

RE-ENGINEERING VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION AND CAREER COUNSELLING - REVOCC

MAKING GEDNER EQUALITY COUNT

Gender equality analysis of all VOCC materials developed and implemented by CEDA
in the framework of REVOCC project

CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
II. METHODOLOGY	3
III. ASSESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES RELEVANT TO VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION AND CAREER COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS	6
3.1. <i>Academic performance</i>	6
3.2. Choosing a career path.....	7
IV. ANALYSIS	9
4.2. Fifth grade.....	9
4.3. Grade VI	10
4.4. Grade VII	10
4.5. Grade VIII	11
4.6. Grade IX	12
4.7. Grade X	12
4.8. Grade XI	13
4.9. Grade XII	13
4.10. Professional schools postsecondary education.....	14
V. CONCLUSIONS.....	15
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background. REVOCC project aims to adapt the educational system in the Republic of Moldova to the specific needs of the labor market, in particular by increasing the quality of Vocational Orientation and Career Counseling in schools (secondary level) and those extracurricular (within the district Employment Offices of ANOFM). The target group consists of 115 teachers and other academics from schools, public institutions such as the Ministry of Education and ANOFM. In addition, about 1,200 students of technical and vocational secondary schools will benefit from the project investments REVOCC.

Task description. The project aims to provide pupils and students with access to gender inclusive vocational orientation and career counseling services in order to support their social and economic integration or transition to upper levels of education. In this context, CEDA hired a national consultant with experience in gender issues to assess the contribution of the project in terms of equality between women and men, especially to conduct the gender expertise of all VOCC materials developed and implemented by CEDA in the framework of REVOCC project.

This report will base its assessment by comparing the gap between gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score. A scoring for each lesson in each manual for every grade will be calculated based on the above described criteria and a gap will be calculated. In the context of this assessment, a gap between relevancy and gender mainstreaming score of more than 1 (one) point should be addressed by the team. The figures presented below, indicate the core approach in evaluating gender equality of VOCC materials.

Vocational orientation and career counseling is a gender relevant topic. Based on available data, the assessment found significant gender differences in the academic performance; time spent reading/studying, intended career path and career options, academic subject and job preference. These gender inequalities indicate a clear need of a gender sensitive approach to vocational orientation and career counseling including gender sensitive materials.

The assessment finds that VOCC materials are gender aware. The average score on gender relevancy for all VOCC materials is 2,5 (out of 4) and the average score for gender mainstreaming is 2,3, the gender gap (the difference between the two) is not that significant. The VOCC materials take a very individual approach and help students to assess critically their career path decisions. This approach will help both the teachers and students to challenge any traditional gender roles and stereotypes.

II. METHODOLOGY

Gender equality assessment at its simplest is a two step process. At first one needs to identify all relevant gender inequalities in the sector of the Program. This will help to give an overall understanding of the potential gender relevancy of the activities and in our case all VO CG materials are. The level of gender gaps (gender relevancy) will indicate the need of gender mainstreaming.

Gender relevancy	Gender mainstreaming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates how much we should care about gender inequality in our work • Is based on the levels of gender inequality in the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates the level of effort, resources and special attention one needs to put in order to address gender inequalities. • Should be proportional to the gender inequalities in the sector (gender relevancy)

Gender relevancy is measured based on a scoring framework. Which is presented in the table below and measures gender relevancy from 0 (zero) – lowest level of relevancy to 4 (four) – the highest level of relevancy. Gender equality relevancy will be determined using the concept of gender gaps which is the difference between the average values of male and female indicators relevant to the Program outcomes. In the case of VO CG materials, gender relevancy will be scored based on the themes of each lesson from the VO CG manuals.

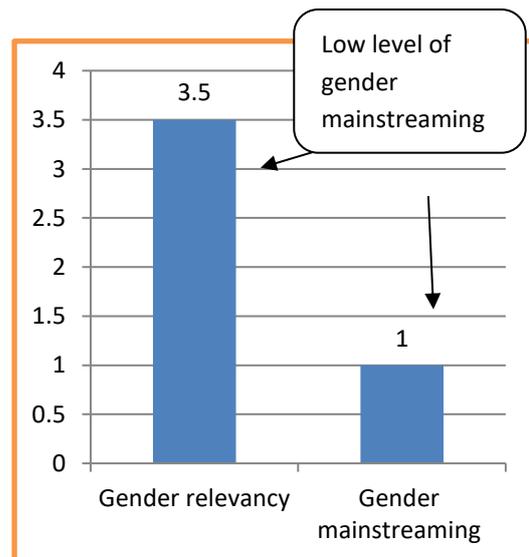
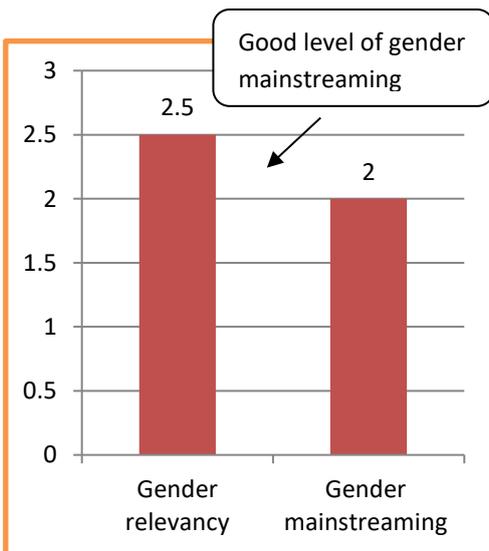
Gender Gaps	GE relevancy	GE relevancy scoring
0%	Not relevant	0
1 – 4%	Weak relevancy	0,5 - 1
5 – 9%	Gender relevant	1 - 2
10 – 19%	Significant relevancy	2 -3
20% +	High relevancy	3 - 4

Gender mainstreaming level is measured using a similar scoring framework. The content of each lesson will be assessed and scored using the framework described in the table below.

