

Educational Principle
Education
to Equality
between Women
and Men



Arguments for the Integral Educational Principle

The introduction of the integral educational principle “Education to equality between women and men” has to be understood as a temporary special measure in accordance with Article 4 of the “**United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women**” (Federal Law Gazette 443/1982) ratified by Austria in 1982.

Thus Austria undertook to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of the principle of equality, and to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women (Article 2). As regards the field of education, it is particularly **Article 5** (measures to raise sensibility with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and to promote a conduct of women and men based on the principle of partnership) and **Article 10** (measures to eliminate discrimination in the field of education) that are of importance.

The educational principle is also in conformity with two resolutions of the National Council of 1985 and 1988:

By **National Council Resolution of 8 May 1985** (624 of the annexes), the Federal Minister of Education, the Arts and Sports, was requested, “in order to support the work of teaching and education ... to see to it that ... education to partnership is increasingly incorporated in all school areas as a principle overlapping the individual subjects”.

By **National Council Resolution of 28 September 1988** (719 of the annexes) the Federal Government was requested “to see to it that the discrimination of girls in all social domains is eliminated by legal and political measures”.

The **Federal Law on Reports by the Federal Government Regarding the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women** also has to be mentioned in this connection. With it, the Federal Government professes the “gradual elimination of prevalent social and economic discrimination against women as well as their discrimination within the family” (Fed.Law Gaz. No. 837/1992).

As a member of the European Union, Austria is now also bound by EU-directives relating to the equal treatment of men and women such as for instance the **Council Directive of 9 February 1976** on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women with regard to their access to employment, vocational training and advancement as well as with regard to working conditions (76/207/EEC). Other EU-documents are also of significance for the field of education, e.g. **Council Resolution of 3 June 1985** on the promotion of equal opportunities for girls and boys in education ... (85/C 166/01) or **Council Recommendation of 13 December 1984** on the promotion of positive measures for women (84/635/EEC).

The educational principle “Education to equality between women and men” is to contribute to motivate all those who work in the field of education to increasingly consider gender equality matters in the contents of curricula, in class, in textbooks and other education materials used, and to intensify discussion of these topics in schools.

The educational principle is meant to educate to a conduct in the daily dealings with one’s fellow beings that is carried by the principle of partnership between women and men on the basis of equality. Besides, female and male pupils are to be led towards a readiness to reflect on causes and effects of traditional sex-specific discrimination, and, on the basis of their perceptions, to develop an attitude which will enable them to contribute to equality between women and men.

INTENTS CONNECTED WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLE

- ◆ Raising awareness of sex-specific socialization through family, school, the media and the labour world as well as of the impacts of this socialization on a person’s choice of education, occupation, life concepts, leisure time organization and on his or her own thinking and conduct (such as body language, communication, role concepts etc.) in a form adequate for the respective age.
- ◆ Perception of the causes and forms of the sex-specific division of labour both in the private domain and in the labour world, of connected vocational opportunities and working conditions as well as of the different representation of women and men in certain fields (such as politics, education, the arts, science, crafts, technology) in the past and in the present.
- ◆ Realization of how teaching contents, education materials and the behavior of all school partners may contribute to a handing down and rigidifying of role stereotypes in the domain ‘school’ (and in other domains of life).
- ◆ Reflection on one’s own conduct, on classroom interaction, on everyday dealings with one’s fellow beings, on one’s own sex-role concepts.
- ◆ Raising awareness of daily forms of violence and sexism at school, at the work place, in the media; pointing out possibilities for prevention and intervention as well as steps towards a conduct with one another based on partnership.
- ◆ Promotion of a readiness to eliminate sex-specific prejudices and discrimination, encouragement of self-confidence and socio-cooperative attitudes and/or setting off deficits in this respect, as well as promotion of a conduct of boys and girls based on the principle of partnership.



Implementation of the Integral Educational Principle

The implementation of the educational principle “Education to equality between women and men” should at best start from everyday experiences of pupils of both sexes. In doing so, special significance should be attached to cooperation and exchange of experience with teachers and parents, i.e. the persons vested with the right of education – possibly also with female and male experts on specific topics.

Another important precondition for the implementation of the educational principle is a cross-subject dealing with the topic as well as its connection with other integral educational principles (in particular with political education, sexual education, media education, preparation for the labour and occupational world).

In order to develop the relevant methodology and didactics for the implementation of the educational principle “education to equality between women and men”, the provincial school supervisors and the municipal education authority are requested to offer special in-service programs for teachers and to enable the establishment of working groups.


In order to facilitate the implementation of this decree in class and to provide ideas and suggestions for teachers, relevant information material can be requested from the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (Department for Gender Issues and Equality). They include:

- ◆ Education History
- ◆ Education Statistics
- ◆ Practical Aids for Gender-Specific Teaching at School
- ◆ Coeducation
- ◆ Violence at School
- ◆ Gender Sensitive vocational orientation
- ◆ Girls and Technology
- ◆ Biographies of Women

INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY **SCH.U.G.**

The objective of the information leaflet for school education and gender equality is to provide information about gender-specific topics in the field of education, about relevant studies, information materials, publications, events, new laws and regulations.

The information leaflet is published once a year by the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs and is sent to all headmasters’ offices, provincial education authorities, school supervisors as well as to initial and in-service teacher training institutions.



School is faced with teaching and education tasks (“educational principles”) that cannot be assigned to just one subject, but can be mastered only in cross-subject instruction. It is just as characteristic for these teaching and education tasks to require instruction to bear reference to the realities of life and to be action-oriented as it is to combine demands regarding the respective subject matter and educational tasks.

Beginning with the year 1995, the teaching principle “Education to Equality between Women and Men” has since then been integrated into the curricula in the Austrian education system.

The Official Policy Decree, Zl. 15.510/60-Präs.3/95 of 15 November 1995, provides information about the reasons for the introduction of the integral educational principle, the objectives and contents associated with it and its implementation. The relevant circular no. 77/1995 was directed to the provincial education authorities, to the teacher training colleges and technical and vocational teacher training colleges as well as to the in-service teacher training colleges.

The teaching principle “Education to Equality between Women and Men” can be seen as a measure according to the strategy of **Gender Mainstreaming** in the field of teaching and education requiring a comprehensive gender perspective.

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