

5.6 Curricula and teaching and learning materials

<p>INEE Minimum Standards</p>	<p>Domain 3: Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Standard 1 – Curricula</p> <p>Culturally, socially and linguistically relevant curricula are used to provide formal and non-formal education, appropriate to the particular context and needs of learners.</p>
<p>Primary users</p>	<p>National, sub-national</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EiE programme managers: government, civil society organizations; • EiE advisors, specialists, officers, analysts in planning and technical specialists in curricula; • EiE working group coordinators and subcommittees focused on curricula; • education personnel at sub-national level including teachers.
<p>Purpose of tool</p>	<p>To provide guidance and examples for making EiE curricula and teaching and learning materials more gender-responsive in their design, content, and usage.</p> <p>This tool is based on and adapted from INEE Minimum Standards on Teaching and Learning and INEE (2019) Guidance Note on Gender, Chapter 3.1. This tool provides specific examples and resources to supplement these more detailed documents.</p>

Introduction

Crises can provide opportunities to revise, strengthen, and 'build back better' curriculum content and resources during and after humanitarian emergencies and ongoing crises. Ministries of education have a critical role to play in leading curriculum reform processes and ensuring that learning opportunities promote more gender-responsive norms.

Key information

Curricula

Curriculum review can and should take place in acute emergencies and protracted crises if possible. Failure to revise potentially inflammatory and exclusionary curriculum content can often cause change to be postponed for many years.¹ Using opportunities for inclusive and participatory decision making during early recovery can lead to positive changes in curricula, bringing benefits beyond the learning spaces. Such benefits include supporting changes in gender equality social norms.

Curriculum content can be biased and 'gendered,' promoting particular gender roles, stereotypes, and inequalities between females and males. Curriculum content and teaching methods may need adaptation to ensure they are gender-responsive and inclusive. Teachers are highly likely to need support with this. For example, teachers may need to raise their awareness of these issues and reflect on their own biases. They may need guidance on how they can challenge gender stereotypes in discussions with learners and how to teach gender equality and inclusive values.

➔ 7: Accountability to affected populations



✂ 5.5: Teaching and learning self-assessment for teachers and project managers

✂ 5.4: Teacher recruitment and support

✂ 8.2: Institutional EiE gender capacity: personnel and gender capacity

1 Hodgkin, M. (2007) [Negotiating Change: Participatory Curriculum Design in Emergencies](#). Current Issues in Comparative Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. Vol. 9(2), pp.33-44.

Action points

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Wherever possible, national education authorities should lead the review, development, or adaptation of the formal curriculum. This should involve all relevant stakeholders, including affected populations, government, donor, and civil society partners with expertise and leadership in girls' and women's education and learning.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Gender focal points, gender unit representatives, or gender committees from ministries of education, education clusters, or Local Education Groups must participate in the review to ensure the curriculum is gender-responsive. Subject expert groups should review the main content areas of the curriculum. Ensure the concept of gender is not limited to girls and women.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If a displaced group does not speak the language used in school, agreement and materials will be needed to allow teaching in their mother tongue. Girls may have less access to the dominant language if they are in the home more than boys. The dominant language should be taught as a second language. The government may resist teaching the dominant language to discourage settlement. Collaboration and negotiation for good practice will be needed.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>In more protracted crises, prepare a programme of action for renewal of the curriculum framework, syllabi, and textbooks, through a consultative process involving all stakeholders, including gender focal points and representatives from women's teacher unions and associations.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>In post-conflict situations, develop objectives for behavioural skills, concepts, and values that support gender equality, peace, human rights, inclusion, and active citizenship.</p>

Curriculum reform: South Sudan

The curriculum was thoroughly revised in South Sudan in the context of ongoing protracted crises and periodic escalation of violent conflict. The first National Curriculum Framework (2015) includes content that is up-to-date, relevant, and balanced, that gives due emphasis to all subject areas, and is consistent with international norms and expectations. It covers early childhood development and 12 years of basic education, as well as alternative education. The curriculum framework integrates gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, and the framework makes clear that the curriculum applies equally to male and female learners.

Box 5.6.1: Gender equity as defined in the South Sudan National Curriculum Framework

The curriculum applies equally to male and female learners. There is no subject that applies to only one gender.

