



Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys

A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

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PART I:

Introduction to Gender-Inclusive Teaching

We are happy that you are joining the journey to make your classroom, school, and community *gender inclusive*. This guide was created by IREX education specialists with the contributions of secondary school educators from nearly 70 countries across Eurasia, South and Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Western Hemisphere. Teachers who used the tools and strategies included here reported increased leadership roles for girls and boys in their classrooms, increased awareness of how gender inclusiveness improves classroom planning and teaching, effective methods for countering negative stereotypes of girls and boys that impede learning, and success in implementing gender empowerment projects in their schools and communities.

What Is Gender?

Around the world, the term *gender* suggests a variety of different meanings, opinions, and ideas. For the purposes of this teaching guide, *gender* is defined as the behavioral, social, and cultural expectations associated with being a male or female.

What Is Gender-Inclusive Teaching?

A high-quality education supports the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that lead to improved health outcomes, increased individual earning potential, and a more engaged citizenry. While large gains have been made in improving girls' and boys' access to education, multiple

GENDER-INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Teaching with content and pedagogy that helps girls and boys achieve success.



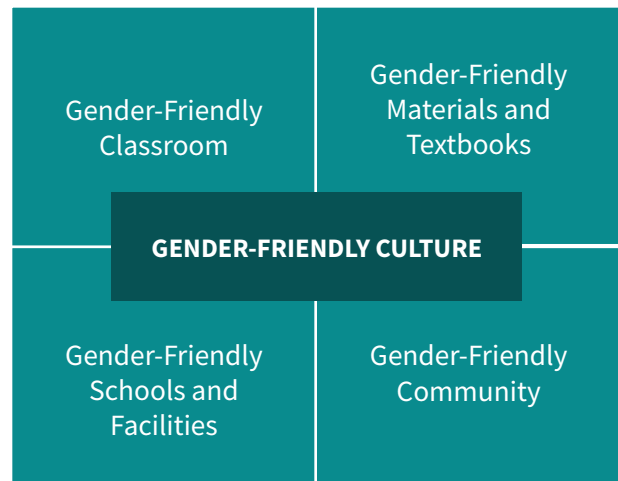
forms of inequality persist between girls and boys that present challenges to advancing girls' education globally. Given the critical importance of education to individuals and communities, how do we ensure that girls and boys are succeeding at equal levels around the world?

Gender-Inclusive Teaching is teaching with content and pedagogy that acknowledges and overcomes gender-based constraints so that both girls and boys can be successful learners. Gender-based barriers to education may be socioeconomic, cultural, or institutional; they change over time and vary from place to place. This guide includes a pathway for teachers to evaluate and put into practice gender-inclusive teaching in their classrooms, schools, and communities so that all their students have a chance to thrive.

Why Is Gender-Inclusive Teaching Important?

Teachers have the opportunity to make a difference in students' lives every day. They have a powerful influence on students' success in and outside of the classroom, through the content they teach as well as the expectations they set. When teachers make the decision to learn about and practice gender-inclusive teaching, they are making a commitment to value and nurture the potential of every student, helping to create more prosperous and sustainable communities. Gender-inclusive teaching proactively addresses challenges that both girls and boys may face in receiving an excellent education.

This teaching guide provides practical, hands-on activities, suitable for large classrooms with varying levels of resources, for advancing on the journey of gender-inclusive teaching. Each classroom, school, and community has its own specific gender-based challenges and opportunities, and we encourage teachers to adapt these activities to best suit their journey toward gender-friendly teaching. A gender-inclusive classroom is friendly to all students; therefore, for the



purposes of this teaching guide, the terms *gender-inclusive* and *gender-friendly* will be used interchangeably.

Creating a gender-friendly learning environment applies to all grades and all subjects. Gender-friendly learning should not just happen in a specific course subject or after-school club; rather, it is a style of teaching that should be applied in a variety of settings. Math, Science, Social Studies, Language, Technology, Art, and many more subjects can all be taught in a gender-friendly environment.

A TEACHER'S VOICE

Rokhaya, Senegal

Advancing Girls' Engagement in STEM

Upon her return to Senegal, Rokhaya used what she learned throughout the 2012 TEA program to implement and improve gender clubs in her region. As head of gender affairs at her school district's superintendent's bureau, and with support from various associations across the region, Rokhaya organized a highly successful "Miss Science and Miss Math" competition to promote girls' education in STEM. In 2015 alone, 300 students participated in the regional competition, and 29 received the distinction of Miss Math and Miss Science. Rokhaya also translated resources provided to her during the program to share as a tool with peers in schools in her district.

The Journey toward a Gender-Friendly Culture

This guide provides a flexible map for evaluating, building, and implementing gender-inclusive teaching in instructional materials, classrooms, schools, and communities. Each section provides an opportunity for teachers to **OBSERVE** current teaching practices, **REFLECT** on the gender friendliness of those practices, and **TAKE ACTION** toward a more gender-friendly classroom.

The sections of the guide do not need to be completed in any particular order. Rather, each section should be utilized to meet current needs. Teachers will find space throughout the guide for taking notes. At the end of each section, teachers will find questions to get them thinking about their short- and long-term goals. We encourage teachers to identify goals as they work through each section and to think about how they can accomplish their goals with the tools provided to them in this guide. Finally, feel free to share this guide with peers and use the suggested activities in trainings or workshops in your schools and communities.

PART II:

Building a Gender-Inclusive Learning Environment

There are three important components to fostering a truly gender-inclusive learning environment: 1) generating support within the school and community; 2) creating a supportive classroom atmosphere; and 3) ensuring gender-sensitive content and curriculum.

1. HOW CAN I HELP MY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BECOME GENDER INCLUSIVE?

Alumni of the ILEP and TEA programs frequently report common barriers to gender equity in education in their communities.

Approximately 85% of survey respondents indicated that there are barriers to gender equity in education in their communities. The most commonly reported challenges are identified here:

| CULTURAL | ECONOMIC |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restrictive gender norms and roles• Early marriage and pregnancy• Girls are expected to stay at home and do household chores and boys are expected to work• Valuing boys over girls• Limited parent engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cost of schooling• Earning potential of males vs. females• Pressure on males to support family• Girls have to stay home to care for siblings• Lack of investment in education |
| GOVERNMENT | SCHOOL |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy relating to curriculum design and school systems• Lack of commitment to equity• Approach to resource distribution• In areas of instability and violence, recruitment of boys as child soldiers• Insufficient infrastructure to support response to natural disasters or emergencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long and unsafe commute• Lack of services for students with special needs• School conditions and poor bathroom facilities• Sexual exploitation and gender-based violence• Inadequate training of teachers• Lack of adequate hygiene facilities and supplies for girls during menstruation |

A TEACHER'S VOICE

Shumaila, Pakistan

Educating Illiterate Mothers on the Importance of Educating Their Girls

“The support I received from the TEA program in 2012 allowed me to work with 100 mothers who had never been to school to learn how to promote literacy in the home and to encourage their daughters to go to school. It improved female access to education by increasing enrollment rates by 25% and decreasing dropout rates by 20% in the nearby schools.”

