

The Republic of Cyprus

***Gender differences in educational achievement: a study of the measures taken and the current situation in Europe\****

**Section 1) General Policy Framework**

1.1 Gender inequality in education is currently a matter of concern in Cyprus for the following reasons:

- The revision of the education system
- European and international commitments
- Social and labour-market concerns
- Civil movements

The Republic of Cyprus is a relatively young state, having gained independence in 1960, with a population of about 854,300 (2005). Gender equality and the right to education for all Cypriot citizens are safeguarded under the 1960 Constitution, Part II, Articles 28, 10 and 20. ([www.cyprus.gov.cy](http://www.cyprus.gov.cy)).

**Revision of the education system.** In 2005, a dialogue between all players involved in education was initiated, following the submission of the *Education Reform Report* (2004) by a group of academics, aiming to reach the maximum possible consensus. The main aim of this reform is to enable the children of Cyprus to successfully meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and endow them with the knowledge and skills to help them become responsible Cypriot and European citizens. It will help them to work and create in the information society, in a global environment, with respect for ethnic, religious and cultural identities ([www.moec.gov.cy](http://www.moec.gov.cy)).

**European and international commitments.** Cyprus, as a member of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union, has signed various European and international treaties as regards gender equality. As a signatory, Cyprus has amended or introduced new legislation that further strengthened the position of women and the human rights of both sexes. A full list of the legal measures introduced on gender equality and women's rights by the Government of Cyprus between 1985 and today can be accessed at [www.mjpo.gov.cy](http://www.mjpo.gov.cy).

Cyprus became a full member of the European Union in 2004 and joined the euro-zone in January 2008. Prior to joining the European Union, Cyprus revised its legal system in order to comply with the *acquis communautaire*.

Cyprus became a signatory of:

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol (Cy Law 78/1985 and Protocol Cy Law 1(iii)/2002).
- The European Treaty for the Protection of Human Rights and Basic Freedoms and 12<sup>th</sup> Protocol (Cy Law 11(iii)/2002).
- The Law for Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Work and Vocational Training (Cy 205(I)/2002).
- The Lisbon Strategy (2005-2010 and re-launching 2008-2010)
- The Bologna Process (signed by Cyprus in 2001).

**Social and labour market concerns.** The main social concerns relating to gender equality are:

a) with regard to women

- the high gender pay gap - one of the highest in the European Union;
- there are fewer women in executive/managerial positions than men. Cyprus has one of the lowest rates in the European Union;
- the unemployment rate among women is higher than among men;
- the rate of illiteracy for women is higher than that among men;
- there are fewer female researchers than male (464 women – 960 men, 2005);
- fewer women are Internet users (women 28% - 31% men, 2007);
- women are also under-represented in government and local administration.

b) with regard to men

- fewer men graduate from tertiary education institutions (women 27% - men 26%, 2006);
- smaller numbers of male students attend university in Cyprus and abroad (women 10,472 – men 9,668, 2005/06);

**Civil movements.** The pre-accession stage saw the appearance of a considerable number of NGOs and women's organisations (political party and trade unions), which support equality of gender in all sectors: politics, economy, labour and education. A serious concern of the civil movements is how to achieve *de facto* equality, not only *de jure* and to reconcile work with family life.

Details of these organisations can be found on the website of the National Machinery for Women's Rights, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, [www.mjpo.gov.cy](http://www.mjpo.gov.cy)

**Levels of education.** The pre-primary and primary sectors are dominated by women teaching personnel. Women teachers at secondary level are higher in

numbers in general education (gymnasias and lyceums) while technical education is dominated by male teachers. At the tertiary university level, male teaching staff greatly outnumber women. For example, at the University of Cyprus, men occupy 218 positions out of 310 (*Statistics in Education, 2006-2007*).

Men also outnumber women in decision-making positions within the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, at the inspectorate level and on the governing bodies of all three public universities.

In Section 3, data by gender is given on students' failure, dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels and on the performance of lyceum graduates at the Pancyprian Examinations for entry to public tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and in Greece.

1.2 Gender equality is not expressed as a goal for the school system in Cyprus. However, within the framework of the on-going dialogue for the reform of the education system in Cyprus, there is provision in the proposed guidelines for the *Public School Curriculum* (December, 2008) that gender dimension will be one of the parameters of the reformed school curriculum ([www.moec.gov.cy](http://www.moec.gov.cy)).

