

# Gender Socialization in Philippine Child-Friendly Schools

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The study examined gender socialization of boys and girls in grades 1, 5, and 6 in selected Philippine public schools under the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) strategy to set up a child-friendly school system (CFSS). The study aimed to see whether and how gender advocacy and concerns are integrated into schools supported by the UNICEF Country Program for Children V (CPC V).

The study had two components. The first was a review of gender and development (GAD) policies and programs in the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS),<sup>1</sup> and of GAD integration into CPC V. The main concern was to identify points of coherence between the two programs and recommend possible policy and program changes to strengthen collaboration between DECS and UNICEF to achieve CPC V’s gender-related goals and objectives.

The second component was a rapid exploratory study of the learning environment in six CFSS model schools to obtain descriptive and “snapshot” information on gender socialization, primarily through on-campus interaction of students, teachers, and administrators. The interaction of CFSS schools with parents, community, and pupils was not covered due to limited time and money.

## Framework

Even before boys and girls enter the school system, sex-role standards have been constructed in the family, particularly through child-rearing practices. Socialization continues in school.

Fieldwork was conducted to answer these questions:

- What key messages about gender are sent to students through interaction of teachers, peers, and administrators?
- What do the messages imply for students’ sex-role standards and for promotion of gender-fair education?

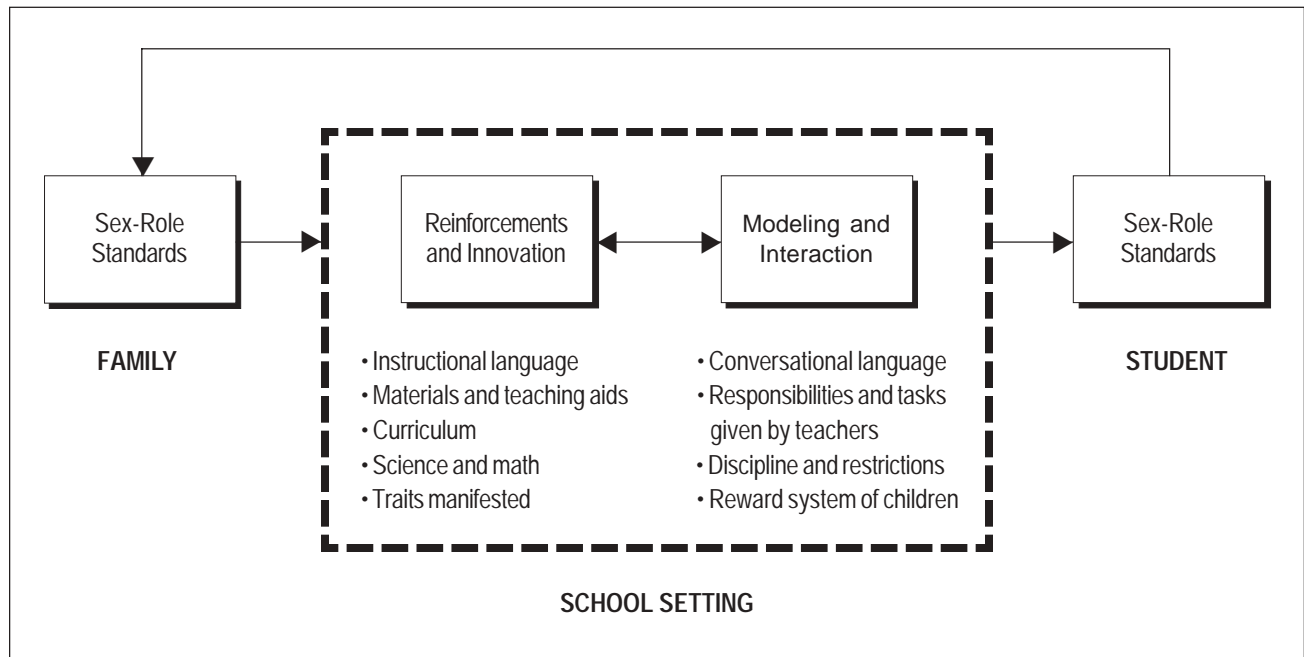
The fieldwork focused on reinforcements and innovations, and modeling and interactions.