Teachers can work together with peers, administrators, and parents to help overcome these barriers by designing and implementing effective strategies for promoting gender-inclusive environments. The more people committed to taking action, the greater the opportunity for all students to succeed. In fact, increasing numbers of ILEP and TEA alumni report that raising awareness in the school and community helps to counter negative stereotypes about girls and boys.

This section provides suggested strategies and real-life examples from ILEP and TEA alumni on how to cope with some common challenges related to gender inclusiveness in their schools and communities.



OBSERVATION

In the space below, identify and list obstacles or challenges that girls or boys face accessing a quality education or completing school in your community. Do they change over time, particularly as boys and girls reach adolescence? How do you see these issues manifesting in your school and community? Is your school currently addressing any of these challenges? If so, what steps are they taking to address them?

CULTURAL :

ECONOMIC :

GOVERNMENT:

SCHOOL:

REFLECTION

All students are affected by factors inside and outside of school, but teachers can and do make a difference. Think about the ways in which you can reduce gender-based obstacles and challenges in your school and community to make a positive, lasting impact on students. How can you get fellow teachers, parents, school administrators, or government officials to support your cause?

TEACHER PROFILE

Mohsin, Pakistan

Educating Parents about the Importance of Girls' Education

In 2013, TEA alumnus Mohsin set out to increase girls' secondary-school enrollment rates by educating parents about the importance of girls' education. With support from the project, Mohsin offered a series of workshops that provided mothers with practical tools for increasing literacy in the home and encouraged them to share their knowledge in their communities. The workshops reached nearly 600 mothers, fathers, and students. Most recently Mohsin is working to train older girls to serve as community educators, to provide emotional and educational support to their at-risk peers.



Messaging to the community about the role of gender in education and student empowerment is the first step in gaining support from various stakeholders. First, you will need to consider how to effectively deliver your message based on your audience and their priorities. Consider the following:

1. Who is your audience? (Administrators, parents, government officials, faith groups?)

2. What is important to them? (Safety in schools, earning potential, family?)

3. What is the appropriate forum to engage in these discussions? (Parent meeting, community meeting, teacher workshop?)

4. What are your key talking points? Think about useful statistics and stories, and how to connect them to your audience's priorities and concerns.

Girls with eight years of education are four times less likely to marry as children.

(UNESCO, 2013)

TAKING ACTION

IREX is pleased to report that ILEP and TEA alumni are taking action and report having an impact on their schools and communities upon their return home.

63% of survey respondents reported having carried out strategies or training programs in their classrooms or schools that promoted gender equity.

Some examples of real-life strategies for building a gender-inclusive learning environment, shared by alumni, are listed below. It is important for teachers and schools to develop and implement projects that build fundamental critical-thinking and problem-solving skills while encouraging gender inclusiveness.

STRATEGIES FROM TEACHERS FOR ENGAGING PARENTS

- Invite parents to attend a school career fair as an opportunity to **educate parents** on the importance of allowing their sons and daughters to complete their studies and pursue higher education.
- **Organize meetings with parents** to encourage them not to assign duties at home based on gender.
- **Arrange seminars** for parents on gender equity in collaboration with school counselors.
- Work with parents **to promote the role of the father** in raising children and forming their personalities.
- Encourage parents to **support their children's dreams**. For example, if a student wants to be a lawyer, practice calling him/her Attorney [First Name] to keep the dream alive.
- Hold teacher-parent meetings to regularly **build trust with parents** and discuss the investment of their children's education.
- **Arrange focus-group discussions** with successful female leaders, and invite boys and girls and their parents to attend.
- Collaborate with parents and teachers to **provide special assistance** for girls who may face early marriage or pregnancy. For instance, offer guidance on what can be done if they miss school. Offer to reschedule exams or prepare remedial activities so that they can finish their secondary education.

A TEACHER'S VOICE

Fanta, Senegal

Engaging with Parents

After participating in ILEP in 2013, Fanta set out to increase parent involvement in efforts to tackle barriers to girls' education in Senegal. "The Parents Association also joined us in the fight and that is how we succeeded in bringing back the girls to school and avoiding the marriage of one of them."



Educated mothers are more than twice as likely to send their children to school.

(UNICEF, 2010)

STRATEGIES FROM TEACHERS FOR GAINING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Incentivize males to be **'male allies'** for girls' education through global initiatives such as the UN Women's HeForShe model.
- **Reward males who have promoted gender equality** in the education or school system as "gender ambassadors" or role models.
- Work with community leaders to provide girls with leadership training through tools such as **CARE: A Leadership Model for Adolescent Girls**.
- **Partner with community organizations** and invite male and female role models to speak with students.
- **Conduct trainings** for staff and school administrators.
- **Use local media** to gain support for gender equality.
- Partner with **local non-governmental organizations** or community associations on projects aimed at training students. For instance, one teacher partnered with Action for Development on a project where trained students went to rural areas to talk to parents and fellow teenagers on a range of gender-based issues.
- **Gain the support of administrators** or the **Ministry or Department of Education** to host an annual Gender and Development seminar-workshop.
- Partner with local community members to train boys and girls.
 - In India, a teacher worked with the **local police** to provide a self-defense training to girls ranging from 11 to 15 years old.
 - Another teacher developed a partnership with a **coaching center** to create a Human Rights Club. The club organizes workshops on gender equity, and students also perform theater plays on similar topics.
- Host a **workshop for teachers** where they reflect on and discuss their own perceptions about gender and the materials the school uses.
 - In Peru, a teacher worked with his colleagues to address how gender stereotypes from teachers could affect student achievement. Teachers worked together to observe their classroom and school surroundings, making observations about how the different genders interacted with one another.
- Become involved with gender-related community initiatives such as **Take a Girl Child to Work Day**, **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**, or the international **MenCare** campaign.
- Train students to serve as **ambassadors in their own communities**. One teacher trained child-rights ambassadors to educate their peers and community members on the prevention of early and forced marriage. The ambassadors successfully reached 12 communities.
- **Engage with faith-based leaders** to support community discussion about issues facing the community, such as gender-based violence or early marriage.

Up to 300,000 child soldiers are active around the world, rather than participating in school. 70% of child soldiers are boys.