Level of gender mainstreaming	Description	Scoring
Level 1: Gender-unequal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations • Privileges men over women (or vice versa) • Often leads to one sex enjoying more rights or opportunities than the other. 	0
Level 2: Gender-blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignores gender norms, roles and relations • Very often reinforces gender-based discrimination by omission • Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men • Often constructed based on the principle of being “fair” by treating everyone the same. 	0,5 - 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers gender norms, roles and relations 	

Level 3: Gender-sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a very individual approach in assessing the needs, aptitudes and capacities. • Does address to some extent inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations • Indicates gender awareness, although often no systematic remedial approach is developed 	1 - 2
Level 4: Gender-specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and how they affect access to and control over opportunities • Considers female and male specific needs • Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group of women or men to achieve certain policy or program goals or meet certain needs 	2 -3
Level 5: Gender-transformative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and that these affect access to and control over resources and opportunities • Considers women’s and men’s specific needs • Addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities • Includes ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations in a consistent and systematic • Has a clear objective is often to promote gender equality. 	3-4

This report will base its assessment by comparing the gap between gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score. A scoring for each lesson in each manual for every grade will be calculated based on the above described criteria and a gap will be calculated. In the context of this assessment, a gap between relevancy and gender mainstreaming score of more than 1 (one) point should be addressed by the team. The figures presented bellow, indicate the core approach in evaluating gender equality of VCG materials.



III. ASSESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES RELEVANT TO VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION AND CAREER COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

3.1. Academic performance

Overall, girls register more academic performance compared to boys. Girls tend to have on average better test scores on all key subjects from reading to mathematics and sciences. This is confirmed both by the national assessment among students of the ninth grade (see figure 1) and by OECD PISA score. In the 2015 PISA assessment, the average score for girls was 431 and the score for boys was 425, in 2009 PISA assessment the gender gaps score was more significant.

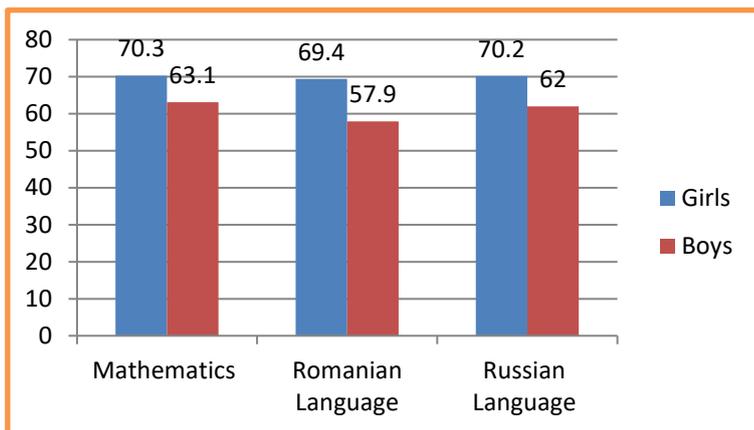


Figure 1: Average score for boys and girls of the ninth grade

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

It appears that gender gaps in academic testing are increasing with the age. Gender gaps the ninth grade are greater compared to the gender gaps in the fourth grade (in both cases girls have a better average performance). This indicates that a certain *gender socialization* in school whereby gender differences become more significant. This speaks to the fact that the way materials are thought are gender relevant and thus have an impact in the way boys and girls learn at school.

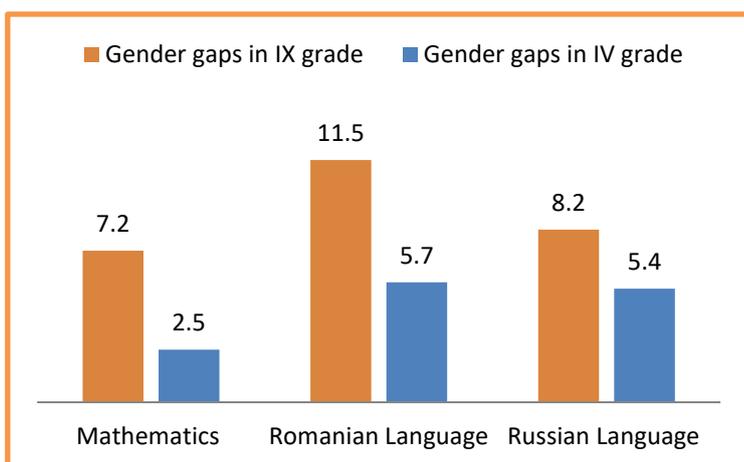


Figure 2: Gender gaps in test score for the ninth and fourth grades

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

Girls spend more time studying as compared to the boys. A significant part of the gender gap in academic performance can be explained by the fact that girls spend more time studying – a behavioral trait that can be traced to traditional gender roles. According to an assessment from Ministry of Education, 35% of the girls in the

ninth grade spend more than 2 hours per day studying, compared to 13% of boys from the same grade. The same assessment showed that 31% of boys never read compared to 10,2 % of girls and about 32,8% of girls spend 1-2 hours every day reading compared to 14,7% of boys. Interestingly, in the fourth grade both girls and boys report to enjoy reading (80, 8% of girls and 61,3% report to enjoy reading) in the ninth grade the share of boys reporting to enjoy reading is reduced to 37,6% while the share of girls reporting to enjoy reading remains unchanged. This finding is relevant since a significant part of Vocational Orientation and Career Counseling modules relies on individual follow up and study.

3.2. Choosing a career path

Gender roles play a significant role in the way students assess their career options. A National Bureau of Statistic survey¹ asked young men and women aged 15-30 about their main goal in life. The results are presented in the graph bellow. One can easily observe that future life goals are shaped by gender roles. Boys tend to focus evenly on having a career, creating a family and making money while girls are overwhelmingly focused on creating a family. This finding is important to take in to consideration while students are asked to use different criteria in deciding different career options. Most likely, boys and girls on average will put different weight on different criteria.

