



GENDER ALLIANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

# **GENDER ANALYSIS**

## **of the Elementary School Textbooks**

*Research*



Financed by *Kvinna till Kvinna*

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## RATIONALE

The well held fact that “education during the first years of schooling is very important for the rest of the child’s life”, as the basis of this research, has led to this focus on the elementary school textbooks. This is exactly the time when children learn about themselves, the others, and the wider world. This is the time when they start to develop relationships with their self and the important others.

The coherent target of the research is the identification of the way the gender roles are presented, the way the textbooks highlight gender related daily issues as well as the way the gender issues are estimated in the textbooks. Research tents to reach some fundamental conclusions and thereafter recommend improvements related to gender identity and gender perspective in the elementary school textbooks.

It was not only the fact that similar research initiatives have been carried out in different countries that stimulated the conduct of this textbook analysis. It was also the efforts in Albania after the 90-s to make the reformed curricula instrumental in children socialization and gender development.

Under the framework of this research, the existing textbooks content has been analyzed. The content analysis has been carried out through the use of formal logic instruments like comparison, synthesis, induction and deduction. Direct research has been carried out in each of the elementary school subject textbooks in particular. Transversal research has been conducted through coherence and incoherence identification effort within the same subject textbooks as well as among different subject textbooks. Textbook analysis has been carried out through quantitative and qualitative methodological approach as well. Whenever possible and reasonable, typical study methods of human experience have been used like the complex methods of content analysis, verbal history and semiotic analysis.

In order to conduct a thorough analysis, the main basic documents of education policy have been searched. The law on Pre-university Education, Curriculum Standards for Elementary Education as well as the syllabus for each subject of Elementary Education is just a few to mention. This has led to a wider picture of the gender issues in elementary education as well as to a more comprehensive look into the policy papers that would bring about a powerful gender ethos into the elementary school.

Some of the main findings, but not all, of the elementary school textbooks content analysis include:

- The textbooks mostly present children with stereotyped gender roles.
- The human behaviour is typically presented as feminine or masculine.
- Women and girls are predominantly found in human caring roles.
- The girls are continuously given messages that remind them of special responsibilities.
- The gender roles growth dynamics is insufficiently and vaguely presented.
- Illustrations in the textbooks mainly represent highlighted masculine figures.
- Male individuals are mostly trusted leadership roles in daily life and social institutions.
- Important others, very frequently presented as powerful, seem to be predominantly males.

## WHY THIS RESEARCH?

Gender roles and identities are amongst the most fundamental social values that education allows children to early develop and internalize. Education itself, as it reflects the social, economic, historical and cultural dynamics of the society, relies on social gendered processes. The content of educational materials, as well as the way and methods they are taught reflect the gender value and norms of behaviour in society. This is why, being purposeful in bringing in the desired human values, is of such an importance. This research aims at verifying the compatibility of textbooks with the citizenship, social and democratic commitments of the education system in Albania.

### ***About the attention taken during research conduct***

- It is all by chance that the research team is composed of women only. It is important to mention that the methodology chosen for the research is not a feminist one.
- The authors' personal experience does not determine the research results. In no single case, the belief that “females know female’s issues better” has been determining. The textbook analysis has been carried out with the technique of objective interpretation of the findings. The personal impressions have been ruled out through the use of reliable research methods.
- The transformation of the findings from a simple and isolated fact in the textbooks into an idea or paragraph in the study has been made objectively through the art of interpretation. The facts have been covered, not only through the artful use of research methods, but also through a responsible use of an extended gender paradigm.

- The findings in the textbooks have been interactively interpreted, meaning that same findings have been interpreted by, at least, two members of the research team.
- This research has been kept far from sterilized efforts. The research team has been careful in interpreting textbooks findings in accordance with the Albanian gender mentality. The traditionalist prejudices have been reconsidered as part of the authors' cultural background; but it is sure that the background is not conservative. The female roles in the capacity of daughter, friend, mother, wife, agent and leader have been interpreted on the paradigm of the most advanced Albanian mentality.
- Considered attention has been paid to avoid matters of authority imposition by the researchers. None of the gender issues has gained priority because of personal preference.
- The purposeful presence of gender objectives in core curriculum is a basic, but insufficient condition for gender education. The research is permeated by the belief that on top of purposefully articulated gender education objectives, the basic curriculum should bring an “ethos” of gender education in the school. Important attention has been paid to identify artificial and archaic inhibitors of the ethos development.
- The research is constructive. It does not keep the authors accountable. It aims at highlighting the need for more careful gender representation in textbooks. Moreover, it aims at recommending to authors possible improvements in the future.
- In this first research on gender issues in the textbooks, the team has been careful in



respecting the fact that the publishers of these textbooks have not had the contractual obligation to be sensitive to gender representation. Actually, there are no official documents that have the power of national or global compulsory framework related to gender issues.

- The national education and social affairs policymakers have not been especially lobbying for gender education agenda, so the research has been expecting spontaneous gender representation in textbooks.
- The textbook authors' engagement in gender issues has been spontaneous, not necessarily purposeful. Their intuitive personal outlook on gender issues has been reflected randomly.

### ***The objective of the research***

The main objective of the research is the identification and assessment of gender issues as well as the way in which the daily gender identity and roles are brought to children of elementary education through textbooks.

### ***The aim of research***

This research aims at:

- Identifying whether the textbooks help the natural development of gender identity, gender role and sensitivity among school children.
- Identifying whether the elementary school textbooks meet the requirements of the global and local agenda as well as the present day's metamorphoses and tendencies related to gender developments.

- Analyzing whether students' textbooks present a balanced gender development chance to children.
- Analyzing the gender engagements represented mainly in illustrations, messages, characters, social roles, and professions taken over by man, women, boys and girls in the textbooks.
- Analyzing the main social scenes where the gender roles are developed.
- Analyzing the power of social actors regarding gender identity development, the resource of gender authority and forms of role imposition, the degree of gender involvement in decision making, the specific gender roles in urbanizing Albanian society.
- Highlighting and analyzing the main stereotyped gender roles.
- Identifying self-regulating and self-balancing gender education processes.
- Identifying issues related to gender identity in textbook development policies.
- Suggesting recommendations for the inclusion of gender perspective in education.

### ***Researched documents***

For the purposes of this research, the following documents have been considered:

- Albanian law in pre - university education,
- Official documents that screen the education perspective influence the education reform, like:
  - curriculum standards of each subject in elementary school;
  - syllabi of each subject in elementary school;
  - student's textbooks of each subject in elementary school.

## LOCAL AND GLOBAL CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

Schooling is the main instrument through which social change is claimed. Education has an extraordinary importance; it is not all about having enough schools, textbooks and qualified teachers. It has also to do with a certain social context, which grants rights to all, which gives the individuals the possibility of improving their social and economic well being, which allows all of them to be part of public life.

*United Nations Development Program, Tirana 2005*

Gender equity has been proclaimed to be one of the Eight Goals of the New Millennium by the United Nations in the New Millennium Summit held in New York in 2000. Vienna Conference Documents, 1993, the Conference of United Nations on Population and Development, held in Cairo 1994, the Beijing Conference, 1995 and its Action Plan have ever since been the bases for action during the last decade.

Under this framework, the textbook analysis coincides in time with international initiatives to encourage gender equity, as well as the way the Albanian state commitment and policies support them. Care needed to be taken at local level for gender identity related issues is imperative. It is becoming clear that present day gender roles in Albanian society are neither simple nor stiff: they are growing into more and more complex paradigms.

## ***Gender identity and ethnoculture***

Gender is referred to as the norms and possibilities through which men and women, boys and girls live to be whom they are and develop relationship amongst themselves. It is multidimensional, and as such, has an impact on the establishment of human relationships within the economical, political, social and cultural context. Gender is related to the way the power is used, on whom it is used. It helps in establishing societal expectations on men and women obligations.

Under this framework, the process of education and relationships established within school institutions contribute to the development of gender identity as well as to the reinforcement of gender roles. In order to have a better understanding of the interconnectedness between gender and education, it is important that education as a social process be viewed within the context of social Microsystems values and traditions.

In his last publication “Periurban Society”, Artan Fuga goes deeply into the analysis of the nature of the social and political changes in Albania; on the impact the initiatives to overcome transition have had on the actual situation of society. He highlights that “Life under communist regime has enriched the Albanians’ experience, has moulded them with customs of living which, however, represent a sum of very resistible reactions, which can’t be changed, but gradually” (Fuga, 2004: 269).

Meanwhile, the individuals face new realities both in urban as well as rural areas which require “sustainable” and “healthy” reactions. The interconnectedness between gender and culture is complex. The Albanian cultural context it is not homogenous especially when it comes to the distinction between urban and rural areas. Because of its rapid change, more than often, people have found themselves in moral dilemma and crossroads.

Unlike the other initiatives of the type “reduction of inequalities between countryside and urban areas” gender integration has not been considered integral part of undertaken initiatives and reforms. It has been considered as an “imported” value or good from Western developed countries. A counterargument for all those who believe in the process of imported ideas is to be found in the practice of loaning initiatives within globalized system.

This research aims to demonstrate the ways of empowering women at an early age through instrumentalizing the textbooks and curricula at large. The universal argument that education of women contributes to poverty reduction adds to the justification of this research. Education helps women to help themselves, and to become aware of their rights as well as of their reproductive health rights. Better educated mother raise better children, send them to school and encourage them to assure a better living quality. Research done so far proves that social development is mostly influenced by gender inequality, by the fact their creative and productive potential is not transformed into an effectively working capital in the country. The social and economic development is impeded if men and women do not take part in decision-making, labour market and education. What is learned through textbooks, for sure, considerably affects the training of the social capital and the way it is recycled.

The enrolment of young girls in elementary and 8 year schools in Albania has dropped from 98,3% in the year 1991 to 87,3% in 2001. The women enrolment in secondary schools has dropped from 58,9% in year 1991 to 47,2% in 2001. This has happened as a result of wider engagement of young girls with house chores, as a result of the street risk increase threatening young girls, gender exclusion and lack of positive encouragement. This is what a research done by UNICEF in 1999 has identified as main causes of school drop out.