*Reinforcements and innovations* are gender concepts, ideas, and notions in the curriculum such as instructional language, classroom management, materials and teaching aids, curriculum, and science and math.

*Modeling and interactions* are gender concepts, ideas, and notions socialized in relations in schools, such as conversational language, responsibilities and tasks assigned to students by teachers, discipline and restrictions, reward system of students, and traits manifested.

All these gender concepts, ideas, and notions were examined to see how they reinforced or contradicted the DECS core messages on gender-fair education:

- *Gender-fair family roles.* Shared parenting, shared home management, and shared decision-making.



- *Gender-fair social roles.* Equal opportunities (particularly in math and science); socialization of leadership traits among students; breaking down of gender stereotypes in occupations; and valuation of women's roles and worth, including elimination of violence against women.

### Gender and Development Policy Review in Education

#### Linkage between women's and children's rights

Women are the primary child rearers and homemakers, as dictated by traditional notions and cultural practices. Children remain the responsibility of women despite their increasing education, employment, and migration. Poor women bear the brunt of a difficult "double day" as they struggle to make both ends meet as well as take care of the children.

The Constitution enshrines the family as the basic social unit. Gender analysis, however, shows skewed divisions in family responsibilities and decision making, and instances of family-based violence.

Linkage between education and human and social development

Traditionally, education is seen as a means by which women and men can become self-reliant and productive. Nevertheless, the "self-reliant" model in which "education is seen as an independent commodity" (UNESCO 1999) has lost much of its credibility. Education is now analyzed as intimately linked to social practices. To be effective, education needs to be supported by social institutions and tied to cultural and social transformation (ibid). Education also connects the outside with the personal. Education is the vehicle by which "we understand and rationalise the workings of the social order... (and) describe how we understand ourselves" (Edwards and Sen 2000).

Official commitment to the rights of children and women

The Philippines is a State Party to international conventions and agreements that protect the rights of women and children, such as the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination

of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Goals of the World Summit for Children.

The government has drawn up frameworks to implement its international commitments to children and women: Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC): The Filipino Children 2000 and Beyond (PPAC updated 1991); Philippine National Development Plan for Children (Child 21); and Philippine Plan for Gender and Development (PPGD 1995–2005).

The Council for the Welfare of Children and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) are the national mechanisms to implement the country's plans and programs. The Special Committee for the Protection of Children (created February 1996) is jointly chaired by the secretaries of justice and of social welfare and development, and coordinates agency, government, and nongovernment efforts to protect children who are victims of abuse, including prostitution and trafficking. NCRFW directly leads efforts for women.

Laws have been reviewed and amended or enacted, including those on establishing family courts, granting them exclusive original jurisdiction over child and family cases; children's television; special protection of children against child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination; and prohibiting employment of children below 15 years of age in public and private undertakings.

Recent laws to protect Filipino women include the Women in Nation Building Act, Anti-Rape Law, and Anti-Sexual-Harassment Act, to name a few.

#### Gender and development mainstreaming in the bureaucracy

NCRFW introduced gender analysis and planning to all government agencies, DECS included, to identify policies, programs, and services to rid the agencies of gender-based discrimination.

#### UNICEF's Country Program for Children V

##### *The child-friendly school system*

A CFSS school recognizes and respects child rights and responsibilities, provides an environment to realize child rights, and helps ensure that the community and households are child-friendly. CFSS also takes responsibility for the education of children who are not enrolled.

Model child-friendly schools are being supported in three disadvantaged settings: (i) multigrade and monograde schools in remote rural areas, (ii) Islamic schools (*madrassah*) in Muslim Mindanao, and (iii) schools in urban poor communities. The country has 130 such schools (UNICEF listing as of October 2000).

##### *Gender in the Country Program for Children V*

CPC V sees CFSS as providing equal learning opportunities regardless of the child's circumstances (rich or poor, girl or boy, rural or urban, ethnic origin, differently abled, enrolled or not). Crucial in implementing CPC V is the linkage with education and GAD programs to promote gender-fair socialization in schools and eliminate stereotyping and discrimination.

UNICEF projects on childhood care and early stimulation and learning for children up to 2 years old recognize children's formation of values and self-concept, and socialization into future roles, including gender roles, and the need to change attitudes and behavior toward gender-fair child-rearing practices. The curriculum for early child care for development will be reviewed for gender messages and practices.