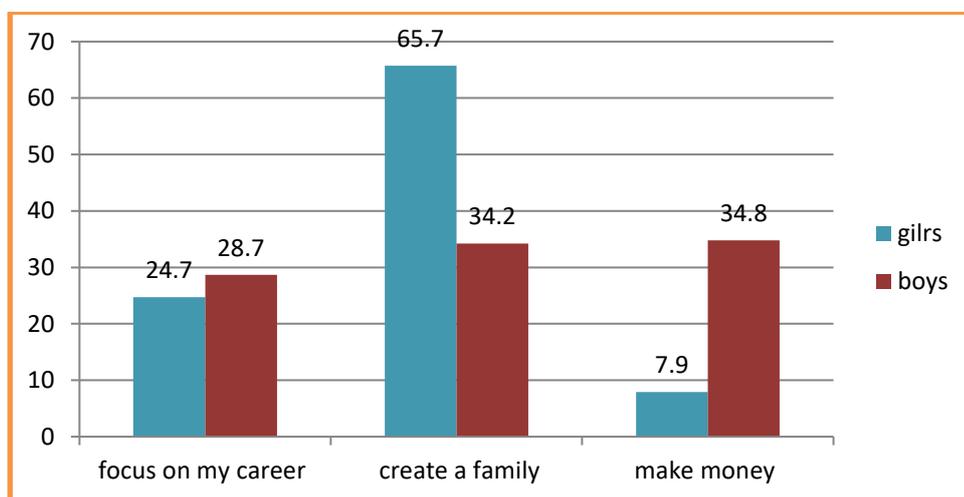


Figure 3: Life goals among girls and boys aged 15-30,

Source: National Bureau of Statistics

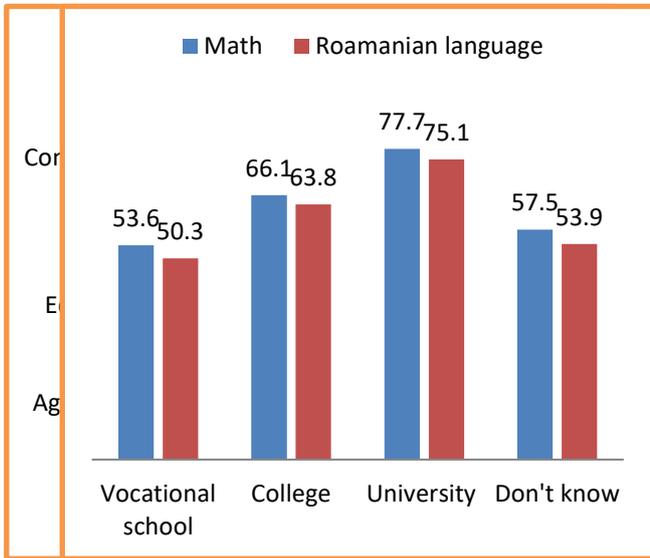
Vocational education (in collegiums) is as popular as general education among boys and university education is popular among girls. The World Bank study² found that 36 % of students would prefer vocational education, with a clear gender difference: while 43 percent of male ninth graders are interested in vocational education, only 30 percent of the females are. Of lyceum (12th grade) students, almost half (42 percent of men and 49 percent of women) want to continue to study in a Moldovan university. More women want to continue their studies. This was most evident for university students in their last year of undergraduate studies, 48 percent of women but just 28 percent of men reported an interest in further study.

¹ Transition from school to work, National Bureau of Statistics, 2014

² From aspirations to occupations : the role of information in educational and labor market decisions in Moldova, 2016

Labor market ambition of the gymnasium students is partly explained by the school performance. Students with lower math and language score tend to opt for job prospects in less skill intensive sectors (agriculture, construction) and intend to pursue less education after gymnasium (figure 5). Available data on the national school performance scoring shows that urban students and girls in general consistently outperform rural students and boys in general. Labor market segregation and inequality already starts in the school system.

Figure 4: Desired sector of employment by student score Figure 5: Intended future education by student score



Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

Intended employment path for the inactive youth seem to differ based on residence and gender. Youth females are more willing to take up high skill intensive jobs (managers and professionals) compared to young males. The intention gap is more significant for the rural/urban youth when it comes to preference for these types of jobs. Rural youth are more likely to opt for a less skilled job (service worker and craft and other trades workers) compared to the urban youth and youth females are more likely to choose a service job and male youth are more likely to choose a craft like job.

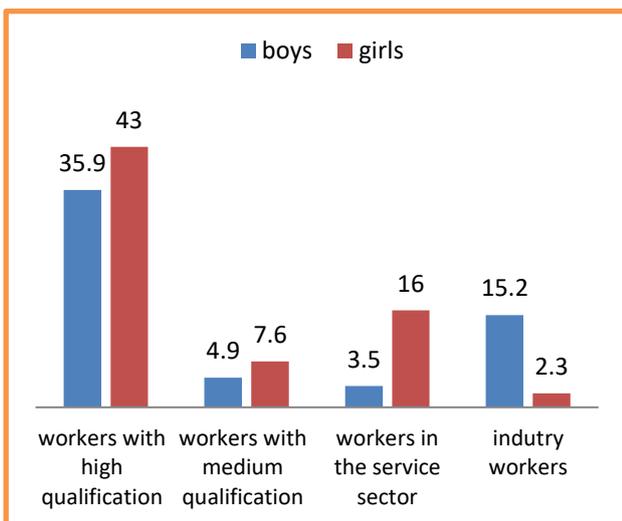


Figure 6: Intended job of labor inactive youth by gender
Source: National Bureau of Statistics

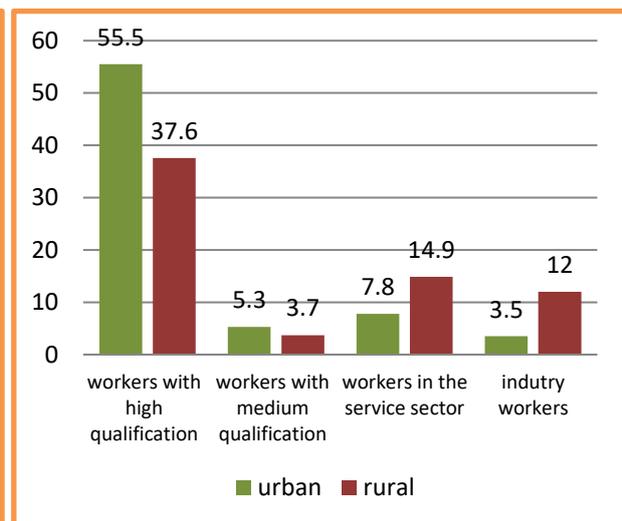


Figure 7: Intender job of inactive youth by residence
Source: National Bureau of Statistics

