



# Expanding the use of the Gender Equality Charter Mark for Schools across Europe



With the support of  
the Erasmus +  
programme of the  
European Union

## Project Overview

### Funder

Erasmus Plus, 2019-2021

### Partners

Development Education Centre, South Yorkshire (DECSY, England – Lead), Anthropolis Association (Hungary), Oxfam (Italy), Center for Citizenship Education (CEO, Poland), Forum for Freedom in Education (Croatia), Peace Education Institute (Finland), Slovak Centre for Communication and Development (Slovakia), Sudwind Association for Development Policy and Global Justice (Austria), University of Thessaly (Greece)

### Aims

To develop tools to enable a school to measure progress in tackling the effects that gender stereotyping still has on pupils in relation to both subject (and career) choices and as a root of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in schools and wider society.

To extend the use of the Gender Equality Charter Mark to schools across Europe.

### Need for project

The EU sees social norms and gender stereotypes as barriers to girls and women's agency in social, economic, political and civil life. Socially and culturally we are at a point where gender issues are becoming ever more prominent in social life, both in their potential harm to individuals and society, but also in the need for innovative approaches and solution. Gender inequality is also a root cause of gender-based violence.

One of the conclusions on 'the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls' by the UN Commission on the Status of Women was that educational and teaching materials should be developed 'in order to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women of all ages, to eliminate prejudices and to promote and build informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills for the development of respectful relationships based on gender equality and human rights' (CSW57, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The project also supports the work of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.

### Objectives

To challenge the negative and damaging norms, stereotypes and expectations by using our Gender Equality Charter Mark (GECM) to provide a framework for instilling a whole-school approach to gender equality (GE) in schools across Europe.

To foster and encourage positive change in the approach to gender equality, and develop a culture where children engage their critical thinking skills to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence. The change we hope to see includes widening subject and career choices made by pupils and reductions in harassment and gender-based violence in schools and wider society.

### History

The GECM in its first phase was a three-year project funded by the EU Justice Fund. The GECM itself was initially developed by the three NGOs from England (DECSY), Hungary (Anthropolis Association) and Italy (Oxfam Italy). The five main themes of the charter mark (Leadership, Curriculum, Physical Environment, Attitudes and Relationships and Community) were agreed, along with sub-sections and a suggested

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57\\_Agreed\\_Conclusions\\_\(CSW\\_report\\_excerpt\).pdf](https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_Agreed_Conclusions_(CSW_report_excerpt).pdf)

framework for incremental improvements. We recognised from the start that each country had a different social, cultural, political and legal framework in which we were trying to promote GE in education, and our initial ideas were adapted by working with groups of teachers and experts in each country to pilot a GECM for secondary schools in each country.

### **What is this project about?**

Expanding the use of the 'Gender Equality Charter Mark for Schools' across Europe is a three-year European Union funded project. There are 9 partners involved from 9 different European countries and each one aims to create a specific Gender Equality Charter Mark that can be used in and by schools. It is hoped that schools in any country in Europe (and beyond) will be able to adapt the charter mark to their context.

### **What exactly is a Gender Equality Charter Mark?**

It is a framework that can be adopted by schools to help them look at influencing and informing their leadership, curriculum, physical environment, and the attitudes and relationships of both the students, staff and wider community in relation to gender equality issues.

We envisage an ever-expanding network of schools throughout Europe and beyond that can provide examples of substantial and lasting change due to the way that the GECM is integrated into school policy and ethos. We see the GECM becoming a more widely recognised symbol for gender equality that is both attainable for schools in any country, yet also prestigious and a symbol of an equal and healthy learning environment.

### **Who is it for?**

Early Years, Primary and Secondary Schools: a whole-school approach means the target groups are school - children, teachers and headteachers but also parents, administrators and the wider community.

### **Outputs**

- Development/adaptation of GECM to schools teaching ages 3-11 (DECSY leads)
- Charter marks adapted for each partner country
- Handbook on how to implement the charter mark including case studies
- Handbook of gender equality support materials - curriculum ideas and classroom resources
- Teacher professional development modules on gender equality which can be adapted to different countries
- Initial teacher education modules on gender equality which can be adapted to different countries
- Train the trainer events in each country
- Multiplier / dissemination events in each country

### **Get involved**

Why not look at how you can improve gender equality in your school / educational setting? You could start by looking at some of our core questions such as:

- To what extent is Gender Equality (GE) part of the long-term vision of the school/setting? (Leadership)
- To what extent are students involved in non-stereotypical extra-curricular activities? (Curriculum)
- To what extent is GE represented in the physical environment? (Environment)
- To what extent do children/students understand that they have choices in the way they behave and present themselves and that these shouldn't be restricted according to gender? (Attitudes)
- To what extent do school/setting staff engage families with GE work? (Community)

For more questions linked to the five core themes go to <https://www.decsy.org.uk/project/gender-equality-charter-mark-2-2019-2021/>

### **Further information**

[www.genderequalityinschools.org](http://www.genderequalityinschools.org)