Realizing the positive correlation between mothers' education and children's improved health, nutrition, and psychosocial status of children, CPC V continues to support female functional literacy. CPC V's programs will be improved through, among other things, incorporation of topics such as gender socialization,

including advocacy for a more active role of fathers and men caregivers in child learning.

The ongoing in-service training for teachers, head teachers, and supervisors will be enhanced through development of new protocols and manuals on a number of new topics, including gender awareness. In the same vein, gender messages meant for communities linked to school outreach programs will be coursed through the parents, teachers, and community association (PTCA).

For institution building, CPC V is committed to help education actors adjust to the new paradigm, roles, and functions within CFSS, including by teaching the CEDAW.

#### Mainstreaming gender and development into the curriculum

By the time the CPC V was implemented, its partner agency, DECS, had some years of experience in integrating women in development (WID) and GAD into its educational programs. CPC V may very well catalyze the revitalization of WID and GAD activities and concerns within DECS.

#### *Policy framework*

Republic Act 7192 promotes GAD to develop human resources and achieve modernization. PPGD is the key national program framework for the DECS WID and GAD programs. The key institutional mechanism accountable for these programs is NCRFW. DECS supports all education-related provisions in local and international laws, policies, agreements, memoranda, orders, circulars, and other gender-responsive interventions initiated by DECS and other government and nongovernment entities.

#### *Gender and Development Program*

In the long term, DECS aims to eliminate all gender biases. These were identified in the cur-

riculum; textbooks and instructional materials; teachers' classroom practices; and policies, programs, and projects.

DECS's objectives are (i) equal opportunities for women and men in education, nontraditional livelihood, and occupation; (ii) nonsexist schooling in textbooks, teacher training, and training or scholarships; (iii) participation of women in science and technology; and (iv) women's career opportunities in the bureaucracy.

In March 1990 DECS's WID Focal Point was organized. Its chair reports directly to the education secretary. Its initial membership consisted of general managers (bureau director level), division chiefs, assistant division chiefs, board secretaries, and senior analysts. In 1999 DECS conducted a gender awareness workshop for new Focal Point members, and since then revitalization of the Focal Point in national, regional, and district offices has been a priority.

DECS's GAD Core Messages serve as the key vehicle to promote gender-fair education. DECS has trained curriculum developers and textbook writers in integrating the core messages in textbooks and other instructional materials. The Core Messages also serve as a reference point to develop a checklist to evaluate textbooks and instructional materials for gender biases and stereotyping.

At least two manuals have been developed for gender awareness. The first is *Gender Sensitivity Facilitators' Manual*, the primary reference of DECS GAD trainers on gender sensitivity, gender planning, and strategic planning. The second is *Gender and Development Sourcebook for Teachers*, a collection of prototype lessons in different subjects at the elementary and secondary levels. Both manuals are being reproduced and distributed.

#### Areas of interlinkages

CFSS finds strong policy coherence with the GAD program in a number of ways. The first is that CFSS goals overlap with those of DECS's Core Messages, particularly in family develop-

ment, where both programs promote (i) shared parenting; (ii) shared home management; (iii) shared decision making; and (iv) elimination of violence against women, particularly domestic violence.

Second, CFSS allows DECS to reach out to the most disadvantaged schools. Funds may be used to reach out to teachers; strengthen PTCAs; and reach out to depressed families, whose children swell the ranks of school dropouts.

Third, popular education now stands as a separate DECS program and may strengthen gender fairness and child-friendliness. The triangulation of reproductive health, gender-fair socialization, and child-friendly care and education may interlink not only in conceptual and curricular concerns but also at the programmatic and institutional development levels.

### Field Study Methodology

#### Approach

The field study adopted a qualitative-descriptive and rapid approach. The sites were chosen for presence of urban and rural schools, accessibility, openness to cooperation, convenience of schedule, and the like. The findings are highly subject to modification, given a different set of field circumstances. The research nevertheless raises initial clues and significant leads that may be considered in designing a follow-up study.

#### Data-gathering techniques

Various data-gathering techniques were used in the schools:

- *Classroom observation.* Researchers observed science; math; geography, history, civics, and social studies; Filipino; home economics and livelihood education; and language.
- *Observation of children's play activities and informal interactions.* Aspects observed included use of language, traits manifested, games, and other activities.