In Cyprus, educational policies are formulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture and approved by the Council of Ministers.

Education is provided through pre-primary and primary schooling, secondary general (gymnasium, lower secondary and lyceum, higher secondary) and secondary technical vocational schools, special schools, higher and tertiary education institutions and non-formal institutions and centres.

As mentioned in section 1.1 above, gender equality and education are two basic rights enforced by the 1960 Constitution of the Cyprus Republic and reinforced with modern, up-to-date legislation as the outcome of European and international conventions and agreements and pre-and post-accession compliance with the *acquis communautaire*.

According to the ten-year schooling educational programme, the aim of primary education is to create and secure the necessary learning opportunities for children, regardless of age, sex, family and social background and mental abilities.

1.2.a The current official policy on gender equality and gender in education is outlined in the following government action plans:

*The Strategic Development Plan 2008-2013*, is a publication issued by the Planning Bureau of the Cyprus Republic. The 7<sup>th</sup> axis "Developing Human Capital" singles out as concerns the following:

- the greater percentage of illiterate women 5% compared to 1% men (2001 census);

- pay gap at 24-25%, one of the highest in the EU. The Ministry of Labour and Social insurance decided to commission a comprehensive study on the gender pay gap in order to have its causes identified and classified;
- more men continue to be employed in executive/ managerial positions while women are concentrated in unskilled and therefore low-paid professions. Cyprus is the last among the EU 25 member states in terms of women in executive positions (Cyprus 13.6%, EU average 32.1%).

On page 152, there is a clear statement "that the government policy goal is to include the principle of gender equality in all policies that have a direct or indirect impact on social, work and family life, both for women and men, as well as the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of the social, economic and political levels, such as the decision-making process...".

*National Reform Programme of Cyprus 2008-2010-Progress Report 2008.* This *Progress Report* was submitted within the framework of the revised national reform programme of Cyprus to meet its obligations as a signatory of the Lisbon Strategy, taking into consideration the *Strategic Development Plan 2007-2013* (mentioned above) as well as the new Government's priorities as reflected in the new President's Programme.

*National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPE) 2007-2013*, issued by the National Machinery for Women's Rights, Ministry of Justice and Public Order and approved by the Council of Ministers on 29 August 2007. In accordance with this decision, all government departments are responsible for implementing the measures that come under their competence. It is displayed on the website of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order at [www.mjpo.gov.cy](http://www.mjpo.gov.cy).

The *NAPE* consists of six chapters:

- equality in employment,
- equality in education,
- equal participation in political social and economic life,
- violence against women, including trafficking,
- equal access and equal implementation of social rights and
- stereotypes and change of social attitudes.

The *NAPE* covers in detail national strategic policy on the gender gap, including gender mainstreaming in various sectors. The 2<sup>nd</sup> axis of this plan, Target 2.3: "Promoting Gender in Education, Science and Research," pages 23-29 reviews the present situation, highlighting positive developments in education, but also underlining the inequalities.

The following are listed as positive developments in favour of girls:

- balanced participation of boys and girls at all levels of education

- better performance of girls over boys
- greater flow of girls to tertiary level education
- more than 50% of tertiary education students are female
- girls' success at tertiary level education offers the opportunity to compete for executive and high-paid jobs
- deconstructing outdated social stereotypes as regards girls' and women's education.

Gender discrimination and the gender gap in the education sector are still reflected, *inter alia*, in the following:

- curriculum,
- textbooks,
- teachers' attitudes,
- teaching methods,
- professional counselling,
- teachers' gender biased expectations of boys and girls,
- no curriculum subjects that promote healthy gender relationships and
- professional choices.

Then the *NAPE* goes on to suggest specific objectives that will promote gender equality in education during 2007-2013:

- Introduction of the gender perspective in all curriculum programmes of primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Incorporating the gender dimension in the subject of Counselling and Career Education.
- Making teaching personnel aware of gender issues, the gender gap and discrimination and empowering them to promote gender equality in education.
- Introduction of women's studies and gender studies in tertiary education.

