

# Education Guide

## Gender and Citizenship.

### Pre-school



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Comissão para a Cidadania e a Igualdade de Género

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# Foreword

The *Education Guides*. Gender and Citizenship were undertaken by the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) and supported by the European Social Fund, within the NSFR (National Strategic Reference Framework) through the Human Potential Operating Programme, Axis 7 – Gender Equality. The conception and publication process was followed by the Ministry of Education (DGIDC - Directorate-General for Innovation and Curriculum Development) which has validated the Guides in accordance with the national curriculum guidelines.

Aimed at the formal education and, in particular, the cross-curricular area of Education and Citizenship, these Guides constitute a support tool for teachers in all curricula subjects within all levels and types of formal education. The main purpose of the *Education Guides. Gender and Citizenship* is to mainstream gender perspective in formal educational practices and organizational dynamics within educational establishments attempting to uproot gradually stereotypes based on gender. These stereotypes predefine what a boy is expected to do as well as what a girl is expected to do. Therefore, the Guides were designed to contribute to an effective education for citizenship for girls and boys ensuring that Education for Citizenship, which is a transverse axis of the curriculum in Portugal, incorporates the gender dimension. The aim is to make boys and girls genuinely and freely choose their academic, professional and life projects.

These Guides respond to international agreements assumed by Portugal, particularly, the Strategic Objectives of Beijing Action Platform (1995) regarding education<sup>1</sup> and the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention)<sup>2</sup> including the CEDAW Committee's Recommendations

given to Portugal in November 2008. At the national level the Guides respond to the measures addressing gender equality and education presented in the 3rd and 4th National Plans for Equality, Citizenship and Gender (2007-2010 and 2011-2013) in what concerns school and vocational guidance, school curriculum, school organization, fighting and preventing discrimination and violence, and professional training. In addition, these Guides respond the Recommendations for an Action Plan for Education and Training for Citizenship resulting from the Forum on Education for Citizenship (Lisbon, 2006-2008)<sup>3</sup>. In accordance with the new Organic Law of 2007, the Commission for Gender Equality (CIG) has achieved additional attributions in the area of education for citizenship.

The *Education Guides. Gender and Citizenship* are a sort of extension of the Commission's action line to which education has been always considered as of primary importance since the 70's. These Guides are rooted in several intervention projects carried out by the Commission in a planned way and following the logic of continuity, consolidation and assessment of the outcomes, identification of resistance, gaps and reactions to changes within educational system and professional practices of education. Work carried out by the Commission made possible to establish a National Network (Coeducation Network) of specialists, comprising researchers in the field of Gender, Education and Training, higher education professors, school teachers and NGO. Today this Network constitutes an indispensable national resource to provide scientific and pedagogical rigour, suitability and sustainability to any educational intervention in the field of gender equality. The most part of the authors of the Guides belong to this network.

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<sup>1</sup>Strategic Objective B.4. "To develop non-discriminatory education and training", whose measures were resumed in 2000 in *The Initiatives and Future Actions. Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st century* during an assessment of the Action Platform.

<sup>2</sup>In what regards the art. 5, and particularly the art. 10 concerning Education.

<sup>3</sup>In particular in what concerns Strategic Objectives 4, 5 and 6.

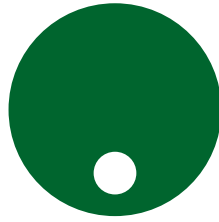
Complementary actions carried out during the production process of the Guides in 2008/09, including continuous teachers' training, validated by the Ministry of Education, and intervention projects in pilot-schools provided good opportunities to listen to the opinions of education professionals (pre-school educators, teachers and psychologists). The authors used and profited from these actions to pre-test the Guides' activities. Schools which participated in the process were those of Porto and Lisbon metropolitan area and the region of Santarém and Setúbal<sup>4</sup>.

One last note regarding the use of these Guides: As reiterated by the CEDAW Committee (UN), the Council of Europe and the European Union, it is not enough to produce good material about gender and education. Teachers training is necessary to insure that the Guides' implementation has a real impact on teachers and consequently on children and youth of both sexes not only during their school curriculum but throughout their lives, as persons and as citizens with equal rights in their communities.

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<sup>4</sup>Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools of Cerco, Fontainhas, Mora, Oliveira do Douro, Portela das Pa-deiras, Póvoa de Santarém, Rio Maior, Rio Tinto, Rossio ao Sul do Tejo, S. Domingos, Santarém, Setúbal, and Vila Franca de Xira.



# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction

*This publication is aimed at supporting the educational practices of early childhood educators when working with children on matters of gender and citizenship. Issues related to gender and citizenship are brought into the lives of early childhood educational institutions by the children and form part of their everyday lives. Nonetheless, they are not easy to address and are often “neglected”. Their complexity, the lack of support in terms of training provided for educators and the lack of bibliographic resources deprives the work which addresses this content of the attention it needs. Furthermore, in accordance with the curriculum guidelines established for pre-school education (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997), this content is a fundamental part of the “personal and social development” area. Because this area cuts across many disciplines, it does not promote these educational goals which are important at all levels of education but should predominate in the education of young children.*

This guide was created to help overcome these difficulties.

In the first part, we discuss the main concepts and grounds of the work on gender and citizenship issues in education and examine the specific nature of this work in early childhood education.

In the second part we present practical suggestions and consider the organisation of the educational environment and the work done with families. We provide examples of multidisciplinary projects and projects in various content areas, projects resulting from everyday situations or from intentional proposals made by educators.

All of the proposals presented are merely examples and starting points for new ideas. Indeed, if the specific nature of each context must always be considered, the attention paid to this specific nature becomes especially important when themes involving gender and citizenship are addressed, given the complexity of these themes and the way in which they are affected by the socio-cultural diversity that describes children's lives.

In accordance with the Portuguese legislation in force, “pre-school education” refers only to children aged three years and up, and the curriculum guidelines established by the Ministry of Education are intended only for this age group.

This publication is aimed primarily at children aged three to six, which is the age of entry into compulsory education. However, we have chosen to use the more inclusive term “early childhood education” because this dimension, present from birth, should be integrated carefully into the work of the educator in crèches (and therefore prior to entering pre-school education).

1.

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



## 1.1.

# Gender and citizenship

## Introduction

The diversity of characteristics of men and women is such a valuable wellspring of resources that the path of each person during his or her lifetime is continually open and constructed around multiple historical and contextual factors. These possibilities for development and learning, however, have been restricted throughout history, always based on the defence of archaic stereotypes that lead to inequality and discrimination which, by and large, penalise the female sex. A hasty glance at current statistics on the situation of Western women and men leads one to believe that equality between men and women has almost been achieved. However, the apparent quantitative equality in certain sectors disguises the real qualitative inequality: women already outnumber men in school, but mixed education and co-education are far from synonymous concepts; in the professional world wage disparities still exist in many sectors of activity; the so-called ‘glass ceiling’ persists in career development; recent female graduates have more difficulty finding a job than their male colleagues and they are affected more by unemployment. In addition, the discourse on a balance between family life and work continues to be linked primarily to women who, in reality—whether in terms of housework or caring for children and dependent family members—are generally responsible for the day-to-day life of the household and see their physical and psychological health endangered by this real overload. Lastly, although they now have a greater presence in public life, women continue to be the minority in positions where power matters and socio-economic status is fundamental. The current Portuguese Parity Law (Organic Law

3/2006 of 21 August 2006) could change this situation but even so, much will be required for them to have equal representation and for all their talents to be valued equally.

Although women are in fact the most legitimately visible face of the fight for equal rights and opportunities, it cannot be questioned that a productive approach to this problem should also include awareness of the impact that these inequalities have on the male sex. Facts which demonstrate this include: the highest rate of early school dropout by young men, above all in secondary education; the number and severity of motor accidents among young men in adolescence linked to social pressures for a hegemonic form of masculinity that also constrains them; the lack of autonomy when performing household chores, a limitation which lies behind the reasons alleged by men for marriage after a first divorce or death of a spouse, or even the decision by some healthy elderly men to go live in a nursing home when they end up alone. For these reasons, it is important to work towards creating a world in which men and women may live in equality, without restrictions to any of their aspirations and with guaranteed opportunities to exercise their many talents.

The school, in addition to being a place of understanding and preparation of young men and women for life, must be one of the main agents of change, thus contributing “along with other social interpreters, to the construction of reality”, in the words of Gisela Tarizzo and Diana Marchi (1999: 6). That is why it should play a role in eliminating the inequalities between

men and women which continue to prevail. This can be achieved through good practices of active, democratic citizenship which could be learned in school alongside formal curriculum content. In order to attain the goals that guide the real achievement of this active citizenship, the school must also take on the responsibility of becoming a privileged place of sharing, co-operation and education for participation. A democratic school is an organisation of freedom that can offer resistance against authoritarianism, oppression and all forms of discrimination based on sex, class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and culture. It is a school which overcomes prejudices and stereotypes. Active citizenship in an increasingly pluralistic society requires accepting the value of equal rights and responsibilities for all men and women; it requires making a genuine commitment to society in its diversity, critical respect for cultures, beliefs, religions, etc. It also requires being open to showing solidarity with difference by rejecting any type of exploitation such as racism or sexism, in other words, by rejecting discrimination in any form.

Organic Law 3/2006 of 21 August 2006, known as the Parity Law (Lei da Paridade), stipulates that the lists of candidates for the Portuguese Parliament, European Parliament and local councils are composed in such a way that a minimum representation of 33% is ensured for either sex.

Despite the many 'discriminations' that exist, in this guide we will focus on questions of equality between men and women and therefore on the eradication of sexism, a concept which covers all prejudices and forms of discrimination practised against an individual because of his or her sex. We are well aware that there are multiple discriminations which can intersect and produce unique forms of inequality. We do not forget, as advised by Conceição Nogueira (2009), these intersecting ways of experiencing multiple discriminations (for example, in the case of young women from disadvantaged classes or non-dominant ethnicities). They are present throughout this work, though not always named. Only for practical reasons will we focus primarily on the category of biological sex (men

and women), which tends to encourage a vision of the two sexes as opposites.

This division, asymmetrical from a symbolic point of view, according to Lígia Amâncio (1994), runs throughout society and leads to the appearance of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations that primarily affect women. It is therefore important to clarify concepts and outline arguments and different positions so that this phenomenon of sexism may be considered, reconsidered and, when interrelated with other categories of belonging which also lead to discrimination, analysed in its inherent complexity.

This chapter serves as the introduction to a guide aimed at promoting gender equality in different formal educational contexts, with special emphasis from pre-school years to third cycle of basic education<sup>1</sup>. It is divided into seven inter-related sections. In the first section, we attempt to clarify the terms of "sex" and "gender", followed by a discussion on the importance of gender as a social category starting from infancy. We then analyse, from a psychological perspective,

the formation and consolidation of gender identity in the first years of life. The following part addresses children's

awareness of gender stereotypes and the adoption of those stereotypes with age. The chapter ends with a discussion on the meaning of citizenship, the relationship between gender and citizenship and ways of providing true education about citizenship.

"However, correct application of the equality principle requires that what is equal be treated equally and what is different be treated differently. As long as situations of inequality are present from the outset, this initial disadvantage will need to be corrected through positive actions which seek to eliminate this disadvantage and create the conditions for true equal opportunities."

Eliane Vogel-Polsky, 1991: 5.

<sup>1</sup> "Translator's note: In Portugal, basic education (ensino básico) refers to the educational level which usually starts around the age of six and lasts for nine years. It has three sequential cycles, the first lasting for four years, the second for two years and the third for three years."

# 1.1.1.

## What do we mean when we talk about gender?

The sex of a child is without a doubt an important factor in his or her development. It is not by chance that one of the first questions asked of mothers and fathers shortly after a child is born is whether it is a girl or boy. The very name chosen for the baby allows one to predict its sex and the presence of a baby or child whose sex is unknown causes feelings of discomfort in those around him or her. Although in the first months of life children of both sexes have similar physical characteristics, the mother and father quickly begin to construct the baby's gender: they give the baby a name, dress him/her in different colours and create a distinctive physical space

bal interactions and the type of language used.

This characterisation (which we may call almost 'automatic') of men and women in personal and social terms based on the knowledge of which biological category they belong to has opened a pathway to simplistic reasoning which explains individual behaviours, to the belief in the stability of individual attributes and to the idea that it would be 'normal' for males to have certain psychological characteristics and females to have other, distinct characteristics. In addition to the fact that this dichotomous vision has no scientific basis – thus making it extremely worthwhile to

“Boys are given a greater variety of toys than girls, and there are important differences as well in the kinds of toys parents provide for boys and girls (Rheingold and Cook, 1975; Yarrow and others, 1972). Boys' toys, more than girls' toys, afford inventive possibilities (Rosenfeld, 1975), encourage manipulation, and provide more explicit feedback from the physical world. Girls' toys, in contrast, tend to encourage imitation, provide less feedback, are more often used in proximity to the caretaker, and provide less opportunity for variation and innovation. (...). Differential exposure to toys with dissimilar characteristics may predispose boys and girls toward different play and problem-solving experiences, experiences with considerable implication for later psychological development”.

Jeanne Block, 1984, pp. 131-132.

that makes it easy for an outside observer to guess whether the baby in question is male or female. In this way, we can say that sex, in addition to being a biological factor, is also a social and cultural factor, given that people tend to react differently towards a male or female child. These different reactions, which take not only concrete forms, such as the offer of toys, also take the form of expectations of performance, expressions of compliments and encouragement, the establishment of verbal and non-ver-

analyse and discuss the origin of possible differences between men and women – the discussion of this problem becomes even more important if we think of how difference has not been a synonym for diversity but rather for inequality, hierarchy and dissimilar ownership of power and social status. In this context, and bearing in mind the goals that shape this guide, we think the distinction between sex and gender seems extremely relevant and useful for a pedagogical intervention that counteracts prejudices and discriminations.

“A catalogue entitled A Festival of Toys, distributed by a hypermarket during the Christmas season (1999), shows the items organised into different chapters, of which we analysed two belonging to the following designations: girl (menina, 12 pages) and boy (rapaz, 14 pages).

Setting aside issues of linguistics (‘girl’ vs. ‘boy’), we present the following list of toys included in each of these two categories [...].

A toy is not a neutral object: it is a vehicle for simulating and learning about adult life, it directs behaviours and socio-cultural practices and defines places in the community and family. From this perspective, what information does the hypermarket catalogue convey?

Female		Male	
Toy	no. of times	Toy	no. of times
Baby doll	24	Motorised toy	3
Bath tub for babies	3	Outer-space action figures	2
Baby basket	5	Spaceship	1
Chair for babies	1	Robots	5
Car for babies	6	Movie and cartoon action figures	21
Dollhouse	2	Fighter plane	2
Doll’s cradle	1	Action figure cars	2
Adult doll, Barbie®-type	10	Jet ski	1
Dollhouse	5	Submarine	1
Cars for adult dolls	2	Aircraft carrier	1
Adult doll, Ken®-type	1	Race track	4
Playground for dolls	2	Garage	5
School and hospital ward	1	Toy car set	3
Doctor’s office	1	Jeep	1
Enchanted castle/palace	4	Helicopter	2
Hair and beauty set	3	Remote-controlled car	24
Kitchen/cooking equipment	5	Cranes	2
Supermarket/products	2	Electric train	2
Disney® dolls	2		
Bag for carrying props	1		
Desk	1		
Skates	2		

This allows us to detect two distinct profiles: one directs children towards maternity, household chores and body image; the other clearly points toward technology, including some elements of violence, or at least conflict.”

Isabel Margarida André, 1999: 98-99.

The term sex is used to distinguish individuals based on their membership in one of two biological categories: male, or female.

The term gender is used to describe inferences and meanings assigned to individuals based on the awareness of which sexual category they belong to. This involves the construction of social categories derived from anatomical and physiological differences.

In order to clarify the idea that the differences observed between the sexes are not justified simply by a person belonging to a biological category present at birth, but that they are largely the result of cultural constructions, Ann Oakley proposed in 1972 that a distinction be made between the terms 'sex' and 'gender', which became a point of reference for the social sciences. In her view, the sex with which we are born refers to the anatomical and physiological characteristics that legitimise the differentiation (in biological terms) between masculine and feminine. For its part, the gender that we develop involves psychological attributes and cultural acquisitions that women and men incorporate throughout their identity formation process and which tend to be associated with concepts of masculinity and femininity. Thus, the term sex belongs to the domain of biology, and the concept of gender is part of the domain of culture and refers to the construc-

tion of social signifiers. In addition to the genetic differences between the sexes, in most societies it is expected that men and women behave differently and assume distinct roles. Furthermore, in line with Oakley's thinking, it is worth bearing in mind that the concepts of femininity and masculinity differ according to specific cultural factors, which means they vary in time and space with different definitions from time period to time period and, in a single historical period, from region to region. They are also subject to re-adaptations in accordance with other variables, such as social class, age, ethnicity and religion.

The study of gender's importance on understanding the individual lives of women and men has sparked the interest of social scientists from a variety of theoretical backgrounds. Using different approaches and methodologies, they have brought extremely relevant arguments about this problem to the discussion, although these arguments cannot always be easily reconciled. This fact has made the debate even more beneficial and has undoubtedly contributed to an understanding of the socially constructed nature of gender that has legitimised an entire system of social relationships—of domination and subordination—that have been regulated throughout history by power imbalances at both the material and symbolic levels, as stated by historian Joan Scott (1986).

“What does it mean ‘to be a man’ from a social perspective?

The question is as complex as it is apparently naive. For the vast majority of people, for the level at which we in the social sciences call ‘common sense’, to be a man consists fundamentally of two things: to not be a woman, and to have a body that has male genital organs. The complexity lies precisely in the naivety (now definitely so) of associating a matter of personal and social identity with physical traits of the body. This is because ‘to be a man’ in everyday life, social interactions and ideological constructions is never reduced to sexual traits, but rather to a set of moral attributes of behaviour which are socially sanctioned and constantly reassessed, negotiated, and remembered. In short, in a constant process of construction.”

Miguel Vale de Almeida, 1995: 127-128.

In 1949, Simone de Beauvoir spoke of this legitimisation of the construction of social differences on the basis of sexual differences when she defended the idea that a female human being is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman by incorporating ways of being, roles, attitudes and discourses which are compatible with the dominant model of femininity in the

culture to which she belongs. The same could be said of learning about what it is to be a man by human beings who are born as males and tend to be socialised according to the distinctive characteristics of masculinity that are culturally dominant for their generation.

Research, primarily psychological and sociologi-

cal in nature, that is dedicated to discovering differences/similarities between men and women has not always led to concurrent conclusions. There are those who tend to emphasise above all else the differences between individuals – the so-called alpha bias – whilst others are inclined to show mainly similarities – the so-called perspective of beta bias<sup>2</sup>. In fact, despite several studies having concluded that there are no sexual differences in domains such as cognition<sup>3</sup>, others point to the existence of differences between men and women, mainly in terms of personality as an adult, when people are asked to describe themselves<sup>4</sup> according to certain characteristics. Certain features such as independence, competitiveness, aggression and dominance continue to be associated with men and grouped under the term masculine instrumentality; sensitivity, emotionality, kindness, empathy and the tendency to establish relationships continue to be associated with women under the term feminine expressiveness.

Whether emphasis is placed on possible differences between the sexes or value is assigned to the perspective maintaining they have much more similarities, it is important to stress that the features observed in women and men develop according to multiple influences associated with the socialisation process and begin soon after the moment when one discovers the child's sex, that is, even before birth.

### Studies conducted with pregnant women and

**described by Carole Beal (1994) concluded that there is a tendency for expectant mothers to perceive foetal movements differently according to their knowledge of the baby's sex. In the case of those expecting a boy, the women studied tended to describe foetal movements as 'more**

Around the mid-twentieth century, based on an analysis of the behaviour of adults (from Western culture) in families and small groups, particularly that of mothers and fathers, sociologists Talcott Parsons and Robert Bales (1955) maintained that the woman was more predisposed to establish social interactions and maintain family ties and harmony. She was, therefore, primarily expressive, leaving the man free to perform instrumental roles. The most typical behaviour of male individuals included, for example, the impetus to achieve goals and establish relationships between the family and the outside world. Such a distinction led to the appearance of two categories of personality traits which would come to be used in other areas to classify and distinguish men from women, thus making a direct (and dangerous) correspondence between biological distinction and psychological differences: masculine instrumentality and feminine expressiveness.

**vigorous', 'true earthquakes' and 'calm, but strong'. If the developing child was female, the mothers tended to describe them as having movements that were 'very mild', 'not too active' and 'lively, but not very energetic'.**

Furthermore, the differences observed within each group formed on the basis of sexual category (a group of males and a group of females) outnumber the differences between those same two groups.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the categories of 'woman' and 'man' cannot continue to be viewed as homogenous or capable of representing ideal, exclusive models (for one group or another) of conduct.

To reflect the diverse ways of being and behaving, the terms must also be formulated in the plural—women and men—without forgetting (if the goal is to understand individual peculiarities) their necessary intersection with other personal and social categories of analysis, some of

<sup>2</sup>For an understanding of this distinction, we recommend consulting the article by Rachel T. Hare-Mustin and Jeanne Marecek (1988).

<sup>3</sup>To this end, please see the reviews of specific studies conducted by Janet Hyde (1981) and by this author and her colleagues (1990).

<sup>4</sup>The study review published by Alain Feingold (1994) and the doctoral research of Cristina Vieira (2003; 2006) clearly portray these distinctions which can be observed between women and men as regards their individual self-descriptions.

<sup>5</sup>See the work of Hugh Lyntton and David Romney (1991).

which have been mentioned previously.

That is why, and following the thoughts of Conceição Nogueira (2001), we cannot continue to believe that static, bipolar and category-based differences are located within individuals and that the sexes are opposite. Continuing with this false dichotomy, by dividing characteristics and activities into male and female ones we are transposing into the understanding of the human being a system of homologous opposites, according to Miguel Vale de Almeida (1995), such as tall/short or over/under, making one believe that the difference could lie in the nature of the beings and not in a process of learning and differential appropriation of norms and values. This clarification is crucial because of its implications for education. It is therefore necessary to deconstruct all the deterministic logic used to prescribe attributes, competences and interests for women and men which result from the biological differentiation.

In the field of psychology and as part of an attempt to understand the behaviour of men and women throughout their lifetime, one of the most consensual visions of the gender concept has been influenced by the work of Janet Spence (1985; 1993), who considers it to be multidimensional in nature and explains it by referring to principles of human development. In other words, when we speak of gender we are referring to a set of components which include (to name but a few) gender identity, sexual orientation, gender roles, personality traits, personal competences and interests.

In the aforementioned author's view, the aspects contributing to the differentiation of each factor that makes up gender have idiosyncratic histories of development, always different from person to person, and influenced by many variables not necessarily related to gender. In addition, during the different life stages of each subject, the factors that make up gender can show varying degrees and types of association among each other. The behaviour exhibited (by men and women) results from the complex interaction of their diverse components of gender. For this reason, considerable variation can be observed—within a sex and between the male and female sex—in the arrangement of characteristics that correspond to the gender each person is capable of demonstrat-

ing in the different situations that he or she must face. It is also essential to point out, as noted by Susan Egan and David Perry (2001), that the consistency with which men and women show typical gender behaviours in different dimensions, e.g., gender roles, sexual orientation, may be only limited. However, this psychological view of gender is merely one of the many contributions that different fields of knowledge have brought to the debate. There are other feminist perspectives (more critical and apparently in opposition to those contributions) which defend its relativism and situational nature.

“My definition of gender has two parts and several subsets. They are interrelated but must be analytically distinct. The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationship based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. (...) As a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, gender involves four interrelated elements: first, culturally available symbols that evoke multiple (and often contradictory) representations – Eve and Mary as symbols of women, for example, in the Western Christian tradition (...). Second, normative concepts that set forth interpretations of the meanings of the symbols, that attempt to limit and contain their metaphoric possibilities. These concepts are expressed in religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines and typically take the form of a fixed binary opposition, categorically and unequivocally asserting the meaning of male and female, masculine and feminine. (...) The point of new historical investigation is to disrupt the notion of fixity, to discover the nature of the debate or repression that leads to the appearance of timeless permanence in binary gender representation. This kind of analysis must include a notion of politics as well as reference to social institutions and organizations – the third aspect of gender relationships. (...) The fourth aspect of gender is subjective identity. (...)

The first part of my definition of gender consists, then, of all four of these elements, and no one of them operates without the others. Yet they do not operate simultaneously, with one simply reflecting the others. (...) My point was to clarify and specify how one needs to think about the effect of gender in social and institutional relationships, because this thinking is often not done precisely or systematically. The theorizing of gender, however, is devel-

oped in my second proposition: gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power. It might be better to say, gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated.”

Joan Scott, 1986: 1067-1069.