- *Observation of messages of information and communication materials on campus.* A communication teacher examined such materials for their gender content and implication.
- *Focus group discussion among teachers.* Teachers of grades 5 and 6, females and males, were interviewed as a group. The interview focused on (i) difficulties and barriers met in socializing gender-fair ideas and concepts, (ii) techniques and activities for socializing gender-fair ideas and concepts, and (iii) understanding of gender-fair education.
- *Survey of students' attitudes toward gender roles.* A short survey questionnaire was administered to one section each of grades 5 and 6 in each school. Survey respondents were asked whether certain activities, tasks, behaviors, and traits are (i) for women only, (ii) for men only, or (iii) for both women and men.
- Short interviews with school administrators. One administrator was interviewed per school, focusing on the school's efforts to implement gender-fair education.

#### Research sites

Fieldwork was conducted in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. One urban and one rural public school in each region was visited. The choice of the school was dependent on coordination between UNICEF and DECS. All the schools were covered by the CFSS program.

*Bulhao Elementary School.* The school, in Labo, Camarines Norte, has a view of the surrounding mountains. Students' parents are engaged in retailing, small-scale vending, farming, mining work, and other odd jobs. Of the 408 students, 21 are in preschool. The grade 6 class is overpopulated, with 65 students as two sections were combined when a teacher left. Some young male students had to sit on top of cabinets for lack of chairs. All the girls had chairs.

*Tugos Elementary School.* In the mountains of Paracale, Camarines Norte, the school serves 497 students from families engaged in small-scale mining or farming. A few are children of miners employed by a big mining company. Several years ago, three classrooms of a nearby public school collapsed due to vibrations from compressors used to detect gold.

*Elias R. Mencias Memorial Elementary School.* The school is in San Pedro, Negros Oriental, near the sea. The 353 students belong to artisan fishing and farming families. Unlike other schools visited, its surroundings are clean and spruced up by plants and flowers.

*Abokado Elementary School.* The school is in a rugged mountain range in Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental. The school of 236 students can be reached only by motorcycle, which carries three to five passengers and goods and produce. Students usually come from small-scale upland farming households.

Abokado is proud that one of its teachers received the Model Teacher of the Year Award from a television program. She does administrative work and teaches a combined class of grades 5 and 6. Grades 3 and 4 are also combined.

*Agdao Elementary School.* The school is the only one in a slum community, Davao City, and has 1,093 students. The children come from poor households that get their income, very often irregular, from a variety of odd jobs; for the men, carpentry, vending, and driving passenger jeepneys; for the women, doing laundry, selling fish and vegetables, and providing personal services such as manicures. Some girls work as prostitutes.

*Salaysay Elementary School.* The spacious school is in the hilly fringes of Davao City and can be reached only by motorcycle. The school serves children of indigenous peoples—Bago-bos, Al-Manobo, and Guiangan, who make 70% of the 222 students. Cebuanos make up the rest.

## Fieldwork

Three teachers from Miriam College carried out fieldwork from January to March 2001. They used multiple techniques: classroom and out-of-classroom observation, individual interviews, focus group discussion with teachers, and a short survey of students.

## Findings of the Field Study

### Instruction and communication

This part of the research examined use of language and symbolic interaction and how they reinforced and innovated dissemination of key concepts and core messages on gender-fair education. The instrumental theory of persuasion (Hovland, Janis, and Kelly 1953) was used for instruction and curriculum, and symbolic interaction theory (Blumer 1972) for materials and teaching aids.

### *Instructional language*

Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) defined persuasive communication as “the process by which an individual (in this case, the teacher) transmits stimuli (usually verbal) to modify the behavior of other individuals (in this case, the pupils).” One way that persuasive communication changes attitudes is by changing opinions. Here we show how language reinforces pupils’ sex-role standards.

English, science, and math were conducted in English, and sometimes in the dialect. Filipino; geography, history, civics, and social studies; and home economics and livelihood education were taught in Filipino, and sometimes in the dialect.

Generally, teachers’ instructions to the students were gender-fair, except at one school, where the math teacher separated boys and girls in a contest. The teachers of Salaysay Elementary School said that the pupils had become conscious of their sexuality and the girls re-

requested the separation even in seating to avoid being teased by boys. This separation reinforces the gender gap. A way to stop the teasing is to make the boys realize that the girls were uncomfortable with what the boys might see as normal and harmless behavior.