*Ministry of Education and Science,  
National Strategy for Economic and Social Development, 2003.*

There is already a proven correlation between gender inequity in school textbooks and programs and gender inequity in the labour market. Children learn about gender division in school. They reflect it later in life, especially in the professional development. This fact helps in producing a high level of unemployment among women. Unqualified jobs and lower income allow for lower status of women in family and society. *Education in general and school in particular are instruments of change. They open up vistas; help the individual spin off from poverty. They allow for more possibilities for participation in governing and social decision-making.*

In Albania, there is common consensus that school textbooks and programs do not reflect the needs of the 21st century, that they are not suitable for labour market. When the programs and textbooks are revised, the authorities in education should make sure that apart from transmitting applicable knowledge, they should be free from stereotyped images of men and women and contribute effectively in elimination of discrimination and inequality among women and men.

The report of Ministry of Education in the National Strategy of Social and Economic Development lacks information on the way teachers are treated in terms of gender mainstreaming in textbooks and others materials. They lack data on extracurricular activities, on the involvement of boys and girls in activities that allow for development of roles and models in society.

*Ministry of Science of Education, Annual analysis, 2004*

Androgenic education seems to be the key found to minimize the gender identity crisis in today's modern world. The children at the stage of concrete operational development learn social roles *through imitation, acceptance of authority and reinforce them leading to stereotyping.* The way the social role is structured, helps in moral development at this age.

Children 6-7 to 10-11 years old are characterized by heterogeneous moral norms. They are easily manipulated morally, they are submissive to self moral obligation, but they also tend to have and independent moral of their own.

The research values the actual tendencies and current phenomena of the development of Albanian society, like:

- The opening up of the Albanian society towards democracy and citizenship;
- Transition from traditional gender roles toward more complex contemporary ones;
- The movement of population from rural toward urban areas after the 1990s;
- The new emerging social roles in the so called periurban society;
- The social dramas and co-emerging gender misconceptions;
- The barriers springing from subculture, unrealistic expectations and stereotypes;
- The “hidden drop-out” of education by women;
- The lack of sufficient human and financial capacity to support the development of suitable programs, textbooks and school environment so that social change and development is encouraged.

### ***The law on pre-university education***

The main documents of a paramount importance for any of the processes in progress in education are the law “On pre-university education”, “Curricula standards for elementary education” and “Syllabus of elementary education”.

The first articles of the law “On pre-university education” No. 7952, issued on June 21, 1995, state that:

**Article 1:** “Education in the Republic of Albania is a national priority”

**Article 2:** “Education is developed in full accordance with the basic legislation of the country. It relies on the best tradition and achievements at the national level; it is carried out in accordance with the international treaties and agreements rectified by Republic of Albania.”

**Article 3:** “The loftiest mission of education is the spiritual emancipation, material progress and social development of the individual.

*Law on “Pre-university education” No: 7952, date 21.06.1995*

What is easily drawn from this part of the law is that anything that happens in school, any students’ textbooks should meet the obligations of spiritual emancipation and social enhancement of the individual. Translated in a simpler language, the first three articles of the law amply require that students’ textbooks focus more on the gender issues. Moreover, the Law on Pre-University Education does not sin in inhibiting the initiatives. It provides space and possibility for attention to gender pertaining issues.

### ***National Standards of Elementary Education***

The national standards for compulsory education highlight that “*standards serve the new actual conditions of the society as well as its prospective. They serve the integration of our school into the educational systems of other democratic countries*”.



This highlight means that the standards amply allow for the treatment of the global tendencies and inclinations, gender issues included. The national standards do not particularly articulate gender issues, but there is enough interpretative room in the document for gender education.

A closer look into the national standards for compulsory education shows that it is not only the specific objectives for gender education that are missing. Social objectives are missing as well. Were they present, the users of standards might feel stronger obligation to intentionally take care of their fulfilment. Even amongst the standards for the subject “*Citizenship education*”, where objectives like “time, culture, the individual, power, authority, etc.” are set, the gender issues are not present. It seems that the authors of standards and programs have not fully used the possibilities the law on pre university education explicitly gives while stating that: “*the fundamental mission of school is citizenship education of students, their personality development in a culture of human rights and freedom*”.

### ***Syllabus of elementary education***

A closer look into the syllabus of elementary education confirms that gender related objectives are definitely missing. A careful user of the law, textbooks authors included, should have derived the logical obligations from the first part of the law on pre university education to be sanctioned in standards and programs. It is easily noticed that there is incoherence between the law, the national standards and syllabus in particular.

### ***Good practices in textbook analyses***

Textbook analysis is a well known practice. Some countries have already done the textbook analysis from a gender perspective. The researchers have aimed at making evident

the differences between the way both men and women are presented in school textbooks, as well as the impact the stereotyped gender roles have on the children's behaviour. The main findings fit into the generalized schema that the boys are more on the aggressive side of behaviour, they rank much higher than girls doing competitive behaviour and do not do that well in caring behaviours." The main findings related to sexism in the textbooks were published in 1980s and 1990s. The way sexism affects the behaviour of girls in their professional orientation as well as the stereotyped behaviours, was the main focus. After the 1990s, the research focus shifted on boys, the way the stereotypes affect their behaviour. The research has been mainly carried out through the use of content analyses (Sunderland, 2000).

Some other research has been examining the way men and women are attributed certain behavioural traits in school textbooks. U'ren (1971) discovered that boys are attributed bigger physical abilities than the girls. The boys are presented much stronger than they are in reality in that particular age. Males of all ages are presented to have *stronger physical and mental abilities as compared to females*. Females, on their part are described to be *lazy, incapable of thinking on their own, incapable of taking decision independently of others. They are described as willing to resign because of the lack of capabilities*".

The research carried out in the school textbooks in Hong Kong showed a higher frequency of the presentation of women in the household environment as compared to men. Nan (1992) focused on the analysis of the women behaviours in the school textbooks in China. He discovered that *"famous artists, scientists, and academics were all males"*. Porreca (1984) counted that the most frequently mentioned professions for males were: president, (111 times), writer (59 times), teacher (43 times), policeman and explorer (41 times each). Whereas the women professions were: teacher (28 times), actress (22 times), doctor (16 times), and secretary (13 times). Yau and Look discovered that out of 100 characters involved in activities in the textbook, there were 73 males and 27 females. U'ren (1991) reached a similar conclusion in his research. Males are portrayed as *"capable of working in different sectors"*, whereas females were presented as *not being able of working in so many sectors, but for education only and other not so well paid jobs"* ( Au 1992; Ma 1991).

In a research carried out in 1996 by Turner-Bowker it was concluded that girls in the children literature are attributed weakness, passiveness, negative self-assessment, femininity, where boys are attributed power, activity, positive self assessment, masculinity. Females are more often described as “beautiful, frightened, valuable, sweat, weak”, whereas males are described as “*strong, resentful, clever, and proud*” (Turner-Bowker, 1996).

The research carried out so far has been focused on family roles as well. U'ren (1971) found that elementary school textbooks present the mother as “*kind, sweet, untiring with so little joys in life, of no influence on the wider world outside her family, even of no influence within her family. Her contribution is limited to household activities and daily cooking*”.

Many researchers have been focused on history school textbooks. Female are rarely, even never presented in history textbooks. Even when they come out in they have neither power, nor authority. “*The women history was told only in three lessons. We can convincingly say that we know very little of the women history in the past*” (Cairns and Inglis 1999: 225). Trecker (1971) highlights that “*the textbooks exclude very important women and minimize the legal, social and cultural problems they encounter*”. *The authors aim at describing women “in their passiveness”.* “*They argument that their lives are conditioned by political and economic development*” (Cited in Commeyaras and Alvermann, 1996).

“B.a.B.e”, (Be active, Be emancipated) is an organization that works in the field of women’s rights in Croatia. During 1998-1999, it carried out a research on the drawings and pictures presented in 12 textbooks used by students, grades 1 to 8. The results show that males were predominately represented in textbooks. They were present in pictures and drawings times more than females. Females were presented in the role of mother, teacher, shopkeeper and maidservant, whereas men were presented in a wider spectre of professions. *Male characters were so presented that their power, pride was clearly evident, whereas females were persistently associated with family values only.*

A number of researches have highlighted the fact that school textbooks have been improved in some countries. Therefore, for example, in an analysis of secondary school

chemistry textbooks, Bazler and Simons (1991) found in their comparative juxtaposition that the textbooks used in 1990 had more female nameless characters and young people with no names presented in illustrations as compared to the textbooks used in the 70s.

Koretanhaus and Damarest (1993), confirm similar findings in the students' textbooks illustrations published in USA after 1970s. Deliyanni and Kouimtzi (1992) found that, after the gender equity principles have been adopted in Greece, the elementary school textbooks started presenting more women participating in labour market and more males involved in house chores.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out this research, different methods and techniques have been used. The research has been directly carried out in students' textbooks, for each subject separately, and, indirectly, through searching for coherencies and incoherencies within the same textbooks and among different textbooks. Prior starting the research, different reference materials were consulted, especially on how gender identity is developed, how the gender identity crises is resolved, how children are opinionated about gender roles, how does gender identity develops in early ages under the direct influence of school textbooks in particular and education at large. The research has been carried out through *content analysis, comparison, synthesis, induction and deduction techniques*. The extensive and interrelated use of qualitative and quantitative methods is the methodological basis of the research. Many typical study methods used in exploring the effect of written human experience have been used. The methodology has been used in respect to the psychological criteria used in compiling textbooks. It has been selected to be handy in identifying whether gender roles presented affect the way children 6-10 years of age process information.

The repeated gender motives and gender related narratives have been identified, counted and interpreted, based on their persistence (incidental or repeated) and prevalence (dramatically or naturally) in textbooks. The process has been complemented by techniques of semiotic analysis. The research has purposefully looked for controversial roles and portraits, especially among genders and across age. Predominantly, throughout the research, the whole entity (sentence, paragraph or plot) has been analyzed. Whenever necessary, the content has been broken up to the smallest meaningful bit. Care has been taken that gender related facts have been depicted in small, but meaningful units.

Different methods have been so selected that they meet the multi-fold purposes of the research. The following issues are amongst the determinants in the use of methodology:

- The present day wider interest and inclinations of civil society towards gender issues;
- The status apriori granted to individuals based on their gender;

- Gender identity crisis;
- Gender based local and global policies;
- The local legal framework;
- Content standards in elementary education;
- Syllabus in elementary education;
- Social studies on elementary education;
- Sources of gender models and authority;
- Typical scenes where the gender identity is developed;
- Initiative for decision making that comes from both genders;
- The across genders relationships.