The *2007-2013 NAPE* lists 12 actions for promoting the objectives outlined above. These actions will represent the combined effort of various players in education, mainly the Ministry of Education and Culture, the University of Cyprus, the Pedagogical Institute, the unions of teachers and NGOs.

The main actions put forward in order to promote the gender dimension in education are:

- carrying out a comprehensive research-study to map the gender gap in education.
- designing and promoting programmes that would inform the teaching personnel at the primary and pre-primary level of gender issues or incorporating them in in-service programmes.
- producing teaching material that will include the gender perspective aiming at deconstructing social stereotypes by encouraging boys to

participate more actively in family life and girls/women in political/public life.

- holding a European Conference on *Education and Gender*.
- introducing women's and gender studies at the University of Cyprus at undergraduate and postgraduate level.
- holding a European Conference on *Gender Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*.
- encouraging girls to participate in greater numbers in technical subjects and the use of new technologies.
- providing more attractive choices for girls under the New Apprenticeship Scheme in order to attract greater numbers of girls to technical education.
- developing strategies that would promote more women in decision making positions in all sectors and levels of education.
- developing curriculum programmes that would inform/encourage boys and girls to choose non-traditional male and female professions respectively.
- designing and developing programmes that would aim to make teachers aware of sex education issues and partnership between the two sexes and their parental roles.
- upgrading the subjects of Health Education, including the subject of Sex Education.
- increasing the number of all-day schools, thus allowing students to prolong their stay at school and become involved in activities that promote healthy relations between the sexes.

1.3 The authority responsible for formulating specific policies on gender in education is the Ministry of Education and Culture. Laws and regulations are drafted by the Ministry of Education and Culture with the help of the Attorney-General's Office, approved by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the House of Representatives. At present, there are no specific policies on gender in education in place.

1.3.a The concept of gender mainstreaming is not incorporated in the existing education policies. However, it is one of the major objectives in the *2007-2013 NAPE*. It must be stated that it is the exclusive right of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as the incumbent Ministry, and ultimately of the Council of Ministers, whether the concept of gender mainstreaming will be incorporated in the legal framework of education or in regulations or positive actions as set out in the *2007-2013 NAPE* prepared by the National Machinery of Women's Rights and approved by the House of Representatives.

1.3.b The policy outlined in the government programmes and action plans as described in section 1.2.a above, is disseminated through public newsletters, announcements, conferences and relevant websites. The programmes and action plans are printed and circulated both in Greek and English. Decisions reached through the on-going dialogue on educational reform are posted on the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture ([www.moec.gov.cy](http://www.moec.gov.cy)). Any regulations or year targets are circulated to the

schools referred to and are displayed on the website. Each Directorate, primary, secondary (general and technical) and tertiary, is allocated a space for their activities, regulations, announcements and steering documents. The *Annual Report*, a Ministry publication on the activities, programmes and developments at all levels of education, is published and distributed free of charge. It contains a summary in English and is available on the Ministry's website.

1.3.c There is no specific mechanism in place that monitors and evaluates gender policies in education and their implementation in schools as there are no specific policies concerning gender in education. Gender mainstreaming is not incorporated in policies on education. However, gender policies are evaluated within the framework of evaluating the implementation of agreements like the CEDAW (1979), the Beijing Action Platform (1995), the Lisbon Strategy (2005-2010), the evaluation of the whole education system as in the *Education Reform Report* (2004) or certain aspects of the Cyprus education system were till recently carried out periodically by the Research and Evaluation Section of the Pedagogical Institute.

Within the framework of the on-going dialogue for education reform, this section has been upgraded to a Department and named the Centre for Education Evaluation and Research. It started operation in its new role and capacity as from 2008. For example the parameter of gender was taken into consideration by the Centre when designing a large-scale test development project aiming to develop tests in Mathematics and in the Greek language (mother tongue) for pupils aged 8, 11 and 15 in order to identify those pupils that are functionally illiterate or with high probability of being functionally illiterate at the end of compulsory education (age 15). In 2008, the results revealed that a greater percentage of boys than girls have language problems, while both genders face similar problems in mathematics.

Two independent authorities, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and the Commissioner for Children's Rights, are invested with the authority to investigate any complaints or investigate *ex proprio motu* problematic issues which come to their notice or monitor the law's enforcement.

The Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), established by Law 3/1991, as amended, is a very important institution for the extra-judicial control of the administration and safeguarding of human rights. Since Cyprus' accession to the EU, the Commissioner for Administration acts as an independent institution in order to combat and eliminate, both in the public and the private sector, any illegal direct or indirect discrimination due to race, community, language, colour, religion, political or other conviction, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation applied in the areas of employment, work and vocational training, social security and medical care, education and access to goods, services and housing.

Within this framework and in line with the European Directives 2000/78/EC (on Equality in Employment) and 2000/43/EC (on Racial Equality) two bodies were created: The Equality Authority and the Anti-Discrimination Body.

The Equality Authority can receive referrals in the form of written complaints from any citizen who believes that he/she has been the victim of discrimination in the place of work or study, because of religion or conviction, age, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin. In addition, the Ombudsman's Office is responsible for looking into complaints of discrimination due to gender or disability.

The Commissioner for Children's Rights was set up under Law 74(I)/2007 as Cyprus is a signatory of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a party to the Convention, Cyprus must ensure that all children are treated without any discrimination, enjoy protection and access to services such as education and health.

1.4 As mentioned in section 1.2 above, in the targets and policies set out as mandatory for the revision of the public school curricula on page 19 of the *Public School Curriculum* (December, 2008), it is stated that the public school system of Cyprus will produce citizens who will "create and experience conditions of equality between the two sexes and handle/manage with knowledge and sensitivity the phenomena of otherness of today's multicultural societies".

It is also a target in the five-year *Strategic Development Plan 2008-2013* and the *NAPE 2007-2013* as mentioned in section 1.2.a above. The commitment of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus in these two action plans to enforce a specific policy on gender in education is expected to materialise by the year 2013 and would be the outcome of the on-going reform of education. This would further enhance the equality of the sexes in the 1960 Constitution and the commitments of the state of Cyprus as a signatory of various European and international treaties.

1.5 As mentioned in section 1.2.a above, one of the four main objectives of the *NAPE 2007-2013* is the introduction of the gender perspective in all programmes of primary, secondary and tertiary education by 2013. Secondly, one of the directives set out in the 2008 *Public School Curriculum for the Republic of Cyprus* is to "create and experience conditions of equality between the two sexes". These policies are expected to materialise within the on-going education reform and be reflected in the laws and regulations that will ensue.

In February 2009, fifty committees were set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture made up of experts and practitioners in education in order to design new curricula for individual subjects following the directives set out in the *Public School Curriculum of the Republic of Cyprus* (December 2008) for the ten-year compulsory public schooling.



1.6 None of the existing laws has been reviewed from a gender perspective as gender equality is enshrined in the 1960 Constitution and any efforts to differentiate between the sexes are regarded as unconstitutional, such as the attempt to regulate the intake of primary school teachers to the Pedagogical Academy 50/50 in 1983 [see Photoula A. Loizides Vs The Republic of Cyprus, 3 Cyprus Law Reports (CLR), p. 1084, quoted in Persianis, 1998: 19].

## **Section 2) Curriculum and guidance**

2.1 There is no specific policy or regulation in place making it mandatory for committees to take gender into account in curriculum development and teaching approaches or making certain subjects like technology and science more "girl-friendly" and other subjects like language and humanities more "boy-friendly".

However, the staff of the Curriculum Development Unit at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, made up of educationalists on secondment, are experienced teachers who are aware of issues of gender and have been trained specifically in writing material and aids for pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

Besides, more than half the number of textbooks and teaching materials (320 titles) used in schools in Cyprus are published in Greece and offered to the Ministry of Education and Culture free of charge. Their Greek counterparts started revising textbooks and teaching aids in 2005, taking into account the gender perspective, which is included in the newly-developed curricula for the Greek public schools which have been in use since 2003/04. Thus gender has been taken into account in curriculum development and teaching approaches officially through the revised and new texts offered to the Ministry by the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs.

2.2.a Gender is included in the curriculum as a topic at secondary level and at tertiary education. At the gymnasium level (ages 12-15), the subject of Home Economics is compulsory for both girls and boys at all three grades. At the lyceum level (ages 16-18) the subjects offered are: Family Education and Child Care to both girls and boys. As from the year 2006/07, the subject of Sex Education has been introduced at 6 gymnasia for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with the intention of introducing Sex Education to all gymnasia in the future. Public school teachers and learners often participate in EU and Council of Europe programmes that reinforce gender equality, citizen education and human rights at all levels of education.