IV. ANALYSIS

4.2. Fifth grade

Materials for teachers and students broadly address the main gender issues related to vocational training and career development. Using gender assessment methodology, gender relevancy of all eight lessons was scored with an average of 2,7 from maximum four points, and the level of gender equality mainstreaming was scored with an average of 2,4. Since there is no significant gap between gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming, the assessment concludes that lessons materials are gender sensitive. The scoring for all lessons is presented in the figure bellow.

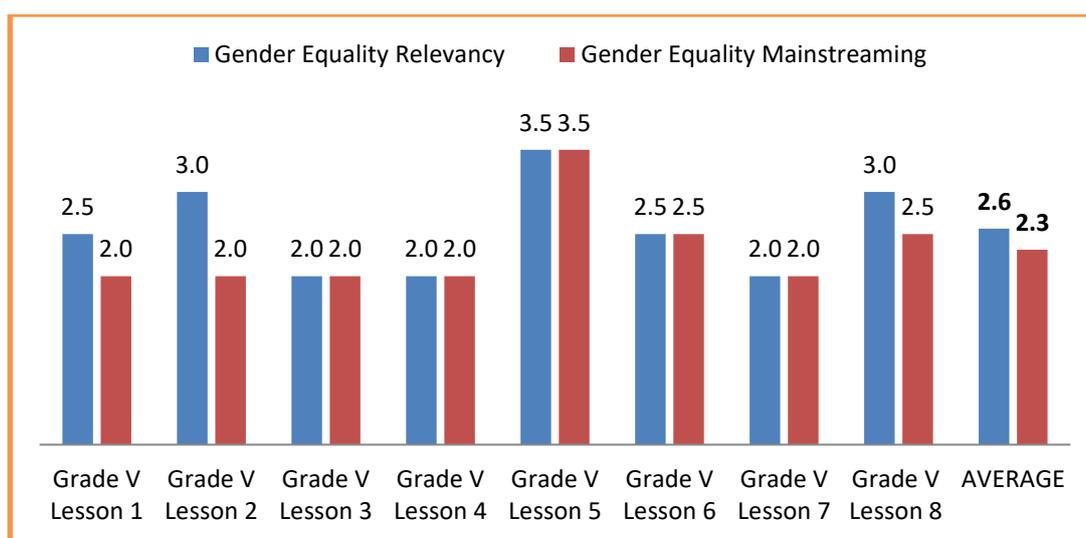


Figure 8: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 5th grade materials

The fifth lesson in the curricula is the most gender relevant and was approached by the authors accordingly. The goal of this lesson is to help boys and girls to think in terms of their dream job. This topic is highly gender relevant due to the prevalence of the traditional gender roles and in shaping of career choices for men and women. The lesson plan allows to for the students to think and debate critically the existence of traditional male and female jobs.

Two lesson plans and materials could have been strengthened from gender equality perspective. These refer to the first, second and the eighth lesson. The topics of these lessons are above average relevant from gender equality perspective since they refer to themes that touch on the issues related to gender inequality in labor market and domestic work. These issues are analyzed in the table below.

Lesson:	Gender relevancy	Ways to integrate gender equality:
Theme 2: My family and work	Gender relevant Domestic work has a significant gender division.	It is important for the students to understand the way gender roles affect labor distribution within the household. One of the key messages for this lesson is the importance for the boys to be encouraged in taking on more care work (taking care of their siblings, cooking, washing the dishes, etc).
There 8: My first career project	Gender relevant Career decisions are influenced by the gender roles.	The teacher can critically assess student's portfolios and help them understand that all professions can be equally accessed by both boys and girls.

4.3. Grade VI

Gender mainstreaming is on par with gender relevancy. The average score for gender relevancy was 2,4 and average score for gender mainstreaming was 2,3. The score for gender mainstreaming is mostly attributed to the highly individual approach within most of the lessons plans and materials. Boys and girls students are encouraged to think critically and assess their inner strengths and weakness in deciding on their career path.

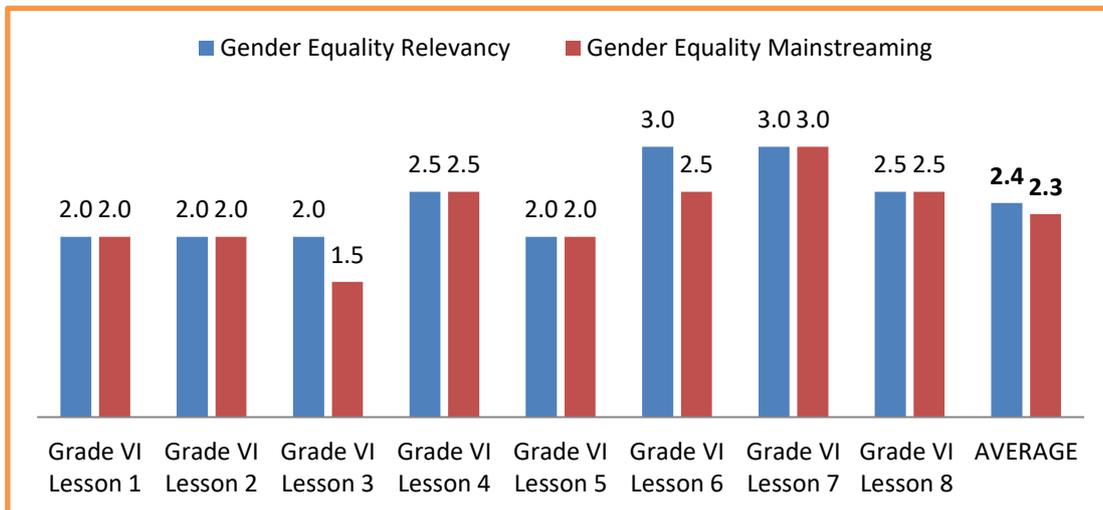


Figure 9: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 6th grade materials

Gender language in describing and listing professions was not fully used. As a general rule, it is advised that in describing and listing the professions, these should be presented in the feminine and masculine versions. A less favorable option would be to present all professions in the masculine form, but note that the authors mean that these professions are meant for both boys and girls. The least favorable option is to present some professions in their feminine form and other profession in their masculine form. In materials referring to the third lesson, authors use both masculine/fem forms of the profession in one case and the masculine versions for the others.

