

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee

Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg |
Priorities for the Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE 28

Ymateb gan : Chwarae Teg

Response from : Chwarae Teg

Question 1 – Within the remit set out above: what do you consider to be the priorities or issues that the Children, Young People and Education Committee should consider during the Fifth Assembly?

1. Introduction

1.1 We're pleased to have the opportunity to feed into this consultation. As you're aware, gender inequality remains a significant issue in Wales and the UK, with a large number of barriers still preventing women from reaching their full potential.

1.2 Stereotypical ideas about men and women's roles in society continue to shape the career choices of boys and girls, and research shows that these ideas are formed at a very young age¹. Evidence suggests that education in particular can make a significant difference when tackling this segregation.

1.3 We're confident that schools in Wales can become world leading examples of gender inclusive learning environments, and that looking into this should be a priority of the CYPE committee. With reviews of the national curriculum and teacher training in Wales having recently taken place, there is a timely platform from which to build these learning environments.

1.4 We have a number of priority areas to recommend for the CYPE committee to explore and scrutinise in order to help achieve this aim:

- Curriculum reform

¹ Chwarae Teg & University of Derby (2013) "[Gendered Horizon's: boys' and girls' perceptions of job and career choices](#)"

- Teacher training reform
- School inspections
- Careers advice and work experience

2. Curriculum Reform

2.1 With the new curriculum currently being developed by pioneer schools around Wales, this is a crucial time to make sure it plays its role in challenging gender stereotypes. If we want to eradicate gender inequality, tackling gender stereotypes must be a central element.

2.2 At its core, ‘the new curriculum will have more emphasis on equipping young people for life’². In order to achieve this, it’s key that both boys and girls develop skills and interests in school that reflect the employment opportunities that will be available to them, as opposed to being influenced by tradition and stereotyping.

2.3 We believe it should be a priority of the CYPE committee to scrutinise the development of the curriculum, and explore the best ways of using it to challenge stereotypes. We feel there’s scope to hold an inquiry into how the new curriculum can be explicit in a vision to create gender inclusive learning environments and how this will help deliver the vision of ‘successful futures for all’.

2.4 We’ve outlined below some areas, among others, in the new curriculum where gender should be an explicit consideration:

2.4.1 The new curriculum places digital competence alongside literacy and numeracy as a cross curricular responsibility. Girls and women have traditionally been under represented in computer sciences and ICT. To make sure this benefits girls and boys equally, it’s important to make sure this is done alongside initiatives to encourage girls to engage more with ICT and digital technologies.

2.4.2 With a new focus on ‘assessment for learning’, content and assessment methods in the new curriculum should be mindful of diversity within pupils and different learning styles so as not to disadvantage certain groups. ‘Assessment experts tell us that

² <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?skip=1&lang=en>

assessment practices and evaluation of pupils' responses in tests need to take into account a range of contextual, and structural (gender, social class, ethnicity) factors'.³ The content of assignments, case studies etc within subjects should also not reproduce the stereotypes of traditional gender professions, which could have an adverse effect on the learner's future decision making.

3. Teacher Training

3.1 Integral to creating gender inclusive learning environments is ensuring that gender awareness training is embedded into initial teacher training, CPD and training for careers service professionals.

3.2 By doing this we can equip teachers and careers staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to challenge these stereotypes when they arise in the classroom. This is all the more important as teachers will be given more freedom to teach in ways they feel will have the best outcomes for their learners under the new curriculum.

3.3 The importance of addressing gender stereotypes through our education system was reflected in a number of Party manifestos ahead of the election. As well as cross party support for such measures, the recent Furlong review also lays the groundwork for reform of teacher training in Wales. This provides the perfect opportunity to introduce elements such as gender awareness training into the programme.

3.4 We believe it should be a priority of the CYPE committee to consider gender in their scrutiny of any changes to teacher training, explore the best ways for this to be incorporated into training programmes, and examine the impact this could have on future employment opportunities.

