

Association of Women Educators
White Paper
Gender Awareness in the Curriculum
for
economic Security for Women (eS4W)



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Introduction

eS4W is a National Women's Alliance (NWA), funded by the Australian Government through the Office for Women in the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Alliance brings together women's organisations and individuals from across Australia to share information, identify barriers to women's economic security and to identify solutions by prioritising the key issues for action to bring about change. It engages actively with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better more informed and representative dialogue between women and government.

A key activity for eS4W in its' 2017-2018 work plan is the project 'Gender Equity starts with Gender Awareness in the Curriculum' which aims to improve economic outcomes for girls, young women and all women by raising awareness of the need to refocus on gender in the classroom across the Australian Curriculum, in particular in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) knowledge based subjects.

This paper draws on the evidence to outline opportunities for this gender focus and inform eS4W engagement and collaboration in with government departments, including the Departments of Education and Departments of Social Services (Federal, State and Territory), the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet including the Office for Women, the Association of Women Educators.

Key issues for economic security

As a snapshot, globally, women make up less than 25% of the workforce in non-traditional occupations, including trades and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas. *This gender imbalance is aggravated by work conditions, pay disparities between men and women, and a stereotype that men are better suited to working in STEM fields than women.*¹ Huge gender gaps also exist for women in business leadership. *Women hold 12% of board seats worldwide and women chair only 4% of companies globally.*² In Australia women make up 16.5% of CEOs nationwide.³

In Australia, although educational attainment for women is high (of all women aged 20-24, 91.6% have attained year 12 qualifications or above, compared to 88.7% of men in the same age bracket; of all women aged 25-29, 39.9% have achieved a bachelor degree or above, compared to 30.9% of men of the same age bracket⁴), the full-time average weekly ordinary

¹ Women in STEM <http://www.graduatwomen.org/the-cause/the-business-case> Accessed 10 December 2017

² Women in STEM <http://www.graduatwomen.org/the-cause/the-business-case> Accessed 10 December 2017

³ Australian Government (2017). Australia's gender equality scorecard: Key findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2016-17 reporting data <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2016-17-gender-equality-scorecard.pdf> Accessed 10 December 2017

⁴ ABS (2018), Gender Indicators, Australia, Sep 2017, cat. No. 4125.0, viewed 22 February 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4125>.

earnings for women are 15.3% less than for men.⁵ Among non-public sector organisations with 100 or more employees, the gender pay gap for full-time annualised base salary is 17.3%, and for full-time annualised total remuneration is 22.4%⁶. The adult full-time average hourly earnings for non-managerial women are 11.1% less than men's full-time average hourly earnings⁷. On average in all industries men still earn more than women by more than \$26,000⁸. Average superannuation balances for women at retirement (age 60-64) are 42.0% less than those for men⁹

In the workplace 62% of working women are likely to face workplace violence over a five-year period. 25% of women aged 15 years or older have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past five years.¹⁰

Government data shows that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, and rural and regional women experience a larger workforce participation gap than men, when compared with all Australian women.¹¹

International and national policy background

The Australian Government is a signatory to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The empowerment of women and girls, and achieving gender equality, are preconditions for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹² set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹³ to eliminate global poverty and inequality. As the SDGs apply to all countries, Australia is expected to establish national frameworks to achieve these goals and report against progress.

In the CSW 62nd Session Outcomes Document, the Commission recognises...*structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal health-care services and secondary and post-secondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative*

⁵ ABS (2018), *Average Weekly Earnings, Nov 2017*, cat. no. 6302.0, viewed 22 February 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6302.0>

⁶ WGEA (2017), *WGEA Data Explorer*, data.wgea.gov.au

⁷ BS (2017), *Employee Earnings and Hours, May 2016*, cat. no. 6306.0, viewed 23 February 2017, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6306.0>

⁸ Victorian Gender Equality Strategy <https://www.vic.gov.au/women/gender-equality/a-victorian-gender-equality-strategy/working-together/work-and-economic-security.html> Accessed 10 December 2017

⁹ Clare R. (2017), *Superannuation account balances by age and gender, December 2017*, ASFA Research and Resources Centre

¹⁰ Victorian Gender Equality Strategy <https://www.vic.gov.au/women/gender-equality/a-victorian-gender-equality-strategy/working-together/work-and-economic-security.html> Accessed 10 December 2017

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics - Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women ABS, Labour Force, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Feb 2017, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, 12 month average of original data, persons aged 15 years and over. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women ABS, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014-15, cat. no. 4714.0, persons 15 years and over. Rural and regional, ABS, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2015, cat. no. 4430.0, persons 15-64 years <http://www.abs.gov.au/>

¹² United Nations (2015) Sustainable Development Goals <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

¹³ United Nations (2015) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

*social norms and gender stereotypes, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work.*¹⁴

The Commission urges states to:

(jj) Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education at all levels, throughout their life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and to free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all;

*(kk) Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scaling up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfil the right to education for women and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; to combating gender norms that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender- and disability-sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; to maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; to train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented; to support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; to ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and to promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life.*¹⁵

(See Appendix for additional relevant items)

In terms of Australia's education for equity, citizenship, and human rights¹⁶, the Australian Curriculum is guided by two key documents; the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians*¹⁷, and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*¹⁸.