At university level, the Department of Education of the University of Cyprus offers at undergraduate level, as an elective, Education and Gender, which is also offered as general education course for other departments. The Department of Social and Political Sciences offers the following courses on gender: Gender, Power and Politics; Gender and Politics; Gender and Power; Gender and International organisations; Gender, Race and Class. In 2008, the University of Cyprus started offering a Minor in Gender Studies, a multi-

disciplinary undergraduate project following a decision by the Senate to establish a Centre for Gender Studies at the University.

Another important development in 2008/09 is the establishment of a UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Empowerment at the University of Cyprus. The Chair network is expected to address, through the gender perspective, social, educational and political issues including major issues relating to gender and empowerment in the regions of the EU, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

2.2.b Sex Education, as mentioned in section 2.2.a above, has been introduced as a pilot programme at the 3<sup>rd</sup> gymnasium grade with the ultimate intention of introducing it to all public gymnasias in the future.

2.3.a and 2.3.b There is no specific guidance to encourage girls to choose educational fields that could prepare them for traditionally male professions and vice versa, as both sexes are treated equally and are equally encouraged to follow the career of their choice. The two sexes enjoy a good rate of representation in the fields of study, with the exception of the following subjects: girls have a low representation rate in engineering and engineering trades (excluding architecture and building); boys have a low representation rate in teacher training and education, humanities, social and behavioural studies, mathematics and statistics and physical sciences. However, boys, on the whole, tend to exceed women in doctoral studies. For details, see 7.1 below.

2.4.a There are no official guidelines/regulations on gender for authors of educational texts and materials for teaching, assessment and career guidance. However, as mentioned in section 2.1 above, more than 50% of textbooks and teaching materials and aids come from Greece, where gender perspective is included in the new curricula for public schools and the authors of educational texts and materials for teaching, assessment and career guidance have to comply with this. Additionally, another 200 textbooks and teaching aids, designed specifically for multicultural education with gender perspective, are offered free of charge.

2.4.b School books are not evaluated from a gender perspective in Cyprus but textbooks coming from Greece are evaluated from a gender perspective by the Greek educational authorities.

### **Section 3) Attainment**

3.1 Boys and girls receive equal treatment in education and no specific actions or policies are in place relating the gender gap to attainment nor is it an issue of concern in Cyprus in primary and secondary education. This is the reason why specific school subjects, ethnicity, social disadvantage or special education needs are neither factors nor specific areas of concern as regards gender gap.

3.2 As the subject of attainment has not been related to gender, no policies or strategies are in place.

3.3 In Cyprus there are two major sources of national statistics as regards attainment: *Statistics of Education* and the Pancyprian Examinations for the allocation of places at the public universities and tertiary educational institutions in Cyprus and Greece.

3.3.a The annual Pancyprian Examinations are held once a year in the summer by the Higher and Tertiary Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Examination Section of this Directorate processes results taking into consideration the gender factor.

According to the statistical data provided by the Examination Section of the Higher and Tertiary Education Directorate in the academic year 2007/08, female candidates secured more places at the tertiary education institutions (university and non-university) in Cyprus and in Greece than male candidates:

- female 1,187 – male 701

The candidates who sat for the Pancyprian Examinations were:

- female: 3,010 – male: 2,587

The 1021 places offered by the University of Cyprus for studies at undergraduate level were allocated on the results of the Pancyprian Examinations as follows:

- female candidates 725 - 296 to male candidates

Applicants were

- female 2,781 – male 1,957

The 605 places offered by the Cyprus University of Technology were allocated as follows:

- 375 to female candidates and 230 to male candidates.