(CHATTERJEE, "FOR CHILD SOLDIERS, EVERY DAY IS A LIVING NIGHTMARE," FORBES, 2012)

Consider how you might adapt some of these real-life strategies in the context of your local school and community. Think about any key personal, cultural, or institutional challenges you might encounter, how you might address them, and the support you will need to implement these gender-inclusive initiatives.

SETTING GOALS:

Please create practical short- and long-term goals for supporting your school and community in becoming gender inclusive.

Short-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish in the next 1–3 months.

Long-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish within 12 months.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

What personal strengths and assets will help you to reach your goals? For example, your biggest strengths might be “relationship building,” “a warm, confident presence,” or “leading effective teams.”

Identify 4–6 individuals and/or organizations that are relevant to helping you meet your goals. You should plan to expand your network by initiating, building, or strengthening relationships with the following individuals and organizations.

2. HOW GENDER FRIENDLY IS MY CLASSROOM?

Within every classroom exists a window into a society’s culture, values, and identity. If a male student believes that in order to be successful in society he needs to appear aggressive, or a female student believes she must appear submissive, that behavior will exist in the classroom. Often, a teacher’s most significant challenge is to empower boy and girl students to reach beyond their comfort zones.

To begin, think about how gender friendly your teaching, classroom, and school currently are. As we’ve discussed in the introduction, cultural or socioeconomic factors and social pressures may influence girls and boys to behave differently in the classroom, which could impact their learning. Using the activities below, you will be able to reflect on and evaluate the many ways in which learning in your classroom and school is impacted by gender.



TEACHER PROFILE

Laure-Rachel, Côte d’Ivoire

Born to Succeed

2013 TEA alumna Laure-Rachel created a girls-only English club in response to low participation from girls in her class. The “Born to Succeed” club allows girls the freedom to practice their English without fear of being ridiculed by their male classmates. Girls have significantly improved their English grades since joining the club and have a platform to talk openly about gender-focused social issues such as early marriage and sex-based violence.

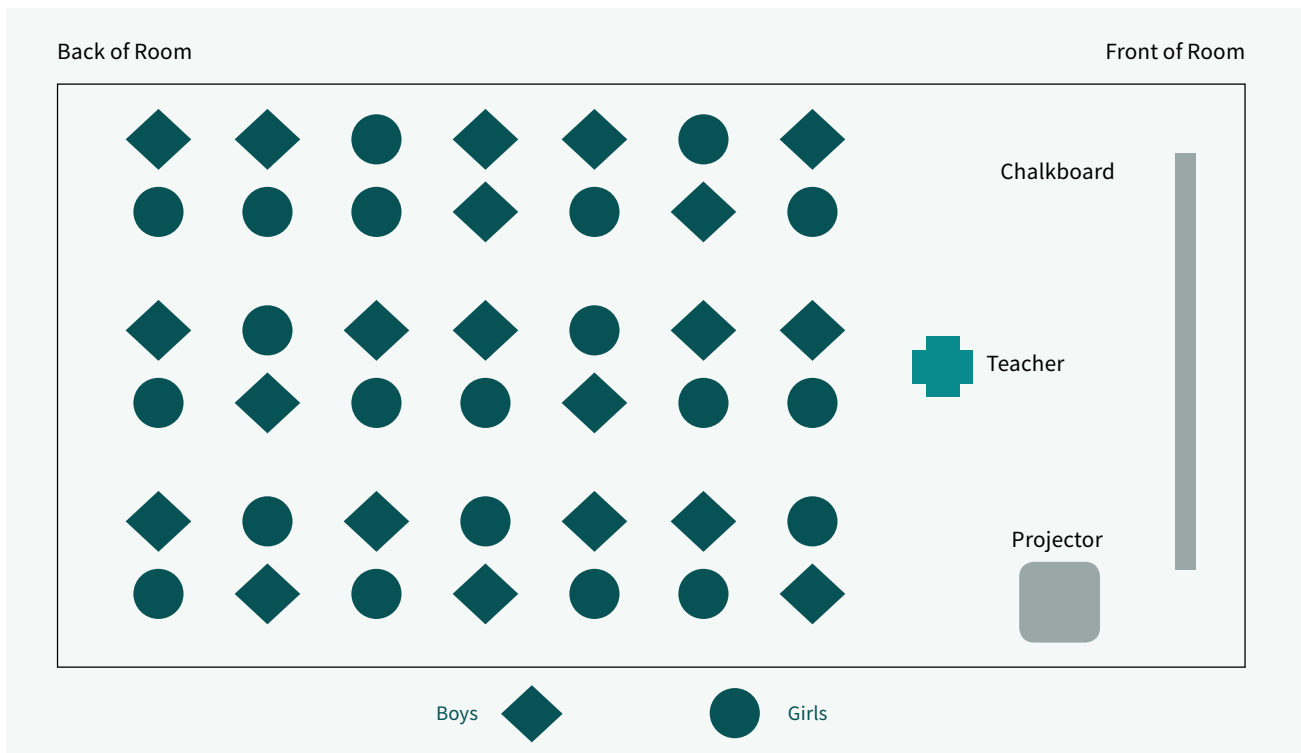
ACTIVITY ONE:

Classroom Environment Map

Maps tell us about the environment that we are in; therefore we will begin with an activity of classroom mapping. We encourage you to use the map below to critically analyze the impact of student seating arrangements and the teacher’s movement around the classroom.

STEP ONE:

Review the example below to consider what elements of a classroom are important to map in your observation. The classroom map includes the board, teacher, front of the room, back of the room, doors, and windows. If your classroom includes technology (such as radio, tablet, computer, cooling fan, or stove/heater), include that also. The example below is representative of a mixed-gender classroom with students sitting at desks. If students are sitting on fixed benches, you will still be able to map them as outlined below. To the extent possible and appropriate, encourage mixed-gender groups on benches and with desk seating.



OBSERVATION

STEP TWO:

Create a map for your own classroom and two maps for other classrooms you observe. If you run out of room here, you can use blank paper.

Map Elements:

Circle all that apply in your current classroom setting. Feel free to add more to the items listed below.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Teacher | Girls | Boys | Board | Front of the Room |
| Back of the Room | | Doors | Windows | Other: _____ |

MAP 1

Teacher _____ Subject _____ Location _____

REFLECTION:

1. What do you notice about the classroom arrangement? (Example: Students are in groups, they are sitting at individual desks, it is difficult to see the board, access to technology is open/restricted, etc.)

2. Does the teacher respond to, question, and support students in certain seats? Or does the teacher move around the classroom and respond to many students?

3. Are students of similar gender sitting together or apart? How does this limit or encourage their access to the teacher? Does the teacher respond to girls and boys similarly?