One teacher at Tugos Elementary School said in class, “Who wants to read? Let’s have a boy. Boys have louder voices.” Such remarks discourage girls’ initiative.

Although the teachers claim that they were gender-sensitive, they preferred boys to carry out certain tasks:

- At Tugos Elementary School, the science teacher instructed the boys to burn paper and twigs for an experiment on physical and chemical change.
- In Bulhao Elementary School, a science experiment required the students to boil a cup of water over a flame. The boys held the cups while the girls watched.

#### *Classroom materials and teaching aids*

Teaching materials have greater influence than verbal reinforcement because students recall pictures more easily than words. Researchers examined teaching aids, posters, and cut-out letters on walls.

Generally, the research team found the materials to be gender-sensitive, with some exceptions.

Two pictures from Agdao Elementary School depict a teacher as female and a farmer as male, reinforcing the idea that men and boys work in the fields and that females become teachers. Other pictures showed a seller, sewer, and food server as female, and the busboy as male.

Although some teachers try to be gender-sensitive and gender-fair, some fail—not deliberately, but because of lack of formal training. One picture shows a family composed of father, mother, older sister, older brother, and youngest child. Teachers should bear in mind that not every family is like this. Some families have only one parent. Some children are raised by grandparents.

Posters showed the following stereotypes:

- A girl and a boy are standing to honor the raising of the flag. The flag raisers are boys.
- A boy is helping an old woman cross the street.
- Two boys are shaking hands as a sign of being a good sport.
- A mother is telling her son to clean up the garbage.
- Girls are sweeping the grounds and boys are raking and pushing a wheelbarrow.
- Models used for an anti-drug campaign are males.
- The dentist is male, teacher female, nurse female, and electrician male.
- A woman does the laundry.
- The doctor is male and the nurse female.
- Fire fighters and ship crews are males.

Quotations are displayed on walls in cut-out letters:

- “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” A gender-neutral way to say this is, “Train children in the ways they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from them.”
- “He who pleases everybody pleases nobody.” It could have been better said as, “An individual who pleases everybody pleases nobody.”

#### *Curriculum*

Home economics and livelihood education lessons are gender-sensitive. These are reinforced by teachers’ injection of principles such as, “It doesn’t matter if males or females shop. Father and mother should shop. Males and females know how to shop. Their duties are equal.”

No gender gaps were seen in math and geography, history, civics, and social studies lessons as topics were geography, mineral resources, etc.

English lessons showed gender bias. Teachers generally prefer using girls’ names or sentences using the feminine pronoun:

- Gina is tall. Divine is taller than Gina but Cora is the tallest of the three.
- She always reads in the library.
- Sometimes, she comes late.
- Nenita always speaks slowly.

At Elias Macias Elementary School, the language teacher asked the following questions after the students had read a text on ants:

- How are ants similar to man?
- Do the ants and man have one thing in common?
- How are man and ants similar?

At Bulhao Elementary School, the male teacher had gender bias for masculine examples:

- Everyday he tries to live better.
- He loves God's creatures dearly.
- He thinks well of his neighbors.
- He always obeys traffic regulations.

No examples used feminine names or pronouns. Only Tugos Elementary School had a gender-neutral lesson in language.

#### *Science and math*

The research team observed that math lessons were not gender-biased. However, in some schools, science lessons were biased in favor of males:

- In Bulhao the grade-5 teacher showed a drawing of men rolling a heavy load onto a boat and asked, "What do men use in rolling up the heavy load to the boat? Does it make the work easier for the men to lift the object?" The picture and questions imply that only men do heavy jobs.
- In Elias Macias, the science teacher showed a picture of a girl using a kitchen knife and a boy holding a saw, stereotyping gender roles.
- In Salaysay, for a lesson on chemical and physical change the boys were instructed to gather twigs, put them in a can, and burn them. The girls just watched.

Science lessons in other schools did not have gender gaps because they talked about animals and their habitats, but "man" was used to refer to the human race, and experiments that involved risk (such as burning) were assigned to boys. Although the teachers were not conscious of it, they used sex-role standards when they assumed males as better able than females to conduct heavy and risky activities.