The Australian Curriculum affirms the importance of discipline-based knowledge and skills (learning areas) as well as general capabilities (literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology competence, critical and creative thinking, ethical behaviour, personal and social competence, and intercultural understanding) which are integrated into the content descriptions and achievement standards for each subject.

¹⁴ UN CSW 62nd Agreed conclusions document <http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2018/L.8> Accessed 14 April 2018, p. 3

¹⁵ UN CSW 62nd Agreed conclusions document <http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2018/L.8> Accessed 14 April 2018, pp. 14-15.

¹⁶ Australian Human Rights Commission (2011) Human rights education in the national school Curriculum: Position Paper <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/publications/human-rights-education-national-school-curriculum-position-paper>

¹⁷ Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (2008) *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians*. http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf Accessed 10 December 2017

¹⁸ National Curriculum Board (2009) *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/The_Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_May_2009_file.pdf Accessed 10 December 2017

In recent years, in terms of the promotion of gender equality through schooling, Australian national and state Governments have targeted resources to the primary prevention of gender based violence, or 'Respectful Relationships Education'. Violence prevention is closely related to economic security, for example, research confirms that exposure to violence affects children's education and employment prospects.¹⁹ The Victorian Government has developed gender aware curriculum²⁰, and comprehensive guidance is provided by *Our Watch*, a national foundation established by the Australian Government.²¹ These resources include references to work, career and economic issues, and provide a strong foundation for elaboration and extension.

Curriculum goals for economic security for women

More specifically, curriculum elaborations and the development of teaching resources are required to:

- increase girls' financial literacy, in particular to understand the financial implications of their decisions
- increase knowledge and understanding of gender equity issues in industrial relations, including employment terms and conditions, and empower young people to negotiate work arrangements, pay and other conditions
- raise awareness of the impact of career interruptions on superannuation and economic security in retirement, and of the retirement gender income gap
- encourage girls to consider the industrial and resources sector and STEM careers
- increase participation by men in parenting, caring and domestic responsibilities
- further support vulnerable young women with their education, training and employment, such as mentoring and programs for pregnant or parenting young women, women with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- more broadly support the development of gender equitable attitudes and behaviours

¹⁹ Frederick, J and Goddard, C (2007) 'Exploring the Relationship between Poverty, Childhood Adversity and Child Abuse from the Perspective of Adulthood,' *Child Abuse Review*, Vol 16: 323-341.

²⁰ Victorian Department of Education and Training (2016) *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* <http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=2JZX4R> Accessed 10 December 2017

²¹ Our Watch <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Media-Resources> Accessed 10 December 2017

Gender equity in the curriculum

The gender equity perspective will be evident across the curriculum when all students:

- actively participate in all learning areas and achieve equity of outcomes
- know that they are recognised and valued in the curriculum's content, teaching and learning strategies, and reporting and assessment methods
- engage in critical analysis of language and practices, and develop strategies that challenge narrow and limiting gender identities
- recognise that all people are capable of the full range of useful and appropriate human behaviours when not constrained by social expectations based on gender
- understand that gender is socially constructed and that people are actively engaged in the process of constructing and performing their own gender identity
- find themselves, their interests and their values reflected in the curriculum, not just through the recognition of gender diversity, but also through other aspects such as cultural background, sexuality, socio-economic status and disability.
- demonstrate awareness of others' interests and values reflected in the curriculum and accept and appreciate their inclusion
- employ skills, knowledge and behaviours that develop and maintain equal and respectful relationships with all their peers, in the classroom and the playground
- understand the impact of the gendered nature of violence, sexual harassment (including homophobia) and gender-based power and demonstrate skills to deal with such behaviours.²²

The curriculum context - A whole school approach

The whole school approach is the crucial context for successful curriculum for change. This includes an early childhood focus. According to the OECD report *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour and Confidence*²³ girls and boys remain deeply divided in career choices, which are being made much earlier than commonly thought, and that gender bias, conscious and unconscious, among parents, teachers and employers is partly responsible. Other research reveals how even very young children perceive men and women to have differential competencies for gender-typed occupations²⁴