Given highly individual approach within this grade, the role of the teacher is the key. Teachers should be given materials and advice on how to help the students to think critically about their capacities and career choices. One useful way to do this is to help the students think about men and women working in nontraditional sectors.

4.4. Grade VII

The general approach for the sevenths grade is assessed to be gender sensitive. At the core of the REVOCC approach is to encourage both girls and boys to think critically about their professional paths, to think about outside factors that influence career options (lesson number 5), and think about various tradeoffs involved in career planning.

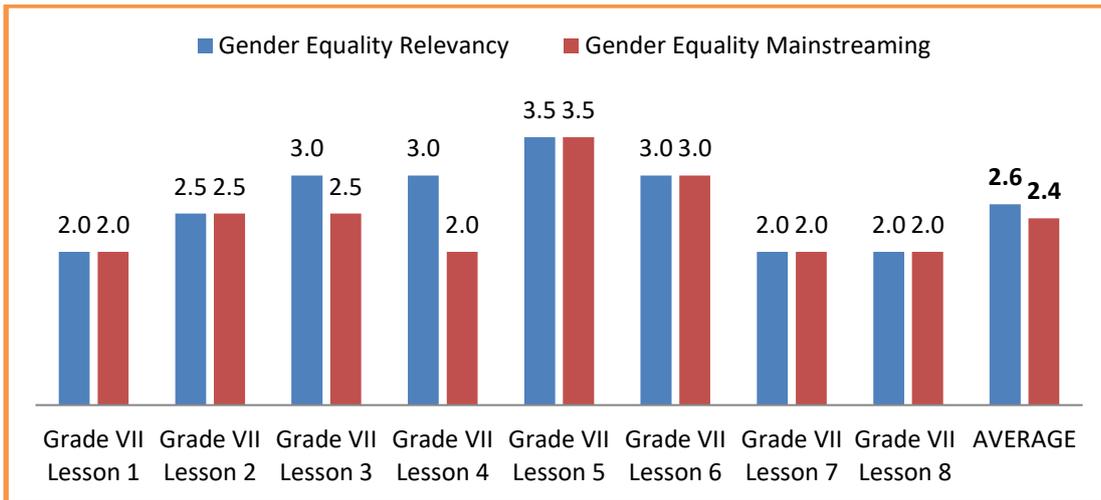


Figure 10: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 7th grade materials

The use of both female and male role models is encouraged. One positive example is the case of lesson number 6, where the students are presented with both a female and male role models. It would be advised that teachers can assign students to study/interview men and women working in nontraditional settings.

4.5. Grade VIII

General approach is assessed to be gender sensitive. Consistent with the approach in the previous grades, namely an approach to help each boy and girl student to assess own capacities and personal traits in deciding on career path.

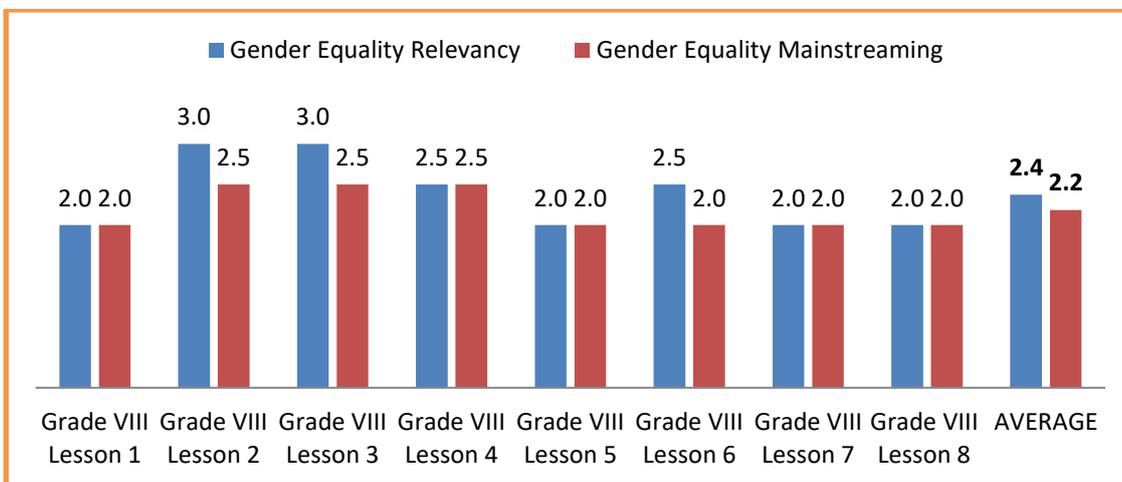


Figure 11: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 8th grade materials

The use of various personality and capacity tests is a good approach to encourage students to decide on a merit base career path. The use of multiple tests is a way for the students to discover themselves and develop solid reasons on how to approach career development. Teachers would be advised to analyze any patterns in the way boys and girls respond and choose potential personality traits and jobs. If such tendencies exist, these should be debated critically so to help boys and girls students to be more aware of them.

4.6. Grade IX

General approach is gender sensitive. The approach in the fifth lesson is very appropriate. The data shows that most of the informal work is done by young boys with incomplete education. Focusing the lesson on legal rights of the underage workers will primarily benefit this group.

