School to School

General ideas about coeducation

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Summarising idea

From birth, we take on sexist stereotypes and behavioural models based on what we see at home, at school, or in the media. The models are so internalised in us that not only do we carry them out, but we also unconsciously expect them from others. For example, girls are expected to be more docile and quiet than boys. These stereotypes limit children's way of thinking, feeling and acting, and impede the full development of their abilities.

School isn't neutral: it plays a fundamental role in transmitting values. To build a safer and more equal society, preconceived notions of what's to be expected from boys and girls must be eliminated. In order to do so, schools must detect the stereotypes assigned to masculinity and femininity and take necessary measures to eliminate them from our language and behaviour.

Coeducation means educating from a place of equality between people, regardless of their sex. Coeducation fosters real autonomy in children, granting them equal opportunities and understanding that differences are positive and enriching.

Examples that favour coeducation in the classroom

• **Studying and visualizing the role of women in history** raising awareness of their contributions and successes achieved as scientists, politicians, artists or athletes.

• **Celebrating at school important days that promote equality** and condemn gender-based violence.

• **Reflecting about the stereotypes assigned to each sex** based on legends and traditional tales or via analysis of professions. For example, can the woman be a knight that saves a prince from a monster? Likewise, what happens if the father is a stay-at-home-dad? Are there mothers who are engineers, mechanics and firefighters?

• **Avoiding images of women related only to the domestic environment.** Similarly, promoting the taking on of domestic or care-related responsibilities on the part of boys. For example, taking care of a school pet, watering a plant or tidying and cleaning the classroom.

• **Giving more opportunities for girls to speak** if it's detected that they participate in class little, or that it's more difficult for them to contribute than it is for boys.

• **Observing the space used by girls and boys at breaktime.** Is it the same? Foster athletic spaces shared by boys and girls at breaktime.

• **Highlighting the traditional roles assigned to boys and girls.** For example, presume that girls will prefer to skip rope and boys will want to play football.

• **Revising language usage** (in Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Basque...), alternating between the use of feminine and masculine words and by using generic terms:

- **Use of generic terms:** *alumnado, profesorado, persona solicitante.*

- **Double gender:** *las trabajadoras y los trabajadores, las niñas y los niños.*

- **Use the feminine gender with professions:** *científica, presidenta, jueza, dependienta, etc.*

Coeducation and the Sustainable Development Goals

A truly transformative society cannot exist without putting gender equality at the core of relationships. The Sustainable Development Goals place special importance on the fight against violence and regards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a key element in achieving sustainable development, specifically in SDO 5 (Gender equality), but also in others, such as SDOs 4 (Quality education), 10 (Reduced inequalities) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

Glossary

Sex
Corresponds to those physical and biological characteristics of people bornh as men and women. The most visible characteristic is genitalia: women have a vagina and men have a penis

Gender
A set of social, cultural, political, psychological, legal and economic characteristics constructed socio-culturally, and which society assigns people differently, as belonging to men and women.

Gender roles
Behaviour patterns associated with the gender perceived in individuals.

Gender stereotypes
An opinion or generalised prejudice about the attributes or characteristics that men and women possess or should possess, or about the social functions that both fulfil or should fulfil.

Cisgender
A person whose sex at birth exactly matches their sexual identity.

Objectification of the female body
Representation or treatment of a woman as a sexual object, ignoring her intellectual and personal qualities and abilities, reducing women to a mere instrument or consumer good. It's symbolic violence.

Gender gap
Different positions, resources and power between men and women. It's calculated by subtracting the female rate and the male rate.

Double workday
Expression that denounces the time that many women find themselves forced to spend on both housework and caring for people or family members as well as on paid work in the formal or informal market.

Manspreading
Action carried out by a man upon sitting in public with his legs wide open, taking up space for more than one person. A show of the tendency to enlarge masculine space and reduce feminine space.

Mansplaining
Term that comes from the combination of the words "man" and "explaining". When a man interrupts a woman to explain something in a condescending way, due to simply assuming that he has a better grasp of the subject at hand with no proof, discrediting the other speaker simply due to her gender. The term gained prominence thanks to the US writer Rebecca Solnit.

Inclusive language
All verbal or written expression that opts for neutral vocabulary, or makes mentions to both men and women clear, avoiding masculine generalisations for situations or activities in which both women and men are involved.

Salary gap

What a woman earns, on average, less than what a man earns, on average. It's reflected more in extra pay than in the base salary.

Gender identity

A subjective perception held by an individual with regard to their own identity, whether or not it coincides with their biological sexual traits.

Division of labour by sex

The way in which each society organises the distribution of work between men and women, according to the established gender roles that are considered appropriate for each sex. The social distribution of tasks is based on biological sex and is divided into productive and reproductive work; from this perspective men are assigned public space (productive work, paid) and women, private space (reproductive work, care). It's a social construction, internalised in such a way that it's considered that traditional roles actually correspond to nature and the abilities of men and women.

Patriarchy

Social organisation in which the man has power. At the moment, all power rests with men in our society: political, financial, economic, cultural, and social power. The man makes decisions and is the standard for everything: language is structured on the masculine generic, powerful positions and responsibilities in business and politics belong to men, the social construction of sex is focused on masculine sexual pleasure, families are structured around a male head of household that until recently was the one who provided the surname.

Feminism

A social movement that demands equal rights for women along with men. Feminism is currently a school of thought that brings together a set of movements and ideologies that are political, cultural and economic, with the fundamental objective of achieving gender equality and the transformation of relationships of power between men and women. In this sense, some of the victories of the feminist movements have been the access to education, the right to vote, the protection of their sexual and reproductive rights, along with many others related to civic and democratic values.

Mental workload

The labour of planning, organising and making decisions at home, generally taken on by women in order to achieve a specific result. It implies a heavy load of thoughts, things to remember, and outstanding tasks related to work, home, family, friends, which women carry and which can increase stress and anxiety.

Inspiring video

FOR TEACHERS:

Cómo educar en la igualdad de género. Marina Subirats, sociologist. Aprendemos juntos. June 2018.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gl6c1kLrJnU&ab_channel=AprendemosJuntos

"¿Muñecas para niñas y robots para niños?". BBC Mundo 2017. The experiment by the BBC that shows how gender stereotypes can affect the toys we choose.
https://vimeo.com/460856521

FOR STUDENTS:

Mujeres que hicieron historia. Draw My Life in Spanish. March 2019.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTVuVK8k0ig&ab_channel=DRAWMYLIFEenEspa%C3%B1ol

"Superlola". La señora Malilla, co-educational stories. Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer. February 2014.
Video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVAfqiVM9qw
Story and learning guide:
https://www.observatoriodelainfancia.es/ficherosoia/documentos/4213_d_SuperLola.pdf

WEBSITES:

"La coeducación y la gestión de la diversidad en las aulas. Un dosier dirigido al profesorado de primaria y secundaria". Educación sin Fronteras; Fil a l'agulla. November 2013.
http://www.educatolerancia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/maquetacion-castellano.pdf

"Coeducación". Junta de Andalucía, Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer. Consejería de Igualdad y Políticas Sociales.
http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/institutodelamujer/index.php/areas-tematicas/coeducacion

Club Peques Lectores, "20 cuentos coeducativos para la igualdad", March 2020.
http://www.clubpequeslectores.com/2016/03/cuentos-igualdad-coeducacion.html

Guía de comunicación inclusiva para construir un mundo más igualitario. Ajuntament de Barcelona.
https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/guia-comunicacio-inclusiva/es/

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