#### *Activities and interaction*

Modeling and interaction were observed in: (i) classroom management, (ii) responsibilities and tasks assigned to students, (iii) discipline and restrictions, (iv) rewards, (v) games and activities, and (vi) traits manifested.

#### *Classroom management*

Seating was mixed in most classes observed, except for Salaysay, where the girls asked to be separated from the boys.

In class recitations and discussions, the boys and girls participated almost equally. The teachers called the girls as often as the boys. Boys and girls alike were behaved and obedient, and participated. They followed the teachers' instructions with interest and enthusiasm. They were cordial and greeted the teachers and one another respectfully.

Girls and boys volunteered for class recitations and other class activities such as going to the front of the classroom, role-playing, flannel-board activity, show and tell, and board work. Leaders were chosen not on the basis of sex but of responsibility, leadership qualities, social maturity, friendship, popularity, and intelligence.

Overall teacher-student relationships were very good. Most teachers did not favor any sex over the other. The teachers taught with ease and comfort while the students, boys and girls alike, were relaxed and spontaneous in their remarks.



*Responsibilities and tasks assigned to students*

Both boys and girls were called for recitation and other class activities on an almost equal frequency. Group leaders were assigned on rotation, and girls and boys acted as group reporters.

Most tasks were assigned to girls and boys, such as erasing the blackboard, putting away manila papers, filling out attendance sheets, and laying aside teaching aids used by the teacher. Boys and girls were also assigned as room cleaners and monitors.

In home economics and livelihood education, girls and boys are taught together. The lessons include industrial arts, elementary agriculture, and retail trade. Boys and girls carried hollow blocks, cleaned cabinets, and gardened.

However, gender-based tasking was noticed. In Luzon, only the boys carried chairs from one classroom to the other while only the girls led the opening song.

Teachers said that tasks outside the classroom ordinarily given to male students included weeding, building fences, carrying water, scrubbing floors, climbing trees, and ploughing fields—heavy tasks that the girls could not do. Girls' tasks were sweeping the floor, wiping the furniture, and picking up litter and leaves. Tasks assigned to girls and boys were cleaning the schoolyard, arranging flowers on the teacher's table, and bringing out the garbage. Initially boys and girls would tease boys asked to arrange flowers on the teacher's table as *bakla* (effeminate), but this rarely happens nowadays. Convincing the boys that there was nothing abnormal in their arranging flowers is a small but important gender-bender success.

*Discipline and restrictions*

Generally the students were well behaved, although teachers at one school said boys broke discipline more than girls. In another school, a teacher opined that the girls tend to be talkative and inattentive in class when they were seated beside boys and vice versa.

Girls and boys who do not follow the teacher's instructions or cheat or fail to do their homework received the same treatment. Teachers said they usually speak with the students and refrain from scolding them so as not to embarrass them. For slightly more serious offenses, students regardless of sex are asked to fill up a paper with the sentence, "I will behave in class."

For fighting and cheating, girls and boys are sent to the principal or to the guidance counselors. In some cases, the parents are called for a meeting.

In at least one instance, a female teacher was so irritated by her noisy class that she shouted: "*Hoy, mga tsismosa!*" (Hey, you gossipy girls!) even if the male students were also noisy.

Teachers claim they usually do not punish or reprimand students who come to class late or are unable to bring the required school materials. Sensitivity to pupils' poverty was an important point in child-friendly learning.

*Rewards*

Rewards were given to students who earned good scores, satisfactorily accomplished an assigned task, gave correct answers, or performed good deeds. The most common incentives were food (biscuits, candies, salt, sugar) and school supplies (ballpens, pencils). Teachers spend their own money to give away necessities that poor families cannot afford.

*Games and out-of-classroom activities*

For the most part, boys and girls played or performed out-of-classroom activities together, including catch, rubber bands, and ball games. Some games were played only by girls, such as Chinese garter and jumping rope, while spider fights were a favorite of the boys. Some boys played "karate-karate," a rough game. Boys and girls played "Adam and Eve," forming a circle with boy and a girl, both blindfolded in the middle. The idea was for "Adam" to catch "Eve" within the circle. Boys

tended to stay near one another. The same was true for the girls.

#### *Traits manifested*

Boys and girls displayed similar traits, although boys were noisier and more boisterous than girls outside the classroom. Girls and boys were courteous and helpful to grown-ups, and shy with strangers.