The research has been looking for the gender biases of:

- Illustrations;
- Stereotyped behaviours;
- Social roles;
- Gender authority;
- Scenes where the gender identity is shaped;
- Professions;
- Questions in the textbooks.

The way the children learn has also been a determining factor in identifying the research techniques, According to Piaget, *“concrete operations like serializations, object comparison, inversion, reciprocity, objective thinking, the ratio part to whole, stimulate the development at this age group.”*

All the students’ textbooks have been object of research. The applicability of the above mentioned research techniques in the textbooks of mathematics grade 1-4 have been impossible as there are only geometrical figures and androgynous drawings.

## HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN?

Children are human beings in constant interaction with parents, friends and teachers. They learn continuously and in a very complex way. Through interaction, they learn to develop schemas that are used in interpreting personal experience. Schemas are used in gaining additional meaning of surrounding events and circumstances. Social constructs through which they interact, are coloured by the cultural and educational environment they are raised in.

Gender role is a social construct that is developed through the influence of social, educational and cultural context. The shape of gender role is given by the educative methods used over a long period of time. The way the gender concepts are presented in textbooks feeds their societal perceptions. It helps them develop attitudes and understand suitable and acceptable behaviours. Sexism in the textbooks happens to be hidden and canny to the degree that it forces children to accept the world as it is presented in the textbooks.

*Ben invites Bashkim (boys) to the promotion ceremony of the new book of his father (male writer), whereas girls (no names) write letters telling their girlfriends (girls to girls) about the new doll (an indoor object, not an activity) they “have just been shopping” (consumatorism of females).*

According to *Vigotski*, “through cooperation and interaction with peers, a wide variety of inner developmental processes become more powerful”. Social interaction helps students learn social roles. *Vigotski* adds that learning can be viewed as result of cooperation and communication with others as well as with self, because within the realm of it, the experience leads to sustainable thinking reflected in sustainable behavioural change. The relations of child with self and others in school and elsewhere are coated with gender messages.

### **First school day**

Mother and sisters helped Taulanti put on his clothes. It was made clear to him that he had *to become as clever as his uncle*. Father advised him to attentively follow the teacher.

“Reading”, grade 2

Children age 6-11 live in the stage of concrete operations. Their thinking is based on observed objects and concrete events. Abstraction is impossible. According to Piaget, attention shifting from one quality to another is typical at this age. It is through attention shift that limits of understanding are expended. Attention adverse is continuous. Comprehension is simplified through finding daily life events in school textbooks. Children go over events presented in the textbooks, trying to classify and reassess the whole process. Attention helps in activating the thinking schema. *“Girls, besides well behaving in the classroom, reject to take part in the classroom mass. They are sensitive when the teacher is sick or when a friend is hurt”*. In such situations, girls are presented in the textbooks *“with tears in the eyes”*. This is how textbooks tend to make girls concentrate attention and thinking on this kind of behaviour.

At this age, the ability to conserve the perceived characteristics of behaviour develops progressively. The children take the other’s perspective in their actions. The cognitive growth helps them consider social behaviours against a moral ground. The memory at this age marks a startling development. Alongside with it, the ability to conserve and reproduce processed and coded information is also developed. Long term memory helps accurate reproduction over time. School textbooks support the development through ample and suitable situations that reinforce the above-mentioned characteristics. *“Children cooperate with the teachers, but not with the school janitor; they cooperate with the father, but not with the younger brother.”* Out of the many readings in school textbooks, the child picks particularly things that help him feed the above mentioned mental functions.

Erickson has made a special contribution in interpreting the development of children



of 6-10 years of age. *His main merit is the identification of the major role of cooperation with others in resolving age crisis, especially cooperation with those that have a more desired social status, towards whom children make more purposeful efforts for acceptance.* This is why they model themselves after the strongest, the most successful grown ups. Gender construct, according to Erickson, is swallowed as it is served.

“Mimi, a spoiled girl, is at the circus. Genci can’t stand her behaviour. He pulls her hair. An old woman, for sure reacts by saying: “What a spoiled girl is Mimi!”

*The new ABC book*

According to Erickson, boys and girls at this age grow naturally into a development crisis. Their gender identity suffers a crisis as well. In brief, the crisis can be described as a clash between the need to be open, public, and active in the social environment and the fear and frustration to indulge in action. Children of this age leave the family environment. Despite the history of crisis resolution in family environment, children of age 6-12 mentally live with friends in the playgrounds, streets, classrooms and schools. Their new development dilemma springs exactly in that environment. *The social and specially, gender roles are affected by the authority of the models, as well as by stereotypes living in the new macro social environments.* Children of 6-11 years of age develop the ability to view moral aspects of social interaction.

Kohlberg believes that children of this age learn through moral punishment and reinforcement. They are submissive to the authority of the privileged: teachers, parents, older sisters and brothers. They tend to meet obligations and undertake roles that are preferred by parents and teachers. They have the tendency to look for reinforcement of the type “good boy” or “good girl”. Moral conformity is typical at this age. In order to be the adults’ favourites,

children internalize behaviours they are not comfortable with. Internalized gender stereotyped behaviours is but an example of what happens daily with the morals of the children.

The search whether the elementary school textbooks allow for natural gender development is particularly based on the above-mentioned theoretical considerations on children's learning and the didactic principles deriving from them.

### ***Development of children 6-10 years old***

The main and only gender distinction in the physical growth of this age is the inclination of boys towards activities that ask for gross motor skills whereas girls tend to engage in activities that ask for fine motor skills. In the textbooks' analysis, situations where girls are presented as being involved in jobs that ask for fine motor skills and boys involved in activities that ask for gross motor skills are ignored.

### ***Emotional development***

Children of the elementary school are sensitive towards mocking and critique. They find it difficult to accept failure. Many of them are stubborn and persistent in their effort to satisfy teacher's demand. Children of this age are sensitive towards the feelings of the others as well. Part of healthy emotional development is emerging of a relatively stable global self-image.

The need for success of children 6-10 years of age is usually governed by a not yet internalized locus of control. The emotional gender characteristics are gained on basis of personal history of success and external influence. Research methodology has not ignored

the role of external influence in reinforcing the traditional gender behaviour. The methodology relies on the peculiarities of emotional development at this age in providing recommendations for possible improvements in textbooks.

## ***Cognitive development***

Elementary school children in general are eager to learn. They prefer to talk; they do better at verbal exercises as compared to written assignments. Because of literal interpretation of the rules, children of elementary school tend to be straightforward.

Children of this age do not refuse to interact with children of the other gender in the presence of parents and teachers. But, if they organize activities on their own, they do not accept to interact with children of the other gender. Most of the children finally define the “close friend” within the same gender. This relationship, mainly based on shared ideas, vision and impressions can last throughout the adolescence.

Children of this age seem “to specialize” in cognitive development. Boys do better at tasks requiring kicking, catching, dancing, running, jumping, whereas girls do better at tasks requiring muscle flexibility, body balance and rhythm. So, for example, girls are ready to play with rope, whereas boys are ready to play with ball. Situations where children are presented in these typical age roles are not listed as “gender findings”, but have been carefully scrutinized whether they are part of the stereotyped gender expectations.

As the paradigm of cognitive development of age 6-10 shows, children learn better from logic of textbooks. They are concrete; limited in their perceptive and cognitive processing skills. They are still depended on others’ opinions and thoughts. They are easily manipulated in their perceptions and thoughts. This characteristic of the written information processing has dictated the methodology of researching elementary school textbooks.

## ***Self-concept***

According to psychologists, self-image is developed during the elementary school years. It is comprised of physical, social, emotional and cognitive attributes of the self as well as the evaluation and judgment for their own characteristics as perceived by the others.

Self-image is largely influenced by the feedback on academic performance as well as other activities in living environment. It is important to remember that adult's acceptance of the child's role and behaviour influences social adjustment and encourages positive self-image. This is why we have been concerned whether textbooks present children with adults' compromised gender expectations.

The basic and fundamental mechanism of developing self-image during elementary school years is comparison with others. Children are still endocentric. Their thinking categories preserve multiplicity. The research aims at identifying cases when the textbook imposes comparison to be made with traditional gender role carriers within and across genders.

Self-concept at this age is, for the first time, described in emotional terms. Children talk about themselves with pride, shame, anger and happiness. We have searched in the elementary school textbooks typical descriptions of the masculine and feminine self. The described findings show the textbooks reinforcement of certain emotional self considerations.

As it is clearly seen, the emotional and social development paradigm of children 6-10 years of age is very interesting. They develop close friendships, express their social preferences within the same gender, and establish rules of behaviour and criteria for group assessment. They try to define the most important authorities outside family: important friends and teachers. The degree to which the textbooks reinforce the natural sources of gender influence is precisely the object of research.

# TEXTBOOKS IN GENDER EDUCATION FOCUS

## *Illustrations*

Illustrations are considered to be an important part of the text content. They empower the linguistic and communication aspects of the text. Children of age 6-11 rely on their sight to create images and to process information. Illustrations, as a universal communication means, send directly to children messages of the same power as the written language. In order to get meaning out of illustrations, children consider forms, measurements, colours, contrasts and compatibility of the written message with the illustration. The position of illustration in text page, its expressiveness determines the perception and discrimination. The position and association of elements of illustration are not only powerful instruments in concept development, but also ways of encouraging flexibility in using what is learned.

*Based on the paradigm of the psycho social development of the child 6-10 years of age, communication through illustration is more rational and straightforward than verbal communication.*

Illustration reinforces the written information and helps its conservation. Moreover, information accompanied by illustrations can be stored over a longer period of time in memory. Illustrations help visual memory store information that can be actively retrieved throughout lifespan. Up to 10 years of age, it seems to be the most preferred type of memory. The information is stored much easier through visual memory, which intakes information through visual receptors. Visual perception is an active process through which the information gathered by senses is transmitted to brain, where it is organized for interpretation. This psychological process allows for the development of other cognitive processes like memory, thinking, and comprehension through seeing. It is the way the illustration is perceived that influences on the children positioning to what they see, perceive and interpret. Perceptual expectation is thought to be dominating learning experience. It leads perception of the world as unique.