Applicants were

- Female 1,974 – male 1,879

As regards individual subjects, in the subject of Mathematics

- 3,004 female and 2,999 male candidates sat for the Pancyprian Examinations

The successful candidates were ( $\geq 10$  (passing mark))

- 2,153 female and 1,450 male

In Modern Greek

- Applicants: 3,230 female – 3,168 male
- Successful candidates ( $\geq 10$  (passing mark)): 2,614 female – 1,588 male

In Physics

- Applicants: 3,230 female – 3,168 male
- Successful candidates ( $\geq 10$  (passing mark): 2,614 female – 1,588 male

3.3.b As mentioned in section 1.3 above, national statistics on gender-specific results are published annually in *Statistics of Education*. This publication includes official statistics presented from the gender perspective on the following levels of education: pre-primary, primary education, secondary (general and technical) and tertiary education (university and non-university), non-formal education, special education as well as financial statistics. There are statistics by gender on enrolments, dropouts, failures and promotions at primary and secondary level. Ethnicity and religion are two other perspectives taken into consideration in processing educational data in this publication.

According to the latest available data in *Statistics of Education 2006-2007*:

a) at primary education level, year 2005/06

- number of school leavers from public primary schools who proceeded to secondary schools by sex: Total: 9,253, Boys: 4,672, Girls: 4,581
- number of enrolments: Total: 56,077, Boys: 29,833, Girls: 28,067
- number of drop-outs : Total: 70, Boys: 34, Girls: 36
- number of failures: Total: 126, Boys: 79, Girls: 47
- number of promotions: Total:57,430, Boys: 29,575, Girls: 27,855

b) at public secondary education level, year 2005/06

- percentage of failures (as a percentage of enrolments):Total: 2.2, Boys: 3.2, Girls:1.1
- percentage of drop-outs: Total:1.4, Boys: 2.0, Girls:0.7
- literacy programme at the gymnasium: Total: 1,095, Boys: 796, Girls: 299 (year 2006/07)
- literacy programme at the lyceum/technical schools: Total: 14, Boys: 8, Girls: 6 (year 2006/07)
- secondary education literacy programme: Total: 1,109, Boys:804, Girls: 305 (year 2006/07)
- percentage of graduates of upper secondary level who pursue further studies in Cyprus and abroad: Total: 82%, Men: 76%, Women: 88% (2006/07).

#### **Section 4) School climate and environment**

4.1 At the moment there are no gender-related policies in place on school climate. However, the Ministry of Education and Culture and other education players (parents' associations and teachers' associations) are seriously concerned about school climate and environment and, in the framework of the

on-going education reform, the Ministry has commissioned a study into discipline and disciplinary measures, which has been carried out by academics. The findings of this report will form the subject of the dialogue for educational reform in order to find a consensus on the measures to be introduced in schools.

However, the gender perspective has not been taken into account in the report submitted, although there are occasional references to gender.

4.2 The School for Parents is an institution at which a series of lectures are delivered annually, specifically for parents but not necessarily from the gender perspective.

## **Section 5) Teachers**

5.1 There have been no recent initiatives to encourage men to become teachers at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Since the establishment of the Pedagogical Academy, there used to be a quota as to the number of student accepted and their sex (50/50), taking into consideration the annual needs in primary teachers. However, this practice stopped when a female candidate took the case to court in 1983. Pre-deciding the sex of the intake was ruled as unconstitutional and had to be stopped, see section 1.6 above.

5.2 As mentioned in section 2.2.a above, the Department of Education offers an elective in Gender and Education to undergraduate students for initial teacher education. This elective is also offered to students of other departments.

5.3 There are no specific gender guidelines relating to teachers' day-to-day practice in schools but such information and training is received during pre-service training for secondary school teachers and in-service training through courses designed by the Pedagogical Institute and carried out by Pedagogical staff or experts.

5.4 Gender is available as a topic in continuing professional development activities provided by the Pedagogical Institute, the official provider of in-service training to pre-primary, primary and secondary school teachers (general and technical), through compulsory training and voluntary seminars. For example, the Pedagogical Institute in 2007/08 offered an optional seminar in Nicosia on Education and Gender open to teachers at all levels. The same optional seminar was offered in 2008/09.

## **Section 6) Single-sex education**

6.1 Co-education is embedded in the public school system of Cyprus at all levels of education, from kindergarten to university. Co-education was introduced at primary schools in the 1940's and was completed in 1968/69

(see Persianis, 1998: 231). At secondary level, co-education started becoming the norm in 1974 in the aftermath of the Turkish invasion in 1974 since 38% of secondary schools were occupied and closed and 44% of the students had to be accommodated in the Government-controlled area (see Maratheftis, 1992: 40). It took a decade (1974-1984) for co-education to be established throughout the Government-controlled area.