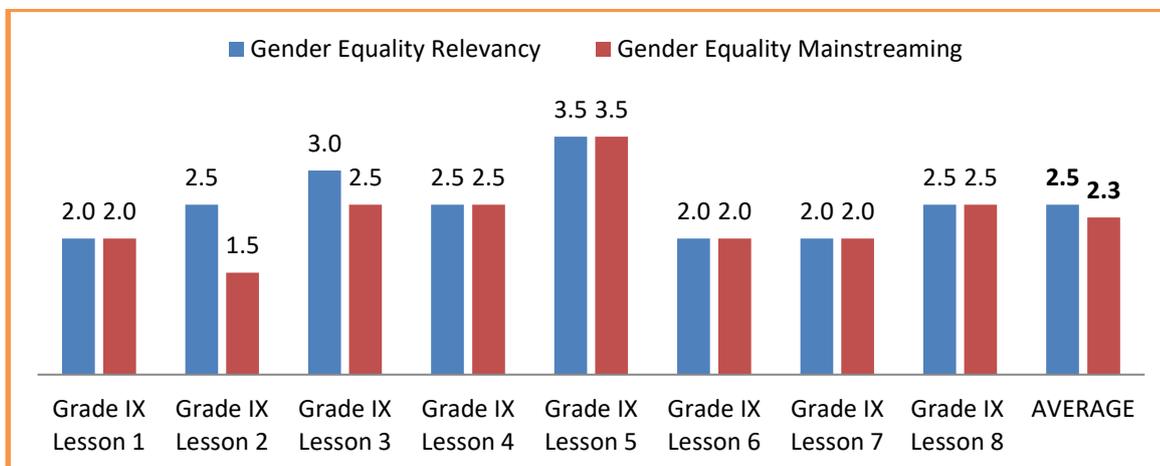


Figure 12: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 9th grade materials

In the second lesson, a case study is presented, where by Andrei and Galina are given seemingly traditional gender traits and students are asked to assess the weak and strong points for each one of them in pursuing a career in IT sector. It was not clear what exactly students should learn from this exercise taking in to account that this sector is perceived to be male dominated and based on the exercise inputs it seems that the students can reach the conclusion that the girls from the exercise is not suited for a career in this sector.

4.7. Grade X

General approach is proportional with the level of gender relevancy. The most significant gap in terms of gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming was identified in for the second lesson within this cycle. The lesson introduces the students with the national education system, advantages and disadvantages it can bring as to help the students better choose. The students would have benefited to learn about gender preferences for professions and type of education in Moldova (as presented in the first part of the report). The students could have been encouraged to debate in a critical way why such a gender preference exists and why this reflects on their personal choice.

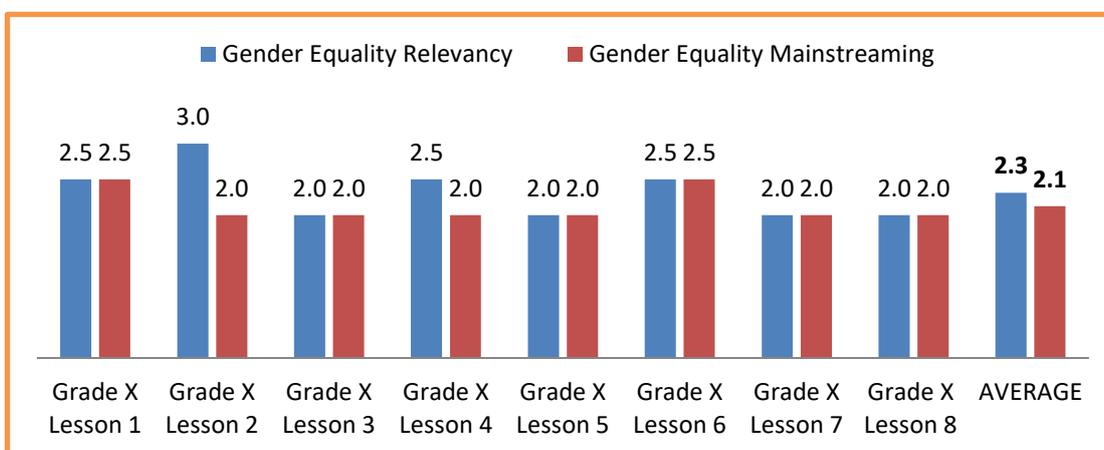


Figure 13: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 10th grade materials

4.8. Grade XI

Gender gap (difference between gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score) is a bit more significant for this cycle as compared to the other grades in the program. In the sixth lesson the students are introduced to the most effective ways communicating with potential employers. Relevant advice is given on how to negotiate financial remuneration for example. However the students, especially female students, would have also benefited if they would have been provided with practical advice on how to deal with potential discriminatory situations: (i) how to recognize such a situation, (ii) what are the basic rights and (iii) how to proceed in such situations. In similar fashion, the seventh lesson could have been complemented on practical advice with regards to conflict resolution and potential cases of sexual harassment cases.

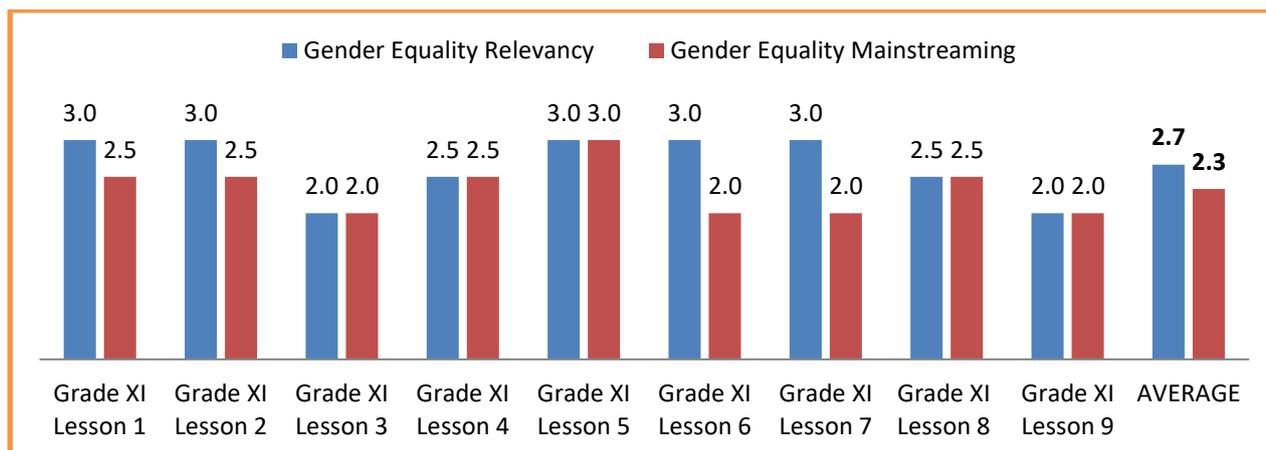


Figure 14: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 11th grade materials