4. Do students work in groups or individually? If they are in groups, how are the groups chosen? Do the groups change over the course of the school day, or is their composition fixed?

MAP 2

Teacher _____ Subject _____ Location _____

REFLECTION:

1. What do you notice about the classroom arrangement? (Example: Students are in groups, they are sitting at individual desks, it is difficult to see the board, access to technology is open/restricted, etc.)

2. Does the teacher respond to, question, and support students in certain seats? Or does the teacher move around the classroom and respond to many students?

3. Are students of similar gender sitting together or apart? How does this limit or encourage their access to the teacher? Does the teacher respond to girls and boys similarly?

4. Do students work in groups or individually? If they are in groups, how are the groups chosen? Do the groups change over the course of the school day, or is their composition fixed?

MAP 3

Teacher _____ Subject _____ Location _____

REFLECTION:

1. What do you notice about the classroom arrangement?
(Example: Students are in groups, they are sitting at individual desks, it is difficult to see the board, access to technology is open/restricted, etc.)

2. Does the teacher respond to, question, and support students in certain seats? Or does the teacher move around the classroom and respond to many students?

3. Are students of similar gender sitting together or apart? How does this limit or encourage their access to the teacher? Does the teacher respond to girls and boys similarly?

4. Do students work in groups or individually? If they are in groups, how are the groups chosen? Do the groups change over the course of the school day, or is their composition fixed?

TAKING ACTION

1. Based on what you observed in various classrooms, how is student learning affected by the classroom arrangement?

2. What did you notice worked well for student learning, and what could be a challenge? Which challenges were related to gender, and which could be related to other factors (e.g. age or academic performance)? How could you apply these observations in your own classroom?

| Successes | Challenges | In my own classroom... |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Example: Teacher moved around the classroom while engaging students.</i> | <i>Students by the door were regularly distracted.</i> | <i>I will move around the room to engage with male and female students equally.</i> |



FROM THE CLASSROOM

2010 TEA alumnus Sajid from Pakistan is promoting equal participation of girls and boys in his classroom. “Sometimes, I observe shy and hesitant boys who are not actively participating in a mixed class due to gender difference. However, such students learn better in pairs, and I continually change the pair and group members for every new activity in my class. This practice not only maintains the interest of my students but also heightens their learning. If any student—either male or female—is shy about participating in class, then I ask simple, opinion-based questions. For example, ‘Ms. Hina, what do you think about this?’ or ‘Ali, can you give us a good example?’ Then I appreciate his or her thoughts and later use his or her opinion as a reference, by saying, ‘Just like Hina explained to us’ or ‘Ali gave us some interesting examples.’ These kinds of statements promote equity and encourage students of both genders.”

ACTIVITY TWO:

Classroom Management Observation

Students' achievement improves when they receive specific feedback from their teacher on learning and behavior.

Student participation in class is a valid indicator not only of student learning but of behavioral expectations. For that reason, teachers may find that a student's participation is influenced by cultural expectations and is an indicator of gender friendliness within a classroom. **Nearly 80% of survey respondents reported gender barriers related to cultural and societal norms.**

The activity below supports teachers in analyzing current trends in student participation, in order to better support learning for both boys and girls in the classroom. Please have a colleague observe your classroom and tally student participation in your class by gender. The colleague will also identify whether your responses are *behavior responses* or *learning responses*.

Teacher feedback should be balanced in promoting student learning and positive behavior. Teachers may be unintentionally enforcing gender stereotypes by consistently praising or criticizing student behavior. For example, a teacher may think they are really empowering girls by giving them positive feedback, but if the feedback is only about their behavior, it isn't improving learning. Effective student learning responses enforce and empower students toward meeting their learning objectives.

Afterward, you should visit the classroom of a colleague who is interested in participating in the activity and evaluate student participation in their classroom. The tool is a measure of inclusiveness of student participation in your classroom, and involving other teachers will help to bring the school into the conversation.

Suggestion: Do not let the students know about the observation, because it may influence their participation!

TEACHER BEHAVIOR RESPONSE:

Definition: A response positively affirming or correcting a behavior.

Example: "I appreciate the way that Maria is **paying attention** by **looking at the speaker** and **taking notes.**"

TEACHER LEARNING RESPONSE:

Definition: A response positively affirming or correcting a student's learning.

Example: "Great job **correctly identifying the capital** of Tanzania as Dar es Salaam!"



A child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.

(UNESCO, 2011)

OBSERVATION

STEP ONE:

Invite a colleague to observe your classroom and have them complete the Student Participation Observation Form (below) based on their observations.

| STUDENT PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION FORM | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|---------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| Observing Teacher: _____ | | | Teacher Name: _____ | | | |
| Subject: _____ | | | Grade: _____ | | | |
| I. Student Participation Tally | | | | | | |
| Directions: While observing the class lesson, take a tally of questions from the teacher and responses from boys and girls. Record your observations below. | | | | | | |
| Number of Questions from Teacher | | Number of Responses from Female Students | | Number of Responses from Male Students | | |
| | | | | | | |
| II. Behavior and Learning Responses | | | | | | |
| Directions: While observing the class lesson, record the types of responses the teacher gives to students. Make a tally of behavior and learning responses, and record examples of responses you hear. Record your findings below. | | | | | | |
| | Teacher Responses to Girls | | | Teacher Responses to Boys | | |
| | Number of Responses | About Behavior | About Learning | Number of Responses | About Behavior | About Learning |
| Classroom Observed: _____ | | | | | | |
| Examples | | | | | | |

III. Observation Questions

1. The teacher calls on: (Circle One)

Many Different Students

Mostly Boys

Mostly Girls

A Few of the Same Students

Other: _____

2. Actively participating students are: (Circle One)

Many Different Students

Mostly Boys

Mostly Girls

A Few of the Same Students

Other: _____

3. Describe the behavior and learning responses given to boys and girls in the classroom. Do you notice a trend in the responses the teacher gives?

4. Do students work in groups? If so, please describe the group participation and group roles.

Example: "Yes, students work in groups on a science project. There were no defined roles from the teacher.

One boy performed the experiment and told the girl what to write. The other two students (two boys) talked to each other about a football match."

STEP TWO:

Observe a colleague's classroom and document your observations in the Student Participation Observation Form (below).