Today, the most critical feminist perspective which is also closest to postmodern perspectives rejects the possibility of discourses that make universal and general statements on gender. This perspective challenges the natural quality of gender difference, maintaining that all significant social characteristics are actively created and not always biologically inherent, nor are they permanently socialised or structurally predetermined. According to this point of view, gender is not always something that society imposes on individuals. Women and men choose certain behavioural options, ignore others and, in doing so, they create their gender. We can say that to create gender is to behave in such a way that, regardless of the situation or actors, the behaviour of men and women is viewed, in each context, as appropriate to the expectations of gender that have been socially established for each sex. Thus, it is believed that gender is performative<sup>6</sup>.

The tendency of common-sense thinking is to standardise the description of the different components of a person’s gender based on the knowledge of only one of those components. Following studies conducted by Kay Deaux and Melissa Kite (1993), one popular belief observed was the idea that women with a homosexual orientation show characteristics typical of men, while men with a homosexual orientation tend to display so-called feminine behaviours. This does not correspond to the reality, nor does it represent the diversity of a person’s characteristics, regardless of their sexual category.

In the attempt to counter mistaken and discriminatory practices toward both sexes, the basic commitment of all feminists in different domains of knowledge has been to fight for the permanent eradication of gender inequality by trying to do away with biases that harm both women and men.

This understanding<sup>7</sup> of what gender is helps to reconcile empirical results that women and men are more similar than different in most traits and competences with the common idea that they seem to behave differently. Indeed, although women and men have the same competences, when faced with different circumstances, constraints and expectations they can be conditioned to make different decisions regarding their range of options. In this way, when acting in apparent conformity with what is expected of persons of their sex, they end up reaffirming the sexual category-based arrangements as being natural, fundamental and immutable, thereby legitimising the social order. It could then be imagined that a simple change in the way that men and women create gender could be the path to-

“Far from claiming that the structures of domination are ahistorical, I shall attempt to establish that they are a product of a constant effort (and therefore historical) of reproduction promoted by unique agents (...) and institutions, families, the church, the school and the state.”

Pierre Bourdieu, 1999: 30.

ward transformation. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that institutional restrictions, social hierarchy and social relationships of power limit the ability of individuals to act.

<sup>6</sup>For further discussion of this subject, see the works of Judith Butler (1990; 2002; 2006).

<sup>7</sup>According to Chris Beasley (1999) this is a vision influenced by what has been termed ‘social constructionism’. This appeared as an alternative response to positivist epistemology, which defends the existence of a fundamental truth in the explanation of all phenomena, one that can be discovered through reason. Contradicting this position, the following premises are defensible for social constructionists, according to Sara Davies and Mary Gergen (1997): 1) knowledge is socially constructed; 2) there is no single version of the truth; 3) meanings are constructed through discourse; 4) individuals are viewed as being capable of multiple expressions.



We can therefore say that it is the acknowledgement of gender resulting from a social construction which allows us to understand how discrimination continues, despite all the work by feminist social scientists who, by minimising or maximising differences, hoped to help eliminate gender inequalities in society in both public spaces and the private domain.

Nearly forty years since gender was identified as a category of analysis, we know there is still much to be achieved with respect to equality between men and women and the consequent, recurrent asymmetries of material and symbolic power in the various spheres of life. Founded on ideas without any scientific basis, the family and all other agents of socialisation continue to educate a boy or girl differently in order to perform the most varied roles throughout life, as if biological difference determined the personal qualities, opportunities for development and life paths of one or the other.

“What is fundamental in the differentiation between masculine and feminine is not the attributes that, apparently, distinguish them [...] but rather the fact that the content which defines masculinity is confused with other higher categories, such as that of the adult person, whilst feminine meanings define only a sexed body. It is in this process of social construction that masculine symbolism becomes a universal reference for the feminine, which remains marked by the sexual category.”

Lígia Amâncio, 2002: 59.

“The analytical category of gender became more present in Portugal in the 1990s, with aspects related to the social construction of the feminine (and the masculine) as its fulcrum. It has become an all-purpose term, namely in its emigration to and translation in institutional contexts and whose use — in that institutionalised translation — is often unjustified because it disguises the critique implied by that analytical category and can cause it to ‘depoliticise’ the struggle of women.”

Teresa Joaquim, 2004: 89.

It is therefore imperative that we speak of gender if we want to encourage active citizenship. In reality, gender must be viewed as one of the organising principles behind the construction of each female or male citizen’s individual path during the formation of her/his competences in order to make full use of one’s citizenship. In any society, the beliefs associated with gender tend to create, for both sexes, norms (often silent) which determine the formation of values and attitudes with a direct influence on assessments of the self and others about various expressions of behaviour and on the challenges people believe they are able to confront successfully.

“We have incorporated, in the form of unconscious designs of understanding and assessment, the historical structures of masculinity; we therefore risk revisiting, in order to consider male domination, ways of thinking which are themselves products of this domination.”

Pierre Bourdieu, 1999: 30.

Research on the different issues of gender — which was encouraged, as previously mentioned, by feminist thought and movements and produced with greater intensity from the late twentieth century — called attention to the cultural complexity of gender stereotypes, the overlapping nature of ideas associated with masculinity and femininity and the arbitrary actions resulting from the promotion and maintenance of a dichotomous, conformist reasoning founded on stereotypes. Portuguese studies carried out around that time also demonstrated, for example, the role of teaching resources used in formal teaching contexts in the maintenance of a gender ideology adopted by the collective and assumed to be unquestionable, even though it naturalises power structures and legitimises situations of inequality between men and women. At the risk of excluding from this cast many important research projects by Portuguese social scientists dedicated to studying gender issues and their connection to what happens in schools, we may cite, as examples, work on gender stereotypes in school textbooks officially adopted in basic education by Eugénio Brandão (1979), Ivone Leal (1979), Maria Isabel Barreno (1985), José Paulo Fonseca (1994), Fernanda Henriques and Teresa Joaquim (1995), Maria de Jesus Martelo (1999) and Anabela Cor-

reia and Maria Alda Ramos (2002); the research of Teresa Alvarez Nunes (2007) on the representations of citizenship associated with the masculine and feminine in history textbooks and educational software used in secondary education; the work of Luísa Saavedra (2005) on learning what it is to be a boy or a girl, as promoted by the curriculum and the school organisation; the research of Laura Fonseca (2001) on subjectivity in the education of girls; and the work of Teresa Pinto (2008) on the (historically constructed) association between vocational training and the male sex.

“Research has shown that mixed-sex education has not taken the form of educational practices conducive to transforming social relationships of gender in the process of socialisation and identity construction of boys and girls. The persistence of gender stereotypes can be observed, whether in teaching materials or interactions in the school environment, which sustain a social image that asymmetrically represents female and male identities and reproduces different expectations for girls and boys about the many dimensions of their present and future life.”

Teresa Pinto, 2007: 142.

With respect to what takes place at the pre-school level, one recent study by Fernanda Rocha (2009) showed that male and female childhood educators are also inclined to use gender stereotypes, whether in the organisation of teaching spaces or in their interpretations of parental behaviour. As regards the poor representation of young women in traditionally non-feminine professions, one study carried out by Luísa Saavedra (1997) predicts considerable medium-term difficulty in changing the gender stereotypes linked to those professions because this change seems to require an ideological modification of the representations associated with the social position of the female group with respect to the male group.

## 1.1.2.

### Gender as a social category

Gender is one of the first categories that children learn. This has a remarkable influence on how their social world is organised and the way in which they evaluate themselves and perceive people around them. In order to correspond to social norms and as an integral part of the socialisation process, children learn to behave themselves according to the dominant models of masculinity and femininity. This process is stimulated by a complex interaction between individual and contextual factors, including their relationship with their mother and father, friends, educators/teachers and other important people.

Some studies in the field of psychology have shown that children begin the gender development process (and the categorisation of self and others resulting from that) much sooner than they become aware of their sex, i.e., their genital organs<sup>8</sup>. Relating to this acquisition, Janet Spence (1985) maintains that the central core of gender identity begins the process of its consolidation, in children of both sexes, during a pre-verbal phase of development, that is, before children are able to express their thoughts in words. However, throughout the following years, there are multiple influences capable of affecting the subsequent development of gender's many components or its situational manifestations. Thus, in a given situation, a girl may exhibit a behaviour that is typically more common in boys, and vice versa.

Analysis of the sexual composition of children's groups formed on their own initiative in play situations provides data that highlight the importance of gender as a social category, especially in the first decade of life. When compared with other personal characteristics, such as ethnicity or race, sex emerges as one of the primary criteria in the child's choice of a potential playmate<sup>9</sup>. Thus, a four year-old boy of Caucasian descent will sooner play with a boy of African descent than with a Caucasian girl of the same age.

It is important to mention that during childhood, the distinction between sexes is related to the prevalence to an earlier process of social categorisation based on the apparent physical differences between the sexes.

Another distinction – established on the first, though less defined in conceptual terms—results from the application of the concepts of masculine and feminine. In fact, an individual can be more or less masculine, but cannot be more or less of a man, according to Eleanor Maccoby (1998). This second dichotomy is less important when understanding the social behaviour of the child because it invokes certain, more abstract, cognitive skills which he or she does not yet possess.

Scientific interest in understanding the phenomenon of a child's explicit preference for establishing interactions with others of the same sex has led to the development of numerous

<sup>8</sup>In this regard, please consult the work of Diana Poulin-Dubois and colleagues (1994), Teresa Alário Trigueiros and colleagues (1999) and Ana da Silva and colleagues (1999); the last two books are publications of the Commission for Equality and Women's Rights (Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres), now renamed Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (Comissão para a Cidadania e Igualdade de Género) as part of the *Cadernos Coeducação* (Notebooks on Co-education) series.

<sup>9</sup>See the studies described by Carole Beal (1994) which address this sexist behaviour of children.

studies<sup>10</sup>. Among other conclusions worthy of note, it was observed that children's predisposition for sexual segregation:

- a) is a group process, as it does not depend on the unique characteristics exhibited by each child or his or her degree of gender typing;**
- b) occurs in both sexes, but tends to appear earlier in girls;**
- c) tends to become more intense as the number of children of the same sex and age available to participate in games increases;**
- d) is greater in situations unstructured by adults, such as school cafeterias, than in more formal contexts, such as classrooms;**
- e) is not related to value judgments about the child holding more or less social power, his or her belonging to one sex or another, or the specific gender roles that he or she plays;**
- f) is a tendency that seems to begin around two years of age, continue during the pre-school phase, and intensify in the years after early childhood, between ages six and eleven;**
- g) is a phenomenon that manifests itself equally in studies conducted in different cultures.**

To explain the segregation of the sexes observed in early childhood, Carole Beal (1994) presents two main reasons. Firstly, she states that children prefer to play with other children of the same sex based on mutual similarities of interaction styles. Secondly, she speaks of the individual need to develop gender identity which leads children to seek contact, preferably with other children similar to themselves, i.e., others matching learned models of what it is to 'be a boy' or 'be a girl'. According to Beverly Fagot (1985), in order for the child to begin developing rules linked to gender, all that is required is that he or she learns to designate the sexual category to which he or she belongs. In the same vein, Eleanor Maccoby (1988) maintained that children choose to play with others of the same sex because the cognitive process of social categorisation which they undergo is so strong that their choice, at this level, should be viewed as an integral part of gender identity formation.

Although various research studies on the importance of gender in child development have never led to conclusions entirely in agreement with each other, they nevertheless seem to come to a consensus on two particular aspects. The manifestation of typical gender behaviours in the first years of life tends to precede (1) the development of a sophisticated understanding about gender, i.e., the culturally dominant models of masculinity and femininity<sup>11</sup> and (2) the consolidation of gender identity<sup>12</sup>. As we will see below, this latter aspect is something that extends through time, especially throughout the first seven years of life. The degree of complexity of explanations given by the children for their gender behaviours and the assessment they usually make of these behaviours in themselves and others are aspects directly dependent on the development of their intellectual abilities, which become increasingly complex with age in both sexes.

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Eleanor Maccoby (1998) for a broader vision of the results of these studies.

<sup>11</sup>See Diana Poulin-Dubois, Lisa A. Serbin and Alison Derbyshire (1994).

<sup>12</sup>See Valerie Edwards and Janet T. Spence (1987).

# 1.1.3.

## The formation of gender identity

Several theoretical positions developed in the twentieth century have attempted to clarify the process of gender identity formation. With the aim of providing a certain theoretical and conceptual order to these positions, Susan Freedman (1993) groups them into two separate classes. The first (which includes, for example, psychoanalytical and evolutionist ideas) brings together theories which attempt to explain the possible causes of the differences between the sexes. These are concerned with knowing why the sexes can present differences. The second category groups together theories (such as social learning, cognitive development and social interaction) which analyse the processes leading to the observation of differences between men and women. In this case, the concern of

ferent perspectives and the use of different analytical methods for studying gender – and its implications for the organisation of the personal and social lives of women and men – make it difficult to present explanatory principles and models that bring unanimity among specialists and reflect the richness and complexity of the approaches.

Because the Education Guides. Gender and Citizenship<sup>13</sup> are intended primarily for children from three years of age until middle adolescence, in this part of the chapter we have decided to present a psychological view of gender identity formation which sees it as intrinsically linked to human development in other domains (cognitive, emotional and social). This choice does not

mean, however, that other more critical and reflective approaches – such as those influenced by social constructionism or radical feminist thought, whose analysis tends to focus on understanding the many determinants of

male and female adult behaviour – should be viewed as less interesting or having less heuristic value. They will not be discussed here only for practical reasons.

Using studies conducted with children and adolescents as a starting point, Susan Egan and David Perry (2001) presented one possible definition of gender identity, using four theoretical propositions. In their view, gender identity covers the following:

- (a) Individual awareness of the subject's membership in one of the gender categories;
- (b) The feeling of compatibility with one of the groups formed on the basis of the previous category [...];
- (c) Feeling pressured to conform to the gender ideology;
- (d) Development of attitudes toward gender groups” (p. 451).

the respective authors centres on how the sexes tend to exhibit different forms of behaviours.

As mentioned previously, the coexistence of dif-

<sup>14</sup>A set of four guides was produced for pre-school education and for the three cycles of basic education respectively.

In psychology, the cognitive development perspective – in which the pioneering thought of Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) deserves special mention—recognises that the child has an active role in the construction of his/her identity and acknowledges the impossibility of dissociating this process from the development of intellectual abilities. Considering the life cycle, and stressing the importance of social interaction between children of both sexes as noted by Kay Bussey and Albert Bandura (1999), we can say that the first stage in the development of the various dimensions of gender involves the formation of gender identity. When observing the adult world, external differences (clothing, hairstyle, size and shape of the body) are much more apparent to children than the differences of genital organs. Based on the confirmation of these distinctions between adults, children include themselves in one of the groups, i.e., they classify themselves as being of the male or female sex, and inevitably begin to make assessments about reality.

For Kohlberg, the child's ideas about the roles of men and women are determinants in the exhibition of behaviours that correspond to the dominant models of masculinity and femininity. The motivation to learn these same roles comes from his or her individual need to identify with one of the groups. He therefore believes that during the gender identity formation process, the child is able to understand gender, instead of simply imitating the behaviour of those who have the same sex as the child. Thus, children's gradual comprehension of the nature of gender is intrinsically linked to their cognitive development<sup>14</sup>, that is, to their overall degree of comprehension of the world in which they live and their role in it.

In this context, the child is capable of correctly designating his or her gender at around two or three years of age. However, gender identity formation, which extends from approximately two to seven years of age (as noted earlier) is a process that follows the transition to the period

of concrete operations<sup>15</sup>, during which time the child is able to begin understanding certain social categories, such as gender.

The ideas of Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) on the role of motivation in gender development have found consensus in the social science community. In his opinion, in order for children to feel motivated to value others of the same sex and begin the process of testing/imitating behaviours, they must be assured of the stability of their gender. In other words, they must be aware that although some external characteristics or the behaviour itself displayed in certain situations can be modified, the sex and gender identity of the individual are invariable.

Because children cannot achieve object permanence (a Piagetian notion according to which there is constancy in the physical characteristics of objects) before a certain age, we cannot predict that at just three years of age the child is able, for example, to develop a permanent gender identity.

We shall demonstrate this statement by referring to the work by Jean Piaget (1932) on the understanding of conservation: The explanation given for the inability of children to believe, up to a certain age, that the number of objects in a tower remains the same even though the physical arrangement of those objects may change can be applied to the way children understand gender. Whilst they do not achieve that which Kohlberg (1966) called gender stability, children tend to think that, just as they tend to change hairstyles or clothing, people can change sex or can belong to one gender group or another. According to this line of children's thinking, as noted by Margaret Matlin (1996), "a woman can become a man if she cuts her hair very short and a man can become a woman if he decides to carry a handbag" (p. 99).

As children continue to understand, from about two to seven years of age, the immutability of being male or female, i.e., as they consolidate

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<sup>14</sup>See the works of Jeanne Brooks-Gunn and Wendy Matthews (1979).

<sup>15</sup>Based on the prominence of gender in the organisation of individual life, Diane Ruble and Carole Martin (1998) maintain that the 'preservation of the sex category' can be considered one of the child's first expressions of operational thinking.

gender stability, children feel motivated to seek information about behaviour considered appropriate for their sex by observing others in the family, at school and in the media, which operate as models. Therefore, children imitate models belonging to the same sex and prefer to exhibit typical gender behaviours because those same efforts are considered the most appropriate (and most approved by others) and match their self-concept as a boy or girl and their gender identity that is being formed. Following Kohlberg's line of thought, children's desire to act according to the appropriate norms for their sex precedes their own development, based on their understanding of reality. They move towards the adoption of typical gender behaviours, motivated by their need for internal coherence and development of a robust self-esteem.

The entire process of cognitive categorisation that at first seems essential for the gradual consolidation of gender identity in the child's first years of life nevertheless leads to appropriating rigid behavioural norms or stereotypes which may have a perverse influence on the authenticity of the individual development paths of boys and girls. It is therefore fundamental to develop an appropriate, collaborative educational intervention – among the many sources of influence, such as school, family and the media – that correct the stereotyped messages about gender which children learn and integrate in their cognitive networks of information.

## 1.1.4.

## Gender Stereotypes

Stereotypes are well-organised groups of beliefs about the characteristics of people who belong to a particular group. Whilst the tendency may be to view stereotypes as the negative results of the perceptions of others, given the ease with which they can lead to discriminatory opinions, they can also play a positive role in the way in which the individual deals with the multiple stimuli facing him or her in daily life. We may therefore say that stereotypes take on an adaptive function for human beings insofar as that they allow the behavioural complexity to be organised into easily manageable operational categories. However, it is also true that stereotypes can be extremely harmful due to the risk of forming a distorted and reductionist reading of reality. This is because they easily legitimize categorisations that can be broadly applied without reflexion and can be more negative than positive.

In fact, based on stereotypes, all members of a given social group tend to be assessed in the same way, as if individuals belonged to categories which are internally homogenous. Obviously, in this judgment there is a clear omission of the variability that can be observed within each specific group. These generalised beliefs do not have much predictive power and we run the risk of making inappropriate judgments about a particular person on the basis of the stereotypes known to characterise the group to which he or she belongs. Add to this the fact that they often seem so solidified in a person's mental framework that his or her propensity to change is limited, even in light of information to the contrary, according to John Santrock (1998).

In the specific case of gender, its associated stereotypes are related to beliefs widely shared by society on what it means to be a man or a woman. More than any other kind of stereotypes, those concerning gender have, according to Susan Basow (1992), a strong normative power in that they adopt not only a descriptive role in the supposed characteristics of men and women, but also embody a prescriptive, though not uniform, view of behaviours (gender roles) which both sexes must exhibit because they transmit norms of conduct, albeit implicitly.<sup>16</sup> Whilst gender stereotypes can show some similarity to the characteristics and behaviours shown by men and women in day-to-day life, the over-generalisation inherent to them and their almost unquestionable nature mask, according to Janet Spence (1999), “the considerable overlap between the distributions of male and female groups” (p. 281).

However, if the stereotypes establish what is expected of each sex, they also contain in themselves an assessment of that which men and women must not display, whether in physical or psychological terms. In general, individuals who distance themselves from the dominant views of masculinity (e.g., the ‘whining’ man) and femininity (e.g., the ‘aggressive’ woman) tend to be the target of negative judgments by others. In this context, it should be noted that men tend to suffer more social punishment (by the family, partners, etc.) if they deviate from the behavioural norms considered appropriate to their sex. Because of this increased social coercion felt by males, authors such as Susan Basow (1992) maintain that the persistent preoccupa-

<sup>16</sup>For a broader understanding about the power of gender stereotypes in male and female behaviour, see the work of Madeline Heilman (2001) and Conceição Nogueira and Luísa Saavedra (2007).



tion by some men to ‘provide evidence’ of their masculinity should come as no surprise.

Referring specifically to the exclusionary character of the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ — which aims at representing the dominant model of what it means to be a man in our society — constantly referred to in music and popular sayings (or even in current television series designed for children and adolescents), Miguel Vale de Almeida warns that most men are left out: “In the case of men, the crucial division lies between hegemonic masculinity and several subordinate masculinities [...]. It follows that masculinities are constructed not only by power relations but also by their interrelationship with the division of labour and patterns of emotional connection. Thus, we may empirically determine that the culturally exalted form of masculinity only corresponds to the characteristics of a small number of men.”

Miguel Vale de Almeida, 1995:150.

Studies conducted on gender stereotypes have called attention to their non-unitary character and their constant adaptation to social changes. Similarly, historical research has shown that stereotypes have varied over time and, in each period, from one region to another. This need for adaptation has led to the appearance and refinement (or even reformulation) of particular subtypes of gender stereotypes of men as well as women. Nevertheless, there seems to be a consensus regarding the idea that the distinction between stereotype subtypes for women is clearer and has more consensus among individuals than the subtypes for men. Despite the relative stability with which more general differentiating classifications linked to the categories of man and woman appear (and are used) in modern societies, special studies dedicated to examining possible classification subtypes have shown the importance of other factors in their appearance, such as ethnicity, age, religion, socio-cultural level or even sexual orientation.

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<sup>17</sup>To better understand this idea, please see the work of Susan Golombock and Robyn Fivush (1994).

<sup>18</sup>See the book by António Neto and colleagues (1999) about gender stereotypes, published as part of the *Cadernos Coeducação* series.

<sup>19</sup>See, for example, the works of Michelle Perrot (1998), Joan W. Scott (1994), Maria Victoria Lopez-Cordon Cortezo (2006) and Annette F. Timm and Joshua A. Sanborn (2007).

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In an attempt to show that gender stereotypes are complex and thus tend to have more subdivisions than other stereotypes, Susan Basow (1986) wrote that it was possible to identify in them at least four subtypes which are not necessarily correlated with each other:

- **Stereotypes on personality traits or attributes, e.g., independence versus docility;**
- **Stereotypes on roles played, e.g., ‘head of the household’ versus ‘caregiver’ to her children;**
- **Stereotypes on professional activities which are pursued, e.g., lorry driver versus receptionist;**
- **Stereotypes on physical characteristics, e.g., broad shoulders and a muscular body versus curvy and proportionate body shapes.**

Following the ideas of Kay Deaux and Laurie Lewis (1984), from among these various gender stereotype subtypes, those relating to physical characteristics seem to exercise more power over behaviour, to the extent that they intensify

the actions of gender-associated beliefs<sup>21</sup>. At this level, the problem with mistaken and discriminatory ideas becomes even more urgent if we consider that physical appearance – the body – is the most difficult aspect to change from among all gender-related aspects<sup>22</sup>.

In addition to the stereotypes based on bodily appearance, others based on personality traits, roles performed and the professional occupations preferred by each sex also tend to persist in the images drawn of men and women. Although it has undergone changes according to socio-cultural contexts, the aforementioned dichotomy – ‘feminine expressiveness’ versus ‘masculine instrumentality’ – seems to still be used to maintain a certain social order and distinguish individuals born of the female sex from those born of the male sex.

A very broad summary of the main conclusions of the studies conducted primarily during the late twentieth century in Portugal<sup>23</sup> and transnationally<sup>24</sup> highlights the considerable convergence of results on the ways in which men and women are typically described by people of different ages in distinct periods of time. In general, men tend to be viewed as stronger and more active, competitive and aggressive than women, with a greater need for achievement, domination and autonomy. Women, in turn, are characterised as needing, above all else, to establish affective links with other people, being more affectionate and more able to provide care, having lower self-esteem and being more inclined to provide assistance in difficult situations.

<sup>20</sup>These studies include those of Susan Basow (1992), Kay Deaux and Melissa Kite (1993) and Kay Deaux (1995).

<sup>21</sup>In a study conducted by Kay Deaux and Laurie Lewis (1984) with children and teenagers, it was found that persons described as having a deeper voice and broader shoulders were perceived as having more masculine characteristics and better able to play typical male roles than persons known to have a higher voice or a thinner figure. Several subsequent studies (see the review by Kay Deaux and Marianne LaFrance, published in 1998, to learn about these studies) have offered empirical backing to this conviction that, when evaluating individuals, physical characteristics seem to take precedence over all other information about gender. For example, it was observed that, primarily among men, height was positively correlated with assessments by other subjects about their professional status or even their personal suitability as members of the male sex.