3.5 A successful project in this area was Chwarae Teg's Fair Foundations programme which worked with 55 primary schools in Wales to raise awareness of gender issues in early education. Gender awareness training for teachers was one element of this programme. Everyone that took part

³ School of Education, Roehampton University (2007) Breaking down the stereotypes: gender and achievement in schools.

said they felt better able to explain the difference between sex and gender, that they had a better understanding of how gender affects a child's personal and social development, and understood how to organise the learning environment to reduce gender stereotyping⁴.

4. Work experience

4.1 Stronger links need to be cultivated between schools and business to ensure that pupils are ready for the world of work. In turn this will provide girls with a broader range of opportunities through positive role models and meaningful work experience.

4.2 Positive role models and meaningful work experience are well cited methods of helping to broaden girls' horizons and encourage them to consider careers in less traditional sectors. It has been identified by the Women's Business Council and the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE)⁵ among many others.

4.3 The need for this was echoed by focus groups held recently by Chwarae Teg with women around Wales. Women business owners stressed that the work experience pupils undertake needs to better reflect the world of work, and provide them with the skills necessary to make the most of future opportunities.

4.4 Following an inquiry held by the Enterprise and Business committee in the last Assembly into Assisting Young People into work, the Government accepted recommendations to: make fundamental changes to work experience for young people, including reviewing best practice; doing more to ensure that more employers are involved; ensuring that sufficient resources are in place, and providing face to face careers advice for every young person that needs it⁶.

4.5 The CYPE should monitor and evaluate the Government's implementation of the recommendations above, ensuring that quality and availability of placements are maintained as best as possible, even when faced with

⁴ Chwarae Teg (2015) "Fair Foundations final evaluation report" (not currently public but available on request)

⁵ CaSE (2014) "[Improving Diversity in STEM](#)"

⁶ [Welsh Government \(2015\) Response to the Enterprise and Business Committee's Report on Assisting Young People into Work](#)

reduced budgets. There is further scope to hold an inquiry into how initiatives to encourage girls into non-traditional sectors can be incorporated into the provision, helping to address the current gendered nature of work placements.

5. School Inspections

5.1 School Inspections by Estyn have a key role to play in ensuring that schools are using gender neutral teaching practices, and challenging stereotypes through their teaching and careers advice. Inspections can also support a whole school approach to gender inclusivity.

5.2 As these changes are introduced through curriculum and teacher training reform, it's important that schools' performance and progress are fully monitored and evaluated. Making gender a more explicit consideration within Estyn inspections would be an effective way to encourage schools to do this and move towards creating gender inclusive environments.

5.3 Currently gender is part of the inspection guidance for both primary and secondary schools, but there is scope to make gender much more explicit in the inspection criteria. This would not require substantial change as many elements of the criteria require assessment by different groups but do not mention gender explicitly.

5.4 The CYPE committee should ensure that as gender awareness is embedded into our educational system, correct monitoring and evaluation of this is also introduced. This should be incorporated into any inquiry held on the creation of gender inclusive learning environments.

Question 2 – From the list of priorities or issues you have identified, what do you consider to be the key areas that should be considered during the next 12 months (please identify up to three areas or issues)? Please outline why these should be considered as key priorities.

6. From the priorities outlined above, there are two that we believe should be considered during the next 12 months:

6.1 Curriculum reform

Given the current development of the new curriculum, it should be a short term priority of the CYPE to make sure this is delivering equally for everyone, and challenging gender stereotyping.

6.2 Teacher Training

Again following the recent review of teacher training in Wales and the suggestions within the new curriculum, now is the time to embed gender awareness into a new programme as it is developed.

6.3 Significant changes are currently happening to the education system in Wales, To ensure that these changes have a lasting and positive impact for every child, it's crucial to make sure at this stage that they deliver equally for girls and boys, giving them equal opportunity to succeed.

6.4 Early intervention like this has the potential to address some of the inequalities and segregation that currently exist between men and women in the workplace, creating a fairer, more equal society in the long run.