STUDENT PARTICIPATION OBSERVATION FORM

Observing Teacher: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Subject: _____

Grade: _____

I. Student Participation Tally

Directions: While observing the class lesson, take a tally of questions from the teacher and responses from boys and girls. Record your observations below.

| Number of Questions from Teacher | Number of Responses from Female Students | Number of Responses from Male Students |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | |

II. Behavior and Learning Responses

Directions: While observing the class lesson, record the types of responses the teacher gives to students. Make a tally of behavior and learning responses, and record examples of responses you hear. Record your findings below.

| | Teacher Responses to Girls | | | Teacher Responses to Boys | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Number of Responses | About Behavior | About Learning | Number of Responses | About Behavior | About Learning |
| Classroom Observed: _____ | | | | | | |
| Examples | | | | | | |

III. Observation Questions

1. The teacher calls on: (Circle One)

Many Different Students

Mostly Boys

Mostly Girls

A Few of the Same Students

Other: _____

2. Actively participating students are: (Circle One)

Many Different Students

Mostly Boys

Mostly Girls

A Few of the Same Students

Other: _____

3. Describe the behavior and learning responses given to boys and girls in the classroom. Do you notice a trend in the responses the teacher gives?

4. Do students work in groups? If so, please describe the group participation and group roles.

Example: "Yes, students work in groups on a science project. There were no defined roles from the teacher.

One boy performed the experiment and told the girl what to write. The other two students (two boys) talked to each other about a football match."

REFLECTION

STEP THREE:

Use this reflection form to reflect on YOUR classroom management and teaching.

1. On the scale below of classroom participation, circle where your classroom would fall.

| High Girl Participation | Equal Girl and Boy Participation | High Boy Participation |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|

2. Did girls and boys participate equally in class? Did the teacher call on boys more than girls or vice versa? Were participation patterns consistent, or were there variations affected by subject/content, age, or other factors?

3. Are my responses to girls and boys more focused on behavior or on improving learning? Describe the potential causes and effects of behavior and learning responses.

4. What did you notice in your colleague's classroom that could influence the way you teach and engage with boys and girls in the classroom?

5. What social, cultural, or institutional expectations may be influencing girls' and boys' participation in class? (Examples: "Girls who raise their hands are teased by other students for showing off," or "Teachers call more often on boys who have raised their hands.")

TEACHER PROFILE

Rita, India

Creating Student Leaders

After participating in the 2009 TEA program, Rita directed a student-led tutoring program. The program enabled 17-year-old girls at her school to tutor, mentor, and conduct human rights activities for slum children and adults. Rita believes that the female mentors became leaders with a sense of civic responsibility as they kept journals, communicated with the media, conducted interviews, and learned writing, discussion, and critical-thinking skills. They also administered women's empowerment and children's rights workshops to imprisoned mothers.

6. What personal bias might you have that could be influencing your teaching or the way students are participating? (Example: "I realized I am expecting boys to be more vocal due to our culture, so I am not encouraging the participation of girls as much as boys.")





TAKING ACTION

STEP FOUR:

Now it is time to brainstorm action steps for your classroom that could make it more gender friendly. Review the list of strategies below and brainstorm ideas for how your teaching can better support both girls and boys.

Check the activities you would like to use in your classroom.

Classroom Participation:

- Use a box to randomly draw names to encourage equal participation.
- Alternate choice of respondents by gender: taking turns having boys and girls respond encourages all genders to participate.
- Award points for participation to groups and individuals as an incentive for broader participation.
- Rotate roles for boys and girls in groups: create roles such as “group leader,” “researcher,” and “scribe,” allowing all genders to fill each role.
- Move around the room and engage girls and boys by questioning them about what they are learning.
- Create a classroom seating arrangement so girls and boys are working together.

Classroom Culture:

- Have girls-only and boys-only classroom meetings where both genders can be free to discuss their goals and challenges at school, then work together with students to meet those goals.
- Make sure girls and boys feel comfortable about visiting the restroom when needed.
- Set up a “Gender-Friendly Ideas” box where students can put ideas about how to be more gender friendly in the classroom.
- Pay attention to “teachable moments” and respond in a way that is encouraging to both genders. For example, a teachable moment might happen when a student says or does something to promote gender friendliness or gender bias, and the teacher responds.

Example of a *teachable moment*:

STUDENT: Meriem is never at school these days. It doesn't matter, because she is getting married soon anyway.

TEACHER: Did you know that the more educated a mother is, the better her children's chances are to do well in school, obtain good jobs, and lead healthy lives?

(Continue the conversation to prompt critical thinking about gender and encourage students to understand why education is important for ALL students)

FROM THE CLASSROOM

A 2015 male TEA teacher from Bangladesh has a classroom policy that girls go to the “Girls' Leader” to get approval for visiting the bathroom. Boys go to the male teacher to get permission to go to the bathroom. This encourages a safe classroom culture for girls and boys.

There are 33 million fewer girls than boys in primary school.

(EDUCATION FIRST: AN INITIATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL, 2012)

Please list three classroom ideas you will try below.

| Gender-Friendly Classroom Idea | Day Completed | Comments/Reactions |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

CASE STUDY: SINGLE-GENDER SCHOOLS

Single-gender schools can apply the same strategies for creating gender-friendly learning environments within their schools. Did you know that even at an all-girls school, or an all-boys school, gender stigma can grow? For example, if a teacher only provides examples of male scientists, the teacher is encouraging the idea that girls cannot be scientists. Additionally, teachers should look for opportunities for student groups of different genders to collaborate on community issues.

For example, a 2009 TEA alumnus from Uzbekistan organized a cleanup day in the community with the participation of girls and boys from single-gender schools. Such a collaborative activity also helps students to understand that everyone is responsible for cleaning.

Boys face in-school issues that contribute to higher repetition and dropout rates than girls.

(UNESCO, 2012)



STRATEGIES FROM TEACHERS FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- Provide **separate and adequate bathrooms** for girls and boys.
- Provide girls with necessary accommodations at school during their menstrual cycle.
- Provide girls and boys with access to **clean drinking water**.
- Enforce **anti-bullying** policies, including zero tolerance for harassment in the classroom.
- **Arrange seating in the classroom** to promote equal participation from girls and boys.
- Encourage students who have to travel a long distance to school to **form mixed-gender teams** to walk to school together.
- Create a **safe space** for girls where they are able to discuss issues that relate to the girl child, such as reproductive issues, life skills, entrepreneurship skills, and leadership skills. The same space should be created for boys.
- Work with your school administrators to ensure there are sufficient male and female teachers or counselors for girls and boys to talk to.
- **Introduce career guidance**: role modeling by female and male professionals such as engineers, doctors, and pilots.
- Provide reinforcement to students through **tutoring** and other support.
- Create a **language and literary club** in your school to look at gender-focused content such as the role of women and men in creating a better society.
- Host a **career fair** with representatives from the community who hold gender-atypical jobs. Follow up after the career fair, planning individual meetings with students to encourage those interested in jobs that counter stereotypes.
- Moderate a club initiated by students as a way to solve problems together.
- Invite males and females from different professions (for example, lawyers) to talk about their jobs and how they achieved success.
- Encourage the participation of girls in “boys” sports and create **sports clubs** (for example, a soccer club) for them to join.
- Organize a **schoolyard cleanup day** and challenge students to understand that caring for their physical surroundings and environment is everyone’s responsibility and not determined by gender.