<sup>22</sup>To this end, please see the chapter of this guide entitled “Body, gender, movement and education”.

<sup>23</sup>See, for example, the book by Lúcia Amâncio (1994) or the article by Félix Neto (1990).

<sup>24</sup>In this regard, the pioneering European study by Anne-Marie Roceblave-Spenlé (1964) and the transnational research of John Williams and Deborah Best (1990) are worthy of note.

“If the only information available about a man is that he has a physical constitution something delicate and fragile, people’s tendency will be to predict that this person probably has stereotypically feminine traits, probably has a profession more common in women and, perhaps, is gay.”

Susan Basow, 1986: 6.

“Social gender roles have, on a normative plane, the same asymmetry promoted by stereotypes of masculinity and femininity with respect to content. While the features defined as masculine represent competences, associated directly with the sphere of work and with power over others and situations, the content that characterises the feminine correspond to feelings and are restricted to the sphere of social and affective relationships. This leads to a distinction made when defining the areas of intervention for both sexes: the masculine, defined according to the many competences and roles, includes as its own diverse areas of intervention which cover the social complexity and multiplicity of the public space, whilst the feminine, centred around specific roles, is shaped within the restrictive environment of the private and family sphere.”

Teresa Alvarez Nunes, 2007: 43-44.

In a study conducted in Portugal by Lígia Amâncio (1994), it was also found that masculine stereotypes comprised a higher number of characteristics than feminine stereotypes and demonstrated more positive aspects than the latter. Furthermore, the traits in women assessed as positive mainly involved their relationships with others, such as being affectionate, tender, or sensitive, characteristics which typically form part of a stereotyped view of femininity. In men, aspects such as being daring, independent or enterprising were valued more, which describe the stereotyped view of masculinity. In either case, the concept of sexism once again becomes important in understanding participants’ answers because, according to Peter Glick and Susan Fiske (1996), what is at stake is a greater hostility toward persons of the female sex.

Although certain traditional ideas about attributes and roles more suitable to females have undergone relative changes with the passage of time, other beliefs have taken their place, a fact which allows us to speak of old and new forms of sexism. “According to Janet Swim et al. (1995), such forms of sexism can be conceptually distinguished in the following way:

- Old sexism is characterised by the defence of traditional gender roles, differential treatment of men and women and by the adoption of stereotypes that represent the belief in women’s inferior abilities as compared with men.
- Modern sexism involves the rejection of traditional stereotypes, which devalue women, and the belief that sex-based discrimination is no longer a problem. Furthermore, persons who demonstrate this kind of attitude tend to think that the media and the governments themselves typically devote more attention to women than what is deserved and tend to feel a certain aversion toward women who exercise some kind of political activism in defence of their rights.”

Cristina Vieira, 2003: 167.

The variation in knowledge of stereotypes with age has revealed a positive correlation between both variables, primarily during the first two decades of life, owing to the growing cognitive complexity of children and adolescents. The strength of this association tends to be the same in boys and girls, although children between the ages of eight and eleven generally show awareness of a greater number of stereotypes about women than men, as shown by the research of Félix Neto (1997). However, here we must make the distinction between the knowledge of stereotypes and the cognitive flexibility with which such beliefs are applied, whether in descriptions that boys and girls make about themselves, whether in the manner that they assess other people. In this respect, studies have shown that the mere knowledge of stereotypes does not necessarily motivate children to exhibit behaviour that is consistent with them, as Kay Bussey and Albert Bandura (1999) have concluded.

Following the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (1966)

cited in the previous paragraph, a U-shaped relationship has been drawn between the rigidity with which stereotypes are applied and the age of the children studied. This conclusion was reinforced later with the results of a meta-analysis<sup>25</sup> on the subject carried out by Margaret Signorella et al. (1993). Very young children are relatively flexible in the use of stereotypes because they understand gender as a very broad category, which can include various activities and roles correlated with one another, as Aletha Huston (1983) maintains. However, from age three to around seven or eight, with the progressive acquisition of gender stability, there is an increase in stereotyped perceptions about the characteristics of men and women. In this age range, not only do children know the culturally applied stereotypes to men and women, they also believe in the truthfulness of such ideas<sup>26</sup>. Even so, around this time they are already capable of understanding that the activities and behaviours prescribed by gender stereotypes are not crucial for an individual to be considered male or female. In other words, a woman can pursue an occupation that is more common to men, she may not know how to cook, or may

seven years of age. It therefore seems that until children begin attending school, the rigidity with which stereotypes are adopted tends to increase, with the period from five to eight years of age considered the 'most sexist' phase in the lifecycle. This tendency, however, drops in subsequent years. In fact, during the intermediate phase of childhood – around eight to eleven years of age – children demonstrate an increasing propensity to view with flexibility the diversity of roles, activities and personality traits that each sex is capable of showing in different situations.

The flexibility with which gender-related stereotyped knowledge is used in adolescence has led researchers to find results that do not always agree. On the one hand, certain researchers<sup>27</sup> have already shown that because of social pressures to gradually assume responsibilities as members of one sex or another, older adolescents seem to be more sensitive to stereotyped beliefs about men and women. Therefore, a relative loss of cognitive flexibility at this level takes place in the final stage of adolescence. Meanwhile, other studies have concluded that decreased rigidity in the use of stereotypes

According to some studies described by Diane Ruble and Carol Martin (1998), between the ages of three and six, children tend to make more stereotyped descriptions of themselves and others than adults. They believe, however, that the stereotypes apply more to boys and girls of their age than to older people. Although boys and girls first learn the stereotypes associated with individuals of the same sex as them, around age eight or nine most of them are already able to understand the expectations of the culture in which they live with regard to the roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women, as Eleanor Maccoby concluded (1998).

even enjoy auto racing, but that does not mean she will feel like less of a woman.

For Eleanor Maccoby (1998), although a child may continue learning some stereotypes or may tend to refine certain aspects of those that he or she already knows, the peak of the stereotype process tends to be reached in both sexes around

continues even during the years corresponding to secondary education. Authors of one study – which used different ways to measure the flexibility with which children and teenagers of both sexes aged eight to eighteen described themselves and assessed others according to the dominant models of masculinity and femininity – concluded that a positive relation with

<sup>25</sup>As one can see in the work of Cristina Vieira (2004), a meta-analysis is a quantitative procedure of reviewing original studies dedicated to examining the same hypothesis. This process includes the use of statistical indicators, such as effect size (in this case, the size of the differences between the sexes), to present the conclusions.

<sup>26</sup>See the work of Susan Golombok and Robyn Fivush (1994) for a broader understanding of the way in which children learn and use gender stereotypes.

<sup>27</sup>See Diane Ruble and Carol Martin (1998).

<sup>28</sup>To this end, please see the work of Phyllis Katz and Keith Ksanskak (1994).

age was evident in both cases<sup>28</sup>. Thus, from the intermediate years of childhood until the end of secondary education, there seems to be a growing acceptance of the possibility that they, or others, may perform activities which are atypical for their sex.

The flexibility with which stereotypes are used, however, seems to vary according to sex. Several studies described by Aletha Huston (1983) involving samples of children all concluded that when differences between the sexes were found, boys showed more stereotyped views of individual characteristics based on gender than girls. In the meta-analysis cited above, Margaret Signorella et al. (1993) also found that as they become more aware of gender stereotypes, children (especially girls) believe less and less that those stereotypes should exist. In the extensive narrative review conducted on studies published after the work of Aletha Huston (1983), researchers Diane Ruble and Carol Martin (1998) once again confirmed the greater tendency among boys to be less flexible than girls when accepting and using stereotypes.

The tendency of individuals to choose to use stereotypes in personal and social functioning seems to represent the use of a certain naive view of the way in which the world is organised, based above all on a set of implicit theories about behaviour that is related not only to the sexual category of belonging, but also to social class and ethnicity, to name just a few of the factors that tend to lead to simplistic reasoning of this type. The problem resides in the fact that these (clouded) lenses lead to a limited view of the world and have negative consequences for the person (whether male or female) on both an individual and collective level when experiencing full citizenship and building a truly democratic and pluralistic society where individuality and diversity can coexist.

## 1.1.5.

# What do we mean when we talk about citizenship?

The term 'citizenship' as applied to schooling and education has become a popular term in recent years. However, it appeared without a clear presentation of its many meanings. It is therefore important that we ask ourselves what citizenship really means. In reality, this concept is problematic, ambiguous and history has shown that over time, different ideas associated with it continue to be readdressed, reformulated, or even critiqued as new ideas appear. Citizenship is a state in which (or One key reference in the literature on citizenship is Thomas Marshall (1893-1981), Professor Emeritus at London University, who is considered a classic in the study of the subject. In a series of conferences held at the University of Cambridge in the 1950s, he created the idea of citizenship as a specific type of legal status of official identity. He also developed the notion of full membership in a sovereign community that is self-governed. In his words, citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a given community. Just like a legal status, citizenship bestows the right to have rights. His theory of citizenship is based on three types of rights: civil, political and social rights. Those men and women who have the status of citizens are – with respect to the rights and responsibilities associated with that status – equal. It is the aspiration of male and female citizens to implement full equality, fighting for the progressive granting of rights, which increases the number of people to whom citizenship status is bestowed.

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Thomas Marshall's (1964) concern for citizenship involved finding ways to (re)concile formal political democracy with the continued division of capitalist society in social classes. The answer that he put forth for this reconciliation resides in the hypothesis of the existence and promotion of the so-called Welfare State. Marshall argued that the Welfare State could limit the negative impacts of class differences on life opportunities for all persons whilst allowing them to make a commitment to the system.

Although Thomas Marshall thought it possible to expand the rights of citizenship through conflict within civil society, historical develop-

ment should not be understood as a linear and evolving process through which rights are accumulated and eventually accepted as guaranteed. On the contrary, the rights achieved should be defended and exercised continually, which presupposes the importance not only of acquiring power, but also using it on a continual basis.

The work of this author has raised considerable debate. For Ruth Lister (1997), one of the main reasons behind the controversial nature of this theory of citizenship is the way in which it can simultaneously act as a mechanism for inclusion and exclusion. This categorisation can be very beneficial to demonstrate, for example, how the history of women as non-citizens is characterised. Married women from England in the late 19th century would not have even achieved the first stage advocated by Thomas Marshall and would have been viewed as persons living in a feudal system. The same can be said of Portuguese women, for whom the status of equality would only be formally established in law much later (many achievements took place after the Revolution of April, 25, 1974) and enshrined in the Portuguese Constitution of 1976. Thus, the fundamental critiques of this model come from its evolutionist logic that neither includes nor explains the history of most individuals – women<sup>29</sup>. By assuming that citizenship (in the form of civil rights) became universal at the start of the 19th century, Thomas Marshall casts to one side the universality of the history

Thomas Marshall developed a historical classification system. He identified three conceptual and historically distinct elements (stages) in citizenship, which are constructed in an interlinked fashion and form part of a development that is also sequential. According to the author, the first stage of citizenship is civil citizenship: its inherent rights are those fundamental to individual freedom – freedom of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to property and the right to justice. Because individuals who have these basic civil rights exist under the law, this is a type of legal personality. The second stage is political citizenship: individuals have the right to participate in the exercise of political power as members of a body invested with political power. This stage represents the basic and formal recognition, by legal and political institutions, of the individual as an equal member among equals in his or her community, as someone who has the right (and the related obligations) to make decisions (such as voting) about the community. Lastly, he speaks of a third stage in the development of liberal citizenship that would have occurred in the twentieth century: social citizenship. Social citizenship involves independent, individual access to basic social goods provided by the community as a whole to all its members. In this way, the access granted to the benefits of social welfare – healthcare and the full range of welfare programmes, from education to housing – is the element identified by Thomas Marshall as social citizenship. These social forms of citizenship have been institutionalised in the form of the Welfare State. The fight for fundamental social rights is still a modern-day reality; it continues to be an aspiration and not, as the author proclaimed, the end of the story of the citizenship concept.

of women's citizenship. As Helena Araújo (1998) stresses, women have been excluded from the public sphere with respect to the State and the economy, but they have been included as subordinates, confining their activities to the domestic sphere with an emphasis on fulfilling the obligation of maternity.

We will see further on how debates in the field of gender studies have focused primarily on the exclusive mechanism of citizenship and the issue of equality and difference.

After the Second World War, social liberalism became the dominant theory on citizenship in Western liberal democracies. This theory assumes a status of equality and full citizenship for all adults born within the territory of a pre-existing State. It is based on the principle that – from a strictly theoretical viewpoint and as regards public life – all members of (Western) societies

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<sup>29</sup>Feminists strongly criticise this theory because the rights of women are not reviewed in this historical progression of citizenship rights. The theory's assumption that these rights have been universal, i.e., have been applied to all individuals, since their implementation only strengthens the critical argument. How is it possible to think of all people if half the population (women) were excluded from political citizenship?

have equal status and equal rights.

Under the terms of the liberal tradition, citizenship is defined firstly as a set of individual rights with different functions; one of their functions most often valued is that of individual autonomy. That is, according to this theory, rights are considered chiefly as enablers and aids in the space for individual development. Personal development, in turn, allows individual potential and interests to be promoted; it allows the existence and promotion of freedom, i.e., the existence of self-sufficient beings free of interference from other individuals or the community. From this perspective of natural and individual rights the ideology of individualism is born, essentially abstract, but fundamentally in opposition to the community, which is assumed to be a potential threat for those same individual liberties.

“[...] the most pressing demand of the European people is the civil and social rights that give shape to a true democratic citizenship. [...] The goal of introducing social rights into the treaties of the European Union aims at elevating the social, so that it is no longer a mere correction or simple adjustment of economic contingencies in order to rise to the level that one should occupy: one of a category of thought, politics and action linked to life and the right held by all to lead a life worthy of being lived”.

Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, 1992:18

This abstract individualism, developed by liberal thought after the eighteenth century and continually exacerbated until today, probably explains the ambivalence of the liberal citizenship theory as regards notions of social responsibility and social rights. The liberal emphasis on individual autonomy therefore implies a basic lack of confidence in the notion and idea of community. The fear that the community may require restrictions on personal interests and developments has led to a gradual withdrawal from a collectivist logic of common, shared interests.

In practice, this theory does not avoid the persistence of inequality, increased social exclusion, or the growing complexity and difficulty of solving

problems faced by societies. Today, liberal perspectives on equality, liberty, rights and political representation are under serious threat. Society is becoming more complex and limited perspectives (such as those of the nationalist variety) on citizenship are showing themselves to be completely unsuitable and would only produce profound phenomena of exclusion. Migration processes have involved a complex heterogeneity which has implications for ideas of identity based on nationality or ethnicity. Therefore, if we intend to live in, understand and promote societies in which order and social justice can co-exist in a pluralistic, mixed world, such as modern-day States, it is essential that we make use of egalitarian aspirations of citizenship by removing it from the concept of nation and accepting the many ‘memberships’ of individuals, as Karen O’Shea (2003) maintained.

In conclusion, it is now possible to conceive of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship being exercised by people living in a certain geographic space (such as the European Community) more so than in any State or particular nation. More and more, individuals may exercise their responsibilities and rights of citizenship in multiple spaces which include nearby spaces, such as neighbourhoods and civil society associations, as well as local, regional, national and supranational spaces. This may eventually represent not only more fluid political borders, but also the emergence of a ‘multiple citizenship’, in the words of Derek Heater (1990).

We have to conceive of a citizenship that involves not only rights, but also duties, acts, qualities, merits and opinions which result from the relationship between the State and individuals and among individuals themselves. This involves a broader concept of citizenship. Thus, in order to develop a sense of citizenship that is inclusive, each male and female citizen must develop feelings of sympathy, empathy and solidarity toward others and other cultures in particular. In order for that to happen, we must have a policy aimed at flexibility and heterogeneity, i.e., cultural diversity, by seeking to develop policies of ‘interculturality’ in which there is respect for and acceptance of all, with equal rights and duties. Thus, we can say that there is no single unifying theory of citizenship, but rather, several types and categories.



## 1.1.6.

## What are the relationships between gender and citizenship?

Under the influence of postmodern thought, gender studies and citizenship have evolved through a series of different phases, focusing largely on the dynamic of the debate over the equality/difference controversy. Initially, critiques were based on the exclusive nature of the evolution of rights (as envisioned by Thomas Marshall, for example), critiquing the supposed universality of rights and pointing to the existence of inequalities (still present today) between men and women as regards the rights of citizenship. This confirmation of women's exclusion from citizenship has been addressed in two distinct ways: one which demands their inclusion under the same terms as men are included, and another which demands that citizenship should take into account the *specific interests* of women. In the first case, the theoreticians of equality demand a gender-neutral citizenship in which women are included and may participate with men as equal citizens, especially in the public sphere. In the second case, for theoreticians of *difference*, the goal is one of differentiated citizenship in which responsibilities and competences of the private sphere – a realm typically associated with women – are recognised, valued and rewarded. They speak, for example, of valuing the private space and competencies associated with caregiving.

To speak of pluralism and diversity even among women whilst also assuming persistent inequality leads us immediately to the fundamental

question of modern feminism, key in the debates on citizenship: the debate between equality and *difference*.

Two questions dominate at the centre of this dilemma: (1) Could diversity require a citizenship that is differentiated and no longer universal? (2) Is the demand for policies of difference an emancipatory one, i.e., liberating?

In its liberal form, the concept of citizenship calls for the incorporation of the ideal of universalism. In this context, it is supposed that all individuals who may legitimately assume themselves to be citizens of a State share an equality of rights and responsibilities of citizenship. However, this universalism creates serious situations of exclusion, as there are people who are victims of exclusion on a continual basis because they share certain characteristics. Such is the case, for example, of inequality associated with sex, race, immigrants, and people from economically disadvantaged social classes or those of a minority sexual orientation. We must ensure that individuals and groups are not excluded from the benefits of citizenship because of any aspect (global, specific, or singular) of their identity. That is why there are those who demand a *policy of identity* and a *differentiated citizenship* for women, i.e., of a demand for special rights and based on the rights of a group.

For perspectives advocating differentiated citi-

zanship, equality will only be achieved through mechanisms that recognise the different voices and perspectives of oppressed groups. Thus, promoting citizenship which is not exclusive involves recognising the specific identity of social groups and, consequently, the need to construct a *policy of difference*. A *policy of difference* would be characterised as follows: 1) by including the identities of the groups involved, 2) through group representation in institutions, 3) by creating policies that would show how group perspectives have been taken into consideration and lastly, 4) through group veto power over policies that are particularly relevant to them, e.g., women's veto of policies related to reproductive rights.

With these conditions met, differentiated citizenship would no longer have the universal quality of liberal citizenship, thus making it possible to aspire to a more just policy for increasingly pluralistic societies. Despite the interest of this perspective – a valid attempt to overcome the problems of modernity and liberal citizenship – it also raises some questions worth discussing.

“[...] the women's vote was obtained much earlier in the United States, Great Britain and many other countries for reasons linked to philosophical grounds and policies on the right to suffrage. In the utilitarian approach of democracy dominant in Anglo-Saxon countries, women conquered political rights on the basis of their specific nature. They are considered to have introduced their own concerns and competence into the political sphere. Women therefore received access to the vote as members of a group representing specific interests and in this way the women's vote forms part of a perspective on representing specific qualities: it is as women, and not as individuals, that they were called to the ballot boxes. In France, the right to suffrage has different roots, derived from the principle of political equality among individuals. In this case, French universalism is an obstacle to women's suffrage: women are denied the right to vote based on their particular nature, because they are not a true abstract individual, because they continue to be too marked by the definitions of their sex. Although they can be very closely related, representations of women's roles in the

family and society thus lead to completely opposite effects in France and most other countries. In France, prejudices operate in a negative manner: they prevent women from being seen as a social individual, relegating them permanently to their domestic role which isolates them and contains them in a normal relationship with men. By contrast, in countries where a utilitarian approach to democracy prevails, prejudices about the nature of women help establish women as a very distinct social group that may aspire to being included in the political sphere, precisely because of their specific social role. For women, therefore, there are two models for accessing political citizenship. On the one hand, we have the French model, which forms part of an overall economy of the individualisation process in which achieving suffrage is linked to recognising the status of the autonomous individual. On the other hand, we have the Anglo-Saxon model which views the women's vote from a global sociological perspective on the representation of interests.”

Pierre Rosanvallon, 1995: 73-77

The demand for a *policy of difference* and *differentiated citizenship* creates serious problems because its acceptance could lead to situations that jeopardise the emancipatory potential of the citizenship concept itself. The fact that the theory is based on an essentialism (a perspective in which some characteristics are immutable and necessary) assigned to one or more groups implies a strong negation, or at least devaluation, of the constructed nature of their distinguishing characteristics, thus preventing the possibility of emancipating that group. For example, would the demand for a differentiated citizenship for women – understood as a group which immutably shares its own characteristics (and which should be valued) – in fact increase the problems of inequality? Reifying the differences by justifying them with essentialising mechanisms may have the perverse effect of maintaining the 'group' logic and associated symbolic asymmetry. In conclusion, essentialism and even the legitimisation of the existence of the groups themselves arise as significant problems in the adoption of this alternative vision of citizenship.

The politics of difference and the debate between equality and difference are extremely challenging topics on the agendas of all those concerned with matters of gender, citizenship and, fundamentally, social inequality.

Modern-day feminism shows a continuous tension in terms of thought and theory and in terms of action with respect to, on the one hand, having to construct the idea of *woman/women* by giving them a solid political meaning and, on the other hand, feeling the need to deconstruct the category of woman: as regards the full exercise of citizenship, do women want to be equal to men or accept biology (or socialisation) as establishing an *essential difference*?

But this opposition between equality and difference may also be seen as a product of abstract individualism. There seems to be no reason to suppose that equality and difference are inherently opposed to each other. The choice between equality and difference may be a false problem. Equality and difference constitute another false dichotomy which we should seek to abolish. The way to begin achieving this is by adopting a theory of citizenship that is not atomistic, but rather relational.

Aspiring to the emancipation and inclusive citizenship of several identities should involve the continued quest for equal rights and opportunities as an essential objective, using a methodology that looks for areas of compromise and creates common interests and systems of government capable of accommodating differences peacefully.

This political aspiration for equality does not need to deny difference, given that a desire for equality presupposes the initial differences. Equal rights and opportunities includes respecting the rights of all human beings, regardless of their characteristics, beliefs or identities.

“The promotion of equal opportunities and results takes place essentially through positive-action programmes. This is based on flexible, selective measures that follow previously defined and selected goals and priorities.

It also occurs by modifying implementation techniques used by the authorities and institutional mechanisms that are responsible for promoting equality. More often, the goal is to persuade, influence opinion and propose voluntary formulas to achieve set objectives, whilst using coercive means to a lesser degree. [...] It is fanciful to think that the law alone can overcome discrimination. When legal discrimination formally disappears, social discrimination remains and is established in new guises, sometimes much more subtle. Thus, the law must contain principles of ‘positive action’.

Positive action requires a combination of actors, forces, constraints and incentives. It should be able to reach all who could become guilty of discrimination; it associates methods derived from collective self-help and intervention by the State. Positive action also requires that new kinds of institutional mechanisms be created which are not just protective structures, but are responsible for solving the problems of discrimination.”

Eliane Vogel-Polsky, 1991: 11.

## 1.1.7.

# What do we mean when we talk about citizenship and education?

Nowadays, we speak increasingly of a citizenship that is active, emancipatory and multiple. This idea of citizenship requires that a set of practices be implemented in different social spaces for education and training which can involve people of all ages, in order to give them the skills to participate in the various spheres of life.

According to Karen O’Shea (2003), these educational practices for citizenship:

- **Are fundamentally aimed at promoting a culture of democracy and human rights.**
- **Seek to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity.**
- **Highlight the individual experience and the search for good practices to develop communities committed to establishing authentic human relations.**
- **Are devoted to the person and his/her relations with others, to the construction of personal and collective identities and to living conditions as a whole.**
- **Are intended for all people, regardless of their age and role in society.**
- **Involve a process of learning that can unfold throughout one’s life and emphasises values, such as participation, partnership, social cohesion, equity and solidarity.**

In order to realise this education for citizenship, we must also reflect on the universalist model of the school, examined by Raul Itúrra (1990),

given that it does not take into account the cultural specificities – multiple memberships – of its male and female students. When they arrive at the educational institution, these individuals bring with them the ‘baggage of knowledge’ that has shaped their understanding of the world and prepared the ground for the inclusion of new information. Thus, in the context of education for citizenship, the school is expected to be a place of respect for the diversity of those who attend it, without the risk of dominant cultures suppressing the cultural idiosyncrasies of minority groups.

In this age of economic globalisation (unfortunately not yet one of globalised solidarity), social inequalities increase every day, threatening fundamental human rights. Only by valuing social justice and solidarity can we help build a united society.

From this viewpoint, this solidarity is taken on as a responsibility and duty of all. The link that common, reciprocal rights and responsibilities establish among citizens can sustain the political community in at least two ways: by allowing solidarity to be built among members of the society and increasing the number of individuals who participate (in this way, by learning) in the political sphere.