4.9. Grade XII

Consistent with overall approach, the materials developed for the 12th grade are assessed to be gender sensitive. The fifth lessons introduces the topic of mass-media as a tool for students to look for a job but also to educate themselves about eh labor market and working life in general. It also notes that one should be critical in assessing media stories including from gender equality perspective. Most of the times media has a gendered way in with it portrays the working men and women and students should be aware of that. The sixth lesson could have benefited from the giving students (especially girls) tips on how to assess if the potential employer is asking discriminatory questions with regards to one's personal life and family situation.

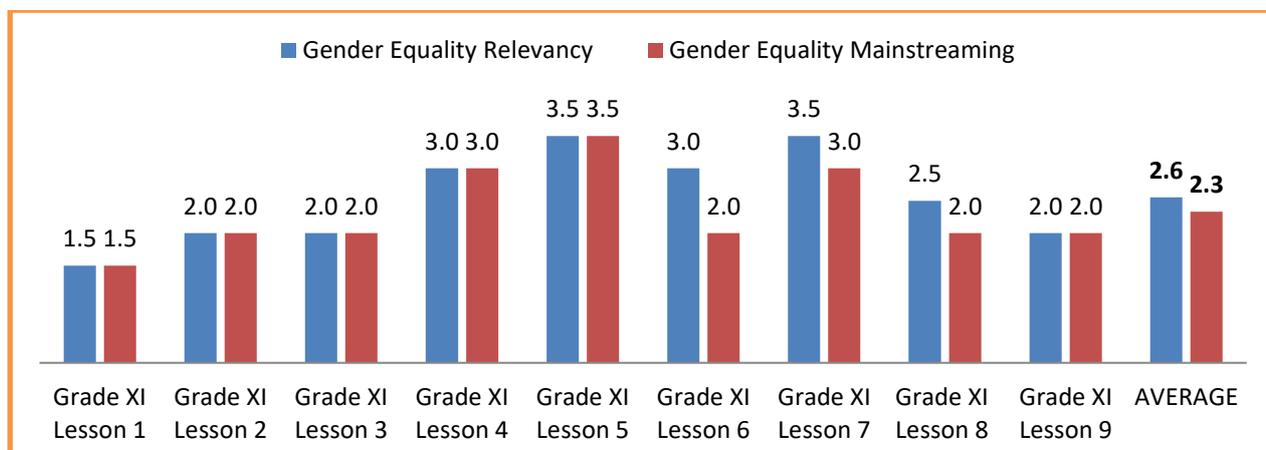


Figure 15: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for the 12th grade materials

4.10. Professional schools postsecondary education

Materials are assessed to be gender sensitive. The sixth lesson introduces the topic of labor rights including the rights of persons with disabilities in the labor market. The topic could be expanded to include more specific information on gender discrimination in labor market, highlighting illustrative cases from the equality council of Moldova. As mentioned above the eighth lesson could have benefited from the giving students (especially girls) tips on how to assess if the potential employer is asking discriminatory questions with regards to one's personal life and family situation.

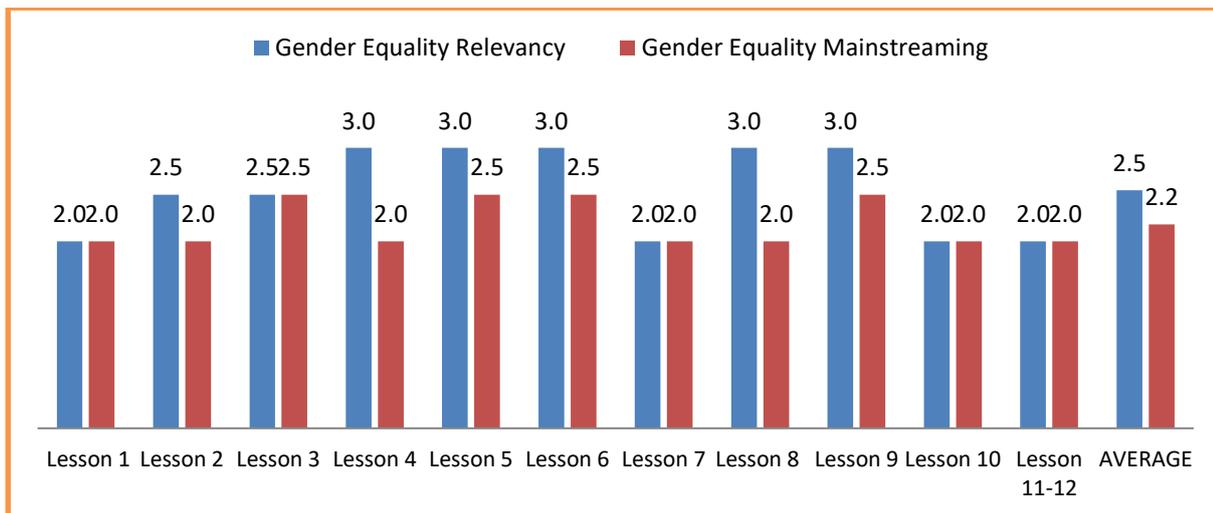


Figure 16: Gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming score for post secondary education

V. CONCLUSIONS

The assessment finds that VCOG materials are gender aware. The average score on gender relevancy for all VCOG materials is 2,5 (out of 4) and the average score for gender mainstreaming is 2,3, the gender gap (the difference between the two) is not that significant. One should note that the assessment was done with the understanding that VCOG authors had to balance multiple priorities given the fact that for each grade, the curricula allowed only 8 lessons on vocational orientation and career counseling.

