

Revising textbooks from a gender perspective

National workshop

Do Son, 21-23 July 2009

TRAINING PACKAGE

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1. Opening session (Day 1, 08:30-10:00)

(1) Presentation of participants and interactive session on workshop expectations and methodologies

The participants will form small groups and discuss for 10-15 minutes based on the following questions:

- What do you want to learn from this workshop?
- What do you think the outcomes should be?
- What are your suggestions to work more effectively?

They will afterwards write down their responses (2-3 maximum per question) on colored paper to be displayed on a white board. One group representative will report to the plenary by also briefly introducing the members of the team. The facilitator will categorize and summarize the answers to the three questions against which the workshop outcomes should be evaluated at the end (total time approx. 20 minutes).

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(2) Overview of the workshop Agenda

Objectives

- explore the understanding of concepts such as “gender”, “gender perspectives” and “gender equality” in the context of VietNam and internationally with a focus on education (curriculum, textbooks and teacher education and training);
- develop appropriate methodologies of textbook analysis and assessment from a gender perspective that should be integrated in draft Guidelines for analyzing primary education textbooks in selected subject areas;
- prepare the members of the local expert/technical team to carry out subject-related textbook analysis and assessment from a gender perspective with a view to provide recommendations for textbook revision;
- plan for the follow-up, including the actual textbook analysis phase; the preparation of the Report on findings; and of an international workshop to share the outcomes of the analysis and recommendations to MOET to improve primary education textbooks (tentatively October 2009).

Expected outcomes

- Shared understanding of concepts such as “gender”, “gender perspective” and “gender equality” and how they apply to education in the context of VietNam and internationally;
- Draft Guidelines for analyzing primary education textbooks integrating appropriate conceptual and methodological dimensions, including concrete subject-related examples;
- Enhanced skills of Vietnamese specialists to carry out comprehensive, relevant and reliable textbook analysis from a gender perspective;
- Realistic work plan for the follow –up period, including the actual textbook analysis phase; the preparation of the Report; and of an international workshop to share the result of the primary education textbook analysis (tentatively October 2009).

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(3) Overview of the UNESCO and Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) project

- **Project title:** “*National textbook review and analysis from a gender perspective, including piloting teacher-training programmes to incorporate Gender Equality issues in line with the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic violence Prevention and Control*”
 - **Main objectives:** Improve primary education textbooks and teacher education courses by integrating gender issues and promoting gender equality
 - **Project rationale:** Importance of gender dimensions in education as a right-based approach for improving the quality of learning outcomes in compliance with the needs of promoting Learning to Live Together (LTLT), social justice and inclusion
 - **Means of implementation:**
- 2009:** Textbook analysis from a gender perspective by a technical team (primary education)
- 2010:** Development of training packages for teachers to be pilot tested with a view of improving pre- and in-service teacher education and training

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(4) Overview of the Vietnamese education system: current issues and challenges, and reform prospects

- Education structure
- Main changes and achievement over the last decade
- Challenges facing the education system
- What is likely to happen in the (near) future? (i.e. the revision of primary education textbooks; changes of the teacher education and training system)
- Relevance of the project for MOET and the Vietnamese people

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2. Plenary interactive session: Introduction of conceptual and methodological issues and Introduction of the draft Guidelines for textbook analysis from a gender perspective (Day 1, 10:30-12:30)

1. Introduction of conceptual and methodological issues

Textbooks

- **Textbooks:** learning resources facilitating access to subject-related information and learning methodologies in a comprehensive and systematic way
- **Why do we need them - advantages and disadvantages:** i.e. advantages: textbooks are comprehensive sources of learning; disadvantages: if not respecting quality standards, can be misleading
- **Achievements and challenges in VietNam with regard to textbooks:** what is going well/what is appreciated; and what causes discontent

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“Gender” and “Gender equality”

- “Gender” versus “Sex”: Social & cultural definitions of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ (examples)
- Traditional versus contemporary roles (examples)
- “Gender equality” as a main dimension of right-based approaches: equality of rights and chances
- What hinders gender equality: i.e. gender biases of different kinds such as outdated, patriarchal views on the male superiority; traditions privileging sharp role and task distributions between males and females; unfair norms and practices;

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- Being explicit about “gender” assumptions: gender differences should neither be ignored, nor be transformed in sources of bias and discrimination
- Learning content and methods (i.e. being fair to both genders; using examples that are not misleading and one sided)
- Learning environment (that is favorable to both boys and girls)
- Teaching staff and teaching and learning strategies (how to be balanced and fair in addressing different learner needs and styles)
- Assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes (i.e. privileging a ‘whole-child’ approach and competency development)

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Question: What are strengths and weaknesses in Vietnam?

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Textbook analysis (from a gender perspective)

- The concept of textbook analysis: using an analytical framework (i.e. concepts; analytical criteria; indicators) to obtain information about the overall quality of textbooks or about specific aspects
- Possible concepts and criteria: i.e. *quality* (accuracy of information; adjusted to age characteristics; updated information; good balance of different stimuli; free of bias); *accessibility* (easy to read, easy to understand; easy to carry); usability (inspiring for learner-friendly activities; good linkage between theory and practice and between theory and learners' immediate environment; stimulating classroom interaction)
- Developing an analytical framework to analyze textbook from a gender perspective: what biases to take into account?