Cultural pluralism and the practice of interculturality is also something which must be adopted by all those with educational and training

responsibilities towards younger generations because it is clear that living with diversity is inevitable. We must promote interculturality, value difference and accept equality in a way that does not represent uniformity or homogenisation. However we must be aware that this is a field which requires much debate and genuine critical thinking. Problems can arise at any time and there seem to be no solutions considered appropriate for every situation to be faced.

This perspective of active and multiple citizenship involves an ethics of participation – complex, at different levels and in different contexts in both the public and private spheres – that always follows the logic of the reciprocal relationship between rights and responsibilities. Indeed, the social and civic competences to be promoted must include a more individual level of intervention and more relational levels, such as interpersonal, social and intercultural. Discussion, respect for the ideas of others, but also personal reflection are fundamental competences to practise in privileged contexts of interaction and human development, such as in kindergarten or different levels of formal schooling. We cannot expect someone to act according to the principles of citizenship with equality as a guiding path if that person is (for example, due to a lack of information) incapable of making informed decisions and/or critically interpreting reality, if he/she is incapable of self-critique or if his/her freedom has been unduly deprived for various reasons, such as gender stereotyping, religious fundamentalism, cultural traditions, etc.

“Common sense has to be a different ethic which must be closely related to that which was proposed to us by Hans Jonas in his work, *Das Prinzip der Verantwortung* (ethics of responsibility). The principle of responsibility to be implemented cannot be based on linear sequences because we live in a time in which it is increasingly difficult to determine who

the agents are, what the actions are, and what the consequences are. Rather, it will be based on Sorge, care, which places us at the centre of everything that is happening and makes us responsible for the other: the other which can be a human being, a social group, an object, a heritage, nature; the other which can be our contemporary but will increasingly be a future other, whose possibility of existence we must assure in the present.”

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 1991: 23-43.

Following the guidelines of the recent document written by the Education for Citizenship Forum<sup>30</sup> (2008: 73-75), we may cite as an example some essential competences to be developed in male and female students so that they may experience a citizenship unfettered by gender stereotypes:

- **Accept one’s identity and the characteristics, possibilities and limitations of one’s own body.**
- **Value personal experiences as a construction of identity.**
- **Develop self-esteem, responsibility, respect for oneself and others, courage, persistence, the ability to overcome adversity and affirm citizenship under any circumstance.**
- **Have autonomy in individual care [...] and in caregiving tasks which form part of family life [...].**
- **Have autonomy in order to carry out an occupation and adapt to the risks of various economic climates.**
- **Know how to participate in society and take on responsibilities, especially leadership, for the creation of collective well-being at the local and global levels.**
- **Know how to communicate respect for equal freedom and equal dignity for all whilst considering the plurality of individual attributes.**
- **Know how to communicate as equals with men and women.**
- **Know how to respect human diversity, exercise cultural freedom within the framework of human**

<sup>30</sup>Because we lack the space here to describe all the competences presented in the areas of individual civic behaviour, interpersonal relationship and socio-cultural relationship, we strongly recommend consulting and using the document in question. It is a valuable resource, for all educative agents, in the context of education and training for citizenship. This document brings together and summarises the main conclusions of the debates which took place during the Education for Citizenship Forum (in October 2006, made up of various personalities invited by the Minister of Education and the Secretary of State for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers). It frames and arranges them into policy and social intervention measures, which were the strategic objectives of Education for Citizenship. Available at: <http://www.dgicd.min-edu.pt/cidadania/Documents/FECidaniaSP.pdf> .

**rights and a global, systemic idea of the world in which we live.**

**- Know how to recognise injustice and inequality and take an active interest in seeking and practising fairer ways of living.**

**- Acquire value criteria related to coherence, solidarity and personal and social commitment both within and outside the school.**

**- Know how to live in peace, justice and solidarity and promote these values in our pluralistic societies of today.**

Citizenship in a pluralistic society involves a broad range of aspects, e.g., the experience of difference and reciprocity, awareness of contextualised rights and responsibilities, acquisition of relational qualities and positive communication and the rejection of inequality, prejudice and racism. Every student should learn to take responsibility for the tasks that they must perform as students and in everyday life outside of school in order to develop the skills required to exercise true citizenship<sup>31</sup>. It is essential to develop values, attitudes, standards of behaviour and commitments. A central part of education for citizenship must consist of exploring and discussing key concepts of the democratic experience, universal values and everyday matters of the individual and the collective, always trying to build bridges to real life and leading students to identify with the topics being examined. For James Banks (2008), it becomes essential that male and female students make a genuine commitment to an attitude of global change in order to make it more democratic and fair.

Reflecting on the many competences and cognitive and relational knowledge that students are to learn how to mobilise, the central question becomes: *how should we teach and practise citizenship in different contexts of education and training?*

“It is known that citizenship is not learned through explanatory teaching or based on a pedagogy of authority. In order for its distinctive values to be incorporated, it needs to be observed, taught, represented and discussed in ‘emotionally protected’ spaces and by using positive and achievable models. Fathers, mothers, male and female teachers — and all other agents in education — must be these models.”

Cristina Viera, 2009: 196.

The answer to this question calls for an emphasis on action. It calls for teaching behaviours in protective spaces, such as the student group, playtime, peer groups, recreational associations, etc., spaces whose implicit and explicit organisation also reflects examples of citizenship. Specifically, we refer to good management/leadership, whether it is to establish rules of operation of these same groups, whether it is related to the democratic participation of all its members in decision-making and sharing duties and responsibilities.

Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that the idea of education for/in citizenship varies according to the position adopted on education. Emphasis can be placed on education directed at individuals as subjects who share common characteristics, or at the public and collective interest; these two positions represent distinct and even antagonistic options. Education for citizenship is frequently mistaken with personal development of male and female students, which represents an emphasis on the first aspect of the problem. To teach or train for citizenship, using common social values and promoting individual participation, would be important in the formation of independent, autonomous male and female citizens who participate in democratic institutions and are agents of their own destinies. Safeguarding individual interests, knowing about and exercising their rights, seems to be a project that is praiseworthy and frequently feasible, but it is not enough to teach/train in and for citizenship.

<sup>31</sup>When we address the possibility of any project on education for citizenship in the school, we also think of the contributions of the critical pedagogy perspective heavily influenced by the works of Paulo Freire. In order to promote democracy, the goal of social justice is a fundamental value, i.e., so that education can “provoke changes in the classroom but also identify and teach strategies that make students aware of becoming involved in social change outside the classroom”, in the words of Luísa Saavedra and Conceição Nogueira (1999: 132).

“Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) has emerged from more traditional programmes such as civic education or civic instruction. As an approach EDC emphasises individual experience and the search for practices designed to promote the development of communities committed to genuine relationships.

It concerns the individual and her/his relations with others, the construction of personal and collective identities, the conditions of living together, to name but a few. A fundamental aim of EDC is the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights, a culture that enables individuals to develop the collective project of building communities. Thus it seeks to strengthen social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity. “

(Karen O’Shea, 2003, p. 10).

That is why the defence of education for citizenship, supported by those who safeguard individual interests, has been criticised for emphasising the rights of citizens to the detriment of their responsibilities in a collective coexistence. In this regard, it could be viewed as education for a consumerist citizenship, as termed by Paulo Freire (1995), to the extent that emphasis is placed on the demand of rights to ensure individual interests. We think it is important that children and adolescents be aware of their rights as well as their responsibilities as male and female citizens. Educating for and in citizenship requires educating for an awareness of the reciprocal relationship between rights and duties. Rights and duties are not mutually exclusive poles of a dichotomy. Rather, they are complementary. Within an orientation of more active and pluralistic citizenship, the aim is to dissolve dichotomies which often paralyse truly egalitarian programmes. Individual freedom and the rights associated with it may only be assured on the basis of supporting democratic institutions; without these, freedom itself is compromised. The responsibilities towards all institutions which sustain society and are for society in general are therefore the guarantees of individual freedoms. With this orientation, education for the exercise of true citizenship is intended to ease tensions between individual and collective programmes.

Education for citizenship, when viewed as a relational logic between the individual and community by means of the complementarity between rights and responsibilities, may involve choices relating to matters to be addressed or understood and matters concerned with the best way to teach them or test and practise them effectively. In addition to understanding democratically supported political structures, it becomes essential to understand matters which involve the relationship between individuals and society. In this regard, those who believe in an emancipatory programme on education for citizenship recognise the value of learning more about problems, such as sustainable development or an analysis (focused on seeking answers) of issues related to inequality, poverty, the problems of immigrants and minorities, environmental risks, religious fundamentalism and social exclusion.

Recognising the contribution of difference and diversity to society today – rather than seeking to suppress them – should also be a crucial element in education for citizenship. Experiential approaches are considered the most appropriate for this type of training because they place value on the direct mobilisation of knowledge in practice, student involvement in concrete analysed situations and the possibility that students themselves will act as leaders in such situations. Work in groups, debates on subjects (involving awareness-raising, critical discussion and changes in attitudes), student involvement in school administration organisations and in outside participatory projects, e.g., by volunteering at nearby charitable institutions, are positive activities of education for/in citizenship within a context of broad educational involvement. In this way, education for citizenship will be a process of true training of students of all ages that results in a genuine commitment to social commitment, caring for the environment and valuing and sharing public space.

As a response to concerns about the kind of education needed by men and women of this century in order to live in a complex world guided by a certain triumph of individualism, in which the globalisation of the economy, media and

culture goes hand-in-hand with the resurgence of nationalism, racism and violence<sup>32</sup>, Paulo Freire (1997) demanded an education, ethics and culture for diversity. In order to achieve these things, we must think of a new scenario for education: reconstructing the knowledge provided by the school and the training of those who

educate. In the views of Luísa Saavedra and Conceição Nogueira (1999), this requires leading students – but also all those with educational and training responsibilities – to develop the skills needed to know how to locate themselves in history, find their own voices and form the convictions needed to capably practise democracy.

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<sup>32</sup>Obviously it is also possible to create citizenship networks at a global level which must be valued and encouraged.



## 1.1.8.

## Constructing practices for citizenship

Formal education should be viewed as just one of the components of a group of social policies and programmes that must be officially adopted and put into practice (with proper monitoring and follow-up) so that a full sense of global citizenship in all individuals may be promoted. In order for this to go beyond a mere declaration of intent, it is essential not only to develop pedagogical and didactic resources, but also to readjust the initial, ongoing training of those with educational and training responsibilities. Teaching, guiding and promoting actions in the context of education for citizenship requires, first and foremost, that one authentically be a citizen. This calls for the development of critical awareness about the individual role in the maintenance of inequalities, which in turn should lead each person to assume responsibilities, respect oneself and others, adopt universal values and promote a culture of justice, peace and solidarity.

Informed, active and responsible citizens must be aware of their rights and responsibilities as members of society; they must understand the social and political world; they must be concerned for their own welfare and that of others; they must be consistent in terms of opinions and practices; they must be capable of having some kind of influence on the world; and they must be active in their membership groups, as Rolf Gollob and Peter Krapf (2007) maintained. In conclusion, they must be responsible for the

way in which they exercise their citizenship, when performing private roles (for example, as a daughter, wife, husband, father, son, or mother) or social and professional roles (for example: lecturer, educator, or trainer).

**Since it is essential to address gender equality in the context of education for citizenship, it becomes fundamental to train all agents of education and make them aware of the importance of gender when shaping behaviours starting from the first years of childhood. The performance of gender stereotypes tends to be surreptitious; the damage caused to the authenticity of individual development tends to be the same for children of both sexes and men and women may never become aware of this fact.**

The school, given its leading role not only in the transmission of disciplinary content but also in the formation of the human being as a member of a society that shares values and requires access to rights and the exercise of rights and responsibilities, is viewed here as something which may have a truly transformative role. Those transformative practices can be tested starting from kindergarten, which should be viewed as the best space to initially experience citizenship during a critical phase in a child's life for the appropriation of stereotypes<sup>33</sup>, given that gender stereotypes, as we have seen, are highly influential at this stage of human development.

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<sup>33</sup>See also Fórum Educação para a Cidadania (Education for Citizenship Forum). Objectivos estratégicos e Recomendações para um Plano de Acção de Educação e de Formação para a Cidadania (Strategic objectives and recommendations for an action plan on education and training for citizenship) (2008: 18).

In the globalised world in which we live – a stage with multiple identities and spaces for participation – education and training for citizenship can take place in the school and in all places where citizens live, with the aim of giving them the skills for individual and collective participation in surrounding spaces of social intervention. The concept of citizenship should be addressed in terms of practical democracy, in local and specific contexts, despite being able to address hypotheses of multiple participation in multinational terms. Furthermore, effectively learning, teaching, testing, and practising citizenship can happen in many spheres of everyday life. It can involve people of different ages and should have such a transformative impact that the resulting implications extend beyond the personal/local context and play a positive role in creating the foundations of a better world.

**Taking as a starting point the certainty that respect for freedom and equality is a fundamental value that should always accompany the evolution of the citizenship concept, as we can read in the valuable document that resulted from the Education for Citizenship Forum (2008), it becomes urgent to transform the abstract nature of this value into concrete educational strategies. This generalised form of action, which can take various modalities, will have as its main objective to give all males and females the necessary skills for civic and political participation, coexistence in society, recognition of difference, respect for ‘otherness’, and the creation of a common, ethically sound and unquestionably happy future. For this to happen, and paraphrasing Ana Maria Cruz, we must encourage it among all entities with educational responsibilities towards younger generations and also, among the latter, the reconstruction of “gazes which are not levellers of difference, but profoundly respectful of the life choices of people, women and men” (2001: 9).**

Given that school institutions are an integral part of society, inequalities in schools may be a symptom, as well as a consequence, of greater inequalities. Nonetheless, educational inequalities need to be considered because the future of students as citizens, as well as the future of civil society as a whole, will be compromised if they do not receive an education that allows them to develop their potential and participate actively in the construction of a society – because democracy is a condition for development and not a cause – that is intended to be increasingly democratic. Democracy requires the real support of state institutions as well as a strong civil society. It is not enough that the State legislates in order to guarantee that the minimum conditions for democracy to be achieved, nor is it enough to initiate only discussions of controversial matters in order to find consensus. It is also vital that children, adolescents, and teachers participate in political discussions, are able to learn from their mistakes and construct in an active and committed manner a world that is theirs.

It is true that education for citizenship – and education, in general – alone will not solve the problems that people face every day. However, it can call attention to individual responsibilities and their exercise, and it can ensure that people are able to live their lives based on principles of peace, harmony, respect and tolerance and will know how to identify the potential violation of these ways of being and behaving with other citizens. In this context, education for citizenship should be viewed as a privileged place for the construction of an emancipatory education in a truly democratic society for women and men, regardless of the groups with which they identify.

## 1.2.

# Gender and curriculum in early childhood education

“In modern, democratic societies, the future of each man and each woman, regardless of their race, religion and social class, will surely depend on the abilities and opportunities offered to them to learn, explore, and experience challenges.”

(Cristina Vieira, 2007: 107)

Education for citizenship should occur starting from the earliest stage of childhood and in a comprehensive manner, similar to the comprehensive way in which children positively accept and integrate diversity from early on.

One fundamental component of citizenship is tied to questions of gender: how do we educate for gender issues? In what way (thanks to the selection of materials, games and books which we provide) do we transform school spaces (namely the institutions for the youngest children) into spaces that do not promote gender and race stereotypes?

Studies show that Portuguese teaching materials, especially school textbooks and their accompanying multimedia products (see, for example, Maria Teresa Alvarez Nunes, 2007), continue to transmit stereotyped concepts of men/women and representations of the world that do not match social reality. In short, these teaching materials perpetuate the idea that the traditional category of Man includes the diversity of human existence, i.e., representations of the world based on the idea that the masculine is neutral. We must therefore reflect on the kind of citizenship we encourage among our male and female students.

Manuel Jacinto Sarmiento (2006) describes an intimate citizenship as a space that affirms identity and otherness, of the recognition of a difference that does not minimise gender, culture, religion, social or ethnic background and language, among others. This last form of citizenship places others in the centre; it leads us to bypass immediate corporate interest and accept the other as placing limits on our own individuality (Teresa Vasconcelos, 2007). The school system of today has far to go in promoting it.

Pre-school education is the first stage of basic education in the lifelong education process. It supplements the educational activities of the family, with which close co-operation should be established. It promotes training and balanced development of the child and is designed for his or her full integration in society as an autonomous, free being that is united with others.

Early childhood educational institutions have been created as spaces in which the pedagogical role (very different from the traditional school model) is characterised by indirect action on children. This action is mediated by suggestions for their activities so that they may conduct their learning freely (Maria João Cardona, 2006: 73). Early childhood education appears as a space in which the child can be a child, freely developing his or her occupation as one who plays (Jean Claude Chamboredon & Jean Prévot, 1982).

Unlike school, which was created as a place to teach younger generations, the first institutions for small children were created to respond to a social need. Only after many years did its

educational role begin to be valued (Maria João Cardona, 1997). Today, pre-school education is recognised as a fundamental place of learning in the lives of children. Its role in promoting educational success has been proven, contributing to more equal opportunities for all children in their access to school.

Because pre-school education provides a positive context in which children become aware of themselves and others, it therefore takes on a central role in the education of values. Personal and social development is an area that includes the entire pre-school education process (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997: 20). The curriculum promotes education for citizenship by including the acceptance of diversity as a way to encourage more equal opportunities and participation. Questions concerned with the promotion of greater gender equality are not explicit enough. More discussion should take place regarding this essential problem for all work associated with education for citizenship.

The work of the educator to transform his or her values into reality in the day-to-day environment of the kindergarten makes pre-school education a social and relational context that facilitates an education for values. Although children begin their personal and social development soon after birth within the family and the sociocultural environment in which they live, pre-school education is a wider context that allows them to interact with other adults and children who may have different values and perspectives, which encourages them to become aware of themselves and others.

However, the more diverse the network of social interactions—the network of contacts with other groups—the greater the contradictions tend to be between family values and the values of the outside world. This in turn maximises the possibility of conflict during early childhood and adolescence (Maria João Cardona, 1997). In kindergarten, the quality of the child's social ability predicts his or her academic and social skills in future years, decreasing the risk of academic failure, school leaving, or juvenile and adult criminal offences.

The relationship that the educator establishes with each child, the way in which he or she is

valued, respected, stimulated and encouraged, is another model for the relationships that children will establish with others (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997: 53). In this sense, the role of educators—their educational goals and the way in which they structure the educational environment—becomes important for a curriculum development that leads to teaching activities which positively and democratically link to matters of the curriculum and gender.

Contradicting what has been established at the legislative level, our education system is still far from promoting equal opportunities. Specifically, it differentiates the treatment and values transmitted to young boys and girls. Despite the changes that have taken place since the April 1974 Revolution, huge differences continue to exist in Portugal which affect both sexes.

It is true that academic failure has been, in recent decades, a political concern which has led to the creation of programmes and specific measures. However, “false solutions” are often presented which maintain social inequalities (Luísa Saavedra, 2001). Meanwhile, families are increasingly concerned with the education of their children, starting at the pre-school level.

Placing value on the educational potential of pre-school educational institutions appears alongside recognition of their role in promoting educational success by creating more equal opportunities among all children in their access to school (Maria João Cardona, 1997).

Children construct their self-esteem from the first years of life as they construct themselves in their individuality, whether female or male, whether “white”, “black” or “gipsy”, whether they are from a certain country of origin or social or religious background (Teresa Vasconcelos, 2007). As regards learning associated with gender, we know that soon after three years of age, children are able to identify certain toys, household objects and clothing accessories which are more typical of men or women. This list grows during the pre-school years to include individual behaviours, specific activities and even occupations (Eleanor Maccoby, 1998). Obviously, this stereotyped thinking influences the way in which each child defines his or herself as a member of a group of men or women, conditions his

or her social behaviour towards peers and adults and it shapes the assessments of others on the basis of the sexual category of belonging.

Pre-school aged children begin by learning the stereotypes of their own sex and then recognising those related to the opposite sex, a process which is identical in young boys and girls. However, in the opinion of Carol Martin (1989), it is only around age eight or nine that most children are able to show a solid understanding of the social expectations linked to gender.

As stated in the first chapter, at the same time children (soon after two years of age) begin the process of forming their gender identity and provide evidence that they understand gender stereotypes, they also begin to exhibit stereotyped behaviours, especially in situations unstructured by adults in which they can interact freely with their peers. Examples include the choice of toys (Bussey and Bandura, 1992) or even children's preference for children of the same sex when trying to establish friendships (Eleanor Maccoby, 1998). In any case, the tendency to show stereotyped behaviours tends to increase in both sexes during the years corresponding to pre-school education.

Because learning about various social roles occurs from the earliest years onward, when children begin to distinguish the social roles assigned to women and men, they also begin at an early age to make an excessive differentiation that is often the foundation of future inequalities in participation in family and professional life (Ana da Silva et al., 2001).

Therefore, and also bearing in mind the evidence shown by research, it is necessary to intervene as early as possible, preferably in conjunction with other essential educational contexts during this period of life, such as the family. Here, the role of pre-school education becomes decisive in a dynamic of adult-child interaction that promotes teamwork based on a relationship of support among adults and thus creates a solid foundation for the education of the young child. For Maria Sakellariou (2008), this stage of life in children, prior to the start of formal schooling, is particularly relevant for studies on gender issues for the following reasons:

**“ 1. Children have a limited capacity to think critically about everything that the social world gives to them.**

**2. Experiences soon after the first years of life are of extreme importance for individual development.**

**3. Children find themselves in a state in which they need to establish boundaries and internalise typical activities and modes of conduct that are consistent with their gender” (Sakellariou, 2008: 26).**

Indeed, during the pre-school years (from ages three to five), children show rapid cognitive and affective development. This is an excellent time to promote aspects such as identifying and controlling emotions (Esther Leerkes et al., 2008), adopting perspectives and establishing empathy (Benjamin Hinnant and Marion O'Brien, 2007), or even the ability to make the distinction between “appearance” and reality (Andy Forceno, 2008). All this learning seems fundamental to the deconstruction of gender stereotypes through activities that, despite considering their life contexts and idiosyncrasies, i.e., the individual differences that have influenced these acquisitions, utilise the “mental flexibility” (the malleability of the brain) of children in this age range.

An intervention that encourages the development of the skills described earlier will train less stereotyped individuals in relation to categories which underlie unfounded discrimination, namely gender, but also “race”, for example. This type of early action also encourages academic success, a decrease in emotional problems and a closer relationship between cognition and emotional control (Esther Leerkes et al., 2008).

Reflecting on the role and operation of educational institutions we read the following:

**“School practices and the curricula are not mere transmitters of social representations that circulate somewhere outside; they are instances that burden and produce representations. The silence around “new” sexual and gender identities is constructed to represent them in such a way that it marginalises and delegitimises them. The silence and secrecy signify the adoption of a position on the side of those who already hold authority and legitimacy. [...]**

**Omission always favours those who dominate.” (Louro, Guacira, 2000: 56)**

Considering the importance of the time period from birth to six years of age in the construction of gender identity and formation of the gender concept, educational intervention should promote an attitude of gender equity, with particular importance assigned to the contexts of learning and models presented to children.

**The curriculum is the product of a complex and historically determined social construction (Ivor Goodson, 1997). We must take advantage of its development to question the status quo, clarify the role of the different kinds of knowledge and understanding and analyse how these relate to the interests of different social groups.**

**“Ideally, the creation and redevelopment of the curriculum should be an opportunity to intervene in each period of the social and historical context in order to examine more closely and enrich individual and collective subjectivities and potentialities, and to promote higher-quality learning for all. However, in reality things happen quite differently. The organisation of the curriculum reveals the mark of idiosyncrasies by individuals or groups who pervert the primary mission of the curriculum by superimposing them over aims which should be legitimately and altruistically defended, but end up being subordinated” (Fernandes, Margarida 2000: 107).**

Likewise, Michael Apple (1997) reinforces the idea that the production, distribution and assessment of knowledge essentially represent questions of control and domination which must be analysed from a broader perspective. Apple’s critique is aimed at the dominant discourse of interest chiefly to influential social groups whose idiosyncrasies exercise a significant influence on curricular choices, thus affecting groups who, despite being more numerous, cannot make themselves be heard as vigorously. In the school, this dominant discourse has an entrepreneurial perspective. This perspective gives preference to the economic and developmental aspect of education over the humanist and democratising aspect which values the role of school-based education in the creation of a

fairer and more united society (Margarida Fernandes, 2000).

However, the relationship between democracy and the school is a close one. Sacristán Gimeno (1998) operates from the belief that democracy involves a collective ability for reflection, understood as a society’s ability to think for itself and choose its own destiny. Education should also be a means by which to improve the options available to human beings by believing in their progress through culture and the formation of personality. Education therefore becomes an instrument that must enable subjects to think for themselves and thus truly participate in social construction through the construction of the self.

According to Bernard Spodek and Patricia Brown (1996: 15), we can define the curriculum model as “an ideal representation of the theoretical premises, administrative policies, and pedagogical components of a program aimed at obtaining a particular educational outcome”. These premises in turn lead to theories that explain how children develop and learn. They also lead to ideas about the best way to organise resources and opportunities for learning and to value judgments about what is most important for children to learn.