When disengaged from education, boys have often lost confidence in themselves, adopted at-risk behaviors and negative attitudes, and resorted to violence, alcohol and substance abuse.

(UNGEI, 2016)



TEACHER PROFILE

Dara, Cambodia

Building Gender-Responsive Classrooms

Upon returning to Cambodia in 2014 from the TEA program, Dara created a “Gender Awareness in Teaching” workshop to encourage his fellow teachers to analyze the gender balance of their classrooms. Dara used a series of questions to help his colleagues identify key areas in their teaching that could be more gender-responsive, and had them brainstorm appropriate methods to implement in their teaching. A variation of such a workshop could include peer-teacher observations to help each other with analysis of the classroom environment.



SETTING GOALS:

Please create practical short- and long-term goals for supporting your classroom on the way to gender inclusivity.

Short-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish in the next 1–3 months.

Long-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish within 12 months.

What personal strengths and assets will help you to reach your goals? For example, your biggest strengths might be “relationship building,” “a warm, confident presence,” or “leading effective teams.”

Identify 4–6 individuals and/or organizations that are relevant to helping you meet your goals. You should plan to expand your network by initiating, building, or strengthening relationships with the following individuals and organizations.

3. HOW GENDER FRIENDLY ARE MY TEXTBOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS?

Students are heavily influenced by the images and text around them. The *hidden curriculum* is the idea that societal expectations are unintentionally being taught through classroom materials and the teacher's own actions. This is why it is important that teachers are thoughtful about their own stereotypes and biases as well as those represented in their teaching materials.

For example, if a textbook represents only men as scientists and business leaders, then girls will learn the *hidden curriculum* that they do not belong in the workplace. Similarly, if a teacher says that girls and boys are both equal but only calls on boys to answer questions, the *hidden curriculum* is that boys are smarter.

The *hidden curriculum* can be a positive force for change when a teacher's behavior and interactions with students are aligned with gender-friendly principles.

For that reason, the next step in creating a gender-friendly classroom is evaluating your textbooks and learning materials. Below is a checklist you can use to make observations about your learning materials.

OBSERVATION:

- Material uses girl and boy examples in various professions and roles within family and community.
- Textbook does not encourage stereotypes of males and females.
- Materials and textbooks use gender-friendly language that speaks positively about all genders.
- Classroom texts and literature include both male and female subjects and writers.
- Classroom handouts include male and female pronouns.
- Classroom texts include males and females who have made significant contributions to their fields of study.



TEACHER PROFILE

Ron, United States

Global Networks through International Collaboration

In 2015, Ron, a 2011 Teachers for Global Classrooms alumnus, collaborated with three TEA alumni from India — Sudha, Tanusree, and Vishan — to implement a global gender equity project with students in his 10th grade social studies classes in Vermont. The teachers connected their students to discuss and evaluate gender issues in India and the United States via questionnaires and in-person video calls. The project resulted in students disseminating their research findings through self-produced websites. Throughout the project, students in both countries developed their knowledge of gender issues and expanded on their global competencies and technology skills.

66 million girls are out of school globally.

(2012 EFA GLOBAL MONITORING REPORT)

REFLECTION:

1. How would you describe the gender friendliness of your textbooks and materials?

Circle one:

- a. They are very gender friendly.
- b. Some materials are gender friendly and some are not.
- c. Few of my materials are gender friendly.
- d. None of my materials are gender friendly.

2. Based on your previous response, how do you predict that your materials may be influencing gender bias in your classroom?

3. Do your materials or textbooks reflect any of the gender bias in your culture and community? If so, please describe below.

4. Do your materials and textbooks celebrate all genders and encourage boys and girls? If so, please describe below.

While girls remain less likely than boys to enter school in the first place, in many countries, boys are at higher risk of failing to progress and complete their secondary education.

(UNESCO, 2015)



5. How are your classroom materials chosen and created? Do you create and choose your materials, or are they chosen for you by the school or ministry of education?

6. Have you discovered any “hidden curriculum” in your textbooks, materials, or actions? If so, please describe.

TAKING ACTION

Now that you have reflected on the gender friendliness of your classrooms and textbooks, it is time to take action steps. Depending on how your materials are chosen or created, you will have different options.

SCENARIO ONE: Materials are chosen by the district or ministry.

If your materials are chosen by the district or ministry and present gender bias, you can *critically engage* with your students about the material. This means that you ask a question to promote critical thinking if a stereotype or negative image about gender is present in a textbook. You can also support this activity with supplementary materials encouraging gender equality.

For example: If a textbook presents a photo of an office workplace and there are only men in the photo, discuss this photo with your students. Do not just skim over the photo. Ask your students their thoughts on the photo with *guiding questions*.

SCENARIO TWO: Materials are chosen by the teacher or school.

If your materials are chosen by the school or teacher, you have the opportunity to research new material for future years, supplement current material with gender-friendly texts, and create gender-friendly handouts. You can use the checklist above to research gender-friendly texts and create gender-friendly handouts. Remember, it may be best to begin with your classroom texts, focusing on one unit at a time, and then use the positive evidence to make changes throughout the school.



FROM THE CLASSROOM

TEA teachers have actively countered gender bias and stereotypes in classroom materials through:

- Inviting professionals who counter stereotypes to visit the classroom. For example, a male nurse and a female advanced-math teacher.
- Supplementing materials with gender-equality handouts and readings.
- Creating equitable group roles for male and female students.
- Encouraging teachers to reflect on their perceptions of gender roles and taking action about how those perceptions are influencing their classes.

CRITICALLY ENGAGE:

Definition: To initiate discussions that encourage critical thinking in your students.

Example: A textbook may reflect a stereotype such as: “Women are nurses and men work in business.” Discuss this stereotype with your students.

GUIDING QUESTION:

Definition: A question guiding a student in a specific direction and encouraging a thoughtful response.

Example: In the situation above, ask your students: “What do you think of this photo? Do you think it’s correct to portray only men working in business?”

Two-thirds of the world’s 796 million illiterate adults are women.