Attention in illustration analysis of elementary school textbooks has been concentrated on the following questions:

1. What are some of the gender messages given by illustrations?
2. To what degree do the illustrations convey messages related to the image of women and girls?
3. What are the typical feminine roles they represent?
4. How often are man and women represented?
5. Which are the most dominant masculine and feminine social roles in the text book illustrations?
6. Is the textbook illustrations dominated by females or males?

“Father is fixing the iron, mother is sewing, grandfather is reading the newspaper, grandmother is knitting a sweater, the little boy is playing with toys, and the girl is doing homework.”

*The Civic Education, grade 2*

Perceptual stability develops gradually, year after year. At age 6, children have the tendency to adapt new information to the existing schema, but they also show flexibility in developing new schema. Year after year, flexibility makes room to stability in schema usage. The elements that help in stabilizing schema in perception of illustrations are colours, shapes and measurements. But textbooks do not always contribute to perception’s improvement. Females in textbooks appear mostly in their upper part of the body or even head only, whereas boys’ bodies are presented in full. This is a repeated style of presentation of females and males in textbooks.

The repeated illustrations tend to make children’s schema freeze. This happens with “ABC textbook” and the textbooks on “Knowledge of Nature” for example. A boy pointing his finger up appears repeatedly throughout text pages, becoming so a dominating illustration of male authority.

“At the end of each exercise, there is an illustration of a boy with school back pad”.

*ABC book, Author: Kol Xhumari*

According to Gestalt theory, in order for the perception to help thinking processes, the picture has to be perceived as a whole. When children see illustrations, they tend to separate the main dominant figure from the background field. The relationship between the whole figure to the rest of the background field influences children thinking. The shapes of the known objects play an important part in discerning the meaning. The fuller the figure, the easier it is for the child to draw a meaning. In illustrations, the surroundings of the known objects as well as the distorted figures are melted into the field. The main figure is perceived as it is standing just in front of the field. The researches have discovered the human tendency to group the stimuli according to some principles or rules. Grouping of the stimuli allows for structured perceptions. The figures persistence helps student learn. While doing this research, attention has been focused on the persistence of female distorted figures, versus total male figures. Otherwise children would have perceived both genders equally.

The tendency to perceive elements of the scene at once as resembling has been an argument in interpreting illustrations at the detriment to gender education. The associations of women with a certain group of objects and men with another group of objects help in fixing gender expectations. Objects, so close to each other, in terms of physical and value affinity, are perceived as part of the same mental construct.

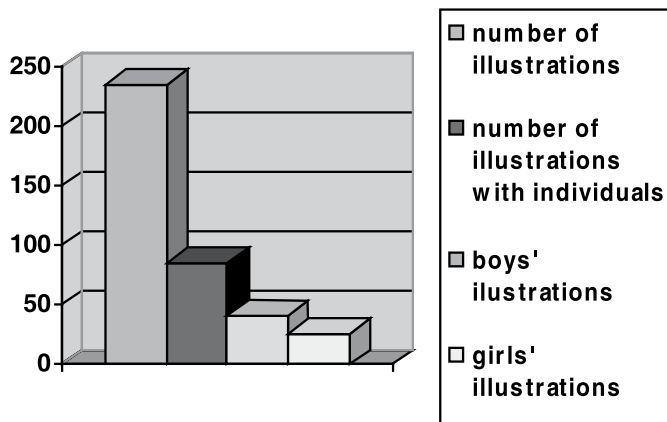
Throughout the research of elementary school textbooks, it was noticed that illustrations were focusing mainly on males. It is only in the textbooks of Civic Education and Social Education, grades 1-4, that the situation was a little bit different. There is a constant effort in these textbooks to preserve equilibrium, not only in illustrations, but also in character repre-

sentatives and gender social roles.

In textbooks like: “ABC”, “Reading”, “Mathematics” and “Knowledge on Nature” the male dominance are easily seen in illustrations. It is their body language that makes them look dominant leaders. They, not only take the larger part of the text pages, but they also carry important functions and characteristics like “doctors”, “*brave men*”, “*hardworking*”, “*wise*”, “*entrepreneurs*”, “*leaders*”, etc.

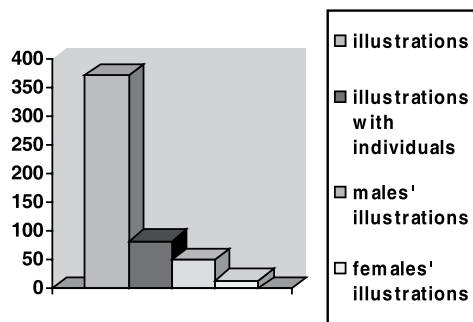
Meanwhile, they are also presented as “tough”, “self careless”, and “having bad personal hygiene”. The figures of girls are mainly situated at the rear part of the field. Even in the cases where girls are leaders, they are so presented in the pictures that their figure is vague and cheerless. In general, they appear as serving the boys, brothers and friends. They are always neat, beautiful, doing well at school work, but not leaders. The females are generally presented in school or home environments. They very rarely appear in schoolyard, playing with other boys and girls.

Graphic 1: Gender representation in the textbook “Knowledge on Nature”, grade 4

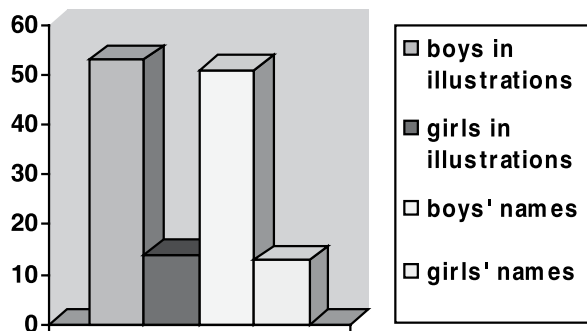




Graphic 2 Gender representation in the textbook “Albanian Language”, grade 4



Graphic 3 Gender representation in the textbook “Reading”, grade 3



## ***Social roles***

Social roles include any suitable social behaviour of boys and girls. *“The females tend to have a more negative self-image than boys. They are less confident. They are not*

*as responsible for their own success, whereas males respect themselves; they are self-confident, responsible for their success. They tend to attribute failures to outside factors” (Basow: 211).*

Gender stereotypes negatively impact the individual. Self concept, mental and emotional well-being are particularly impacted. Stereotypes are reflected in behaviour. Pairing distorted self-concept with stereotypes directly influences behaviour: the female stereotyped as such in terms of gender does not do well in masculine activities that ask for competition and independence. The males, stereotyped as such in terms of gender, do not do well in roles that ask for empathy, care, expression of feelings, etc. The interfaced behaviours seem to justify the role division among male and female during life career.

At the age range 6-11, the routine daily practices in family are transformed into functional models in social environment. In family, life is described as *“starting and ending around caring, cooking and cleaning, house chores, where mother takes care, corrects, goes shopping, buys food and clothing, appears frustrated in the kitchen”*. She *“cooks the pastry, she knits the sweater, she reminds children of their obligations, living small notes for them, she cleans, she sweeps, she treats others, she waters flowers in the yard”*; whereas the father comes as an acting figure in the family *“only on March 8th (Mother’s Day) or New Year day. In other days, he “watches TV, works with a pick, works with a derrick, and works in the garden. He doesn’t let the others know that he is coming late. He cuts wood and brings it at home, etc.*

So, as it is seen, the textbooks not only reinforce poorly stated family roles, but they also perpetuate the routine gender roles in family practice. Taking the child to such families, with such social roles, for sure, is not the best strategy to reinforce proper desired behaviours. The deplete gender social roles do not suit to the characteristics of development of this age group. Neither do these models fit to the urbanization of life in Albania. In the new urban areas, the functional models change rapidly toward a better self-service. An environment rich in old customs, especially for girls, means to give up desires, neglect self and learn to be submissive to the desires of others.

It seems that, the presentation of urban, group and headquarters life, bringing in textbooks community and society, asks for more creativity as compared to the presentation of dry and dragging family environment. *Textbooks either neglect updated gender roles or they hurry to bring in conservative, traditionalist gender ones.* This is very often so with the roles of the mother and father. *The mother is caring at home, she tills the land. The father drives the tractor or cuts the wood.* These professions are atavistic. They are not typical roles. They don't represent the immediate perspective professional identities of boys and girls. It is difficult to judge whether textbooks favour behaviours in gender free environments or behaviours in gender loaded problems environments. None of them guarantees the abolition of gender crisis.

The dynamics of mature gender roles of male and female is not presented in the textbooks. There is a stereotyped ranking: either roles in school or roles as parents. The way the children are presented with family and school environments, where mother is mainly the educational leader that encourages body, physical, emotional closeness and attachment, and teacher is necessarily present both in dialog and pictures, does not really help to resolve identity crisis, which is going to settle in, more or less pretty soon.

The world is presented to children through stereotyped roles. Textbooks encourage not only self role expectations, but also strict expectations on the role of others.

A resilient enemy, constantly affecting gender identity cohesion is the spitefulness of the environment where the social roles are performed. The research shows that prevalence of aggressiveness in social environment allows for "falling in love" with wrong gender models: boys love to be violent, to be physically strong and girls expect to be victims. This stereotype is present in the textbooks. The early stereotyping of gender role because of the environment handicaps the sex-role development.

The urban functioning models within a social group are very often self-regulating processes. In the textbooks of "Albanian language" and "History" the females, though not present in decision-making, appear to be capable of monitoring the consequences of the

decisions made by men. More than often females appear in textbooks watching for the consequences of male negative behaviours. So, the mother “*gives advice or criticizes her son*”, “*the sister teaches the little brother*” she “*takes care that the brother is successful at school work*”. “*The older sister is always careful, always responsible, remindful*”, as compared to other children in the family. Women, in war time, took *care of the worriers*. In the “History” textbook, grade 4, the picture of a woman with a pot at hand, a symbol of care and food, is presented side by side a male husky fighter at the first page.

### ***Prevalence of social gender roles***

The individual, despite of gender, takes over different roles in social institutions that can be gender interpreted. Family is a social institution somewhat more conservative as compared to others, in the sense that change in it happens slowly. Unlike the gender roles taken over by the individual in family that are mainly traditional, individuals takes over different gender roles in community or school.

In the analyzed textbooks, girls and women appear in caring roles. They take care of the other family members and such a thing is taught to them early in life. The messages to girls remind them constantly of their special responsibilities”

“Girls at your age would stand at the head of you little sick brother! She should not play with dolls or be out when the brother is sick!