Schools need to ensure that all learners have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of gender. To this they need to consider:

- Giving equal support and encouragement to girls as well as boys.
- Ensuring that gender stereotypes are avoided and challenged.
- Setting equally high expectations for girls and boys.
- Making sure that the school is welcoming to both girls and boys.
- Ensuring that girls as well as boys are listened to with respect and given full opportunity to contribute to lessons.
- Encouraging girls to attend and supporting them to achieve.

Every encouragement needs to be given to girls to help them complete their schooling successfully.

Table 5.6.1: Questions to guide curriculum review

Questions to guide curriculum review	Examples
<p>What objectives does the curriculum have for promoting gender equality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: 'to know and understand gender equality'. (See below for suggestions of learning objectives for different levels of education.) • Objectives on gender equality can be set in 'carrier' subjects such as health education, sociology, religious studies, geography.
<p>What competences are set that are relevant to the achievement of gender equality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children valuing themselves and others; - playing positively together (early childhood education); - commitment to the principles of gender equality; - understanding the social construction of gender and gender inequality and its impacts (secondary level).
<p>How is learning on gender equality assessed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observations; - formal assessments against learning objectives.
<p>Is gender equality promoted through teaching and learning methods?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are trained and supported by national and local government and school leadership in a sustainable way to deliver gender-responsive pedagogy and messages in their teaching and learning. • The curriculum suggests ways in which teachers can engage boys and girls in particular subjects by making the content more relevant to the different interests and life experiences of boys and girls. For instance, are there suggestions on how to engage girls more in science subjects? • Learning activities do not perpetuate stereotypes about the types of activities in which girls or boys should engage. • The curriculum suggests activities that encourage girls and boys to work together, in contexts where this is culturally appropriate, and thus learn to respect each other. • Every whole-school policy or improvement plan (e.g., child safeguarding or behaviour management policies) is reviewed annually by school leadership and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to ensure every part of the policy/plan promotes gender equality.

<p>Is curriculum content and subject matter gender-biased? If so, how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of bias might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - history and science lessons feature only male historical figures or scientists; - key statistics taught in subjects such as geography or social studies are not sex-disaggregated; - specific roles portrayed in stories and illustrations are limited to only boys or girls.
<p>Do male and female learners have equal access to all subjects taught?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For instance, technical and vocational education and training offers males access to tailoring and females access to mechanical engineering. Both male and female learners have access to physical education and sports. • Teaching guides provide hints and tips to make teaching and learning practices more gender-transformative. • Work is done with PTAs, and with parents in the community who do not participate in formal structures, to address gender stereotypes and negative norms and to encourage acceptance of and value in gender-responsive curricula and teaching and learning materials.
<p>Do male and female learners have equal access in their home lives to the language(s) used for teaching?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys have more time for reading, while girls are expected to spend more time on household chores. • Boys who speak a non-dominant language spend more time in the community using the dominant language for trading and employment. Girls are expected to spend more time working at home, using the non-dominant language for communication.

Where a full curriculum review is not possible, for example in acute crises, smaller changes to curriculum content can have a positive impact on gender in EiE. For example:

- Develop sets of illustrative lesson plans that provide step-by-step guidance on how to deliver curricular topics in a gender-transformative manner. The plans can have a particular focus on subjects where gendered practices are more likely to occur, such as science and mathematics.
- Introduce life skills topics in classrooms, temporary learning spaces, girls and boys clubs, and other education spaces. This can help learners to be more sensitive to the root causes of inequality and conflict, and more aware of what they can do to protect themselves.
- Embed financial literacy and basic entrepreneurship into extracurricular and co-curricular, life skills, and non-formal programmes and activities. Include specific examples that portray young women in business. This can help girls and teachers to overcome gender bias towards mathematics and make the subject more relevant to all learners.

- Sexual and reproductive health and rights education, including menstrual health management, can teach learners about respect and equality in relationships. Gender equality and inclusion principles can be introduced.
- Make curriculum and teaching materials, developed for training teachers and volunteers, gender-responsive from the start. This might include curriculum for providing psychosocial support and social and emotional learning, and posters highlighting school codes of conduct and referral mechanisms.
- Even if the development of gender-responsive curricula and teaching materials is not feasible, gender-responsive teaching and protection practices are still possible. Train teachers to be aware of gender stereotypes in textbooks, for example. They can use existing materials to prompt open-ended questions about the content and to encourage critical thinking around gender issues.
- Teachers can reflect on their classroom practice and take corrective action to ensure that their methods are gender-responsive.
- Encourage male teachers to be positive role models for female empowerment and gender equality.
- Incorporate gender-responsive approaches into support and supervision processes to help teachers implement new practices.