In his definition of the curriculum model for pre-school education, Artur de la Orden (1986) differentiates the underlying foundations of this model as follows: targets (which include the way roles are designed and child development), objectives, content and the organisation of work.

In addition to this model, Maria João Cardona (2008) envisions a curriculum model that is shown in the chart below. This author operates from the basis of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1981) ecological theory on human development, which views the resulting educational framework as a set of forces and systems that cannot be studied separately. Defining the activity room as a micro-system, the author believes that the main elements which describe it are the space (in which its occupants are involved in certain activities); the physical and material qualities of that space; the roles assumed by the occupants (for example, that of teacher or student); and a

certain time.

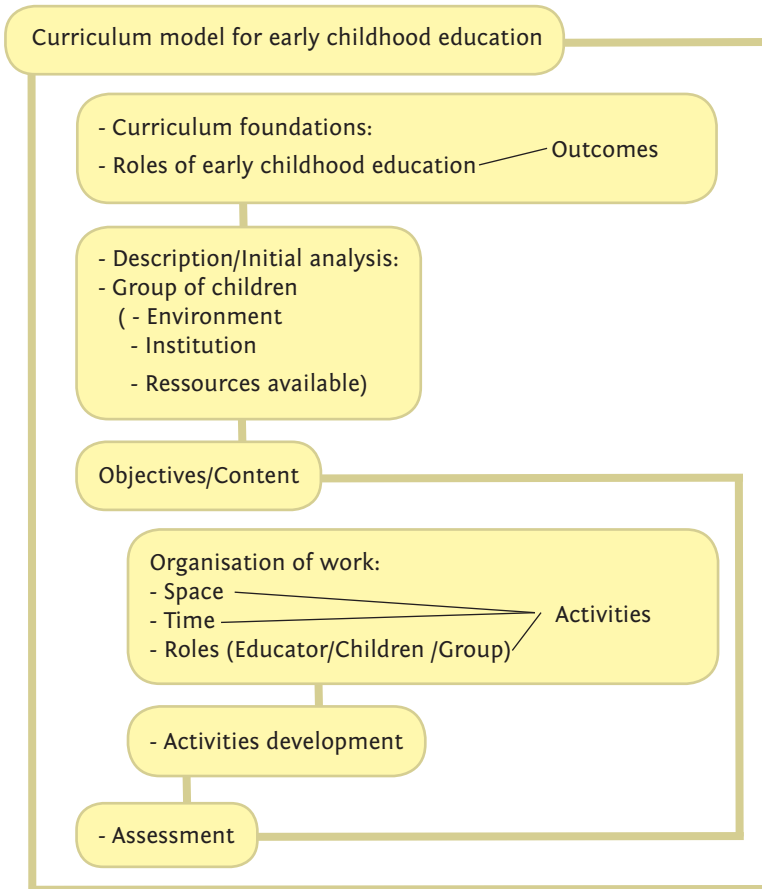
On the basis of this idea and the principle that the project being worked on must always be defined according to the specific nature of each educational context, we must consider the following elements when we speak of organising work in early childhood education: space; time;

activities; social roles assigned to children and to adults.

Bringing these proposals together, Maria João Cardona (2008) suggests a framework for the curriculum model of early childhood education.

**FIGURE 1 – The Curriculum Model in Pre-school Education**

(Adapted from Artur de la Orden, 1986, and Bronfenbrenner, 1981).



Given the contributions of neuroscience and knowing that children’s brains at this age are characterised by considerable plasticity (despite the differences among children which can be observed at this level), the arrangement of the educational space in kindergarten should be based on the premise that it is possible to stimulate the development of neural connections in a variety of ways in order to facilitate the acquisition

of new knowledge (Noronha, 2009). It is not so much the amount of stimuli that matters, but rather their quality, their links to hemispheric specialisations and the respect for the (starting) level of each child’s performance. Although their chronological age may be the same, it is essential that those who educate be aware that children can vary considerably as regards learning styles, the degree of expertise they show in the use of

their different skills or even the rate at which they make certain acquisitions. Indeed, knowing how to deal with all these potential differences is a challenge for any agent of education.

Although the human brain works in an integrated fashion, it has functional asymmetries which are extremely important for education (Maxfield, 1990). We know that the right hemisphere of our brain commands motor skills and sensorial events that occur on the left side of the body; it constructs three-dimensional images; it is responsible for affective functions; it is the centre of spatial perception, form recognition, non-verbal comprehension, tone and modulation of the voice, musicality, images and colour. The left hemisphere, in turn, commands motor skills and sensorial events that occur on the right side of the body; it is responsible for verbal language (oral and written), numerical calculation, logical reasoning, capacity for analysis and abstraction; it is temporal in that it processes information temporally and sequentially.

Pedagogical techniques involving visualisation (images, charts, plans, diagrams, etc.), multisensory learning, hearing, kinaesthetic and tactile learning, taste and smell, experiential learning, the use of metaphors and simulations or role-play are strategies which primarily stimulate the functioning of the right hemisphere (Santos, 1992). For preferential activation of the left hemisphere, it is essential to employ verbal language, words, definitions, step-by-step presentation of information, the use of symbols as a substitute for things, quantification, presentation of logical arguments and conclusions based on facts and reasoning, temporal organisation of information, and so on (Santos, 1992).

Consequently, in order for learning to be more effective and in order for the child to feel more motivated, the educator should promote activities which, when combined with a variety of stimuli, make simultaneous use of the specific abilities of both hemispheres.

Below we present certain aspects—of extreme relevance for the entire planning process and pedagogical action/interaction of the educator—to consider during the curriculum development process in early childhood education. However,

we should establish certain premises which run through all educational goals.

- The child learns by interacting and the adult learns by assisting the child in the development of that interaction. The quality of that interaction determines the quality of the construction of knowledge, by the child and by the adult, knowing that humans construct their own knowledge when interacting with objects, ideas and people in the context of their experience and their world of meanings.
- The “educational situation”, viewed here as the encounter between the adult/educator with the child, and the child with his or her peers, is a set of “‘communicative spaces’ where knowledge is constructed, attachments are developed, where the child grows and appropriates the surrounding culture and the educator is recreated professionally” (Júlia Oliveira-Formosinho, 2006: 54).

We must also adopt a less restrictive vision of children as learners, restoring a view of children which makes them interpreters who deconstruct messages, representatives and authors in the educational process—a process that is negotiated and negotiable through the idea of communication. This vision requires accepting, as maintained by Jerome Bruner (1990), that young children also have access to complex things, provided that the media be adapted to them.

When we address curriculum questions in early childhood education and all guidelines which assist the curriculum development process, we must mention the different content areas which serve as references to consider when planning and assessing educational experiences and opportunities. These last items should be viewed as linked because the construction of knowledge is also processed in an integrated fashion (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997).

According to the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school Education (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997), the term area designates a way of thinking of and organising the interventions of the educator and the experiences made available to children. This organisation takes as its reference the major areas of development that



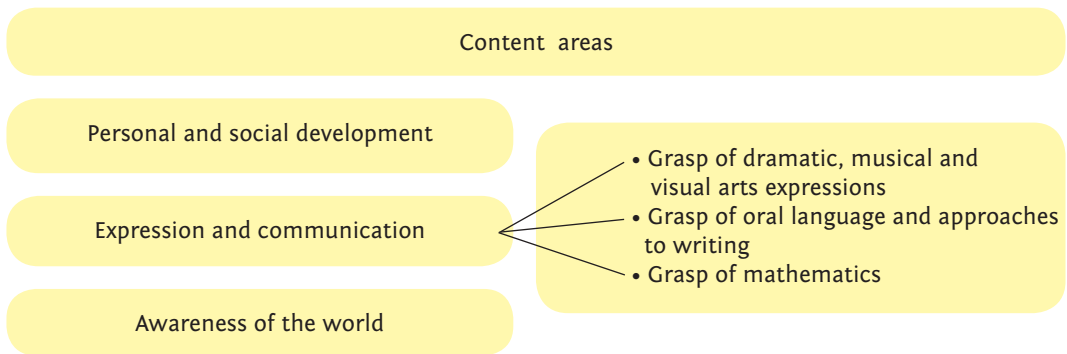
must contribute to the full, overall development of the child.

**“The content areas require activities to be conducted, given that children learn by exploring the world that surrounds them. If children learn**

**through action, the content areas are more than areas of activity, as they require that the action be an occasion for discovering relationships with themselves, others and objects, which means thinking and understanding” (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997: 47-48).**

## **FIGURE 2 – Content areas according to curriculum guidelines for pre-school education**

(Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997)



Personal and social development thus appears as part of an international perspective based on the organisation of an educational environment that must promote educational experiences which make sense of the different content types. It is an area that cuts across and integrates the entire educational process (in which education for citizenship is located) and therefore integrates all other content areas, namely the areas of “Expression and Communication” and “Awareness of the World”.

Operating from these theoretical principles and based on the previously defined content areas and objectives, we may distinguish the following when referring to curriculum development in early childhood education:

- organisation of work, considering:
  - space/materials
  - time
- the group, bearing in mind the roles and initiatives of the educator and the children (at individual and group level)
- activities design
- activities development
- assessing work
- family and community involvement

In order to analyse the different levels of intervention, we will present further on (in this section) some suggestions regarding the organisation of work, activities development, their assessment and the involvement of families and community.

## 1.3.

## Education for citizenship and gender equality in early childhood education (from 3 to 6 years)

“The perception held by the teacher of his or her students in general, and of each student in particular, and the perception held by the student of his or her peers and the teacher in an educational situation determine the manner in which to act and react.”

Marcel Postic (2008)

Education for citizenship is a lifelong progress. It begins at home and/or in the children’s surrounding environment with questions that arise in everyday life about interpersonal relationships, identity, choices, justice, the good and the bad, and develop as they expand their horizons in life. Promoting greater gender equality is a fundamental element in education for citizenship and in the creation of a true democracy. Dealing with differences without transforming them into inequalities is one of the major challenges of education today.

The school occupies a central role throughout the entire process of educating for citizenship. It is of fundamental civic importance because it is the first step in a path that is framed by the family and community. That is why it should provide a culture of the other as a “need to understand singularities and differences” (Guil-

herme d’Oliveira Martins, 1992), personal and community responsibility, a rigorous and methodical knowledge of life and an understanding of cultures, nations and the world.

The school, an agent of change and a factor in development, must acknowledge itself not only as a space that enhances resources, but also a place of openness and solidarity, justice and mutual responsibility, tolerance and respect, knowledge and awareness. The role of the public school thus takes on a crucial importance in education for citizenship, being that which, by definition, welcomes everyone and forms an integral part of life in the democratic city (Teresa Vasconcelos, 2007). As stated by Teresa Vasconcelos, the kindergarten—just like the school—is a fundamental locus of citizenship because personal and social development takes place there by educating children about their sense of ethics and aesthetics. Preparing them to effectively exercise citizenship, the kindergarten is where they begin to learn about diversity and equal opportunities, parity between the sexes, cultural diversity and the social responsibility of each one to promote a more democratic and inclusive society.

It is in an active learning environment where children—always with the evident support of

their peers and adults—are free to manipulate materials, make choices and plans, make decisions and speak and reflect about what they do/did, expand their ability to think and reason and to understand themselves and appropriately relate to others (Júlia Oliveira-Formosinho, 2006).

In early childhood education classrooms, power is shared in multiple and diverse ways: through the space and through objects; through situations and decisions; ideas and attachments; problems and solutions; goods and restrictions. These are power-sharing experiences that create social engagement in action, thought and feeling (Júlia Oliveira-Formosinho, 2006). This right to participation provides access to many other rights and thus creates the context which fosters the progressive creation of balances between rights and duties.

Peter Moss and Pat Petrie (2002) speak of early childhood spaces, physical spaces which are simultaneously social, cultural and discursive. Although they do not rule out the intentions of adults, they are spaces for the topics and interests of children. In those spaces, children are recognised as citizens with rights, participating members of social groups to which they belong, agents of their own lives, but also interdependent on others, co-creators of knowledge, identities and cultures, children who coexist and socialise with other children.

Throughout this dynamic, complex and endless process, the educator plays a central role. He or she must reflect and share experiences and knowledge to create an intentionality which translates into systemic pedagogical action that facilitates power-sharing experiences which require the careful organisation of space and materials and the creation of active learning experiences. Those who educate should believe in the child's ability to think, suggest and decide. They should also believe in their own contributions to the child's socio-cultural integration. The "democratisation of power", which the adult can and should represent to the child, is essential and necessary for the child's autonomy and to learn about democracy itself.

**“At kindergarten, the child ceases being the centre, in order to become one among others.**

**He or she will learn to live in a group, work with others, with the resulting division of labour and management of problems in a participatory manner. He or she learns to be autonomous in these tasks and rely on the adult as a mediator, when necessary.” (Teresa Vasconcelos, 2007: 12)**

As a shared social organisation, the kindergarten can and should systematically provide children with one of their first experiences of democratic life. Thus, unlike the history that has traditionally characterised these institutions, it is important that there be more male early childhood educators. For work that in fact promotes greater gender equality, it is essential that the care of small children stop being viewed as a predominantly feminine task.

Confident that the kindergarten may be the first space to learn about citizenship, professionals who work at this educational level are responsible for “intentionalising” practices which lead to real equal opportunities between little boys and girls based on a diversity of socialisation processes they will experience (Ana Silva et al., 2001).

Being a “boy” or “girl” is a central aspect in the construction of identity. Children of pre-school age, as stated earlier, acquire behaviours which conform to cultural expectations about what actions are appropriate as a member of one group or another, whilst simultaneously acquiring knowledge about cultural stereotypes of men and women.

Our democracies are thus responsible for introducing the structural changes needed for an equal citizenship, ensuring cohesion and solidarity and giving people the ability to act on a sense of change (Ana Silva et al., 2001). We must aspire to educational and care systems for early childhood which support a wide range of learning, participation and democracy.

Promoting education for citizenship requires the learning of skills that enable students to intervene in different contexts. This learning cannot be assigned to a single discipline; rather, it belongs to the entire curriculum (Ana Betten-court; Joana Campos; Lourdes Fragateiro, 1999).

In the early years, citizenship is related to the

personal, social and emotional development of children. It is within this context that the following appears, as part of the “Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education”, as defined by the Portuguese Ministry of Education:

**“Personal and social development is a wide-ranging area, given that all curriculum components must help promote attitudes and values in students which allow them to become conscientious, united citizens and enable them to solve life problems. Pre-school education should also encourage the development of children, given their full integration in society as autonomous, free, united beings” (Portuguese Ministry of Education, 1997: 51).**

By means of these wide-ranging areas, it becomes possible to clarify and counteract the overload of discriminatory stereotypes which are present in the everyday lives of children and pass by subtly and unconsciously, through explicit and hidden curricula, and in the materials and resources used as well as in the attitudes of the very adults who care for them. However, teachers, educators and other education professions are not always made aware of an education that promotes greater gender equality. Studies show that teacher/pupil interactions are guided by attitudes, behaviours and differentiated expectations based on sex (see, for example, Luísa Saavedra, 2005; Cristina Rocha, 2009). This process is not a conscious one, which is why it has not been identified as a problem. Nevertheless, girls and boys do not have equal opportunities in the school space, as in the case of physical education and sports activities. Thinking about the creation of an early childhood culture crossed by gender means analysing the roles adopted in games and play which are loaded with cultural constructions not always apparent or visible because they are sometimes located on a symbolic or imaginary plane. How can we see them if we generally have our backs turned to the [free] games played by little boys and girls? (Deborah Sayão, 2003)

We feel it is extremely important, in order to understand and appropriate the following chapters, to stress this last statement and, as educators, spend time reflecting more carefully about our educational practices and the need to de-

construct this statement.

In the same way, the complexity underlying education for citizenship and the promotion of gender equality answers a difficult, complex and multidimensional assessment process? We ask the educational institutions of today for training in the exercise of citizenship, development of social skills and how to live with others; we ask for an education of values, that is, guidance for the overall development of individuals. Consequently, we must implement assessment practices that constitute opportunities for development and which increasingly correspond to the reality of male and female students, taking their sociocultural development into account (Carlinda Leite e Preciosa Fernandes, 2001).

We know about the important role of assessment, specifically in transversal areas like those found in personal and social development in its formative aspect. In this context, assessment may be yet another learning opportunity for the child, leaving the educator to singlehandedly take on the responsibility of assessing the processes of knowledge creation. By involving children in this process (and not only in its outcome), this becomes more reflective and participatory, which is (gradually) reflected in situations of true learning, responsibility and autonomy.

As stated earlier, we must take on children’s potential as learners by restoring the view of the child as an interpreter, mediator and author of the educational process (also understood as a communicative process) and accepting that young children also learn complex things and may arrive at adult worlds of reflection and awareness, provided that the means of communication (and motivation!) are adequate and appropriately planned.

It will be equally important to make an effort to recognise and value educational contexts in their broadest sense, learning, knowledge and values that are born in the home and which the kindergarten must respect and integrate as a co-caregiver. This is not a passive reproduction, but rather a reconstruction of those same values in light of a “community life” experience in which learning about equal citizenship is addressed with gender equality.

However, it is important that the educator know how to recognise situations, be aware and know how to observe the games and interactions of children and recognise children themselves as subjects and vehicles of prejudices and stereotypes which also have an influence on the assessment process: through the application of tools, in the work proposed, in established objectives and criteria, in the opinions formulated, in the communication of results, in verbal and non-verbal behaviours, and so on.

In the day-to-day kindergarten, situations frequently occur which lead the educator to mistaken, stereotyped interpretations which reveal the subjectivity of assessment, as well as the pedagogical importance of differentiation, dialogue and the careful analysis of events. As an example, we recall the situation of a crying young boy who was wearing a pink rabbit costume. His teacher believed the reason for such stubbornness was due to the effeminate colour of the costume, which she thought was a hand-me-down from his sister! She asked the child why he was so upset. She then discovered that he wanted to dress up as a fairy (who could fly) and not as a rabbit, because in his opinion the rabbit did not know how to do anything special!

As previously mentioned, a fundamental component of citizenship is associated with issues of gender. As educators, we should therefore analyse and assess our work practices according to certain questions:

- How do we understand gender issues?
- How do we educate for gender issues?
- How do we transform school spaces into spaces where stereotypes of gender, “race” and culture are not created, thanks to the materials that we provide and the way in which we organise our space?
- How do we select games or books?

The finding that pedagogical materials continue to convey stereotyped ideas of men and women and unequal representations about their roles and responsibilities in society prompts concerns that point us not only to early childhood education but also to the continuity in the educational system, specifically the first cycle of basic education. Here, the school textbook takes on a more formal character and behaviours which

match cultural expectations of what is appropriate for little boys and little girls are reinforced and intensified, thus consolidating stereotypes about men and women.

At the same time, the importance of working with families on a subject as important as the organisation of private life, as with the case of gender, needs no justification. However, this is one of the most difficult and sensitive areas of the curriculum: how do we work with children, calling in to question the models which match the models used by their families? How do we work with children without questioning these models?

Firstly, it is essential that educators begin by conducting a self-analysis of their own positions on the topic of equal rights and opportunities in gender: what is their stance on the need to promote more equal rights and opportunities between the male and female sex?

The unconscious devaluation of these questions may lead to a counterproductive effect on children because they may reproduce, even involuntarily, gender stereotypes in attitudes and practices.

It is essential to describe the specific nature of each family context, which varies considerably, thus leading to the need for careful reflection adapted to the distinctive features of each context. The best strategy is to promote a reflective attitude that is attentive to educational practices, questioning (always in a way that does not encroach on the family environment, as an intrusive approach may have the opposite effect to that which was intended) the interventions of children and showing them new family models, providing them with more diverse social perspectives.

It is difficult to give a thorough description of the community and family context of children because educators can only have indirect access to this knowledge. For this task, we must attempt to find out: what is the composition of the household in question? Is there a high number of working women? What occupations are the most common? Are there many families who have female housekeepers? Who normally brings the children to kindergarten? Who normally par-

ticipates in meetings and organised activities?

Another way of learning more about the families is to pay attention to the children's conversations, games, drawings, the questions they ask, and the descriptions they provide about their family life.

This assessment is the foundation for inclusive educational practices conducted in early childhood education and should be a fundamental component which leads to the development of more reflective educational practices. However, it is also the most complex and difficult part of this work to carry out. The various suggestions

presented in this publication are intended to promote a basis for a more justified investigation of issues concerning gender and citizenship in pre-school education.

The use of assessment grids, which facilitate (self-)assessment of the work carried out, is an important strategy which may be developed starting from the initial training and continued throughout one's professional career.

Examples of references are also provided in the annexes which can be consulted as support for educators in this work.

2.

# GENDER, CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION: PRATICAL SUGESTIONS

## 2.1.

## Organising the educational environment

In early childhood education, more than at any educational level, the organisation of the educational environment becomes especially important because it is the basis for the development of inclusive educational practices in which boys and girls are able to identify themselves and learn basic citizenship principles.<sup>34</sup>

However, stereotyped ideas can sometimes manifest in the way the space of early childhood educational institutions is organised. “In the kindergarten classroom, there should be differentiated spaces for boys and girls, with the colours and toys that they enjoy the most” Ana (2008). This excerpt from a text written by an eighteen year-old female student who wants to be an early childhood educator reveals how excessive differentiations in the roles assigned to the male and female sex predominate, excessive differentiations—also present in the media, books, etc., to which children are exposed - affect children’s development and learning from the earliest age.

In fact, by observing the organisation of the activity rooms and the kinds of materials they have available, we often find situations which, by strengthening preconceived ideas and behaviours related to gender issues, reinforce the distance between little boys and little girls. To begin with, let us examine to what extent the existing

activity areas (and the way they are organised) influence children’s behaviour in this domain. The “house” area, for example: to what extent has it been organised to be appealing above all to little girls? What about the “garage” area? Furthermore, how do male and female educators intervene in these areas? How do they react when they observe activities that reveal gender-based stereotypes?

Likewise, we must also consider how the walls of the room are decorated, what images stand out, to what extent do these images lead to roles specifically assigned to little boys and girls, women and men. Do they or do they not lead to an inclusive representation of both sexes? We recall one poster for Easter in which the hen is distinguished from the rooster not by its crest, but by the apron it is wearing!

These questions can also be asked of the choice of games, educational materials and books that are present in the room: what images are assigned predominantly to little boys and girls, to men and women?

Some examples will support the discussion of these questions.

Firstly, what activity areas exist in the classrooms? Why? What is their purpose? What are they called, how are they organised, what materials and equipment do they have?

Observe the two figures below.

<sup>34</sup>We base all the examples presented here on studies that have been conducted with students, educators and children from the institutions who work with us. To all of them, THANK YOU VERY MUCH for the information provided on the most appropriate way to work with issues of gender and citizenship in the education of young children.



**FIGURE 3 – The “house” area, situation A**



**FIGURE 4 – The “house” area, situation B**



In light of the examples presented here, which do you think would lead to a more inclusive practice that does not reinforce stereotyped ideas about roles assigned to men and women? To what extent does this organisation influence children's choices?

What role can the educator play? For starters, he or she must be attentive to what children say and suggest and question the motives that guide their choices and behaviours. This is the starting point for the organisation of an inclusive educational environment.

As mentioned previously, the choice of materials is a basic issue which the educator must heed when organising his or her work. Of course, a lot of material remains from one year to the next which children bring from home and cannot be carefully selected. But even poor examples can be the starting point for an interesting activity, leading children to questions themselves, seek alternative solutions, and so on.

The examples shown lead to different practices as regards the roles assigned to both sexes: what kind of intervention can the educator perform in these two cases? If we consider example B, which shows more egalitarian situations, we can work with countless situations related to children's everyday lives. But even example A, which shows more stereotyped situations, could be a good starting point for working with children. They could be used to "re"-construct the game, invent new rules, or even create a new game about occupations, with more egalitarian offers.

Books and films also require attention, as they can also set the theme to reflect on gender issues and the roles assigned to men and women.

Let us imagine that the educator (female or male) decides to explore a story in which the female characters, besides being underrepresented in number, have stereotyped, negative reactions, such as in the text below.

**FIGURE 5 – Examples of two bingo games about occupations, Examples A and B**



Early childhood educator	Mail carrier	Early childhood educator	Detective
Mechanic	Dancer	Pilot	Tailor

**TABLE 1 – Example of a story****FIGURE 6 –  
An illustration from the story**

Paulino and Januário were brothers. Marcelino and Zira were brother and sister; they were twins. The four were cousins and they were spending the holidays with Zira's dog, Tum, at the home of Uncle Alberto.

One night, after their uncle and auntie left the house and the four were in bed, they heard a noise and saw a light coming from downstairs.

Two thieves had come to steal Uncle Alberto's notebooks and computer, but they did not know his niece and nephews were at home. The three boys quickly went downstairs and

peered in to see how they would solve the situation. Zira was afraid, but she didn't want to be alone without the boys, and maybe they needed Tum, so she went downstairs as well. The boys thought of a plan.