“*Social Education*”, grade 2

Encouragement and support for male figures happen more than often. So, for instance, there are three doctors, in the “Reading” textbook, grade two. One of them gives his last advice to the other doctors that are males as well. The king asks the old man to give a philosophical answer.

In the lesson “Disturbed sleep” (“Reading” 2, page 108), *“the uncle, who is a doctor, advises his nephew on what to eat and how to sleep”*. Naturally, the boy followed the uncle’s advice right away. *“The old man gives advice to boys who till the land where gold was hidden. Only after five years they understood what kind of gold the old man was talking about”*. “The earth is gold”, “Reading”, grade 2, page 118.

Mother is seen more often in the kitchen. The authority of women reigns within the house. In “Knowledge on Nature”, grade 3, page 23, “mother is wearing an apron and preparing food”. Food preparation is a fundamental responsibility for women which is attributed to her under whatever conditions. *“Mother shows her son the boiling water in the pot on the stove”* (“Knowledge on Nature”), grade 4. *“Yesterday the mother criticized the little sister which left the light switched on. My sister confessed that she is afraid, whereas mother said that the electric power is expensive, so everyone at home has to be thrifty”* (“Social Education”, grade 2, page 32).

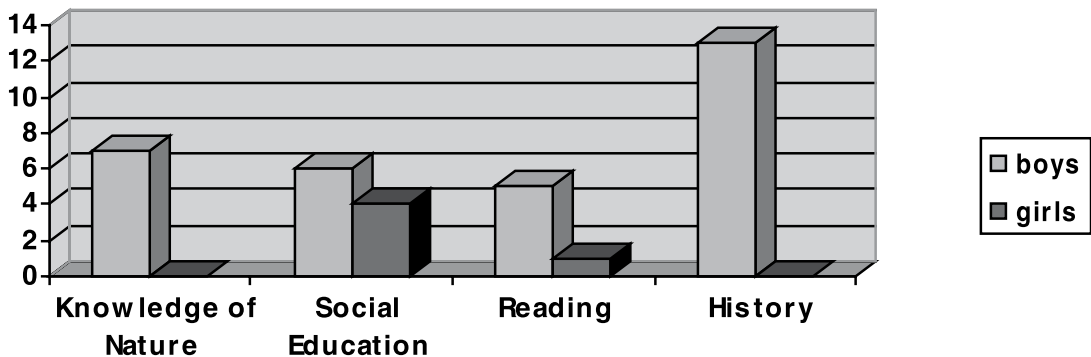
The illustrations in “Social Education”, grade 2, page 8, give a clear message on *whom? does what?* at home, on whose responsibility is it to do certain chores within and outside family. In the second topic *“All of us are responsible”*, illustrations show what each member of the family should do. The six pictures show the father fixing the iron, the mother sewing in the sewing machine, the grandfather reading the newspaper, the grandmother knitting the sweater, the little son playing with toys and the daughter doing homework. In general, the pictures presenting boys are predominant. Out of 8 pictures on page 12, 6 represent boys and the 2 left present objects. There are six pictures in the lesson *“Means that make our daily work lighter”* (“Knowledge on Nature”, grade 3, pages 101 and 102). Only one of them shows a girl pulling some books with a piece of string. The other pictures represent boys pulling a very heavy box, a man pushing a pot, a man pulling a bucket of water and a

man trying to open a lid.

The illustrations favour boys doing important activities. In the lesson “*Extending events*” (“*Knowledge on Nature*”, grade 3, page 128-131), there are seven pictures that illustrate different activities, 5 of them focus exclusively on boys, one picture represents a girl, who is teaching a lesson to her little brother and sister and the other is representing a group of boys and girls (girls playing with a piece of rope in the yard whereas boys playing with balls and cars).

There are four pictures in lesson 33 “*Sound distribution*” (“*Knowledge on Nature*” grade 4). Only one of them is focusing on a girl who is trying to protect her ears not to hear the big noise.

Graphic 4: The representation of boys and girls in illustrations of a randomly chosen lesson



Boys are represented as more *active*, whereas girls are represented more often *in helping* and *supporting* roles. They do not undertake initiative.

In “Knowledge on Nature”, grade 3, page 95, there is a picture of a boy and a girl who are trying to plant a little tree: the boy is digging up the hole in the ground, whereas the girl is holding the tree. In the same textbook, page 97, there is a picture of two boys and a girl; the boys are putting the bird cage on the tree, whereas the girl is holding the ladder tight.

There are three pictures on page 120, in the textbook “Knowledge on Nature”, grade 3. The first picture shows two boys that are playing football; the second picture shows three children: one boy skiing on the snow, one girl crying because of being unable to move and another boy turning his back to the girl. The third picture shows a boy on the riverside playing with a card boat.

The textbooks present girls and women as weak and incapable to face the difficult situations. They are presented in passive roles, whereas boys are related to success. “Era *plans to be a shopkeeper in a toy place*, whereas Gent *plans to be a champion*”. “The players in the field were doing something that Era couldn’t understand, because it was her first time in the stadium (“Social Education”, grade 2, page 58).

A little girl is asking her father about autumn in “Reading” 2, page 51, “*The golden autumn*”. He tells her why he thinks autumn is called “golden”. The girl cannot do anything else but dream of *having that much gold to buy thousands of dolls*. The day after, *while playing she understood that she loved the golden autumn*.

“On the way back home from school, Era and Gent stroll in front of shop windows. Do you know what their most favourite shop is? It is the one that has a window full of dolls, full of nice dolls, cosy bears, plenty of cars and airplanes. “When I grow up, I will work here”, says Era. Gent’s eye caught a pair of sports wear; he thought that if he gets them, for sure he would be a champion. His mother will buy him a sportswear as a birthday present. Let us see whether Gent is going to be a school champion.”

*“Social Education”, lesson 22, page 50, “In the stadium and sports palace”*

It seems common that boys are in leading positions. Are they there where the initiative is taken, they intervene to successfully manage different situations. Boys are the leaders.

*“Who is going to be the leader?”* The boys play with each-other. One orders that each take a role. One of the boys takes the role of policeman; the other takes the role of the thief.”

*“Social Education”, grade 3, page 16*



## ***Behaviour and gender stereotypes***

“While enjoying the nature, the little girl was thinking about her duty to behave well, to work hard and learns to have good results at school. This is what she talked to herself and hurried to school”.

*“Reading”2, topic 16*

Vera and Vjollca (girls) are making a wreath of flowers....”  
Ben and Blerimi (boys) are flying kites....”

*ABC book, authored by Kol Xhumari, page 30-36*

Over the time, behaviour expectations for boys and girls have been stereotyped. Society has been encouraging typical expected behaviours. This has put boys in more privileged and girls in less privileged positions. The effort to justify the stereotyped behaviour of both genders has been argued with the idea that *girls become from the planet March*, whereas *boys from Aphrodite*. It seems that stereotyped behaviour is destiny, definitely connected to psychological aspects of each gender.

In a quantitative androgenic viewpoint, boys and girls are both equally represented in the textbooks “Albanian language”, but qualitative differences are quite large. What’s strikes the eye is that girls are predominantly order oriented, care giving, attention seeking,

whereas boys are mainly irresponsible. *The teachers are females.* A male teacher visits the “Albanian Language” textbooks only once. That male teacher is not even teaching in the regular classroom. He is out in the street teaching kids about the traffic rules. *The sportsmen are males; in the restaurant the chief is a male, but in the family, it is only the mother or grandmother that cooks, whereas grandfather tells fairy tales or gives children advice. The mother is a hostess, she takes care of guests at home; male is in the jury, he is a judge. The mother knits and milks the cow, whereas the male drives a bicycle, leads the meeting, drives a large truck, tills the land, gives advice at work. The female respect the traffic lights, she takes care while walking, whereas the male breaks the rules. The female cuts with scissors; she has an ardent desire to have a house, a piano and a doll. She cleans the house, she does embroidery* (These are roles within house). Whereas *the male drinks tea, goes fishing, has a dream of buying a big kite* (These are roles outside the house).

“The males are not seen working other than a situation when there is a fire hazard somewhere.”

“Albanian Language” grade 3, page 58.

The girl looks *to buy a doll*; the boy looks to buy a top or a car. A female runs to help a handicapped, a male goes to stadium. Sports like: football, basketball, volleyball, tennis, and swimming, shooting belong to him. He is the player, he is the trainer, and he is the referee. He gives advice to others, he is skilled, and he even knows the weather forecast. Tomka, that undertakes a very important action to help the partisans, couldn’t be but a male (Reading, grade 2, topic 30).

The males are “fashionable”, the girls are “neat”. Boys “watch TV and become forgetful”; girls are “tidy and keep their personal things in order”. Girls “go to library”; “they help other people find books”. Boys “go shooting”, they “go wrestling”. The girl “cries because she doesn’t like the sweater the mother has bought for her”. The father “takes the boy shopping”. The big sister “teaches the young sister to iron”. The females are presented as *untiring, loving, instruction providing; they are teachers, educators. They are always careful, tidy, shy*, whereas boys *raise high balloons*, they go shopping, buy things. They are *happy, watch TV, neglect homework*. It is very rare that boys are presented as *loving, taking care*

*of sick mother, brushing the teeth by themselves. They “are not so neat”; they “do not know how to ask for help”. They “get out in the garden to whitewash trees”, whereas females do not seem to take masculine roles. The girls “play with snowballs”, but not “with balls”. Boys “lay bricks and use cement”, they “motorcycle”. Girls “buy ice-creams”, boys “slide on the ice and play with swords”.*

There are some cases that boys and girls, as children, play together: “Blerta and Tomorri are making a snowman”, “Arben, Blerimi and Blerta are tilling the land”, “and they have picked carrots and oats.

The textbooks fail to present the dynamics of gender development. In real life, people shift from simple models of behaviour to more sophisticated, modern and complex ones. Textbooks need to present more complex roles and explain how people’s roles grow. The female are presented at the same role height. (Albanian Language, grade 2, page 56) A woman “waters flowers”, (page 59) “buys a dress”, (page 60) “knits”, (page 65) “irons”, (page 66) “takes care of the others”, (page 75) “cleans the coal”, (page 76) “is in charge at home”. Even if there is an advanced female role, it comes alone. It is neither followed nor supported by similar height roles. So, for example, in the textbook “Albanian Language”, grade 2, a woman is presented as “doctor”, (page 95), but, a number of more simple roles follow: “tailor, nurse, chef, field worker, livestock worker that feeds the lamb” (page 108).