✂ [5.3: Protection and well-being](#)

✂ [5.5: Teaching and learning self-assessment for teachers and project managers](#)



Essential resources

UNRWA (2017) [Towards Gender-sensitive Classrooms. A guide for teachers](#)

Teaching and learning materials

Gender discrimination and inequality is often reflected in textbooks and teaching and learning materials, and in the toys and recreational activities learners choose or are encouraged to play with.

Review teaching and learning materials by asking questions like:

- **How frequently are female and male characters portrayed?** For example, does the mathematics textbook only include images or names of boys?
- **How are the female and male characters portrayed?** For example, are leaders only shown as male?
- **How are roles and relationships between females and males portrayed?** For instance, is the mother always telling the children what to do? Is the father always disciplining the children?
- **How are careers portrayed?** Are certain professions always male or female?
- **What adjectives are used to describe female and male characters?** For example, are female characters ever referred to as strong? Or are male characters ever referred to as caring?
- **In what settings are men and women portrayed?** Are these private or public, is one setting valued more than another?



Essential resources

UNESCO Bangkok (2019) GENIA Toolkit [Tool 18 Mainstreaming Gender in Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Materials](#), pp.7-9. This tool provides a comprehensive checklist of teaching and learning gender review questions.

Plans for procuring and distributing teaching and learning materials should consider gender. For example, local, gender-responsive materials for use with standardized materials that consider gender can be procured as part of UNICEF's Early Childhood Development Kits and School in a Box Kits package.

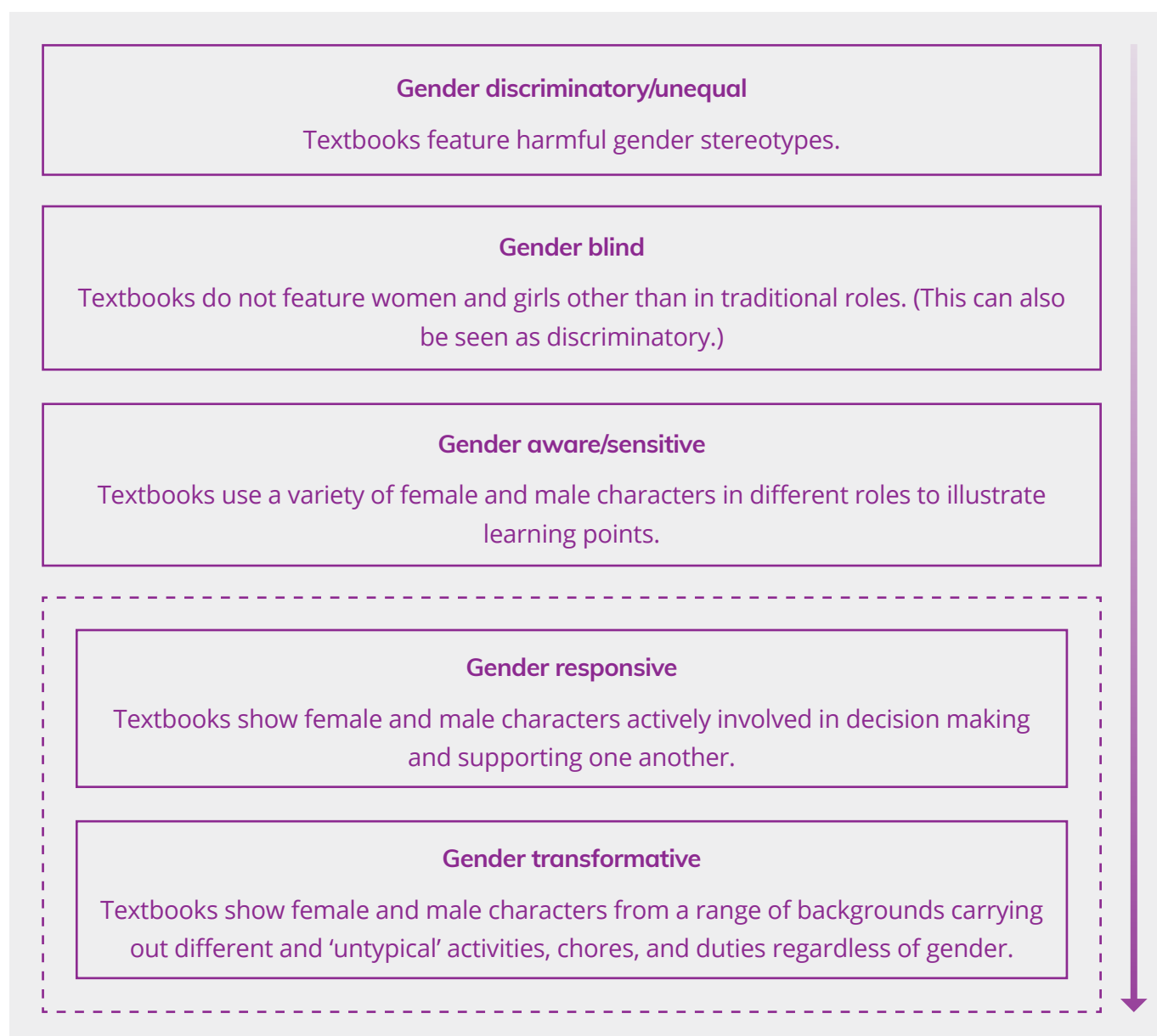
Box 5.6.2: Gender equitable play in early childhood education: tips from FAWE and VVOB²