#### Students' attitude to gender roles and traits

Students' attitudes toward gender roles were obtained through a survey questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes all responses to the questionnaire. Responses did not differ according to sex.

Table 2 summarizes respondents' views on desirable and undesirable traits or qualities.

Respondents considered all the items attributable to boys and girls, indicating that traits or personal qualities are generally considered gender-neutral.

#### Interviews with school heads

Three female and three male school administrators were randomly interviewed. The atmosphere of the interviews was generally cordial, spontaneous, and relaxed, except that one male administrator was uncomfortable discussing gender.

#### *Dissemination of information about gender sensitivity*

None of the school heads interviewed mentioned that they exerted extra effort to system-

**TABLE 1. Responses to Tasks (%)**

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>For girls only</i>	<i>For boys only</i>	<i>For boys and girls</i>	<i>No response</i>
<b>Shared parenting</b>	25.17	1.35	73.03	0.45
Caring for the sick	43.37	0.45	55.50	0.67
Putting kids to sleep	11.46	4.72	82.7	1.12
Disciplining children	9.89	4.04	85.39	0.67
<b>Shared home management</b>				
Fixing house structure	5.17	49.21	45.17	0.45
Cooking	34.83	2.25	62.7	0.22
Washing clothes	42.47	2.02	48.09	0.67
Marketing	48.54	2.7	48.09	0.67
<b>Shared decision making</b>				
Giving permission to children	10.56	6.52	81.8	1.12
Buying major household appliances / fixtures	28.31	3.40	66.97	1.12
Land purchase	2.02	20.9	75.73	1.35
Deciding for a group or the class	5.17	10.11	83.27	0.45
Deciding on education of children	12.13	3.15	84.27	0.45
<b>Leadership</b>				
Joining contests in math and science	6.97	6.07	86.07	0.9
Run for president	1.35	12.13	86.07	0.45
Run for class secretary	11.01	8.54	78.20	2.25
Run for class vice president	5.84	6.29	87.19	0.67
<b>Other activities</b>				
Playing basketball	1.12	65.39	32.58	0.9
Playing volleyball	14.83	10.79	73.26	1.12
Erasing the blackboard	6.52	11.24	81.12	1.12

TABLE 2. Responses to Personal Traits (%)

<i>Personal traits</i>	<i>For girls only</i>	<i>For boys only</i>	<i>For girls and boys</i>	<i>No response</i>
Obedient	3.15	1.35	94.61	0.9
Kind	4.04	2.25	93.03	0.67
Respectful	4.27	2.92	91.91	0.9
Studious	4.72	4.49	89.44	1.35
Autonomous in deciding for self	4.49	6.74	86.74	2.02
Quiet	12.36	2.25	83.37	2.02
Open-minded	9.89	5.62	83.15	1.35
Withdrawn	9.21	13.03	76.85	0.9
Attentive	8.76	13.48	75.28	2.47
Assertive	6.52	17.08	75.06	1.35
Talkative	16.40	8.09	71.16	1.35
Hyperactive	7.19	19.55	71.91	1.35
Humorous	4.27	22.47	71.69	1.35
Playful and inattentive	5.62	21.35	71.69	1.35
Aggressive	4.04	24.49	70.56	0.9
Shy	5.62	3.37	69.89	1.12
Quick decision maker	11.24	18.65	68.99	1.12
Honest	1.35	30.56	67.42	0.67
Soft-spoken	23.82	6.74	66.97	2.47
Careful	25.62	6.97	65.62	1.78

atically disseminate information about gender sensitivity or gender-fair education. Information about the topic was shared mainly only through word of mouth, except in the case of two administrators who had echoed a GAD seminar they had attended. No school-based programs or seminar workshops were developed to help faculty understand gender sensitivity and its application.

#### *School heads' understanding of gender sensitivity*

Only three administrators had participated in gender sensitivity workshops; the rest had attended other training workshops where gender was treated only in passing. School heads felt that their understanding of gender was inadequate. However, they did not think their performance was seriously affected. One school head said that before gender-fair concepts were introduced, the girls were assigned to sweep the floor, and boys to scrub it. "We are minimizing this now," said the school head.