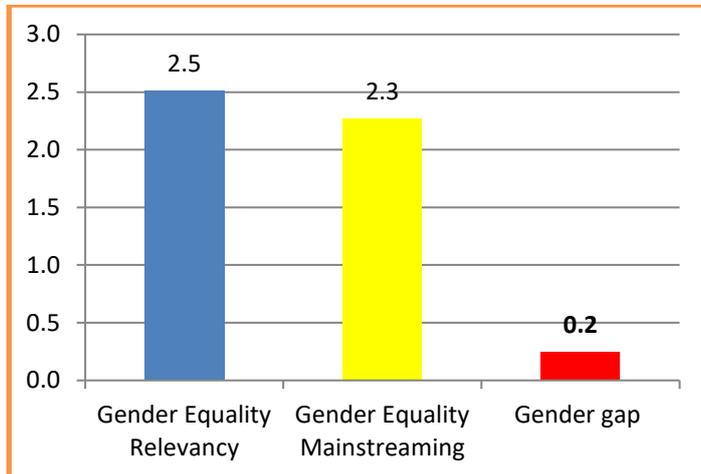


Figure 16: General scoring for gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming.

VCOG materials should serve as best practice for other academic subjects. Because they take a very individual approach and help students to assess critically their career path decisions. This approach will help both the teachers and students to challenge any traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Students are encouraged to reflect on their capacities and interests (and disregard stereotypes) and empowered to take decisions.

The VCOG materials were developed based on the same general approach, hence general gender scoring variation is not significant. As a rule VCOG materials use gender sensitive images, gender sensitive language (with some exceptions) and a fairly equal representation of men/boys and female/girls as role models. For some topics that are highly gender relevant, VCOG materials highlight the importance of gender equality.

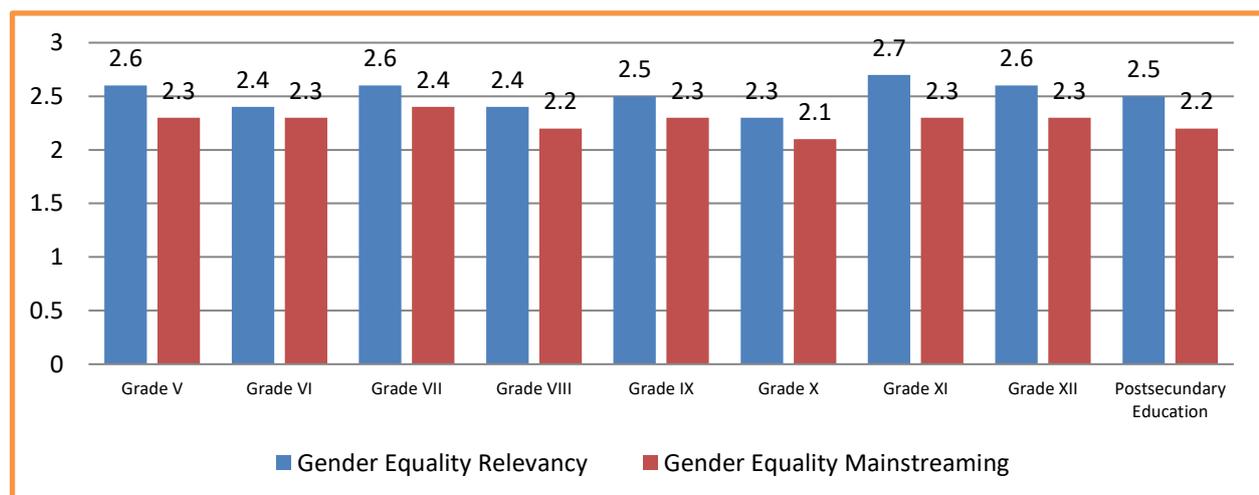


Figure 17: Gender scoring for gender relevancy and gender mainstreaming for each grade in the curricula

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

VOCG authors had to balance multiple priorities. In making the assessment and recommendations on how to strengthen gender equality perspective of the VOGC materials one should be cognizant of the following facts: (i) given the challenges to vocational orientation and career counseling an eight's module lesson approach to this topic seems very insufficient, (ii) given the multiple topics relevant to vocational orientation and career counseling the VOGC authors had to *prioritize to the bone* the information, tools and approaches used within each lesson.

Vocational Orientation and Career Counseling should be a fully fledged academic subject in school curricula. As long there is a general consensus among decision makers, employers and employees with regards to the need of improving educational system in order to align it to the changes in the labor market, it is not clear why this subject does not have a more preminent role in the school curricula. The main recommendation of this assessment is that Vocational Orientation and Career Counseling should be a full-fledged academic subject with at least 36 hours of study.

Help the students to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. VOGC materials encourage students to reflect and think critically. This approach can be extended to help students challenge and think critically about the existing perceptions on the role of men and women in the private and working arenas.

Make a better use of potential role models and resource persons. In multiple cases students are asked to interview or study a resource person from the community or family. Teachers can encourage students to get in touch with persons (male or female) that can challenge traditional roles and stereotypes.

Fully use gender sensitive language. VOGC materials had a somewhat inconsistent approach to using feminine and masculine version of professions. The suggestion is to use a general rule where by all professions would be used in both forms as to signal clearly that all jobs are accessible for both boys and girls.

For the most gender relevant topics it is advised to address gender inequality head on. If lessons topics are dealing with intended career path, domestic work, working relations, mass media, salary negotiation, labour rights etc., and lesson materials should address relevant gender inequalities.

Encourage teachers to be more gender sensitive. Both through support materials and training teachers can develop necessary skills and gender awareness to organize vocational orientation and career counseling modules that are gender sensitive.

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