²² Adapted from the Australian Capital Territory Department of Education & Training and Children's, Youth & Family Services Bureau (1997) Gender Equity Curriculum Support Paper <https://digitised-collections.unimelb.edu.au/bitstream/handle/11343/115619/scpp-00062-act-1997.pdf?sequence=1> Accessed 12 December 2017

²³ OECD (2012) *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour and Confidence* <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-gender.htm> Accessed 12 December 2017

²⁴ Levy, G. D., Sadovsky, A. L., & Troseth, G. L. (2000). Aspects of young children's perceptions of gender-typed occupations. *Sex Roles, 42*(11-12), 993-1006. Accessed 12 December 2017

The goals of gender aware curriculum also need to be reflected across the whole school community, by:

- the creation of partnerships with outside agencies with relevant expertise – for example, working with industry and organisations to provide advice for career pathways and mentoring opportunities for girls and women;
- creation of a culture and environment that feels safe and supportive, and promotes equitable practices, policies, procedures, structures and systems, for example, considering the organisational structure of the school and the authoritative status of women and men; and
- professional development for all school staff to support a comprehensive curricular approach, including informal curriculum and pedagogical practices.

Recommendations

In terms of gender equity and identified economic security issues:

- Elaboration and extension, in terms of identified economic issues, of existing gender equity curricula and teaching resources such as the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships²⁵ and Our Watch guidance documents²⁶
- Development of elaborations to all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum
- Development of professional learning and curriculum resources for educators
- Increased funding by governments, to universities and schools, for pre-service and in-service professional development
- System leadership through active and visible resourcing and promotion of the Australian Curriculum and professional development activities as described

²⁵ Victorian Department of Education and Training (2016) Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships <http://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=2JZX4R> Accessed 10 December 2017

²⁶ Our Watch <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Media-Resources> Accessed 10 December 2017

Appendix

The Commission on the Status of Women, Sixty-second session 12 – 23 March 2018

Agreed conclusions relevant to economic security and education

12. The Commission recognizes that progress in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in particular in rural areas, and the realization of their human rights has been held back owing to the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men, poverty, inequalities and disadvantages in access to, ownership of and control over resources, growing gaps in equality of opportunity and limited access to universal health-care services and secondary and post-secondary education, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws and policies, negative social norms and gender stereotypes, and the unequal sharing of unpaid care and domestic work. It stresses the urgency of eliminating those structural barriers in order to realize gender equality and empower rural women and girls. (p. 3)

15. The Commission also expresses its concern at the fact that many rural women continue to be discriminated against, marginalized and economically and socially disadvantaged owing to, inter alia, their limited or lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, decent work, social protection, quality education, public health, including health-care services, justice, sustainable and time- and labour-saving infrastructure and technology, land, water and sanitation and other resources, as well as to financial services, credit, extension services and agricultural inputs, as well as at the limited financial inclusion faced by rural women. (p. 4)

20. The Commission reaffirms the right to education and stresses that equal access to high quality and inclusive education contributes to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including those in rural areas. It notes with concern the lack of progress in closing gender gaps in access to, retention in and completion of secondary and tertiary education and emphasizes the importance of technical and vocational training and lifelong learning opportunities. It recognizes that new technologies are, inter alia, changing the structure of labour markets and that they provide new and different employment opportunities that require skills ranging from basic digital fluency to advanced technical skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and in information and communications technology, and in this regard, emphasizes the importance of all rural women and girls having the opportunity to acquire such skills. (p. 4)

21. The Commission recognizes that, despite gains in providing access to education, rural girls are still more likely than rural boys, and girls and boys in urban settings, to remain excluded from education, and recognizes also that among gender-specific barriers to girls' equal enjoyment of their right to education are the feminization of poverty, child labour undertaken by girls, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, early and repeat pregnancies, all forms of gender-based violence in and outside of school, including sexual violence and harassment on the way to and from, and at school, the lack of safe and

adequate sanitation facilities, the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, and gender stereotypes and negative social norms that lead families and communities to place less value on the education of girls than that of boys. (p. 5)

29. The Commission recognizes that rural women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities is a significant constraint on women's and girls' completion of, or progress in, education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities, and can result in gaps in social protection, pay and pensions. It also recognizes that addressing attitudes and social norms by which women and girls are regarded as subordinate to men and boys at the household and community levels creates an enabling environment for the social and economic empowerment of all rural women and girls. The Commission stresses the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, infrastructure development, social protection policies and accessible, affordable and quality social services, including care services, childcare, maternity, paternity or parental leave. (pp. 6)