Most teachers equated gender sensitivity to enabling girls and boys to perform the same tasks and responsibilities, or merely switching gender roles: "What men can do women can also do!"

#### *School heads' views on the significance of gender sensitivity*

The administrators all believed that gender sensitivity is an important concept but were not animated in discussions and did not express the desire to actively promote it, perhaps partly due to their inadequacy in addressing difficult gender relation issues, rather than solely from resistance to the notion of gender equality itself.

#### *Dissemination of information about gender sensitivity*

The teachers reported that there was no formal or comprehensive training or seminar workshop on gender sensitivity. Information

about the concept either came from the master teacher or principal. Teachers were unsure of the concept of gender sensitivity and its application. There was no formal program on how to apply or integrate the concept of gender sensitivity in the curriculum.

#### *Teachers' understanding of gender sensitivity*

Most teachers equated gender sensitivity to rights, emphasizing that women and men must be treated equally and given equal opportunities. Revaluing and respecting the tasks and responsibilities performed by women in the same manner as those performed by men, as well as being equally sensitive to the needs of the sexes, were principal notions the teachers related to gender sensitivity. The undertaking of social activities and roles by either sex, which the school heads focused on when they spoke of gender sensitivity, was just one notion teachers attached to the same concept. Teachers had a more developed notion of gender sensitivity and gender fairness than school heads.

#### *Teachers' view of the significance of gender sensitivity*

It was only in conversation with the teachers that the issue of violence against women emerged. Some teachers did not see the importance of making students aware that this was a violation of their rights. Others took it for granted while some could not control what happens in their students' homes.

Most teachers see gender sensitivity merely as a reversal of roles and equal treatment. With regard to promoting shared parenting, home management, and decision making in the family, the teachers were quick to point out that they did not have control over these practices. Most families are still traditional.

The teachers revealed that they did not wish to interfere in family matters because they were afraid the parents would get back at them. An example given was how teachers could not stop

a mother with machete in hand who was running after her child.

Some teachers also said they were helpless to stop girls from engaging in prostitution, or to respond to complaints from parents about the school's emphasis on child right to assert themselves.

#### **Findings and their Implication**

What key messages about gender are socialized among the students through the interaction of teachers, peers, and administrators?

Major elements of the DECS Core Messages are known to teachers, who appear to be convinced about the importance of promoting these messages and values. Administrators, however, have a more limited appreciation of the meaning of gender-fair education and were less enthusiastic about it. The pupils had a generally healthy gender-fair perception of tasks and personal traits. By and large gender-fair relations are being cultivated in schools, especially equal treatment and encouragement given to boys and girls.

Nevertheless, gender biases were found to exist—(i) spontaneous remarks made by some teachers in the classroom; (ii) visual teaching and informational materials, particularly posters, which were strongly gender stereotypical; (iii) English-language subjects, which were fraught with gender bias; and (iv) some science teachers, who favored boys and overlook girls for activities that involved risks and physical challenge.

Family violence, often against children but also against wives, could not be addressed by teachers, who feared retaliation from parents. Teachers felt helpless to intervene in cases of family violence, child prostitution that had the consent of parents, and resistance of some parents to notions of child rights.

What are the implications of such messages to the students' sex-role standards as well as to DECS's promotion of gender-fair education?

Undoubtedly, concepts and values related to women's and children's rights have been infused into CFSS schools. However, even in an

environment that could be relatively controlled by the school heads and teachers, gender biases continue to be brought in through the materials used by, and the often unconscious and spontaneous remarks and behavior of the teachers themselves. In difficult subjects such as English and science, gender stereotypes tend to be more pronounced than in subjects taught in Filipino and that relate to less difficult topics.

Teachers should be enabled to help make changes that can make a difference not only in their students' lives but also in the lives of whole families. For instance, counseling skills on violence against women and sexual exploitation of children, as well as training in persuasion and motivation with regards to respect for women's and children's rights may be given to school-teachers so they can reinforce what they give students in class. The triangulation of popular education with gender-fair and children-friendly education is a positive step in this direction.

Finally, teachers' capacity to promote women's and children's rights can be boosted by helping teachers build institutional linkages with government and nongovernmental advocates. No amount of training will do any good if the trained people are unable to regenerate themselves and find support from co-advocates.

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## Note

1. The name Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) was changed to Department of Education (DepEd) in 2001.