The same happens with male roles. They are presented as of same height. In “Albanian Language”, grade 2, (page 56) the male “polishes the shoes” (page 60), “goes hunting” (page 60), “puts on winter walking shoes” (page 63), “rides a horse without a saddle” (page 67), “loses control of self” (page 70), “forgets what he was told to do” (page 72), “takes care of his skis” (page 75), “cleans the shoes” etc. Even when the male is presented in a sophisticated role, like “pilot” (“Albanian Language”, page 92) or “teacher” (page 95), it is not followed by other complex roles. The textbooks fail in this way to present the complexity of roles in a developing society. So, the “pilot” and “teacher” roles are followed by “carpenter”, “chef”, “meson”, “white washer”, “electrician” (page 98), “tractor-driver” (page 107), or someone that “feeds the pony” (page 108).

Association is a mechanism of social development and thinking. It makes us believe that the preservation of traditional roles, typical of a simple conservative village life scene, encourages the conservations of respective dimensions of social and gender roles. Children learn from both gender models, but when it comes to skills needed for success, they believe that examples are best found among their own gender. Girls look for successful women and boys look for successful males.

Sexism in textbooks seems to appear in three main shapes:

- Ignoring the female;
- Stereotyping the female;
- Disagreeing the female.

Overstressing the importance of male work leads to ignoring the female. Stereotyping, as form of sexism, is realized through parallel description of females and males: females from an outside standpoint and males from the standpoint of the power to be successful.

Stereotyping is reached through description of female portraits and, parallel to that, through the description of males' strength and their particular role in resolving quite difficult situations. Moreover, the females are stereotyped through being blamed for complicated situations, being dependent and dominated individual.

Contradicting females is another sexist strategy in textbooks. More than often, the illustrations present only part of female body, mainly head, contradicting so the importance of their body; whereas males' bodies are totally presented in illustrations.

Modification of gender roles is a significant instrument in identity development. For sure, women have been part of the history. They have played important roles alongside men in history. It is hard to believe that men have gone through history alone, as they are presented to children in the History of 4th grade. It is expected that the textbooks describe the nowadays role of men and women in the business, in intellectual and political life, civil society and public administration. Their role in creating new communities seems neglected.

Genders are frequently stereotyped leisure time. Women are found at home and men skiing, hunting, playing, swimming. Textbooks fail to present new tendencies of gender development because of value added intercultural relationships, internet and electronic mail contact with outside world. The importance of learning new skills for both genders is not presented in textbooks. They miss the chance of telling kids that social environment dictates modified perceptions of gender roles leaving so the children with traditional and patriarchal gender role options only.

Behaviour between siblings age unmarked in textbooks: sister and brother, brother and sister, sister and sister, brother and brother is interesting to be explored. Though it is true that at different stages of development, the relationship among children within family differs, the textbooks seem to ignore the age factor. Close examination of social construct of sister and brother leads to an interesting conclusion: sister has an emotional construct; she is inclined towards values and mediation. Sister is constantly presented in a caring function. (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 75); “*She worries about the mistake of her brother*”, (“Albanian language, grade 4, page 102); “*She surprises her brother*” (“Albanian Language, grade 4, page 75); “*She accompanies the amputated brother to school*” (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 24); “*She gives a warm overcoat to the little sister*”, (“Albanian Language”, grade 4, page 4); “*The sister holds her brother by hand, takes care of him*”.

Brothers are presented as capable of identifying the problem, but incapable of solving it. Sisters seem more capable of solving the problem, but incapable of identifying new problems. “*The brother criticizes his sister for the mistake*” (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 75). “*The brother decided not to hide the mistake his sister made*”. (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 119). Another interesting finding is that the little brother is not that present in the textbooks. Is there reason to believe that the author expects him to grow and be more authoritative and active in decision-making?

Brothers’ ignorance and incapacity of engaging in house chores is part of their social status. Females live in a serving position exactly because of the male complaining style of:

*“I do not know”, “I can’t do”. The brother doesn’t seem capable of house chores. “Once he broke the mirror, next time he smashed the eggs”. “I don’t know how to do that”, or “I can’t take care of others” or “I do not know how to cook” seem to be legitimate manly confessions in textbooks.*

Eating rituals are a common, but very significant scene of role discern. It is the female that lays the table, worries about the food being served in time, whereas males just think of eating only. Boys pretend not to notice that table is laid. The girl takes care of cat (a domestic animal within the house); boys take care of dog (a domestic animal, living outside the house). The girls call each other; the boys get on the train accompanied by grandma or a care giver. The girls that take care of the elderly, boys just take advice from them.

### ***Thinking schema and behaviours***

Sandra Ben, a researcher, observed distinctions between males and females. She highlighted that children learn not only the specific content, but also the distinctions between important gender roles. The gender schema is a cognitive instrument that helps in organizing and using individual perceptions. In case the cultures do not distinguish between genders, everything in the children’s eyes is going to masculine and feminine neutral. The children will not develop and will not use the gender schemas.

The way gender concepts are presented in elementary school textbooks effects student’s attitudes, way of comprehending and interpreting suitable behaviours. The textbooks present sexual roles that conflict gender stereotypes of certain children (a talented singer or a child with an ardent desire to become a nurse cannot find models in textbooks). Nurses and singers are definitely women. On the other side, the girl does not find a girl model playing with a car toy.

Normally, in such situations, the cognitive dissonance happens. The child goes over his gender beliefs unassisted (for the sake of truth, textbooks rarely lead children in meeting cognitive dissonance). The lonely child ends up in blindly accepting the taught schema of sex roles or chooses to adopt an egalitarian attitude.

The typical gender roles presented in textbooks are threatening to both: boys and girls. Girls are expected to always be passive and predominantly dependent and boys have to always be in dominant position. They are rarely seen in fear or sadness. There is no crying boy in the textbook. The stereotype does not only limit children's need to express feelings and self, but also obliges them to adapt to unclear borrowed gender concepts. Their natural personality traits are denied.

Children this age are continuously setting mental schema. They store reorganized information and personal experience. Their thoughts emerge through these mental schema on gender roles, stereotypes of behaviours, opinions and expectations for typically masculine and feminine behaviours.

The textbooks, very often feed the children schema on gender with portraits of "*submissive and passive women, or sweet, naïve, conformist and dependent girls*". The stereotyping of schema on boys happen when boys are typically presented as "*strong, adventures, independent and capable*". The male characters tend to undertake military roles, to face the risk, whereas females tend to be passive, careful to others. Feeding mental schemas with information like that on Burbuque and Manjola, who "*are neat, look like little dolls, whose clothes are never stained*" results in fixed sex role schema, where the female characters are "good mothers", "princesses" whose needs are always met by males. "*Mother and daughter do the house chores. Hana irons, while mother cooks in the kitchen*", "*the oldest sister teaches the younger sister to iron her apron because mother is going to go to work*". ("Reading", grade 2, page 42).

What is deeply rooted in the mental schemas is that female characters meet their aims only through others' support, whereas boys are successful because they are "deter-

mined and capable”. Even when females are presented as active and determined, they go unnoticed to the end of the story, so, they do not affect the schema formation.

“Zana has turned on the TV to watch fairytales. Her brother takes the remote control and start searching channels without asking for permission. He wants to watch a football match. So, Zana makes way to her brother. She sits reading a book. She bags Gezim to lower the TV volume”.

*“Reading”, grade 2, page 68*

The schema affects the identification of young readers with characters of their own gender. The lack of diversified female roles limits the possibility that girls identify with their own gender and establish high expectations for their position in society. If the textbooks did not stereotype female or male roles, but instead, provided general qualities of both genders, the identification and schema formation processes should have been much more favoured.

Today, a new standard of behaviour, based on the qualities of both sexes is considered advantageous. Many see androgyny as an educational chance. The androgynous person, being a male or a female, bears qualities that traditionally have been considered “feminine” like sensitivity and love simultaneously with “masculine” qualities like competitiveness and aggressiveness.

In an androgenic culture, females and males that are educated in early childhood to receive both quality packages become capable enough to surpass the limits imposed on them by sex roles during life time.



## ***Profession and gender***

“Sitting in the same classroom, reading the same books, listening to the same teacher, boys and girls get different education.”

*“Reading”, grade 2, page 68*

Self concept is developed under social influence. Certain skills and attitudes are developed in all the individuals. It is the social environment that forces the gender distinction. The first distinction is made as soon as the child is born. It is going to characterize the child throughout lifespan. It categorizes individuals socially. “This is the basis of gender discrimination that is called sexism”. Most of the societies set different expectations for men and women. They are charged different responsibilities. Depending on the gender, they access resources differently. It is exactly clear what is expected of it, what is going to be assessed under what conditions. The newborn is expected to play certain roles in life.

Gender roles and stereotypes affect the way people function individually and interpersonally. The stereotype determines positions in society. The way the family and society help individuals socialize determines the skills, abilities and performance. Girls in general are encouraged to take care and educate the others, whereas boys are encouraged to compete for profit and income. In the labour market performance, women and girls are expected to have more humane professions like *teacher, nurse, educator, sociologist, social worker, etc., which are considered as continuity of the reproductive role women have.*

On the other hand, the majority of males are more competitive, more aggressive and fewer tasks oriented than females. Most of females are more sensitive toward social issues. They are more cooperative and sensitive than males. Stereotypes on the distinction between

men and women outnumber the distinction itself. This is why it is hard to be considered right or genuine.

Some beliefs have such a common ground that they derive invisibly as hidden messages into our daily thoughts. They make people act on false arguments that girls and boys are in a way or another handicapped. School materials prejudices reinforce the populist gender specific division of field competencies. The populist division is further reinforced in family, media and community.

Generally, mothers and fathers in textbooks come out as having different professions. What is important to notice is that men and boys have professions of a special status, higher reputation and better reward. Whereas women appear in a smaller range of professions, they are more limited in status, reputation and payment. The activities and professions presented in the elementary textbooks can be categorized as:

- (i) **Labour or productive activity** (activities carried out with the purpose of producing material goods). Gender division as feminine or masculine is evident.
- (ii) **Reproductive activity** (activities assuring continuity of family life), like: caring for family members, cleaning, cooking etc.
- (iii) **Community activity** (activities carried out in community from which the whole community profits).

