



"If not School then Who?" : Promoting Gender Equality in Greek Schools via Innovating Programs

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Abstract

According to the contemporary theory and the latest references the rising of gender stereotypes is strongly connected with the future of education. All educational systems are reproducing the social and cultural context of the society. In this aspect school is still the main structure of reproducing gender roles but also is the mean that can help realize social change. Furthermore, teachers have a key role in this social reproduction because their experience and their ideas about gender equality influence students both boys and girls. So, teachers who are partly responsible for the prolonging of gender stereotypes is crucial to have a proper training in order to recognize and sensitize about gender equality.

During the first decade of this century (2000-2008) four European innovating programs were held in Greek secondary education with three major goals :a) the training and sensitization of teachers, so that they can identify gender inequality in the wider social environment and individual educational context, b) the creation and use of educational structures aimed at cross-sectional and longitudinal emergence of a new vision of equality and the promotion of gender relations at individual and collective, educational and professional level and c) the encouragement of female pupils to attend initial vocational training in areas where females are underrepresented(positive actions). These programs included a lot of innovating methods such as e-learning, role playing, computer interaction etc. Thousands of teachers and students attended these European programs for eight years.

The aim of this paper is to present the European programs which promoted gender equality in Greek secondary schools from 2000 until 2008 in three dimensions: a) the new methods of teacher training and innovative teaching, b) the experience of teachers who participated in these programs and c) teacher's propositions and ideas for new methods in order to promote gender equality in education. This paper is based on seven interviews of teachers (men and women)which are explored through Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.