36. The Commission recognizes that indigenous women and girls living in rural and remote areas, regardless of age, often face violence and higher rates of poverty, limited access to health-care services, information and communications technology, infrastructure, financial services, education and employment, while also recognizing their cultural, social, economic, political and environmental contributions, including their contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation. (pp. 7-8)

(hh) Take steps to measure the value of unpaid care and domestic work in order to determine its contribution to the national economy, for example through periodic time-use surveys, and to include such measurements in statistics as well as in the formulation of gender-responsive economic and social policies;

(ii) Invest in and strengthen family-oriented policies and programmes in rural areas that provide the necessary support and protection and are responsive to the diverse, specific and changing needs of rural women and girls and their families, as well as address the imbalances, risks and barriers that they face in enjoying their rights and protect all family members against any form of violence, as those policies and programmes are important tools for, inter alia, fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality, promoting work-family balance and gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls and advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity;

(jj) Promote and respect women's and girls' right to education at all levels, throughout their life cycle, including women and girls living in rural areas and those who have been left furthest behind, by providing universal access to quality education, and to free and compulsory primary and secondary education, ensuring inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all,

eliminating female illiteracy, and striving to ensure the completion of early childhood, primary and secondary education and expanding vocational and technical education for rural women and girls, and foster, as appropriate, intercultural and multilingual education for all;

(kk) Eliminate gender disparities and commit to scaling up financing and investments in public education systems to fulfil the right to education for women and girls in rural areas by addressing gender-based discrimination, negative social norms and gender stereotypes in education systems, including in curricula, textbooks and teaching methodologies; to combating gender norms that devalue girls' education and prevent women and girls from accessing education; provide inclusive, safe, non-violent and accessible schools with gender- and disability-sensitive infrastructure, including lighting, and safe, accessible and affordable transportation to school; to maintain separate and adequate sanitation facilities; to train, recruit and retain qualified teachers in rural areas, especially women teachers where they are underrepresented; to support rural women and girls with disabilities at all levels of education and training; to ensure that rural women and girls have equal access to career development, training, scholarships and fellowships, and to promote an effective transition from education or unemployment to decent work and active participation in public life;

(ll) Take steps to promote educational and health practices in order to foster a culture in which menstruation is recognized as healthy and natural and in which girls are not stigmatized on this basis, recognizing that girls' attendance at school can be affected by negative perceptions of menstruation and the lack of means to maintain safe personal hygiene, such as water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools that meet the needs of girls;

(mm) Ensure that pregnant adolescents and young mothers, as well as single mothers, can continue and complete their education, and in this regard, design, implement and, where applicable, revise educational policies to allow them to remain in and return to school, providing them with access to health care and social services and support, including childcare and breastfeeding facilities and crèches, and to education programmes with accessible locations, flexible schedules and distance education, including e-learning, bearing in mind the important role and responsibilities of, and challenges faced by, fathers, including young fathers, in this regard;

(nn) Intensify efforts to prevent and eliminate violence and sexual harassment against girls at, and on the way to, school by, inter alia, implementing effective violence prevention and response activities in schools and communities, engaging men and boys, educating children from a young age regarding the importance of treating all people with dignity and respect, and designing educational programmes and teaching materials that support gender equality, respectful relationships and non-violent behaviour;

(oo) Develop policies and programmes with the support, where appropriate, of international organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, giving priority to formal, informal and non-formal education programmes, including scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive education that is relevant to cultural contexts, that provides adolescent girls and boys and young women and men in and out of school, consistent with their evolving capacities, and with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with the best interests of the child as their basic concern, information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and foster informed decision-making, communication and risk-reduction skills and to develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young persons, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers, in order to, inter alia, enable them to protect themselves from HIV infection and other risks;

(pp) Address the digital divide, which disproportionately affects rural women and girls, by facilitating their access to information and communications technology and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in order to promote their empowerment and to develop the skills, information and knowledge that are needed to support their labour market entry, livelihoods, well-being and resilience and expand the scope of information and communications technology-enabled mobile learning and literacy training while promoting a safe and secure cyberspace for women and girls; (pp. 14-16)

(ccc) Promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities in rural areas, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including by ensuring access, on an equal basis with others, to economic and financial resources and disability-inclusive and accessible social infrastructure, transportation, justice mechanisms and services, in particular in relation to health and education and productive employment and decent work for women with disabilities, as well as by ensuring that the priorities and rights of women and girls with disabilities are fully incorporated into policies and programmes, and that they are closely consulted and actively involved in decision-making processes; (pp. 17-18)

(Source: UN CSW 62nd Agreed conclusions document
<http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2018/L.8> Accessed 14 April 2018)