Paulino and Januário turned out the lights and then, using a toy tape recorder, they pretended that the police were coming. When the thieves became frightened and wanted to run away, Marcelino commanded Tum to attack their legs so that instead of escaping through the front door they went into a room with no windows. Because it was still dark inside, they truly were confused. The three boys then closed the door and leaned against the other side to prevent the thieves from knocking it down. Zira, who was still very frightened, rang her mum to tell her what happened.

She was crying so hard she could barely speak, but her mother understood her and rang the police. Meanwhile, Uncle Alberto and Auntie Clara came home. Whilst Uncle Alberto rang the police again, Auntie Clara helped Zira stop crying. The police arrived quickly and took the thieves away. Everyone was very happy and Auntie Clara cooked steak for everybody. Guarding thieves makes you hungry! And of course, a large piece of steak was given to the courageous Tum.

There are many questions about this story which we can ask children. For example, why was Zira the only one crying and so frightened? In light of the responses (e.g., if children answer that it happened because "she is younger", remind them that she is Marcelino's twin sister), we can question the relationship between biological identity and personality traits (that is, the relationship between sex and gender), asking for and giving examples of brave women and girls.

It is also possible to use the text as a basis to explore the relationship of men and women to scientific work, reminding them that in Portugal, many scientists are women and there are also great male chefs. Likewise, there are male and female thieves, and so on.

Lastly, after the discussion, we can suggest an exercise for the children in which they recreate the story. Following those guidelines and looking back at earlier child-educator interventions, in the new version both Uncle Alberto and Auntie Clara could be, for example, scientists, and Uncle Alberto could also be a great steak chef.

There are assessment grids which the educator can use or create to assess the images and texts from books in order to understand what roles are assigned to males and females. The educator can carry out this analysis on children and the work can serve as a foundation for the development of various projects, such as the de/re-construction of the story, structuring new books, and so on.

**TABLE 2 – Possible ways of de-/re-constructing stories**

There are several possible ways to approach the work of de-/re-constructing stories so that children may diversify the models which they typically face.

This work may be done using the entire narrative or just one part.

a) The educator's de-/re-construction of the narrative for pre-school children may involve modifications to the following:

Title;

Language;

Action or main plot and sub-plot;

Physical space and/or time of the story;

Characters: by changing their importance in the narrative's economy; by changing the roles performed, the physical and/or psychological features, replacing one sex with another, adding a new character and/or removing one of the characters in the scene, etc.;

Focus: telling the same story from a different point of view;

Modes of expression: dialogue and/or monologue.

b) The de-/re-construction of the narrative, conducted by the educator in collaboration

with the children, may be the object of the following strategies:

Present the end or beginning of a narrative to the children and invent a new one with them (through a dialogue backed by images such as photographs, drawings, etc.);

Imagine the continuation of a narrative by following, for example, the method of *L'Ours fariné* [a French children's book by Jean-Loup Trassard], as suggested in *Former des enfants lecteurs* (Developing Young Readers) (Paris, 1984). According to this method, the educator reads or tells an episode from the narrative and the children invent a possible sequence of events. This sequence of events is then compared to the one written by the author;

Create a new text based on the comparison between a sexist text and a non-sexist text (carefully prepared by the male or female educator) by means of a discussion with children;

Read a sexist text and invite a member of the community to comment on a non-sexist perspective, then work together (educator/guest/children) at the same time on a project to de-/re-construct the text according to presented suggestions.

In Ana da Silva et al. (2001: 24).

## 2.2.

# Organisation of the group

The way in which the organisation of the group is planned, closely tied to the time-space organisation of the room, is not always conducive to educational practices that encourage equal participation by little boys and girls.

The rules that are defined and the way in which small group projects are organised sometimes reinforce excessive differentiation between boys and girls that must be rethought.

In this regard, it is important to begin by thinking about the expectations of both sexes, e.g., understanding the features that the educator attributes to a *good male student* and a *good female student*, to what extent these do or do not coincide, and why.

The image of the good male student is often different, in terms of discipline and social performance, from the image of the *good female student*. This excessive differentiation, a typical feature of educational practices, leads to excessively differentiated behaviours that have repercussions on school performance.

If there is greater tolerance for undisciplined

behaviours of boys, this excessive tolerance ends up harming their integration in school and failures to adequately prepare them to be more persistent and attentive to educational learning tasks. Greater permissiveness towards boys may also make them less sensitive—and less attentive—to established warnings and disciplinary rules, which may also affect their personal development and the way they learn to respect authority figures.

The same can be said for the requirements to follow established rules: in some cases, young girls are assigned the task of helping keep order in the group, with greater demands placed on them as regards behaviour.

Considering the examples shown, what are your main differences and similarities? Why? What is your typical intervention like?

How could your intervention lead to a more inclusive practice that does not reinforce stereotypes about the roles assigned to both sexes?

In groups, it is often observed that the rule is to assist the youngest children. Is this rule followed equally by little boys and girls? How does the educator intervene if it is not followed?

**TABLE 3 – Examples of behaviours normally attributed to boys and girls**

Think of three examples of bad behaviours that you typically attribute:
- to boys
- to girls

It is important that the educator have an attitude that is attentive to and involved in the way little boys and girls organise themselves in the activity room and during playtime, how they solve their conflicts, how they assume leadership, etc.

The intervention of the educator is essential in order to discuss with children the reasons for the differences observed, to what extent they are reinforced by the children, or to what extent they lead to excessively differentiated educational practices.

## 2.3.

## The role of the educator.

### Examples of activities

Activities involving dialogue and discussion seem to be a privileged environment to address issues of gender in the pre-school context. Discussion is understood as a strategy based on active verbal interaction between the educator and the child or among children themselves because of a problematic situation, question, or controversial topic. Accordingly, it will involve an exchange of ideas with the active learning and participation of all (Marques and Vieira, 2005), stressing the importance of times to come together.

It will also highlight the importance of defining a plan involving a series of steps that allow the questioning to arrive at the previously established objectives. However, we know that moments of discussion may be rigorously planned and often emerge from situations experienced in the kindergarten. We must take advantage of any opportunity to have a dialogue about a behaviour or situation, statement, opinion, book, or image, mainly with respect to citizenship and gender issues.

According to the socio-constructivist perspective, the discussion strategy should involve the encouragement of group interaction in order to keep children mentally engaged in that which should be learned. Didactic skills are required to manage a discussion that is more organised and formal in strategic terms as well as a small, spontaneous dialogue (timely and therefore less formal). One must know how to start the discussion, ask questions, assess, overcome resistance (Juan Diaz Bordenave and Adair Pereira, 1991), and so on.

Based on an adaptation of the proposals of the authors cited above (and because discussion as a strategy for the formation and change of attitudes can have many variations) we shall highlight some techniques for communicative participation which can be used to structure the approach to gender issues with kindergarten-aged children.

#### *Discussion group.*

Working with a gender-related question, problem or controversy to be discussed by everyone for a certain length of time, or until a solution or answer is found. A basic principle of this strategy is to encourage participation by all the children, listening to their opinions and suggestions. Consensus does not have to be compulsory, as that implies an effort to avoid leadership which controls or imposes one point of view. However, it is important that children realise the equal participation of all should be encouraged, for example, during activity planning times, decision-making, to overcome problems facing the group, and so on.

#### *Brainstorming or creative discussion.*

This is a way to stimulate and generate new ideas rooted in the commitment of the educator and students to view themselves as a team. The rule is established that each one is capable of producing ideas about the initial topic and that it is also essential to plan and define a kind of log. These ideas must be assessed and (through the participation of all) redirected to questions of gender equality and democratic citizenship. This could form the foundation of projects about the issues in question.

### *Role-playing.*

This involves the simulation or acting out of roles. It offers a fun way to present a problem, situation, event, or objects by involving the recreation or reversal of stereotyped roles, e.g., in relation to occupations, specific everyday situations that arise, and so on. Given the distancing allowed by this technique, the aim is for all individuals to live their roles and identify with the character they represent, thus achieving a different understanding of attitudes and behaviours about gender (in)equalities, their clarification and an educational approach.

### *Dramatisation of situations.*

Children will be able to try out difficult gender-based situations that are real (or could become a reality) in the protected space of the kindergarten. Combined with role-playing, dramatisation can involve the full theatrical staging of a situation, with children as the protagonists, encouraging them to exchange roles. A girl may be asked to display a supposedly masculine behaviour in a specific aspect of the theme, and vice versa. In addition to the specific gender roles dramatised by the children, it is important to understand the underlying theme and factors which, in the child's understanding, determine the various expressions of behaviour (of men and women). All children should be encouraged to speak about their own thoughts and reasons why they chose to exhibit certain behaviours and not others (in the representation of masculine and feminine roles).

### *Case study.*

The educator gives the group an example to study. It is presented verbally, in a written document or another educational format created for this purpose. It can be a real case, adapted, or entirely fictitious, but it should be as detailed as possible. This technique should favour the exchange of opinions and a variety of perspectives, without the intent to find an answer. The analysis and understanding of a situation experienced by other people will lead to applications for use in other situations. Educators may start with a case from their classroom involving their group of children. They may select a difficult situation relating to gender issues which they wish to change, a positive one which they wish to reinforce, or a problematic situation, thereby

opening the debate, listening to the children and their opinions, reinforcing democratic and democratising practices in the development of dialogue and discussion.

*Strategies to clarify values and change attitudes are developed according to the principle that people can be led to change their attitude about a given reality by presenting new information about certain characteristics or qualities that make them change their understanding. Consequently, we may distinguish strategies for discussion from strategies for persuasive communication, which include the following:*

### *Photo essay.*

*This consists of using photographs as forms of expression of language. This is a strategy which incorporates the symbolic image and photographs that question, speak, and provoke speech in teaching and learning processes. The images should be of high quality, but above all they should be symbolic, expressive, evocative and able to produce positive and valuable reactions in students. These images should be dealt with in depth and should especially serve their communicative and expressive purpose, which could be somewhat removed from a strategy of discussion in its strictest sense. The educator may use photographic records from the children's everyday family life or everyday life in the kindergarten, images from magazines, advertising, or works of art, also using the computer and multimedia formats.*

### *The testimonial technique.*

Someone is invited to speak to the group about an interesting or representative experience relating to gender issues, for example, as part of his or her professional activities. This technique may also involve the testimony/disclosure, to a previously selected audience (family, other classes from the same educational institution, other institutions, etc.), about a project, activities and experiences developed and lived by the children themselves.

Knowing how to dialogue is a basic strategy used to confront moral questions, analysis, understanding personal and social realities and moral empathy. The educator should have the skills to direct the personal dialogue or debate because most techniques on the education of



values, attitudes and norms have a phase in which dialogue is essential. We must value every moment of an activity and knowing how to have a dialogue, before and after it occurs (José Antonio Blasco and María Remedios Mancheño, 2001: 23).

As mentioned previously, most kindergarten classrooms are organised into activity areas. Observing how they function and the way in which the educator intervenes are aspects which require careful (self-) evaluation. We may observe,

for example, that in general there are activity areas chosen to a greater or lesser degree by boys and girls and in addition to the way in which they are organised, educators influence the activity areas because of the way in which they support and encourage the activities.

What follows are some elements which are important for an educational reflection that leads to an assessment of children's behaviour in those areas, as explained below.

**TABLE 4 – Examples of interventions by an educator when dealing with choices made by children**



**FIGURE 7 — Illustration of Situation A**

**Situation A**

Miguel never chooses to go to the “house” area. Even so, he spends his time bothering his male and female classmates who play in this area, calling them names, putting down what they do. The female educator is aware that this behaviour corresponds to the conflict felt between his desire to play in this area and internalised expectations about gender; this conflict makes him feel ill at ease about making this choice.



**FIGURE 8 — Illustration of Situation B**

**Situation B**

Maria does not leave the “house” area. She spends her time cooking, washing the dishes, tidying up. She argues that she is learning how to be a housewife.

**Situation C**

Vanessa will play in the “dress-up” area whenever possible. She will not do anything else but try to apply make-up, try on necklaces and other accessories and strike seductive poses in a mirror. When asked, she explains that is what is needed to be a Barbie® doll. She then says that area is only for the girls.

Given the examples shown, what would you have done if you were the educator of this group? Why?

Considering situation A, the educator could, for example, support Miguel's joining of the games in the "house" area, speak with him to help him become aware of his contradictions and fears, encourage him to set up activities there on his own or in a group, and so on.

In situation B, it could be worthwhile to guide Maria towards trying other activities, listen to her reasons, try to understand her fears and contradictions, help her interact more with her classmates, boys and girls, for example.

As regards situation C, one way to intervene would be to talk with Vanessa and encourage

her to ask herself questions. Helping her to find other motivations would be equally effective.

There are no "right" answers: their (in)appropriateness depends on the contexts and the specific nature of each situation. Nevertheless, an attentive and involved attitude on the part of the educator is fundamental. Listening to children, asking them questions, encouraging them to ask questions about their own motives and presenting them with different perspectives are ways to act in situations which all early childhood education professionals must face.

As regards guided activities, children's performances are also differentiated. These differences are evident at distinct levels, from conversations to ways of participating, which also requires reflection by the educator in such situations.

**TABLE 5 – Examples of educator interventions during a group conversation**



**FIGURE 9 — Illustration of Situation A**

**Situation A**

It is Monday and children are talking about how their weekend went. Rita says she helped her mother with the gardening whilst her oldest brother helped her father cook. Some little boys and girls laugh and say that in her house, everything is backwards. The educator asks why they are reacting that way and asks them to let Rita finish speaking.



**FIGURE 10 — Illustration of Situation B**

**Situation B**

Miguel is going to have a birthday. He says he is sad because nobody is going to give him the present that he wanted: a doll. One classmate says "that's for girls". Miguel says that it "can also be for boys", that boys also have to know how to take care of babies and that's why they can play with dolls. They all begin to talk at the same time and make fun of Miguel. The educator asks them to be quiet and tells Miguel to talk to his father and mother about the present he wants for his birthday.

Given these examples, how would you have acted if you were in the educator's position?

As mentioned previously, the meeting of ideas is a fundamental strategy. The educator has a central role by moderating, encouraging, guiding and supporting the explanation of different

points of view, providing a space in which all children may participate.

These two spontaneous situations may allow children to reflect on the social roles that are/ can be played by both sexes by presenting them with various situations they are familiar with.

### TABLE 6 – Example of an educator's intervention in children's work

#### Situation A

Ana is drawing a very elegant-looking lady wearing a dress and a very sophisticated hairstyle. She says she is as pretty as a Barbie® doll, but her name is also "Ana" and that is what she will look like when she grows up.

Ana is a very chubby girl who has a large collection of Barbies®, which she talks about all the time.

#### Situation B

Rui is drawing himself watching a football match on the television with his father whilst his mother cooks dinner in the kitchen. The educator asks whether he and his father can cook with his mother in the kitchen so that she can watch the match. Rui says no, that his mother is the one who cooks and takes care of the house because his father works to earn money. The educator knows that Rui's mother is a businesswoman and asks him, "So the mother can't work to earn money as well?" Rui says that "it's not the same thing".

Bearing these examples in mind, what would you do if you were in that educator's place? How would you use the two events for a project with these children?

In all groups, there are many situations of this kind which educators face every day. Given the various situations which occur, an attitude of participatory listening which leads children to question themselves is fundamental.

In this regard, various strategies have already been presented. However, there are many more which each professional must seek out and adapt to his or her style of working. An attitude of alienation or indifference is always the most inappropriate response to any situation because it does not provide children with constructive lessons about gender roles.

In order to support a more participatory attitude by education professionals, we may consider the contributions to a *philosophy for children*.

Questions linked to citizenship and gender can easily correlate with philosophical disciplines such as political philosophy, the philosophy of

action, axiology, ethics, aesthetics, and so on.

Pedagogical reflection on these questions must be addressed in the (broader) context of a philosophical reflection which, in its purest and most original meaning, should start at the earliest ages. Authors of reference such as Matthew Lipman or Gareth Mathews also suggest that early childhood is the most philosophical phase of the human being. It is in early childhood that we are able to achieve true depth in thought and the philosophical exercise. However, children's propensity for philosophy is not used and encouraged properly in educational terms. According to Lipman (quoted in Kohan, 1999: 84) "making philosophy is not a question of identity, but one of scrupulously and courageously reflecting on what we think is important".

Inspired by the research communities of John Dewey, Mathew Lipman (1995) then proposed a very specific programme known as the Philosophy for Children. In general, he proposes the following objectives: improve reasoning ability; develop creativity; encourage personal and interpersonal growth; develop ethical comprehension; and develop the ability to find meaning in

experiences. These goals cut across the entire study and make it possible to address questions of gender.

Lipman suggests that the educational space be turned into a community of inquiry and investigation, where individuals learn in solidarity and community, where the equality of participants,

their tolerance, the communication of ideas and the rejection of violence make this same community an appropriate space for the discovery, application and discussion of knowledge that aim at being considered as true.

The framework of this method, with certain specificities and fundamental steps, can inspire

### TABLE 7 – Here is one concrete example, based on the method designed by Lipman



**FIGURE 11** — Illustration of a situation showing an example of work using the “philosophy for children” method

An early childhood educator who has been concerned for some time about gender issues in his kindergarten is collecting and compiling some images—photographs of everyday events in the kindergarten, newspaper clippings, illustrations from some children’s books, children’s drawings—which express situations, events and behaviours (here, the *Viver em igualdade* [Living in equality]<sup>35</sup> cards could be a good resource) which do not make sense or are socially controversial in terms of gender issues. Here, for example, we are speaking about representations of female bullfighters, firefighters, construction workers or weightlifters; male hairdressers or men wearing aprons in the kitchen, sewing or changing nappies on babies; little boys in the “house” area giving babies a bottle; little girls playing with action figures; boys dressed up as fairies and girls dressed up as mechanics; girls playing football, and so on.

After compiling this collection, he makes a picture book that is very appealing to children. He decides to work with the book, using some of the essential steps from the philosophy for children methodology.

He plans a group of philosophy sessions for children based on a display of the images from this book. In each session, two or three images are used in reference to a unifying theme or problem, such as gender and occupations, gender and household tasks, gender and toys, etc.

Thus, in each session he shows the images to the children and asks each one, without exception, to formulate a question about those images. He records each question on a panel, accompanied by the name of the author (including the educator). At the end he asks the children to vote for the question they would like to see discussed by all. Once the question is chosen, it is discussed, a process repeated at every scheduled session.

In each session, the educator arranges the children in a circle (so that nobody is implied as the discussion leader) and tries to ensure that all children present their opinion and argument—which usually appears as an example or testimony from their everyday life—stimulating free participation, avoiding judgments, allowing children to argue and counter-argue among themselves and find (or not) their own response and/or project to develop.

<sup>35</sup>Deck of cards entitled *Viver em igualdade* [Living in equality], published by the CIG (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, 2009).

some activities as part of this pedagogical guide because they point to a way of conducting discussions and philosophical reflection on the most varied topics and problems.

The educator must be philosophically “with-drawn” and “reserved”, facilitating the discussion, ensuring that rules are followed, but rarely expressing his or her point of view. Thus bearing in mind the role of the educator (understood as someone who organises, moderates, assists, motivates, co-operates and participates), we may distinguish certain stages:

1. Select the text, image, story (or chapter of the story) that will be read and/or shown to the children, chosen according to the themes, ideas or problems that it suggests;
2. Make an in-depth analysis, find the main ideas, arguments, questions and variations of the theme that may appear (implicitly or explicitly) and be brought up by the children;
3. Plan and prepare the activities which may help clarify, guide and stimulate the debate;
4. Establish and plan the dynamics of the project: determine how the reading will be done—dramatised, illustrated, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, by audio recording—or how will the image(s) be shown; decide whether the session will be

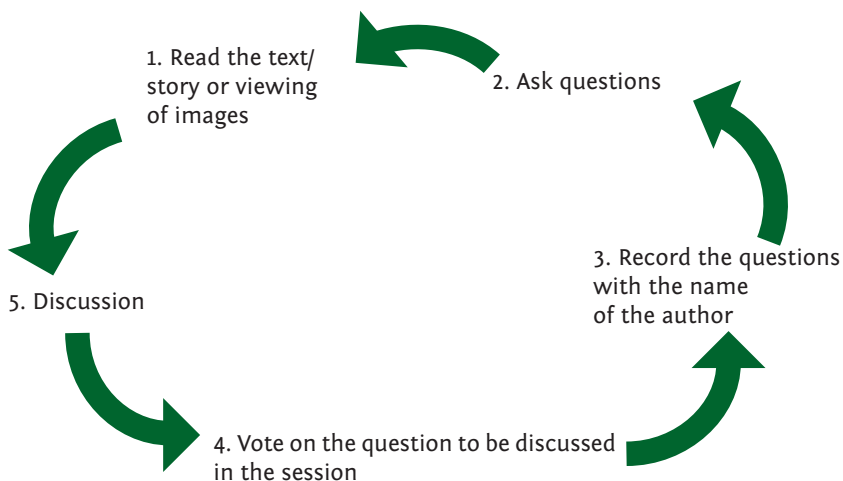
recorded on video; how will the debate be held—will there be an earlier debate in small groups or will it first take place in a large group; how will the children’s questions be recorded; will there be activities to make materials related to the chosen theme, etc. (adapted from Navarro, 2009).

We must emphasise the need for continuity in session development. The effectiveness of the method to develop the competences and objectives in question requires not only time but also a habitus, a continuity which favours children’s comprehension of the process and their adherence to it.

Here we must consider the importance of educators’ sensitivity to the degree of child involvement, as assessment of the disposition and motivation for the discussion underway may cause a pedagogical management of time and the children’s own participation, thereby leading the educator to choose to continue the discussion another day or simply shorten it.

As already mentioned, we must point out the importance of transforming these kinds of regular sessions into a perspective of continuity and progression, namely so that children’s involvement in sessions and discussions increases in accordance with the awareness/recognition of their own dynamic.

**FIGURE 12—Chart summarising the “philosophy for children” sessions**



## 2.4.

## (Self-)evaluation

Following the questions already analysed at the level of group organisation, we must consider the way in which educators process the assessment and the way in which this acts as an incentive for reflection and evolution of the children's learning.

Following the questions already analysed at the level of group organisation, we must consider the way in which educators process the assessment and the way in which this acts as an incentive for reflection and evolution of the children's learning.

When we speak of assessment, we can distinguish two distinct levels which complement each other: The (self-)assessment of the educator, and the (self-)assessment of the children.

The way in which educators process and develop the assessment is a fundamental strategy for the evolution of their work and can also encourage children to reflect on their behaviours and attitudes and on the information they are learning.

Assessing the evolution of learning can arise from situations not planned in advance (but explored in order to provide that assessment) or result from a previously planned situation that only appears accidental. Educators may also combine the two forms of action. For example, they can explore a situation that occurred by chance and then deliberately present the same or a similar situation to the children and compare the results. Inversely, they may create a situation for assessment and then, when an identical situation occurs spontaneously, look for similarities and differences in how it is received by the children.

Most of the contexts provide pretexts to assess representations by children on gender roles: themes, characterisations and descriptions of relationships among the characters of children's books, films, or television programmes, drawings and narratives done by the children themselves, marketing, descriptions of toys, etc.

In figure 13, we find a group of children interacting during playtime.

Notice how, in figure 14, there is no interaction between boys and girls (playtime situation).

How would we work on these situations with children? To what extent could they be a pretext to discuss with children how they assess what it is to be a "boy" or "girl" and gender-based behaviours?

See also figure 15, inspired by a children's book about scenes of life at home.

Besides the situations which occur naturally, the work done by children may also be a pretext for the educator to work with children on the way they represent differences and roles assigned to men and women. In this regard, we present some examples of drawings made by children.

**FIGURE 13 – Playtime situation, Example A**

*Image for reproduction and discussion in the “classroom” context*



**FIGURE 14 – Playtime situation, Example B**

*Image for reproduction and discussion in the “classroom” context*





**FIGURE 15 – Situation taken from a children’s book**

*Image for reproduction and discussion in the “classroom” context*



### FIGURE 16 – Drawing by child A

Image for reproduction and discussion in the “classroom” context



Caption: “The father watches television whilst the mother cleans the house”

### FIGURE 17 – Drawing by child B

Image for reproduction and discussion in the “classroom” context



*Caption: “I like Mum because she plays football with me.”*

These are examples which can be developed by the educator. In addition to facilitating greater knowledge by children, this work can be used by the educator to create a better understanding of children's representations of gender or used to make them question those representations.

Let us observe how a project resulting from an educational need that is apparently outside this area has been used for assessment and, simultaneously, the deconstruction of gender representations in a group of children aged four and five.

### **TABLE 8 – Example of a project involving the group**

One of the children in the classroom has symptoms which are difficult to diagnose. She is admitted to hospital to undergo tests. The other children become rather anxious. To calm them down, the educator suggests they play dress-up, turning the room into a hospital. The children talk about the spaces (A&E waiting room, the wards, reception, doctor's offices) and services that make up the hospital. They also discuss what happens there: people try to discover what is wrong with someone, medicines are prescribed, and people stay close to healthcare staff so that they are sure help is nearby. The children conclude that the hospital is a place where care is taken with people and where they are cared for. The educator then asks the children whether all people take or should take care of each other, or if only some people should. All the children say that everyone should take care of each other and that it does not depend on whether they are children or adults, boys or girls, etc.