(UNESCO, 2013)

STRATEGIES FROM TEACHERS TO ADAPT TEACHING MATERIALS

- **Survey students** on their views on gender-related issues.
- Design **group work** with equal numbers of girls and boys.
- **Talk** about boys' and girls' rights in the classroom, so that both genders understand they have the same rights.
- **Review textbook language** in terms of questions, examples, and illustrations, to make sure they are girl and boy friendly.
- **Revise curriculum** to ensure equal representation of females and males. One physics teacher includes a picture and name of a female scientist on the top corner of each assignment. Students then get extra credit for any research or short reports they prepare on the scientist.
- Assign students to identify a famous person (female for boys and male for girls) and have them **write a biography to present in class**. The purpose of the assignment is to remind students that success is not based on gender.
- When citing examples in classroom discussions, be intentional with your **gender-based pronoun use**. For example, try to use male and female pronouns equally, or use general-neutral pronouns.
- **Highlight influential females and males** who have made distinct contributions to their fields. It is important for girls and boys alike to encounter significant contributions, both current and historical, from men and women.
- Use the Intel® She Will Connect program to **bridge the digital divide** between girls and boys.
- Design team-building exercises to **build confidence**.
- **Use media** as a way to discuss the role of women in society. For example, use movies to analyze how the female role has evolved over time and how women are portrayed today.
- Engage students beyond traditional lessons and organize special sessions on gender issues where boys and girls share experiences through **debates, skits, presentations, poster making, and videos**.
- Using the **Project-Based Learning** approach, create an activity about women in society. Students can conduct research on the role of women in literature, the visual arts, music, and cinema.
- Social media can serve as a powerful tool to explore gender issues with your students. **Create a social media profile or hashtag** to post gender-related content.
- Display posters on the walls that portray female and male figures in equal numbers and involved in activities together, if culturally appropriate. These posters can display females and males in nontraditional job roles as well.
- Organize students into **mixed teams of girls and boys**, and have each team elect leaders to deliver presentations with a focus on gender.

Boys' poor performance and dropout can be linked to social norms and gender stereotypes that put pressure on boys to disengage from schooling.

(UNESCO, 2015)

A girl with an extra year of education can earn 20% more as an adult.

(THE WORLD BANK, AUGUST 2011)



TEACHER PROFILE

Taoufik, Morocco

Raising Students' Gender Awareness

Taoufik challenged established gender roles in his classroom by having students reflect on gender discrimination and biases in their homes and communities. A role-play method, where students act out roles typically defined for the other gender, allowed his students to create different scenarios on topics including girls' education, early marriage, and child labor. Students were asked how they felt in the role and then strategized on what they could do differently. Taoufik, a 2014 ILEP alumnus, feels this kind of activity helps students improve their social intelligence, become more empathetic, and see gender roles from different perspectives.

SETTING GOALS:

Please create practical short- and long-term goals for making your learning materials more gender inclusive.

Short-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish in the next 1–3 months.

Long-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish within 12 months.

What personal strengths and assets will help you to reach your goals? For example, your biggest strengths might be “relationship building,” “a warm, confident presence,” or “leading effective teams.”

Identify 4–6 individuals and/or organizations that are relevant to helping you meet your goals. You should plan to expand your network by initiating, building, or strengthening relationships with the following individuals and organizations.

4. HOW DO I CREATE A GENDER-FRIENDLY LESSON PLAN?

Thoughtful lesson planning is a key element of success for all teachers. **75% of ILEP and TEA survey respondents report adapting their teaching styles and/or materials to be more gender friendly upon their return home.**

Begin with a thoughtful lesson plan that includes a specific learning objective, times for warm-up, content instruction, guided practice, and checks for understanding.

Plan classroom management and content strategies that are gender-inclusive. Teachers can be mindful of classroom management and content that may cause gender bias among their students.

OBSERVATION

Below is a list of classroom management strategies and ideas from ILEP and TEA to create gender-friendly lesson plans. Circle strategies that you currently include in your lesson plan.

| CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT <i>(For a more detailed list see the participation strategies on page 23)</i> | CONTENT |
|--|--|
| Designing team-building exercises to boost student confidence. | Utilizing male and female examples. |
| Student responses alternating between boy and girl students. | Classroom visitors of different genders who are topical experts. |
| Assigning seats with boys and girls in each group. | Reviewing material for gender bias and including supplementary materials to balance gender representation as needed. |
| Rotating group roles between girls and boys, including with classroom duty assignments. | Including authors and literature subjects of both genders. |

FROM THE CLASSROOM

“The first change I made was the seating arrangement; I tried to mix up boys and girls. Whenever I assign group presentations, I tell my students to create mixed groups. Over the years, the boys have become aware of certain social issues related to women and young girls, and they have also participated in various campaigns supporting girls’ right to education. While discussing social issues, I always cite examples related to women with prominent roles. My classroom is no doubt gender friendly.”

REFLECTION

1. Please list the strategies that you currently include in your lesson planning.

2. How did girls and boys respond to these strategies? Did you notice a change in learning or behavior?

TAKING ACTION

3. Please list the strategies you plan to include in your lesson planning.

4. How did girls and boys respond to these strategies? Did you notice a change in learning or behavior?



TEACHER PROFILE

Alice, Kenya

Helping Girls Avoid Early Marriage

Growing up in a community where “girls are not given equal opportunities to study like boys [due to] lack of economic resources, marginalization, and poverty ... and negative cultural and religious practices,” Alice Sayo surpassed expectations when she went to school, became a teacher, and was promoted to assistant principal. She eventually became a girls’ education activist, and after returning home from ILEP in 2011, Alice trained local schools on learner-centered instruction. She raised funds for Maasai girls and opened a new school specifically targeting girls who would otherwise be married young instead of completing an education.

SETTING GOALS:

Please create practical short- and long-term goals for making your learning materials more gender inclusive.

Short-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish in the next 1–3 months.

Long-term goal: A goal you hope to accomplish within 12 months.

What personal strengths and assets will help you to reach your goals? For example, your biggest strengths might be “relationship building,” “a warm, confident presence,” or “leading effective teams.”

Identify 4–6 individuals and/or organizations that are relevant to helping you meet your goals. You should plan to expand your network by initiating, building, or strengthening relationships with the following individuals and organizations.

TEACHER PROFILE

Adeline, Ghana

Giving Girls the Confidence to Stay in School



2015 ILEP alumna Adeline started the Girls Empowerment League in Ghana to improve academic performance and school attendance for all girls. The program connects girls from five communities in northern Ghana to female role models, and engages them in leadership development activities to improve their self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence in their abilities as “agents of societal change.”

The most recent iteration of the program improved leadership and confidence in 60 girls in northern Ghana.