6.2 Public single-sex education is not available in Cyprus.

6.3 There are no national statistics on the proportion of girls and boys of compulsory school age attending single-sex schools as co-education is the norm.

6.4 Not applicable, see sections 6.1 and 6.2 above.

## **Section 7) Higher Education**

7.1 Gender difference relating to choices for particular study fields or levels is not an issue of concern for the Ministry of Education and Culture which treats all students - male and female - equally in accordance with provisions of the 1960 Constitution. However, it is an issue with NGOs and institutions that are striving for *de facto* gender equality, not only *de jure*. It has also been a concern of institutions, both public and private, responsible for monitoring the implementation of certain agreements and protocols like the CEDAW, the Beijing, the Lisbon and the Bologna agreements.

For example, if we examine the case of the University of Cyprus, which is the only public full-fledged university in Cyprus, the latest data available in *Statistics of Education, 2006-2007* show that female students outnumber male students with the exception of PhD students. In more detail for the year 2006/07:

- total number of students: 5,340, men: 1,648, women: 3,692
- undergraduates, total number: 4,042, men: 1,112, women: 2,930
- postgraduates (Master's), total number: 947, men: 352, women: 595
- doctoral, total number: 351, men: 184, women: 167

The same pattern is exhibited as regards Cypriot students studying abroad at university level (2006/07):

- undergraduates, total number: 18,053, men: 8,517, women: 9,536
- postgraduates (Master's): total number: 1,849, men: 787, women: 1,062
- doctoral (PhD): total number: 485, men: 247, women: 238

As regards field of study and sex, *Statistics of Education* show that in the year 2006/07, men had the lead only in very few categories of subjects such as:

- computing, undergraduates: total number: 1,109, men: 821, women: 288
- engineering, undergraduates: total number: 1,890, men: 1,652, women: 238
- architecture and civil engineering, undergraduates: total number: 994, men: 609, women: 385

The same holds true for postgraduate and doctoral studies. However, women lead in numbers at all three levels in subjects such as education, languages, social studies and sciences - undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral - including disciplines such as law, life sciences, mathematics and statistics.

However, a small number of women hold executive positions in the public and private sectors. For this reason, in the next five years, the *Strategic Development Plan 2008-2013* proposes certain measures that will help increase women's participation in Research & Development, bridge the pay gap, encourage more women to follow traditionally male professions like engineering. But there is no specific policy in place on this issue at present.

No specific measures or initiatives have been put in place to improve gender balance.

However, it is expected that in the proposed reform of curricula and system of education, one of the issues that will be incorporated is gender perspective.

It must also be pointed out that teaching personnel at all levels are familiar with gender issues and their bearing on education. This is the case because

- gender subjects are offered by Greek universities and UK universities which are favoured by Cypriot students studying abroad.
- teachers at all levels participate in programmes, activities and exchanges under SOCRATES and other EU programmes.
- students attending Cypriot and Greek universities go on study visits at overseas universities of other EU countries under ERASMUS, ERASMUS MUNDUS and other programmes.

## Annex 1

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Ministry of Finance: [www.mof.gov.cy](http://www.mof.gov.cy)

Ministry of Justice and Public Order: [www.mjpo.gov.cy](http://www.mjpo.gov.cy)

Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance: [www.mlsi.gov.cy](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy)

Press and Information Office: [www.moi.gov.cy/pio](http://www.moi.gov.cy/pio)

Planning Bureau: [www.planning.gov.cy](http://www.planning.gov.cy)

Statistical Service: [www.mof.gov.cy/cystat](http://www.mof.gov.cy/cystat)

Open University of Cyprus: [www.ouc.ac.cy](http://www.ouc.ac.cy)



University of Cyprus: [www.ucy.ac.cy](http://www.ucy.ac.cy)

University of Technology: [www.cut.ac.cy](http://www.cut.ac.cy)

### 3. Unpublished Data

The Pancyprian Examination results (2008) were obtained from the Directorate of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry Education and Culture.

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12 March 2009

\*This report was the contribution of Cyprus for the Eurydice publication *Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes: Study on the Measures Taken and the Current Situation in Europe* (2010)