In the analyzed textbooks, typical male professions are: *miner, sportsman, policeman, postman, doctor, pilot, conductor, painter, planer, shoemaker, constructor, designer, driver, fireman, manager and soldier.*

A very interesting element is the fact that each exercise in the ABC textbook grade 1, is accompanied with an illustration of a boy looking like a postman. He has a post pad. He carries a notebook in his hand through which he encourages children to do homework. Another interesting fact is that the teacher is almost never a man. Very rarely, he comes out to be the physical training teacher for boys. In the unique example of ABC textbook “Stop! It’s the red-light” a male teacher is teaching two girls and a boy to cross roads paying attention to the traffic lights. It looks like the authors want to transmit the message that the traffic rules

are male business and competences. The same happens in “The knowledge on Nature”, grade 3, page 128-131. *“A group of boys are running together with a male teacher. They are reaching the line of finish”.*

It is worthy of mentioning that each topic in the textbook of “Music education” the author (female) “instructs” only male not female teacher on the way the song is sung. The use of different instruments is described on page 11. Lahuta and violin are accompanied with respective illustrations. First, illustrations show typical old males wearing folk costumes of the Northern Albania playing lahuta and clarinet. A third illustration shows a girl playing violin. Text cites that “violin is a magical sweet instrument” and here comes the girl to play it. It is also interesting to notice that, while images of male teachers are presented as always “knowledgeable” about traffic rules, musician and sportsman, the female teachers are presented as sweet, caring and loving. Moreover, the subjects they teach are elementary school subjects only like “ABC” book, “Reading” and “Knowledge on Society”.

Learn something about your school” is a lesson where students are asked to fill in a template on their school with questions like: “What is the name of your teacher (female)? What is the name of the headmaster (male)?”

*“Social Education”, grade 3, page 6*

Women are presented as teachers, secretary, singers, nurses, shopkeepers, dentists, lab technicians, janitors and only once as traffic police, but frightened and scared in the traffic.

“Moza tells Edlira that her mother started working in a company where they knit straw bags. A mother is milking a cow. Bujari (a male) loves village life.”

*“ABC book”, page 77-79*

“Behaving at school”: One of the rules that children should learn is to put garbage in the garbage bin. The cleaner (a female) is going to clean it.”

*“Social Education”, grade 3, page 70*

It is important to mention the gender neutral models presented in the school textbooks. In some illustrations, boys and girls go together to cinema; girls are presented in activities like reading books, painting, watching TV, playing videogame, playing tennis and swimming. The message that comes through these illustrations is that it is OK to have desires fulfilled. Most of the illustrations presented in exercises and assignment in the textbooks “Social Education” grade 1, boys and girls play together; they live and work together in family.

Any society expects to see different individuals take over different professions. There is a general expectation to reinforce well defined labour division. The development of open society and evolution of technology have somewhat avoided the traditionalist labour division based on gender identity. Less and less professions are limited to gender identity.

Referring again to the elementary school textbooks, it seems that presentations are traditionalist. They reinforce exactly the gender division. The illustration that children get is those of *women holding babies in their arms, preparing food, working in the field, taking care of the sick at hospital, or teaching at school.*

Meanwhile, males are usually presented as *soldiers, sportsmen in prestigious sports.* They do heavy work and are usually presented as leaders. In the child’s perception, being a soldiers or holding guns is more important that bearing off springs and taking care of them.

As a conclusion, it might be said that women are frequently passive in the analyzed textbooks. The predominant model is that of women living at home, economically depend-

ent. Girls that see the model can't plan different but being future housekeepers. With some exceptions, women are within house, with children, going shopping, whereas men are presented in a wider range of professions of higher status. The females, following motherhood, care and love children. The conclusion is that traditional values of the Albanian culture are constantly reflected in the textbooks.

### ***Initiative roles and leadership***

The history of mankind is rich in male leaders. Leadership in society and social institutions is mainly trusted to males. Encountering male leaders leading different aspects of social and spiritual life in society is common.

Male dominance in relationship to others, especially to important others, is predominant in textbooks. Boys are more frequently present in meeting important others. Even the meetings are not casual. Boys are present in "*the exhibition of painters*", they are present "*in jury*", and they "*get awards*". They take care of "*the sick*". In relationship to others, a girl helps a "*male friend*", the boy *help a male friend, but not a female friend*. Girls are more *on the phone*, because it is probably difficult to get out of home. Boys are *more frequently seen out, together with other children*. Girls have a *desire to play*, whereas boys are *playing in the playground*. Girls are canny ("Albanian Language", grade 2, page 41) boys are stubborn ("Albanian Language", grade 4, page 63).

Boys choose boys as friends, girls choose girls. Boys are ready to talk to adults, to the painter, the teacher, even the foreigner, whereas girls are not in the scene. Girls wish each other A Happy New Year on the phone, whereas boys are together playing around the Christmas tree.

## ***Typical scenes of gender role formation***

The most typical and natural scene of gender role formation for children of 6-12 years of age is the social environment close to family, but definitely outside family. The fact that children this age are presented with family environments and family house chores runs counter to this psychosocial principle of development. The fact that textbooks offer family environment and charge children with family assignments runs contradictory to the psychological conclusion that children at this age seek identity models outside family. The textbook continues to heavily provide children with the message to come back to family scene for models where they find the mother model frequently presented. It is the mother that “is late because she has to take care of her little daughter”; “*accompanies her daughter shopping for a new dress*”. Mother becomes a moral source, especially when she teaches “friends to share” (“Albanian Language”, grade 4, page 92). This is a violation, because we know that moral at this age comes from the group, peers and friends. Or, the textbooks chose to take children far back in history, in fighting places for kings and princes, soldiers, worriers and survivors to learn morals (“History”, grade 4).

Children follow the gender roles provided in textbooks. They are kept hostage of the techniques used by authors in cognitively counter facing roles. In the textbooks of “Albanian Language” “*Scanderbeg was brave, he had a big sword, but also another short straight sword*”. In the “History” textbook, Scanderbeg is presented as real hero. But neither Scanderbeg schema, nor the family schema is the place where the morals spring from. They are not in conformity with the children’s needs for social development. These schemas ignore the needs of children for normal learning.

## ***Gender authority***

Authority becomes a factor affecting gender identity. There is an effort to present female authority very frequently as compared to rare, but very strong frequency of male authority.

Gender authority is exerted in different ways. Mother is a really powerful source of “No!” for children. Her morals tend to be dominant. She tries to teach children the so old Biblical message: “he should be responsible, strong, as he is going to secure life through toil!” Roles seem to be very toiling! Males are presented as *carpenters, pilots, drivers, cooks, and painters. He comes out in textbooks to be strong and muscular* (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 92-108). *He comes out as king, prince, worrier, brave man.* Mother gives birth to children through pain and take cares of the pain throughout her life: *“mother take care of the son, to be neat and tidy. She takes care of the sick child; she worries about her sick child. She calls a doctor. She orders. She pays for him. She cooks for family, she cleans, and she asks children to be careful* (“Albanian Language”, grade 2, page 36, 79, 82, 89, “Albanian Language, grade 3, page 45, “Albanian Language”, grade 3, page 112-127). The textbooks present facts after facts to prove that females are *“restless, dear, careful, tidy and shy”*.

The impact of the following message can hardly be forgotten. “The wise old man Ismail Qemali was elected to be the head of the country”, *“The war was led by outstanding patriots (males) like Isa Boletini and Bajram Curri”* (“History”, grade 4, page 72). The same source states that “Serbs killed a lot of women, children and innocent old people”. It seems that women can’t self defend. In “history” textbook, there are endless messages on the doings of men in the position of kings, princes, leaders, presidents, and heads of governments, writers, historians and poets. Amongst them, there is only mentioning of the names of some women and girls that can be counted with the fingers of one hand only. In the first page of the textbook “History”, grade 4, there is a woman wearing folk costumes, holding a pot in her hand, which is a symbol of feeding and support role of the females at war time. At the end of the textbook, there is a lesson on Mother Teresa, the symbol of sanctification of Albanian females. What is in-between is a history of men. This misbalanced presentation of female figures in history raises low expectations on power of females in propelling development in society. It puts a burden of high expectations on male shoulders, who believe they are a major factor in the others’ life.

The “History” and “Albanian Language” textbooks allow males to have more respon-

sibility in decision-making as compared to females. In the new social environments, where according to Erickson, the child's personality develops, it seems that the most active part in decision-making is played by males. They come out in the textbooks charged with responsibilities of decision making. "Males help in the extinguishing the fire" ("Albanian Language", grade 3, page 68). They become *bakers, tailors; they take part in shooting, wrestling; they saw, till the land with pick* ("Albanian Language", grade 2, page 89). *They become kings, they invade lands, they form and lead armies in war, they become princes and worry of their own royalties; they become kings and take care of their kingdoms.* Children expect to see other models, based strongly on reasoning.



## QUESTIONS IN THE TEXTBOOKS

Questions at the end of each lesson are analyzed in terms of gender highlighting. While considering questions, care has been taken for the following issues:

- Whether the range of questions at the end of each lesson encourages the involvement of one gender only;
- Whether the questions encourage both genders equally to answer;
- Whether the questions exclude from the possibility of being involved in providing answers one gender group;
- Whether the questions encourage gender stigma;
- Whether the questions encourage debate between genders;
- Whether the questions encourage opposition of genders;
- Whether the questions encourage sanctioning traditional social roles of one gender;
- Whether the questions encourage the impersonal communication;
- Whether the questions avoid identity and gender issues, like the case of -“Knowledge on Nature”, which operated with the term “person”;
- Whether the question tends to be rhetoric with the answers implied;
- Whether the questions are excluding and encourage one gender. If this is so, which is the most privileged gender?
- Is it that questions have drawn the attention of the authors of textbooks not to exclude certain genders or this has not come to their attention at all?