The activity continues, practising various situations with the children: a visit to A&E, performing laboratory tests, taking x-rays, and so on. The educator notices that the girls almost systematically appear in the role of patients/victims to be aided by the boys, or in the role of receptionists and assistants of the boy rescuers.

She asks the children to make a note of their activities and list the roles they played. The children then make a list of the activities they did.

The educator explains to the children that, despite their previous conversation, the boys and girls divided the tasks among themselves in a stereotyped fashion. She asks them again if they think women can help as well as be helped, and whether the same does not happen with boys. The response continues to be an affirmative one.

The educator then has the children look at the list they made with their choices with the previous affirmative statement. The children recognise the contradiction and, together with the educator, give examples of other situations involving gender roles which contain contradictions between what is said and what is done.

The educator then proposes to the children the rule of thinking what they say, saying what they think. The rule is accepted unanimously.

All these examples can serve as a starting point for working with children individually or in a group, encouraging them to evaluate what they think and do and the differences between what they think and do.

The same principle can be applied to educators, who are often faced with their own contradictions. What they say does not always match what they do, which implies the need for an attentive attitude and constant (self-)assessment.

Above all, it is essential to reflect on the way they think of such sensitive questions linked to the experiences of each person from early childhood onwards.

How does each early childhood education professional assess the encouragement of an inclusive practice between boys and girls? Why? These are the initial questions underlying and guiding every project carried out.

We present the following analytical guide so that you may (self-)assess your work and then plan an intervention which encourages greater gender equality.

**(Self-)assessment questionnaire**

**TABLE 9:**

**KINDERGARTEN:**

Public network \_\_\_\_\_ Private network/private welfare institutions (IPSS) \_\_\_\_\_

Private network/for-profit \_\_\_\_\_

No. of existing kindergarten classrooms: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of children in the group:

No. of boys

No. of girls

Ages of the children in the group:

No. of children aged 3

No. of children aged 4

No. of children aged 5

No. of children over the age of 5

Are there children with special educational needs?

\_\_\_\_\_

What were the criteria underlying the organisation of the group?

**DESCRIPTION OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

Outline of the existing activity areas:

For each area, which activities can be chosen by the children on a daily basis?

- How are the children's choices for these activities organised?

Is there an established system of planning? Yes  No

These choices are made: Individually  As a group

Is there a planning chart? Yes  No

- How many children can be in each area? \_\_\_\_\_

- How much time can the children spend in these activity areas each day? \_\_\_\_\_

- Which activities are selected most often by the children? \_\_\_\_\_

- Are there differences in the choices made by the little girls and boys? If so, what are they?

\_\_\_\_\_

- Which activities are selected least often by the children? \_\_\_\_\_

- Will these choices be influenced by the choices of their classmates? Yes  No

- Will the choices be influenced by the time usually spent by the educator assisting each of these activities?

Yes  No

**(Self-)assessment questionnaire****TABLE 9:****PLAYTIME/OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

On average, how much time do they spend each day in playtime? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they typically with the educator? Yes  No

Are they typically with the assistant? Yes  No

What typically predominates: Free activities  Guided activities

Are there differences in the games played by little girls and boys? Yes  No

If yes, what are the main differences?

\_\_\_\_\_

**ORGANISATION OF SMALL GROUPS**

Are there small groups which are usually organised spontaneously within the larger group?

Yes  No

- These groups are mixed, made up of:

Boys and girls: Yes  No

Children of different ages: Yes  No

- The small groups organised in the classroom remain together during playtime, outside the classroom:

Yes  No

- The educator intervenes in the organisation of these groups: Yes  No

If yes, how?

\_\_\_\_\_

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS**

Other differences in behaviours of boys and girls:

Within the classroom \_\_\_\_\_

At playtime/outside the classroom \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAWINGS – Record the answers**

Ask three little girls and three little boys from the group to draw and describe the following, separately:

- What is the father doing (at home and outside the home) - What is the mother doing (at home and outside the home)

After the drawings are done/answers are recorded, ask what the children think about the differences between what the following people are doing:

- Men and women - little boys and girls

Other important observations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date form was completed \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

After completing this form, state three aspects which need to change, why they should change and the implications these changes could have in the lives of the children of the group.

## 2.5.

## Involvement of families and community

As mentioned earlier, the participation of fathers and mothers in kindergarten activities is essential in all curriculum areas, but it is especially important in an area as sensitive as personal and social development, specifically when learning about values related to gender and citizenship.

The child internalises certain stereotyped ideas from a very early age. The role of significant adults—which includes the father and mother who are the most prominent, but not exclusively so—is decisive. When addressed explicitly as part of a reflexive analysis which takes into account the cognitive abilities of children, even potential disagreements between ideas in family life and the kindergarten will stimulate their development and learning.

However, this is probably the primary challenge which faces early childhood educators.

In this regard, it becomes especially important to pay attention to the family environment and the (self-)assessment of the way in which families are led to understand and participate in the work of the kindergarten. Likewise, it is important to answer all questions which may be the object of ambiguous interpretations.

Put another way, in education, especially when working with young children, there is always an enormous “ideological load”. Clarifying and explaining it is not easy for educators to do, but it is essential to establish a relationship of trust, even when the ideas are not the same as those

conveyed by their families.

As mentioned earlier, this includes an explanation of the principles that form the basis of the entire curriculum development and should be presented to the families. In anticipating or responding to their concerns when accompanying the work carried out in the kindergarten, it is essential to listen to and involve those responsible for education—of both sexes—in this work.

What follows are some examples of projects examining questions of gender and citizenship and created with the aim of involving families.

### **TABLE 10 – Examples of everyday situations**

#### **Situation A**

Michael, Anne, Caroline, Mary, Teresa and Susan are playing in the “house” area. They prepared a snack and invited their classmates after spending the entire afternoon dedicated to this activity. It is now time to clean up. Miguel leaves the house and says he is going to playtime because he is not a girl who has to clean house. If you were the educator of this classroom, how would you intervene? This could be a good example to discuss and work on in a large group! But what would you do if a family member came to the kindergarten criticising the educator for making the boy do female tasks? This could be a good starting point for speaking with the family about rules defined in the kindergarten classroom, where all must participate in daily tasks regardless of whether they are boys or

girls. This may help the family to later reflect on the rules that exist in the domestic sphere as regards boys and girls being able or obligated to do the same activities.

### Situation B

A mother brings her two children to kindergarten, a boy aged three and a girl aged five. Laughing, she tells the daughter's teacher that she can tell that her son is a boy because "he already gives his sister orders and he's much cleverer, even though he's younger". What is the teacher's response? Perhaps it would be worthwhile to invite the mother to come to kindergarten more often to get to know her daughter's behaviour among other children and demystify this preconceived notion that boys are cleverer whilst also observing that boys can also achieve their objectives without giving orders.

At the same time, we must consider the growing diversity of the social and family contexts in which the children live. For many years, our minds were populated with ideas about so-called "traditional" families that no longer exist.

When educators describe the family contexts of children with whom they work, they are increasingly confronted by a complex network that continues to grow. There are children who live only with their father; children who live only with their mother; children who, in addition to their biological father or mother, have a "new" father or mother from another marriage; children whose care is shared between the father and mother; children who live with two fathers or two mothers (homosexual or bisexual); children who live with their grandparents, children who live in institutions, and so on.

This diversity requires some reflection: Would it make sense to celebrate Father's Day or Mother's Day as traditionally done in the past? How could we explain this diversity of situations to children? How would families tolerate this diversity?

There are story books which address these ques-

tions and can be very useful in assisting the educator<sup>36</sup>. However, it is primarily in the everyday—through conversation and answers to questions that arise—that these differences can be overcome in a positive way, thus providing children with a stimulating education about the richness of diversity.

These questions can also be asked of ethnic, religious and linguistic differences, the inclusion of children with special educational needs, etc., which cannot be neglected and should be integrated into the day-to-day kindergarten experience.

However, beneath the diversity that increasingly describes the social and family life of children is the promotion of an inclusive education between boys and girls which forms the unforgettable foundation to create true equal opportunities and participation for all.

In this regard, we present some issues which early childhood education professionals can explore with fathers and mothers.

A careful analysis of the consequences of a gender stereotype-conditioned socialisation of younger generations may also legitimise parent-group discussions of other current topics with a significant impact on family and social life. Among the topics which deserve special attention, we may cite the higher rate of road accidents among young men and a higher rate of school leaving, especially during secondary education.

But if the afore mentioned circumstances appear to highlight the damages of male stereotypes, there are countless examples which fathers and mothers may discuss which stress the harmful effects of female stereotypes.

Although the most recent statistics lead public opinion to believe that women have already conquered most areas of work which were previously the domain of men, we must bring to the debate, among other topics, the matter of the "triple shift" worked by women (working women who are also responsible for running

<sup>36</sup>Bacelar, Manuela (2008), *O livro do Pedro*, Porto: Editora Afrontamento



**TABLE 11 – An example of projects****FIGURE 18 — Situation A****Situation A**

It is Universal Children's Day and the educators invite those in charge of teaching the boys to prepare a children's party in which they must perform various tasks, many of these typically associated with females (cooking, sewing burlap fabric to make cushions, etc.) The event allows children to observe traditionally feminine tasks being done by males. The initiative is also important because it is often the mothers or grandmothers who make themselves available to participate in kindergarten activities.

**Situation B**

In a group conversation, the children are talking about the need to ask the president of the parish council (the mother of a girl in the group) for help in buying a computer. One of the boys responds, "Her mum can't be the president of the parish council, she's not a man!" A discussion begins. This argument and the educator's resulting intervention could be the basis for a project in which the group asks the president about her roles, why these can be taken on by men as well as women, etc.

the home) and the damage this can cause to her mental and physical health (such as sleeping less). That is why it cannot be concluded that the apparent quantitative equality is linked to true qualitative equality (in terms of living conditions and welfare of both sexes), or that the problem of inequalities between men and women is an outdated topic. Giving even more urgency to the timeliness of these topics and referring to the most visible aspect of gender violence, we may speak of domestic violence. In Portugal, this is the primary cause of death among young adult females, or even dating violence which, due to its importance (unequal power in intimate relationships) was the theme of a 2009 campaign by the *Commission for Citizenship and*

**Gender Equality (CIG).**

To conclude, we would like to stress that the relevance of the discussion of these topics with parent groups should emphasise the negative role of gender stereotypes, not only in the development of children, but also in the lives of the adults, men and women, who tend to respond to them but perhaps have never been given help in dealing with them critically, thus seeking alternative actions more conducive to values of equality, sharing and mutual respect.

**TABLE 12 – Examples of topics which could be analysed by groups of fathers and mothers**

Unequal distribution of time dedicated to family and household tasks which could be done by both partners, thus relieving the woman of the work overload to which she is usually subjected; The need for and usefulness of explaining to both boys and girls the various issues covered by sex education, for the welfare and health of their sons and daughters;

Unequal free time between men and women for leisure activities (such as sport), which are fundamentally important for a physical and psychological life of quality;

The noticeable imbalance in the distribution of men and women throughout various sectors of work, with so-called male occupations being more valued and better paid than so-called female occupations;

Lack of a sound scientific basis for traditional beliefs that boys would be, for example, better in academic subjects involving the manipulation of numbers, e.g., maths, and that girls would tend to have better language skills and a better ability for interpersonal relationships;

Demystification of the idea that women, because they are able to bear children, are naturally more capable of providing basic care (such as hygiene and nutrition) and childrearing than men;

Highlighting the empirical finding that differences within individuals are greater than those between individuals, thus making it possible that two people of different sexes can be more alike (for example, in terms of personality traits, interests) than two people of the same sex.

(Cristina Vieira, 2007: 110-111)

## 2.6.

# Content areas. Examples of projects

In light of the suggestions already presented, we offer below some examples of possible projects to be addressed in various context areas: personal and social development; expression and communication; awareness of the world.

In the first part, we present examples of projects related to each area in a distinct way, but without contradicting the inclusive features of each area, which cannot be thought of individually. To reinforce this aspect, the second part presents examples of more comprehensive projects, which together link the different content areas.

In broad terms, the projects presented are inspired by their pedagogical content. As mentioned by Isabel Lopes da Silva (2005), this method counteracts the atomisation of learning processes by placing value, in an interconnected manner, on important and motivational learning activities, mobilising various areas of knowledge around a central, overarching theme.

**“With a view to student development and learning, pedagogical projects allow us to integrate a wide range of activities and address different content areas with a common goal which connects the different moments of decision-making, planning, implementation, assessment and communication.”**

**Isabel Lopes da Silva (1998: 99)**

In the various examples shown, there is always a concern about including projects derived from situations which normally arise in the day-to-day kindergarten environment and other projects based on the educator's initiative in accordance with a previous plan defined by on a certain educational goal.

## 2.6.1.

## Personal and social development

The area of personal and social development is a wide-ranging content area that includes, par excellence, matters relating to gender and education for citizenship. However, the cross-cutting nature of this area cannot mean that it is minimised when compared with the other content areas, or that its themes are excessively watered down.

In this regard, we present below some examples of projects included in this area which, despite their inclusive characteristics, have specific work objectives.

**TABLE 13 – Project derived from an everyday situation**



**FIGURE 19 —**  
*Illustration from the project shown*

The classroom teacher asks the children to bring materials that would help them choose gifts to ask Father Christmas for in a letter written in the classroom. In response, a little girl brings a catalogue of toys and games from a large department store, divided stereotypically into three parts: a unisex part for toddlers/babies, a part for girls marked with bright pink borders and a part for boys marked with blue borders. The toys and games in each part are also stereotyped.

The educator asks the girl to show the catalogue to each child, who selects a toy from it. All the children have chosen a toy from the area whose stereotype corresponds to their sex. The educator proposes that they choose a second toy, but from another area. The children make their choice.

The educator asks the children to analyse the prohibition they first felt when choosing toys from the part which was not for them (or with which they did not identify).

They suggest that they set up another catalogue in which there are no divisions between ages and sexes, but where toys are divided, for example,

according to size, the number of players, whether they are games or representations of objects/creatures of the world, etc.

The children pretend to be manufacturers, buyers/sellers of toys and simulate situations in which they question gender stereotypes: a boy who wants a toy assigned to girls, or vice versa; the manufacturer who wants to make dolls for boys but has been told by customers that it is not worth the effort, etc.

The educator discusses one or more of these invented situations with the children.

The children will present their new catalogue to the other classroom and try to convince those children why that catalogue is more interesting than the original one.

Unlike what was initially intended, the main aim of this work was to help demystify the prohibition that there are toys which exist only for boys or only for girls.

### TABLE 14 – Summary of a project planned by the educator with a group of children



FIGURE 20—Illustration of the situation

The educator is aware that the boys (aged four) reject, by and large, the idea that men can be just a stay-at-home dad, or that adult men should share the household tasks. She wants to work with the children on the idea that citizenship is not restricted by gender stereotypes whilst also examining some of the objectives for this content area proposed in the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school Education: sharing power and living democratic values.

1) She talks to the children about Ana, who works outside the home like her husband, and also wants to be a firefighter, just as her husband is a huntsman. They discuss whether women

should be able to have time to hold public office or whether they should be prevented from doing so because they alone are responsible for work related to both the home and family. They discuss the case of Rui, who does not want to work outside the home but only wants to work for his family.

2) The children simulate the roles of Ana and Rui, respectively, in order to better understand the different perspectives of each.

3) The children have a discussion to decide whether Rui may or may not work only at home.

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*<sup>37</sup> in Pictures. They also talk about the declaration of rights of the child and the educator brings the book by Luísa Ducla Soares (2009)<sup>38</sup>. They pay special attention to issues of gender.

4) After this task, the educator talks to them about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and brings the book by Peter, et al. (2008), *We Are All Born Free. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures*<sup>37a</sup>. They also talk about the declaration of rights of the child and the educator brings the book by Luísa Ducla Soares (2009)<sup>37b</sup>. They pay special attention to issues of gender.

<sup>37</sup>Peter, et al (2008). Todos nós nascemos livres. Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos ilustrada (We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures), Prior Velho: Paulinas/Amnesty International.

<sup>38</sup>Luísa Ducla Soares (2009), Os direitos das crianças (The Rights of Children), Barcelos: Editora Civilização

<sup>37a</sup>Peter, et al (2008). Todos nós nascemos livres. Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos ilustrada (We Are All Born Free: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Pictures), Prior Velho: Paulinas/Amnesty International.

<sup>37b</sup>Luísa Ducla Soares (2009), Os direitos das crianças (The Rights of Children), Barcelos: Editora Civilização

## 2.6.2.

## Awareness of the world

The area of awareness of the world also has considerable potential for work based on situations which occur naturally in the life of the group and serve as a pretext for developing studies and various projects. It can also be the foundation for projects planned by the

educator which challenge the children to acquire new knowledge. In the case of gender and education for citizenship, there are many possibilities. To demonstrate, we present below two possible examples to develop.

**TABLE 15 – Project derived from an everyday situation**



**FIGURE 21—Image from the situation shown**

Based on a conversation between two boys overheard in the “garage” area, the educator realises that most of the children think that women cannot drive lorries. She links this conviction to an observation of the lack of interest that men should have in fashion. She then plans an awareness-raising session for the children about occupations, intersecting this awareness-raising with the elimination of gender stereotypes.

1) Using the testimonial technique, the female driver of a commercial vehicle (the driver of a van belonging to a local garden centre) comes to the class to talk about her experience as a driver and the pleasure of driving this particular type of vehicle. At the educator’s prior request, she mentions the name of Elisabete Jacinto as a female race driver who drives lorries, participates in sports competitions, such as the Paris-Dakar rally, is also a teacher who co-authored a comic strip (*Os Portugas no Dakar* [The Portuguese in Dakar]), a work that is included in the Portuguese

National Reading Plan)<sup>39</sup>.

2) The children do research on Elisabete Jacinto and the work performed by the different technical teams—teams for the planning and supervision of routes, support teams for accommodation and food, mechanical support teams, driving teams—that are needed to carry out a rally like Paris-Dakar. They look at the comic strip.

3) Using the simulation technique, all the children play the part of members of the different teams. The educator encourages the inclusion of girls in teams linked to male stereotypes, such as driving and mechanical support teams, and the inclusion of boys in teams more associated with female stereotypes, such as accommodation and food.

4) Either inside or outside the classroom, the children stage a rally.

5) The children discuss whether there are occupations that are closed to a particular sex. The educator mentions various examples according to the suggestions that have come up, e.g., male characters who are leading fashion designers such as Nuno Gama or José António Tenente, an Internet search for names of women who are great political leaders in Europe, etc.

6) They search for images of race car and lorry drivers of both sexes and fashion designers of both sexes. With these images, they create a fold-out book in which we see, on one side, one of the occupations represented by the two sexes and on the other side, the other occupation represented by both sexes.

At the end they evaluate what they have learned with this project: there are no occupations just for men or women, contrary to what some of the children first said.

### **TABLE 16 – Summarised example of a project planned by the educator with a group of children**

The educator wants the children to understand diversity within a single sex, i.e., the fact that males (and the same happens with females) express masculinity in different styles, more or less stereotyped and more or less positive from a relational perspective; to what extent can the differences between two men be more pronounced than between a man and a woman, and more marked between two women than between a woman and a man. Thus, a woman and a man can share more similarities between each other than two women, and vice versa. The educator also wants to broaden the children's knowledge of animals, namely by making them aware of the various strategies for reproduction that exist among living creatures.

1) The children study the life of animals with diverse forms of expression of human sexuality, such as the snail, and non-stereotyped ways of expressing gender, such as the aggressive queen bee, or the

attentive Père Castor [“Father Beaver”, a character from the French children's literature series by Paul Faucher].

2) By means of the case study technique, the children discuss the different ways of experiencing masculinity and femininity of the animals in question, making comparisons, for example, between the way in which hens protect their brood and the mothers of most insects abandon their young.

3) The children develop a play in which they try to apply to the study of human behaviour what they understand regarding the multiplicity of animal behaviours. Half-human/half-animal characters appear (with a human head but the body of a chicken, similar to a mother-hen figure) and behave like the different animals studied.<sup>40</sup>

4) The children rehearse the play.

5) The children present the play for classmates and family members and at the end, they do a (self-) assessment of the work.

<sup>39</sup>Jacinto, Elisabete; Pinto-Coelho, Luis (2007), *Os Portugas no Dakar (The Portuguese in Dakar)*, Lisbon: Editora Plátano.

<sup>40</sup>Ideas for the play may appear based on the book by Soares, Luísa Ducla and Leitão, Pedro (2008) *Mãe, querida Mãe! Como é a tua? [Mum, dear Mum! What's your mum like?]* Lisbon: Terramar.

## 2.6.3.

## Expression and communication

As with previous content areas, the area of expression and communication, in their different aspects, has a wide range of potential for learning a variety of information.

As one example, we will see how, using maths and music, we can explore questions of gender and education for citizenship in pre-school education.

### **TABLE 17 – Project derived from an everyday situation**

The children are talking about the football championship and defend their clubs.

A dispute arises in which the boys think the girls do not understand anything about football and cannot play the game. The educator decides to use this discussion to demystify some preconceived notions about women's relationship to the sport.

1) The educator intervenes, saying that she also likes football and that girls can also play, given that there are also championships for women's teams.

2) They talk about the sports that can be played only by men or only by women. They conclude that most kinds of sports can be played by both sexes.

3) They make a chart to record the different kinds of sports that were discussed.

4) They return to the football championship, talk about the rules of the game and the number of male or female players of each team.

5) The educator gives them the challenge: in small groups, they should design the pitch with the number of players who participate.

6) Various questions arise: Will the referee come in? How are the substitutes represented? This is the beginning of a situation that the educator explores from a mathematics perspective: The children can make the record of the situation, count and register the number of each group of players in the game, find answers to the various situations, and so on.<sup>41</sup>

One of the main aims of this work is to lead the children to question certain stereotyped ideas about the relationship between men/ women and sport.

<sup>41</sup>For more assistance on this project, please consult the brochures produced by the Portuguese Ministry of Education for pre-school education:

- Castro, J.; Rodrigues, M. (2008) Sentido de Número e organização de dados [Numeracy and the organisation of data], Lisbon: Directorate General for Education, Ministry of Education

- Mendes, Maria F.; Alves, C. (2008) A Geometria [Geometry], Lisbon: Directorate General for Education, Ministry of Education



**TABLE 18 – Summary of a project planned by the educator with a group of children**

The educator is concerned about the fact that the children are singing some popular songs without being aware of the aggressive nature of the lyrics toward women. She decides to promote a more attentive and critical attitude about the song lyrics, namely by discussing as a group the aggressiveness of the lyrics in relation to women.

She prepares a chart with the song's lyrics and reads the verse aloud.

Without the music, the children do not recognise the song and do not understand the educator's intent, showing a certain conflict in hearing her talk this way.

The educator continues to read and asks whether they know the lyrics. With help, the children identify the song.

They discuss the absurdity of the lyrics; the children say they like it because the music is nice.

The educator stresses the need to pay more attention to the lyrics of songs they like.

They decide to invent new lyrics for that song.

It is the starting point for the creation of a book of songs and a recording of songs they know. During the selection, all the children pay attention to the lyrics. Putting these records together may create an ideal time to work with children on activities in the areas of language and writing discovery.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup>For more assistance on this project, please see the brochures produced by the Portuguese Ministry of Education for pre-school education:

- Sim-Sim,I; Silva; A:C; Nunes, C (2008) *Linguagem e Comunicação no Jardim de infância* [Language and Communication in the Kindergarten], Lisbon: Directorate General for Education, Ministry of Education
- Mata, L. (2008) *A Descoberta da Escrita* [The Discovery of Writing], Lisbon: Directorate General for Education, Ministry of Education

## 2.6.4.

### Projects involving the different curricular areas

Following what has already been presented for the different content areas, we provide one example below involving the connection between all the areas using the project methodology. In this example, we follow the structure presented by Teresa Vasconcelos (1998), whose working model employs a socio-constructivist perspective derived from problematic situations suggested by the children's group and from which the entire project is planned. As Isabel Lopes da Silva writes (2005), project planning, given its complexity, cannot be done in a linear fashion and it may include various areas of knowledge and action. In this regard, it may help to depict its planning by means of a web or network in which the starting question is located in the centre, surrounded by several forms of development which are in turn framed by the content areas used.