Hints and tips

- Instead of using gender-specific play materials, choose those that are equally attractive to boys and girls. For example, you can make a doll that can be a boy or a girl. If you name the doll, choose a name that is used for boys and girls. If you dress it in clothes, use a colour and design that is not typical for either boys or girls. Another option is to make several dolls so that you provide variety: male and female dolls, different ages, different sets of clothes.
- The colour of play material can, in some contexts, be important. For example, boys may refuse to play with anything pink while girls may claim pink toys as 'theirs.' There is no need to avoid pink or blue – there are no wrong colours – but aim to use a range of colours. Question beliefs about colours. You can for example point out: 'Anybody can play with pink toys.'
- Always question learners when they say things like:
'Only boys can play with cars.'
'Dolls are for girls.'
- Ask them whether they are sure this is true. In our examples, you can ask other learners if they know girls who play with cars or boys who play with dolls. Alternatively, you can offer other views yourself.
'When I was a child, I loved playing with cars.'
'I think lots of the boys in this class will enjoy playing with dolls because they are caring and like being kind to others.'
- Model non-stereotypical behaviour yourself by exploring play materials that are typically for the opposite sex. Female teachers can enjoy playing football and male teacher have fun 'cooking' during pretend play.

² FAWE and VVOB (2019) [Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education A toolkit for teachers and school leaders](#). p.20.

Table 5.6.2: Gender continuum – examples for textbooks



For gender-responsive M&E of curricula and teaching and learning materials, see:

✕ [6.3: Gender-responsive EiE indicators](#)



Further reading

- For guidance on all aspects of teaching and learning, see:
 - INEE (2010) [Guidance Notes on Teaching and Learning](#)
 - UNESCO IIEP [Education for Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion](#).
- Cambridge Education and DFID (2017) [Evidence Brief 4: Quality and Learning](#).
- Care International (2018) [Engaging Young Men and Boys in Emergencies](#)
- FAWE and WVOB (2019) [Gender Responsive Pedagogy for Early Childhood Education](#)
- Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence (2018) [A Whole School Approach to Prevent School-Related Gender-Based Violence: Minimum standards and monitoring framework](#)
- IRC (2006) [Creating Healing Classrooms: tools for teachers and teacher educators](#)
- Save the Children UK (2009) [Steps Towards Learning: A guide to overcoming language barriers in children's education](#)
- UNESCO [SDG5 Resources for Educators – Gender Equality](#)
- UNESCO Bangkok (2019) [Gender in Education Network in Asia \(GENIA\) Toolkit: Promoting gender equality in education](#)
- UNESCO / IIEP (2010) [Guidebook for planning education in emergencies and reconstruction](#)
- UNESCO IIEP (n.d.) Education for Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion resource kit: [Curriculum](#)
- In Bangladesh, Translators Without Borders is helping education agencies to research and improve multilingual education and communication for Rohingya refugees. See the [progress reports and tools](#).