Example:

Blumberg (2007, p. 52-54):

- ⇒ *invisibility* (complete or relative exclusion of a group: for instance, there is no mentioning of women);
- ⇒ *stereotyping* (unfair assignment of characteristics to a group, at the cost of individual attributes and differences – for instance, only women cry or only women like gossiping);
- ⇒ *imbalance and selectivity* (presenting only one interpretation of an issue, situation, or group of people – for instance, only men can be surgeons);
- ⇒ *unreality* (ignoring unpleasant aspects in favor of flattering ones – for instance, ignoring domestic violence against women and children);

- What to look for into textbooks? (for instance: whether male and female characters are depicted in a balanced way; whether they are related to occupations and life situations in a balanced way; whether learning activities are stimulating boys and girls equally; whether learning activities are addressing different learner needs, potentials and styles)

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2. Introduction of the draft Guidelines for textbook analysis from a gender perspective

Outline of the draft Guidelines

Introduction	<p>Rationale for the textbook analysis from a gender perspective</p> <p>Who will carry out the analysis?</p> <p>Overview of methodology</p> <p>Expected outcomes (i.e. gaps identified in primary education textbooks and recommendations for textbook revision)</p>
Conceptual aspects	<p>Conceptual clarifications: “gender”; “gender issues”; “gender equality”; textbook analysis; “analytical framework”</p>
Research methodology	<p>Developing an analytical framework (i.e. what quality and other criteria to define; what biases to search for; where to search for biases – i.e. in the main narrative text; in the language used; in illustrations; in learning activities; in assessment suggestions; in titles; in the team of authors)</p> <p>Examples from international and Vietnamese textbooks to guide the technical team</p> <p>Establishing working procedures, including data collection, systematization, processing and interpretation</p> <p>Establishing a work plan (i.e. objectives; expected outcomes, resources; calendar; anticipating possible obstacles)</p>
Providing a consolidated Report, including recommendations to improve primary education textbooks	<p>Discuss the research outcomes with stakeholders and cater for relevance and reliability</p> <p>Prepare the Report structure and outline</p> <p>Write different sections and assemble the whole</p> <p>Submit a first comprehensive draft for revisions</p> <p>Submit a completed version of the Report, including Recommendations for revising primary education textbooks</p>
Bibliography and references	
Annexes (i.e. Glossary)	

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3. Group work: Improving the draft Guidelines by integrating Vietnamese-relevant issues and concrete examples from different subject areas/subjects (Day 1, 14:00-16:00)

The participants will divide into groups and will work based on the following questions/tasks (2 hours):

- What are, in your opinion, the main obstacles to gender equality in VietNam?
- How are such obstacles impacting learning? (Give examples from primary education textbooks)
- What would you suggest to improve the outlines of the draft Guidelines for textbook analysis from a gender perspective (including through a better structure and more detailed specifications/examples)?

They will designate a group representative to present the summary of their deliberations to the plenary (groups can use power point or flip chart presentations)

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4. Plenary sharing: Groups report back and share their suggestions to improve the draft Guidelines for textbook revision from a gender perspective (Day 1, 16:30-17:45)

The designated representatives of each group summarize the outcomes of the discussions in that respective group.

Dakmara Georgescu provides a synthesis of all presentations by highlighting what will be taken into account to present an improved and more detailed outline of the Guidelines by the next morning. (She and the Vietnamese main consultant/team leader will work in the evening to provide the changes in the outlines of the draft Guidelines)

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5. Inputs for preparing the actual analysis of primary textbooks from a gender perspective and draft work plan (Day 2, 08:30-10:00)

- Who will carry out the textbooks analysis? (i.e. national technical team and lead consultant)
- What subjects and grades to take into account?
- How to organize the work/establish an effective work plan? (i.e. venue; tasks distributions; resources, timelines; communication; leadership issues; how to consult with others)
- Capacity development needs (i.e. to understand the Guidelines; to be able to use adequate research procedures; to collect relevant data; to formulate appropriate recommendations to the MOET; to prepare written contributions to the Report)

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6. Group work: producing a detailed work plan and preparing a consolidated report of the Vietnamese technical team (Day 2, 10:30-12:30)

The participants will work in groups by observing the following tasks:

- Produce a detailed work plan covering the period August-October 2009 in which you identify the main steps needed to complete the work and the indispensable resources
- Identify/anticipate possible difficulties/obstacles and solutions to overcome them
- Prepare the draft outline of a consolidated Report of the technical team, including recommendations to the MOET for revising primary textbooks from a gender perspective (anticipate your own contribution, how you will work with the others; and how you will work with the team leader)

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7. Groups report back: agreement on a realistic work plan (August – early October 2009) and final deliberations on concepts and methodologies linked to textbook analysis from a gender perspective (Day 2, 14:00-16:00)

- What will happen after the workshop?
- What needs are still not covered?
- How will the local technical team interact with the IBE?

UNESCO Hanoi and MOET summarize the outcomes.

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8. Preparing the international workshop – late October 2009 (Day 2, 16:30-17:45)

- Objective, format and expected outcomes
- Who to invite?
- Finalization of the Report and recommendations to the MOET

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9. Workshop evaluation (Day 2, 16:30-17:45)

- Overall quality
- Meeting the objectives
- Working methodology
- Contribution to the development of Guidelines
- Personal gains
- Facilities
- Translation
- Other

(Evaluation forms will be distributed to each participant)

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References and bibliography