#### **TABLE 19 – Stages of a project**

The following are stages to bear in mind when developing a project:

- Definition of the problem
- Conceptual maps—web
- Planning and launching the project
- Implementation
- Assessment/distribution
- Role of the educator
- Organisation of time, space and resources

#### **TABLE 20 – Female personalities who can be used in projects with children**

##### **Irene Lisboa (1892-1958)**

Born in 1892 in Arruda dos Vinhos, she was a pioneering figure in the history of early childhood education in Portugal. She was a renowned author who wrote works for children such as the storybooks *Uma mão cheia de nada, outra de coisa nenhuma* [One hand full of nothing, the other full of nothing at all] (1955) and *Queres ouvir? Eu Conto - Histórias para Maiores e mais Pequeninhas* [Would you like to listen? I'll tell you: Stories for grown-ups and little ones]

(1958). She was a primary school teacher and early childhood educator; she sat for her final exams when she was already teaching classes of young children. She specialised in Educational Sciences in Switzerland (where she met Edouard Claparède and Jean Piaget) and visited French and Belgian kindergartens. What she wrote about those visits and contacts reveals an innovative way of thinking. She developed a pedagogical support programme for work per-

formed in early childhood education classes. The Salazar government considered Irene Lisboa to be too subversive and quietly prevented her from occupying any official position. She died in Lisbon in 1958.

See Fernandes, Rogério, “Biografia de Irene Lisboa [Biography of Irene Lisboa]” in <http://www.iil.pt/artigo.asp?id=3> consulted on 1 July 2009.

### **Ana de Castro Osório (1872-1935)**

She was born in Mangualde in 1872. She was a renowned author, political activist and, above all, a defender of women’s rights. She founded

the Republican League of Portuguese Women, which fought for the right for women to vote. She also created a collection (eighteen volumes) of books entitled *Para as Crianças* [For Children] for which she wrote many works and translated many others by Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm. She lived for several years in Brazil, where she worked as a teacher. Some of her books were adopted as school textbooks in Portugal and Brazil. She died in Setúbal in 1935.

See:

<http://www.mun-setubal.pt/Actividade+Municipal/Cultura/Pessoas/Personalidades/Ana+de+Castro+Osório.htm>, consulted on 1 July 2009.

One example of a simulated situation is shown below.

The educator, in a dialogue with the children, sees that the group shows some interest in finding a name for their kindergarten. They begin by defining the initial challenge: *Our kindergarten has no name!*

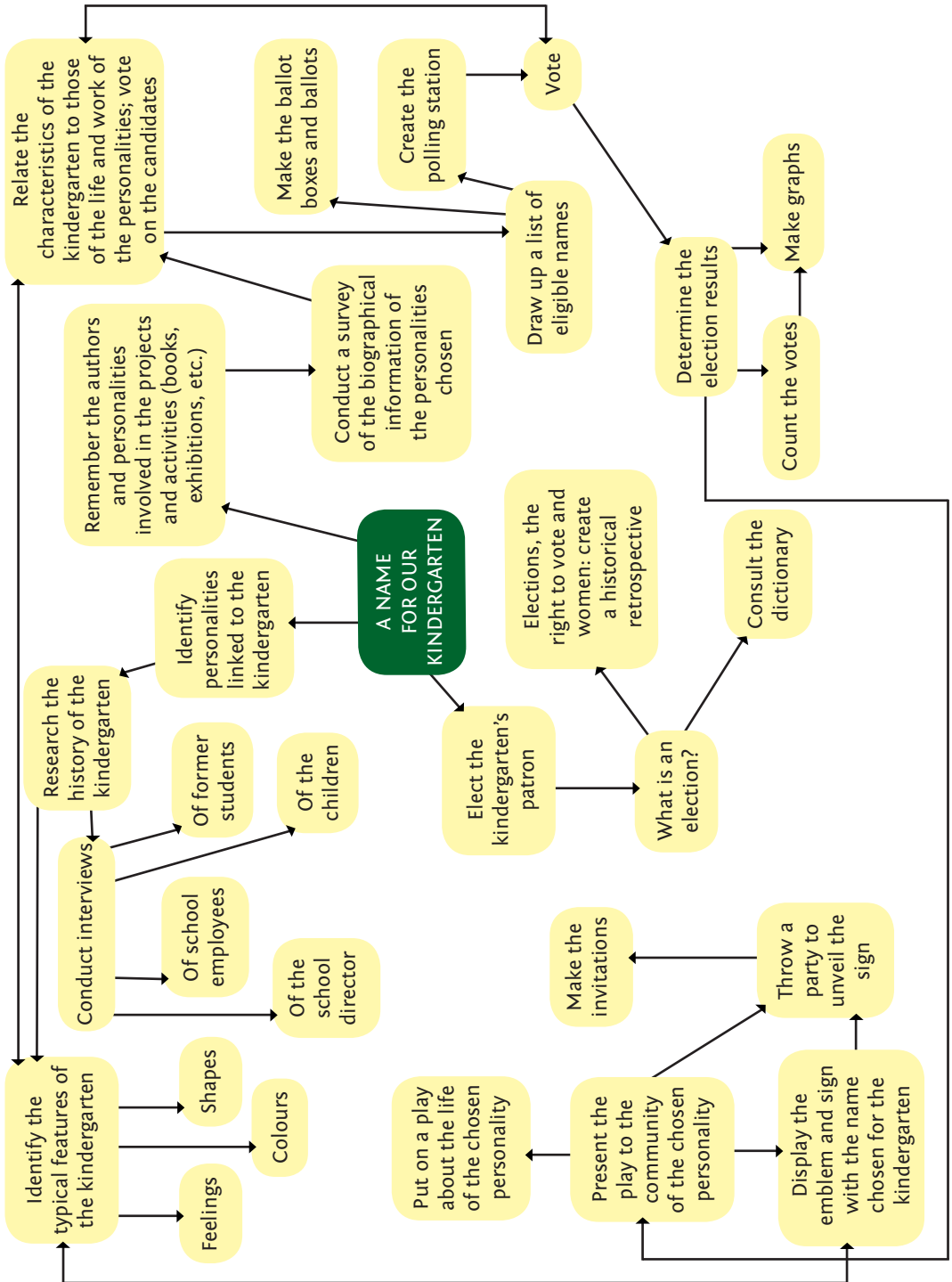
This question, which is very common among our institutions, can be a good pretext to help children learn about female personalities from the community, region, nation or abroad.

In a predominantly male world, the introduction of life stories about women who had or have an important role in society is a fundamental reference which broadens the kinds of models that are normally presented to children.

But alongside this concern, in response to the challenge posed to the children, there are many activities which can be carried out.

Together with the children, the educator can plan different activities to do. One possible scenario could be the one represented in the planning web/conceptual map shown in FIGURE 22.

FIGURE 22 - Example of a project framework



## **Tabel 21 – Contemporary female personalities**

### **Maria Keil (1914)**

Maria Keil was born in 1914 in Silves. She is a well-known painter, illustrator and sculptor who, in addition to many other formats, such as ceramics, figurines, tapestries and illustrations for advertising, has worked with painted tiles (azulejos). Her geometric compositions are on display in some of Lisbon's underground stations. She came to live in Lisbon and spent time in Paris as a young lady. Her very stylised approach allows the viewer to easily understand what the image represents. She has organised and taught a course on children's illustration. She has illustrated several children's books, three of which she also wrote: *O pau-de-fileira* [The roof beam] (1977), *Os presentes* [The gifts] (1979) and *As três maçãs* [The three apples] (1988). Today, Maria Keil lives in the Algarve.

See Heitlinger, Paulo (2007) "Maria Keil" in <http://tipografos.net/portugal/maria-keil.html>, consulted on 1 July 2009.

### **Paula Rego (1935)**

Paula Rego was born in 1935 in Lisbon. She is an internationally renowned painter and illustrator. She went to London to study painting when she was seventeen. She takes her inspiration from her childhood and the stories she heard during that time. It has been said that she used her experiences, memories, fantasies and fears from childhood and gave them a universal meaning. Among many other works, Paula Rego has created illustrations of traditional Portuguese tales. Some of her works are especially popular with children, such as the paintings from her *Vivian Girls* series. Her paintings often depict children or anthropomorphic animals, as seen in the *Red Monkey* series, and she has revisited children's

stories like *Pinocchio*, *Snow White* or *Little Red Riding Hood*. She has also created illustrations of English nursery rhymes. Today Paula Rego lives in London.

See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2004/jul/17/art.art> consulted on 1 July 2009

### **Vanessa Fernandes (1985)**

The Olympic triathlete Vanessa de Sousa Fernandes was born in 1985 in a village near Vila Nova de Gaia. In 1999, at the age of fourteen, she participated in her first competition. She decided to become a triathlete. The triathlon is a very demanding sporting contest. It combines three sports: in the Olympic version, athletes must swim for 1.5 kilometres, bike for 40 kilometres and run 10 kilometres in succession. Soon thereafter, at fifteen years of age, Vanessa moved from her family home to an Athletics Centre for top-level competitive sport where, at the time of publication of this guide (2009), she continues to live. Vanessa has always gone from strength to strength: In the Athens Summer Olympics (Greece, 2004), Vanessa finished eighth in the triathlon. In the Beijing Summer Olympics (China, 2008), she came in second place, winning the silver medal for Portugal. The future of male and athletes is uncertain; they can easily injure themselves and become unable to compete. Nonetheless, regardless of her path, Vanessa Fernandes has already proven that she is persistent, responsible and determined.

See <http://www.vanessafernandes.net/>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanessa\\_Fernandes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanessa_Fernandes), <http://www.slbenfica.pt/Informacao/Modalidades/Triatlo/Atletas/atletas.asp> consulted on 15 September 2009.

The plan presented outlines a path which involves an interdisciplinary approach and the subsequent links among a broad range of activities. These in turn are linked to and included in different content areas.

As regards the approach to citizenship, one essential dimension is clear to us: elections, the right to vote, etc., which enables research and discussion about various aspects of history, old or new, as well as an analysis of various life stories of men and women.

There are countless possible scenarios with many suggestions and personalities which could be chosen for the kindergarten's name.

However, the introduction of female personalities is essential in order for children to have more diverse references, broaden their knowledge and expand their horizons beyond the male references which they are usually presented with in the media, books and so forth. In order to assist this work, we present below some suggestions of female personalities who could be examined with the children.

## **TABLE 22 – The story of the writer Sophia de Mello Breyner, told to children**

### **Sophia de Mello Breyner (1919-2004)**

The writer Sophia de Mello Breyner was born in 1919. As a child, she lived in a large house filled with books and paintings in Oporto, near the Douro River. The house had an enormous garden, full of trees and flowers. The garden was so big that it is now the Oporto Botanical Garden, which anybody can visit. Sophia would play in this garden with her brothers, sisters and cousins. When she was three years old, she began to like poetry. She memorised a poem called “Nau Catrineta (The Ship Catrineta)” and everyone in her family applauded her.

She grew up and went to study at the University of Lisbon. In 1940, she began writing for a magazine called *Cadernos de Poesia* (Notebooks on Poetry) with friends of the same age, such as Jorge de Sena and Rui Cinatti. In Portugal, at the time Sophia began to write, most people did not know how to read and were very poor. Only some families (such as the family Sophia was born into) were rich and well-educated. Furthermore, there was only one person who ruled Portugal and everyone in the country had to vote for him. If Portuguese citizens wanted to choose another leader or another way of living, the police would arrest them so that they would not share their ideas or, for example, that person was forbidden from teaching.

Sophia did not like this at all. She had ideals: she believed that wealth should be shared, that people should have an education and should

be able to choose who led the country. In 1946 she married Francisco Sousa Tavares, a lawyer and journalist who believed in the same ideas and defended political prisoners in the courts. She wrote poetry and stories. She could combine words and sounds in a way that created new thoughts and depicted landscapes. Those landscapes were a combination of landscapes that had existed, such as the garden where she had played, or the morning sea by the beach she would walk along as a little girl, and other completely imaginary landscapes. She continued to improve upon that in her writing. She then used her ability to make the Portuguese listen to her ideas and think differently. She wrote about freedom and the world: the world where she had lived, the world she lived in and the world she thought should exist. She had five children and also wrote stories for them and for all children.

In 1974, the Portuguese Revolution of 25 April took place, which supported her ideals. Sophia was very happy. Because she thought everyone should participate in the country's government, she campaigned for a seat in the Portuguese Parliament and was elected.

She continued to write until her death in 2004.

Considering the literature typically used in a kindergarten context, we understand that other suggestions could easily be made by the children, such as Sophia de Mello Breyner or Alice Vieira.

Using the story of Sophia de Mello Breyner as an example, we present below one possible way to discuss this author's life story with a group of kindergarten children.

Following the examples provided, we would ask that you think of outstanding female figures in the arts, sciences and politics, internationally, nationally and regionally, and who could be a good example to use with the children.

What figures have you chosen? Why? How could you present this work to the children? How could you describe the story and work of these women? How can these stories serve as the grounds for developing projects that involve several content areas?

There are many examples of inclusive projects and many possible planning models. Hernández (2000) proposes a planning outline guided by certain criteria which seem to us, given their specific nature and pedagogical relevance, perfectly suited to the presentation of projects on issues of gender and citizenship in pre-school education. This author makes the following suggestion to plan around a topic, question or main idea.

**TABLE 23 – Framework to support project planning**

(adapted from Hernando Hernández, 2000: 249)

What children should learn	Strategies that can be developed	How to begin (initial knowledge and experience)	Resources
Links to other materials and disciplines	Topic / question / main idea		Final presentation: the portfolio
Activities for the entire group	Activities in a group	Individual activities	Assessment: what they understood and are able to convey

Consequently, we present the example of a project based on a question frequently discussed with children: *What do I want to be when I grow up?*

**TABLE 24 – Example of a project**

<p><b>What children should learn:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there are no occupations for <i>men</i> or occupations for <i>women</i>;</li> <li>• That the choices of all human beings should be respected;</li> <li>• That everyone can be successful, regardless of their gender.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategies that can be developed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use dialogue as a mediator for learning;</li> <li>• Initiate a search for relevant information on existing occupations; what we know about the different occupations and the people who perform them;</li> <li>• Be aware of what is said in the group about the topic;</li> <li>• Create graphs about occupations;</li> <li>• Have access to testimonials by certain professionals (men and women);</li> <li>• Write a book about different occupations that considers questions about gender.</li> </ul>	<p><b>How to begin:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List the occupations of family members (father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister, etc.) and public figures;</li> <li>• List the occupations that each child wants to have;</li> <li>• Write down in a log everything that is known about the people who hold the occupations;</li> <li>• Prepare a questionnaire about the occupations and gender, and apply it to the broader educational context.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books/stories;</li> <li>• Visit to the library;</li> <li>• Exhibition about occupations;</li> <li>• Surveys and the respective answers;</li> <li>• Testimonials from various professionals;</li> <li>• Other resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Links to other materials and disciplines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics: numbers; numeric sequences; graphics, etc.</li> <li>• Portuguese language: verbal expression</li> <li>• Visual and plastic arts: different techniques, fine motor skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Topic:</b> <i>What do I want to be when I grow up?</i></p> <p><b>Main idea:</b> Deconstruct the gender stereotype for occupations and conclude with the creation of a book with different (non-stereotyped) occupations</p>		<p><b>Final presentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise a classroom portfolio containing all the stages of the project up to the creation of the book;</li> <li>• Find a format to present the portfolio, e.g., CD-ROM, file, etc.</li> </ul>



Activities for the entire group:	Activities in a group:	Individual activities:	Assessment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial conversation about occupations we know and what we know about them;</li> <li>• Debate/discussion about what we think of occupations and gender;</li> <li>• Creating records of conversations/dialogues/debates;</li> <li>• Reading stories and dialogues about them;</li> <li>• Planning the surveys and interviews;</li> <li>• Hearing testimonials from professionals and conducting surveys/interviews with them;</li> <li>• Planning the book and introducing into it the ideas which result from survey and interview responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of survey questions;</li> <li>• Using the survey at the educational institution;</li> <li>• Creating/organising the chapters of the book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal observations about the project;</li> <li>• Book illustrations;</li> <li>• Ask the guests questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a grid that includes the question: <i>What do I now know about occupations?</i></li> <li>• Content of the activities in conversations, dialogues and debates;</li> <li>• Records;</li> <li>• Contents of the personal commentary.</li> </ul>

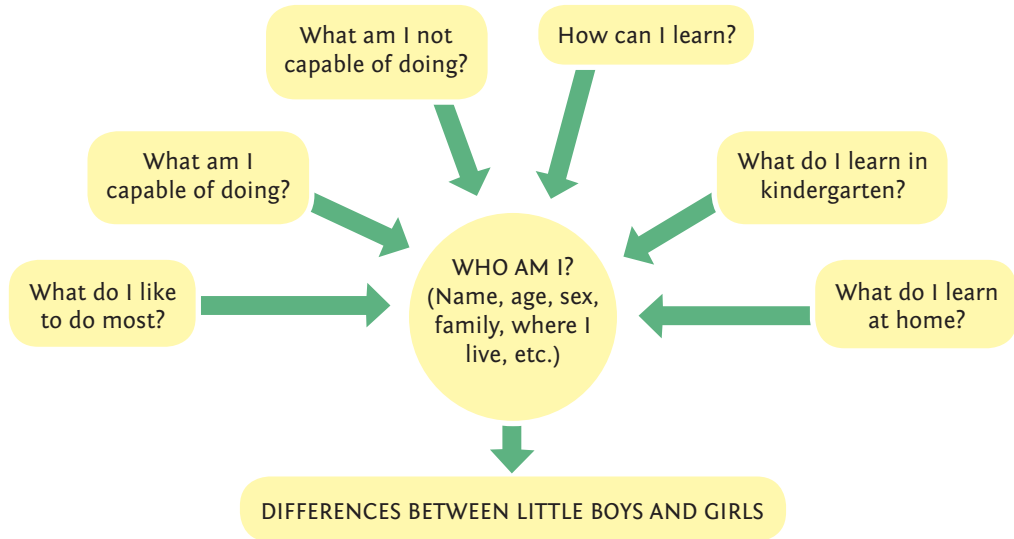
Lastly, we present one more example based on the theory of concept maps developed by Novak and Gowin (1998) according to Ausubel's theory of learning (1963). Key concepts are identified and ranked, joined according to their relationship with each other. Starting with a question that we wish to answer or an event we wish to understand, concept maps are organised according to a hierarchy that goes from the most general or broadest concepts to the most specific.

Given that knowledge of the self (one's abilities and interests) forms the basis for all learning, namely the construction of identity as a member of the male or female gender, let us explore

the concept map created from the following question: Who am I?

The development of inclusive projects involving various content areas is essential in early childhood education, especially when exploring questions related to gender and citizenship that ask questions of all areas of knowledge. In order to develop educational practices which are appropriate and meaningful to learning, it is nevertheless essential to always consider the characteristics of the context in which we work and those of the children.

**FIGURE 23 – Outline of projects based on a concept map**



**TABLE 25 – Other questions that can be explored in the kindergarten**

**OTHER (POSSIBLE) QUESTIONS TO START DISCUSSIONS AND/OR NEW PROJECTS:**

- What is given to a girl on her birthday? What is given to a boy?
- What are the differences between little boys and little girls?
- Can women do everything that men do?
- Can men do everything that women do?
- Why should we respect others?
- Are we all different?
- Are we all the same?
- What would the world be like with just women in it?
- What would the world be like with just men in it?
- Do characteristics exist which only belong to men?
- Do characteristics exist which only belong to women?
- Do occupations exist that are not suitable for men?
- Do occupations exist that are not suitable for women?
- As a boy, how would you like to be when you grow up?
- As a girl, how would you like to be when you grow up?

## 2.7.

# Institutional projects

Most of the ideas presented throughout this publication refer to the pedagogical component that institutions of early childhood education, always striving to involve families, adopt in the work they do with children.

According to António Nóvoa (1992), we may divide the different areas of intervention of educational institutions as follows:

- The pedagogical area, which includes working practices developed by teachers with the children;
- The school area, which includes work with families and the community;
- The professional area, which includes (self-) development which should be a continuum, for teachers, educational assistants and other specialists who work at the school.

This chapter focuses on this last area, operating from the principle that all of the suggestions for projects are just a starting point that requires educators, both individually and as a team, to engage in ongoing reflection and remain up-to-date.

The same could be said as regards the work carried out with educational assistants and other specialists: educational practices do not end in the activity room or with the activities developed by the educator. It is essential that those who wish to work with children on issues related to gender and citizenship develop in order to improve the quality of educational practices.

This work must begin with the following questions: how are these issues experienced on an

individual level? What attention is paid to the work directly related to children's learning about issues of gender and citizenship?

In discussion, value is often assigned to the need to "include" or integrate diversity, but in practice (even in the defined work activities) these issues are watered down. The area of personal and social development defined in curriculum guidelines for pre-school education, which is considered to be present "in everything" that is done, ends up being the most neglected area and the one most difficult to work with. In this regard, gender and education for citizenship often constitute the largest gaps in the work carried out in kindergartens, because their supposed cross-cutting nature ends up obscuring their true importance.

To make matters worse, we must consider that institutions intended for young children are somewhat reluctant to recruit male staff. This issue brings some bias into a more balanced project concerning issues of gender and citizenship in early childhood education.

For many years, unlike what has happened at other levels of education, men were barred from the profession of early childhood educator. Only in recent years have men begun to appear in this profession. Just as it is difficult for many women to gain access to traditionally male professions, the same thing often occurs with this first wave of male educators when accessing this traditionally female profession.

However, the existence of more male teachers in early childhood education institutions is essential in the promotion of greater gender equality when working with young children.

In this regard, we must reflect on the contribution of each individual as a participant in the educational process in order to overcome certain restrictions found in early childhood education institutions.

How open are these institutions to the existence of male teachers? How are they included?  
How does the institutional space encourage more egalitarian practices?  
How does the institution welcome the families?

What kind of attention is given to preparing the support staff for work with children involving gender issues? In the context of early childhood education institutions, these staff members play a fundamental role in the children's lives as regards the responsibility (and accountability) that results from the transmission and explanation of values. They should therefore be in agreement with the work of the educator, primarily in the areas of personal and social development and education for citizenship, avoiding disagreements, disparities and divergences in terms of content relating to communication, behaviours and attitudes.

According to Isabel Alarcão, it is important to understand the school as “an organisation that continually thinks about itself, its social mission and its structure and develops its work in a process that both assesses and trains” (Alarcão, 2000: 13).

Thus, institutional change is based on teachers taking power and responsibility as professionals who include a broad collective process that includes the relationships established with colleagues and other partners involved in the education of children and the life of the institution. Furthermore, as we can see, this work begins in the crèche. It does not end in the kindergarten; it continues during basic education and the manner in which the connection to the first cycle of basic education occurs is fundamental.

## 2.8.

# Final thoughts

When exploring issues of gender and citizenship in early childhood education, we must consider two situations:

- The intervention of the educator in situations which naturally arise in everyday situations;
- The intentional intervention of the educator by means of previously planned activities.

An attentive and reflective attitude is needed in situations which appear; the inclusion of planned activities with the intention to introduce an approach to gender and citizenship is-

essential in order for this content area not to be neglected in the work carried out. The various suggestions and examples presented have been designed according to this context.

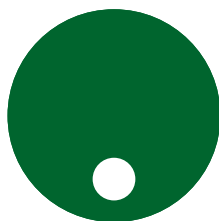
As Teresa Vasconcelos wrote (2007: 48), for a critical reflection about the role of the kindergarten in gender and citizenship issues, it is essential that we consider “the many social contexts in which the children operate”.

***Keep up the good work!***

### ***TABLE 26 – The educational institution as a space for research and reflection***

- Include gender issues in a discussion about equity in education, as part of a perspective to create new forms of citizenship, viewing the child as a citizen and able to have agency over his or her own development.
- Create a proactive attitude about gender issues in early childhood education, namely in the initial and continuing development of educators.
- Help children deconstruct gender relationships in their spontaneous games and play by introducing cognitive dissonance and helping them to critically analyse the stereotypes that it conveys. Be sure to involve families in this awareness-raising process.
- Switch from a discourse of the “corners” to a discourse of the “workshop” by encouraging a critical, rigorous analysis of the educational space, the equipment and the materials that we introduce into the kindergarten.
- Expand this critical analysis to the materials provided by the market (commercial publishers).
- Develop this proactive attitude in pedagogical work, routines and interactions among children, between the educator and the children and between children and their families.
- Operating from the principle that gender is a context-dependent issue, we propose that “children’s spaces” (Moss and Petrie, 2002) be transformed into spaces with multiple possibilities, true “workshops” where doing, reflecting, acting, perceiving [...] can find expression in a school that becomes a huge laboratory of research and reflection...

Teresa Vasconcelos, 2007: 48



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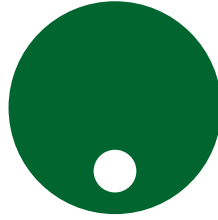
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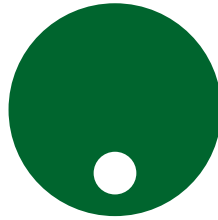
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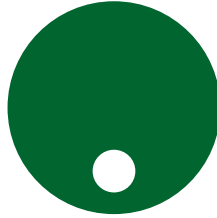
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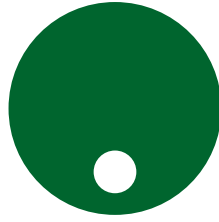
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