Girls from rural communities in northern Ghana face a number of obstacles to completing their education: child marriage, a disproportionate share of household responsibilities, child labor practices, limited family incomes, and the high costs of secondary education, to name a few. While there are other organizations that help pay school fees for girls, these scholarships usually only go to the few girls who are confident, gifted, and bright. Adeline found that many of the girls who didn’t rise to the top still wanted to stay in school, but couldn’t or wouldn’t speak up for themselves.

Girls Empowerment League activities include poetry recitals, traditional dances and talent shows, and networking sessions with educated female professionals from across the region. “At first it was difficult for the girls to pick up a [microphone] and express themselves,” according to Adeline. “Now they are making friends with girls in other communities, and interacting with role models. [It] also made them think more deeply about academic and professional careers.”

Adeline also organized professional development sessions for teachers on ways to make their classrooms more gender responsive: by giving girls more opportunities to participate, teaching cultural literacy that demonstrates conscious recognition of Ghanaian heritage, and allowing open discussion about widely shared values and beliefs.

“We really made the point to reinforce the message that girls are just as capable as boys,” says Adeline. “Even though they are women from rural communities, they can also become leaders in their societies. The best way to [practice that skill] is by actively participating in class.”

Women account for less than 30% of students in engineering, physics, and computer science fields in most countries.

(ELSEVIER, 2012)

PART III:

Next Steps: Action Planning

WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS TOWARD A GENDER-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY?

Creating a Vision

At the beginning of this guide, you reflected on the gender issues in your community. As you move into taking action, describe your ideal gender-friendly classroom, school, and community.

Achieving Professional Growth

List the skills and knowledge that you will need to further develop and be successful. Think about how the global network of teacher alumni can help you in reaching your goals and developing as a teacher and leader.

Taking Action

Please summarize the steps you plan to take in each of the following areas, in order to meet the goals you have identified in the various sections of this guide.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Classroom Mapping | |
| Classroom Management | |
| Textbooks and Materials | |
| Lesson Planning | |
| School | |
| Community | |

PART IV:

Monitoring Change

Change can be gradual, and sustainable change requires consistency and commitment.

How will teachers know if they are effective in creating a gender-inclusive learning environment? Below is a sample list of a few “Quick Win” indicators to measure success. Every community is unique, so success around the world will look different. Therefore, teachers should stay focused and committed, and change will come!

Quick Wins

- You notice girls and boys being more responsive in class.
- You overhear productive and positive conversations about gender between girls and boys.
- Girls and boys work together effectively on group projects.
- Special initiatives such as mentoring groups, gender clubs, parent committees, and educator workshops have good attendance.
- Girls and boys are engaged in classwork.
- Girls and/or boys ask further questions about gender roles. Boys are open to learning about the stigma that girls face, and vice versa.
- Girls and boys are open to discussing and finding solutions to difficult social situations, such as early marriage, early pregnancy, and sexual harassment.
- Girls and boys who were being taken out of school to work attend more frequently, due to student and parent involvement.
- If girls were missing school during menstruation, they are now attending school consistently.

- Administrators or teachers ask you to conduct a workshop on gender-friendly classrooms.
- Reflecting back on your classroom mapping activity from this teaching guide, you can see positive changes in classroom culture.

Perception Poetry Activity

Use the prompt below to analyze students’ changing perceptions on gender.

1. Have students write a gender-themed poem to share with the class.
2. Use the following prompt as guidance in this activity.

I used to think being a boy meant _____

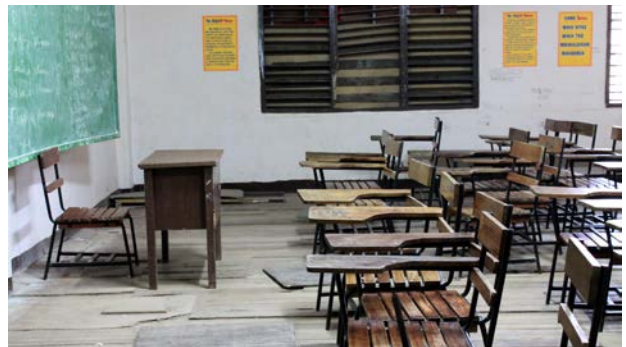
Now I think being a boy means _____

I want the world to know that being a boy is _____

I used to think being a girl meant _____

Now I think being a girl means _____

I want the world to know that being a girl is _____



PART V: Feedback

We hope that this resource helps to raise awareness, spark discussions, and encourage sensitive and productive learning environments for teachers and students of all genders.

We would love to hear how you use the guide in your schools and classrooms, and what you are doing to make a lasting change. In order to maintain the relevance and quality of this guide for future program participants and alumni, your feedback is important. IREX welcomes your feedback in the following areas:

- What did you like most about this guide?
- How could this guide be improved?
- Do you find the strategies and recommended activities helpful?
- Are there any strategies in particular that worked or didn't work in your local context?
- How has the guide changed the way you teach?

Please email us at teacheralumni@irex.org to share your stories, photos, reflections, and successes using this guide.



TEACHER PROFILE

Bluidson, Peru

Training the Teachers

Peru's Ministry of Education selected Bluidson to serve as a teacher trainer in a national professional development program for public school teachers in Peru, focusing on a number of topics, including gender inclusion. A 2015 TEA alumnus, Bluidson designed a course to train education professionals to advance gender awareness in education. Strategies shared in the course include the "parent school," which helps parents and students examine their own assumptions about gender.

PART VI:

Supplementary Resources

Below are some examples of international commitments and resources to support gender equity in education, along with website links that may help you learn more about these commitments and how you can take action.

Gender Equity Initiatives

Let Girls Learn, 2015

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/letgirlslearn>

The Malala Fund

<https://www.malala.org/>

PLAN International: Because I Am a Girl Initiative

<http://www.planusa.org/empower-a-girl>

UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2015

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

UNICEF: Basic Education and Gender Equality

<http://www.unicef.org/education/>

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

<http://www.ungei.org/index.php>

Applicable Resources

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)

<http://www.fawe.org/>

UNESCO Bangkok: Gender-Responsive Life Skills-Based Education Kit

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001781/178125e.pdf>

UNESCO Forum on Gender Equality

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/themes/gender-equality/features/unesco-forum-on-gender-equality/>

Develop Knowledge

CARE: The Power to Lead: A Leadership Model for Adolescent Girls

http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/GE-2009-PW_Leadership.pdf

Gender and Development Network: Girls' Education in International Development

<http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/girls-education>

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage Resources Guide

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USAID_CEFM_Resource-Guide.PDF

Fast-Tracking Girls' Education Report

<http://www.ungei.org/files/1-FastTrackEd-Girls-education-report-full.pdf>

What Works in Girls' Education

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Press/Books/2015/what-works-in-girls-edu/What-Works-in-Girls-Educationlowres.pdf?la=en>