Focusing on questioning in the textbooks, it results that:

1. The textbook “Knowledge on Nature” provides questions with no specific gender address. They can be judged in terms of gender identity as “inclusive”. Almost 99% of the questions at the end of each lesson prefer the use of impersonal, avoiding so certain gender preferences. There is a distinct effort to avoid questions that encourage one gender over the other or to use impersonal, like: “the students should answer”, “the

students should do the measurements”, etc. There is an only case worth mentioning in page 59, topic 28. There is a group of questions particularly addressed to females:

- What kind of vegetables do you use in family?
- Mention some vegetables that you use in salad and some others that you use in soups.
- Mention vegetables that are cultivated in your area.
- How can you prepare a soup in family?

Another thing that strikes the eye is that questions are followed by two portraits: one is a boy and the other is a girl. The girl is put close to questions. She is so presented that she is surrounded with question marks; whereas the boy is holding his pointing finger up in the air. He is sitting close to the part “Assignments”. He orders! From the stand point of common reader, this is something not so striking in particular, but for the group of researchers, these two semiotic signs can be interpreted as gender messages. Girls always need help to reflect, meditate, they need time to think. Whereas boys give orders and carry out assignments.

Something else that is easily seen in the textbooks is that authors prefer to focus on boys that take measurements, find points of horizon, and discover change in nature. Girls are not that present in such activities.

- In the textbook “*Social Education*” grade 2, it seems that authors do not like to use questions. Instead, they bring in case studies from real life, which are equally focused on boys and girls. There are no question leading to the inclusion of one gender and exclusion of the other. The activities calling for cooperation within gender and between genders are equally present. Contradicting genders is rarely seen.

The case in topic 22 is in an unusual situation. Vera goes for the first time to stadium. The prejudice is present. It seems that the stadium is a place where only boys go. It looks blasphemous that girls go to stadium.

- In the textbook “Reading” 2, the questions outweigh the case studies. At a first sight,

it seems that questions are generally naïve. They encourage neither attitude nor positioning, nor reasoning on gender identity. Out of 28 topics, only 13 include female characters. In “Knowledge on Nature”, 41 topics focus on seasons, nature and animals. It seems that it encourages both girls and boys to participate.

The inner structure of the textbook doesn’t really allow for questions as a technique to encourage children’s reflecting on understanding both genders and inner relations among them. But authors lack encouraging techniques for girls. It is quite obvious in some topics that the traditional role of both genders do not encourage students to give reflect on genders. They just accept gender roles the way they are presented in textbooks.

## ***Authorship***

Generally speaking, teams of authors for the textbooks of elementary school are equally balanced in terms of gender. There is a very insignificant preference for masculine authorship. But, the equilibrium comes to an end when the authors decide to choose readings from different authors. Out of 85 authors included in “Reading” grade 2, there are only three females. The other “Reading” textbooks have the same ratio between male and female authors.

This research did not focus on the correlation of the gender of the authors with the gender preferences presented in their writings. Nevertheless, this is a fact that should be further analyzed in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research leads to the following conclusions:

- As of the gender issues in the elementary school textbooks, there is an outspoken incoherence between the main education policy papers. There is a need for more coherence between the gap, the law, especially the first three articles, the content standards, syllabus and the students' textbooks.
- The gap between fundamental policy papers, the content standards and syllabi do not purposefully state gender objectives that meet the commitments of the new millennium.
- It is obvious that textbooks are full of stereotyped gender roles and sometimes they mount to traditional or archaic.
- Authors of the textbooks have not taken into consideration the importance of androgenic education.
- The characters included in the textbooks, especially in the "Reading" textbooks are dominated by typically male figures. They convey typical male behaviours and manners.
- The characters brought to textbooks typically present traditional female or male behaviours.
- Female images in textbooks convey only caring and fostering roles and not those of

researcher, decision-maker and leaders.

- The textbooks do not balance between traditional professions and the new ones. Neither do they present balanced professions among genders.
- Leadership, besides family life, is predominantly a male attribution.
- Women authority is mainly found in family, there where the roles are generally inflexible and traditional. The textbooks present mostly the mother, father, brother and sister much more than woman, man, boy and girl.
- The typical scene, where gender roles are developed is family. School is not so valued and community is ignored (with the exception of Civics textbooks).
- Illustrations in the textbook are way too ineffective in providing quality in gender education. Numerically speaking, the number of males outweighs the females, especially in research and decision - making.
- The importance of questioning at the end of each topic has been neglected. All of a chance the questions happen to be all-inclusive or exclusive. Most of the questions do not give both genders equal chances of responding.

Based on the fact that school textbooks are powerful instruments of information, education and development, that gender education is a means of civilization, there is an evident need for further attention on this topic.

The covert manipulation of the way the gender differences affect child development is difficult to be made, but totally possible. Instrumentalization of curricula should be a strategy of gender education. The textbooks as such are instruments of learning, but they are not the final aim. Gender in textbooks should be a factor of encouraging reasoning.

It is true that the lack of balanced gender roles is not a sin made by authors. They had not been contracted on that. Even in case the textbooks present in a sensitive way the gender issues, school as an institution, needs to encourage applicability, possibilities for cross and extra curricular activities.

This research leads us to accepting two equally important tendencies of gender education:

- First**, the continuous change of gender roles;
- Second**, the conservation of gender roles.

The present textbooks chose to present children with traditional and conservative roles within family. It is largely accepted that the improved textbooks that favour advanced and already quite frequent models in Albanian society will accelerate gender socialization and favour the quick resolution of gender identity crises.

For a careful user of the law, textbook authors included, it is clear that Article 1, 2 and 3 of the Law on Pre-university education, charge sanctions on different standard frameworks and programs. Actually, there is incoherence between the law, standard framework and elementary school programs.

The mission of school, viewed from a legal perspective asks from the authors of standards and programs to formulate not only knowledge level objectives, but also a group of competencies and skills related to citizenship education. Specifically stated, school mission asks for gender education competences and skills.

The school programs should aim the preparation of the individual for social life. In this way, the national teacher training programs should become more focused on issues of gender identity.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## *General recommendations*

The awareness rising on the long term consequences of gender inequities in the life of the individual in particular, as well as in the life of society at large has a paramount importance. This is true especially for the natural sciences teachers.

The Natural Sciences teachers, most of whom are males, feel contented as they try to prove to children that their subject is way too difficult. They stress that a large number of students are going to fail, as the level of competition is too high.  
(Catherine Gillbert, regional college Champlain, Montréal Forum)

Because of different socialization processes, women and girls use different learning styles as compared to boys and men. More than often, female feel better in a cooperating working environment which is not characterized by high level of competition.

In a research carried out by the Teacher Federation in Canada in 1999, it was found that girls and women believe that many educational methods are not based on their own perspective and are not focused on their strong points (Robertson, 1999).

Teachers should present topics, contents and processes that address the needs, concerns and interests of boys and girls, as for example: personal stories written by and for successful women, providing at the same time information that make groups more sensitive towards each other.

*(Ruth Rees, College of Education, Queen University, CCWE Conference)*

The researchers have defined 6 curriculum characteristics that increase the sensitivity towards gender issues. The curriculum should be inclusive, correct, affirmative, representative, and integrative, inclusive of the experiences, needs and interests of both male and female students (Bailey 1992).

“We should look into what children are told. Most of the examples we provide in classrooms, the stories we write for them in books and textbooks describe a world in which boys and men are wise, clever, courageous, whereas girls are silent, passive and invisible” .  
(McCormick, 1995).

Therefore, the researches have focused their attentions in two main aspects:

- In the textbooks that exclude the female experiences;
- In the textbooks that stereotype males and females.

### ***Specific Conclusions***

- More coherence amongst the main policy documents in education;
- More specific gender objectives in the school programs;



- Inclusion of the gender education specific objectives in the working contracts with the textbook publishers;
- Development of school gender related ethos;
- Development of national training programs for elementary school teachers;
- Encouragement for the use of oral history teaching methods;
- Inclusion of gender education related activities in the educational programs developed by the Ministry of Science and Education;
- Development of teachers' manual with cross and extra curricular activities;
- Assistance for the periurban schools to develop gender sensitive plans of action;
- Presentation of the conclusions of this research to:
  - Publishing houses staff
  - Institutions that education policy making
  - Interest groups of teachers
- Inclusion of the results of this research in the initial teacher education programs at university level.

## ***Epilogue***

There is enough consensus among the members of the research team to highlight at the end of the research the following issues:

- Modification of the gender roles in the textbooks has the power of encouraging the gender identity development and socialization of the individual at large.
- The males and females in the school textbooks have to be presented more in the intellectual, political civil, administration and business world.
- There is a need for more presentations of men and women in their leisure time.

- There is a need for presenting the peculiarities of the communication with the wider world, the use of information technology, e-mail, and internet, taking children away from the patriarchal and traditional roles.
- There is need for further encouragement of females in compiling students' textbook.
- There is an evident need for advanced trainings in the field of gender education.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Empowerment:** A process through which women and men in disadvantaged positions increase their access to knowledge, resources, decision-making power, and raise their awareness of participation in their communities, in order to reach a level of control over their own environment.

**Gender:** Gender is the social construction of female and male identities and characteristics, based on roles and relationships that are learned and reinforced through social patterns and cultural norms. Gender is a concept that refers to a system of roles and relationships between women and men that are determined by the political, economic, social and cultural context rather than by biology.

**Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or other status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures.

**Gender identity:** Describes the gender in which an individual him/her self. For example: being a man or a woman. Gender identity can be affected by several other social structures, like: age, race, family relationships, ethnicity, caste, class, economic status, religious and political beliefs, geographic position, etc.

**Gender mainstreaming:** Is the (re) organization improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all levels and

at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

**Gender roles:**

1. Productive role

A concept related to production of goods and services in the labor market. It is related to work done by both women and men for pay in cash or in kind. This includes both market production and subsistence/home production with use of exchange value.

2. Reproduction role

Refers to new born human beings – an activity which can be done only by women (biologic reproduction) and the necessary care activities, necessary to survive and to provide human continuity (social reproduction). Also, it has to do with responsibilities and domestic tasks associated with the household and are usually done by women. In some societies men may have domestic tasks such as house building for one's own family.

Gender relationships: refer to power relations between women and men, which are expressed with a range of actions and behaviours, such as gender division of labour, gender roles, and also skills, attitudes, personality features, different models of behaviour, etc., attributed to women and men.

**Gender stereotypes:** include someone's personality qualities, which are believed to be typical to women and men differently. They also include professional and social roles, which are considered as principal for women and men.

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