Flemish Ministry of Education \& Training 18 October 2012

GENDER GAPS IN EDUCATION

## Evidence from the OECD

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## Gender gaps in education

- Evidence from Education at a Glance, PISA and the OECD Gender Initiative
- What are the main gender differences in education?
- Where does Belgium stand among OECD countries?


## Almost no gender gaps in upper secondary education attainment....

Population aged 25-34 who has attained at least upper secondary education Percentage by gender, 2010


## Change over time...

Share of women new entrants at tertiary-type A level (2000-2009)

- 2000 ■ 2009




## Prevalent women advantage in entry into tertiary education...

Share of women new entrants at tertiary-type A level
(2009)
$\square$ Advanced research qualifications $\quad$ Tertiary-type A first degree


# But biggest gender differences are in the choice of field of education 

Percentage of tertiary degrees awarded to women, by field of education (2009)


# But biggest gender differences are in the choice of field of education 

Percentage of tertiary degrees awarded to women, by field of education (2009)

\author{

- Science
}
$\Delta$ Engineering, manufacturing and construction
- All fields



## Field of study and performance

- Could differences in field of study be explained by performance in school in corresponding subjects?


## The gender gap in reading at age 15



# $\geqslant$ <br> <br> The gender gap in mathematics at <br> <br> The gender gap in mathematics at age 15 

 age 15}


## The gender gap in sciences at age 15



## Field of study and performance

- Students' attitudes towards subjects play important role in shaping gender differences in academic performances
- In mathematics, girls rate their own ability lower than boys as early as the first year of primary school, even when actual performance does not differ.
- Gender disparities in subjects chosen in higher education relate more to student attitudes (e.g. motivation, interest) than to ability and performance at school.


## The gender gap in motivation


Proportion of
Boys and girls
planning a
career
in engineering
or computing

Jordan
Poland
Thailand Mexico Colombia Chile Slovenia Latvia Portugal Spain Turkey Estonia Norway Chinese Taipei Slovak Republic Italy epublic Greece Russian Federation Belgium Lithuania Argentina Hungary Bulgaria* OECD average Uruguay
Romania Brazil Israel Canada
Iceland Serbia Ireland Luxembourg France
Croatia Tunisia Sweden Australia United States Indonesia* Switzerland Austria Japan Germany Denmark Hong Kong-China New Zealand

Korea
United Kingdom
Finland Macao-China Azerbaijan Netherlands
Kyrgyzstan Montenegro*
24.1

路 19.6 17.5 16.7 16.6 16.4 15.2 15.2
14.9 14.9 14.4 14.1 13.7 13.7 13.1 13.1 13.1 12.9 2.5 12.4 11.9 11.7 1.6 11.5


Girls
Boys


## Men and women graduating in same subjects often make different occupational choices

Distribution of graduates working as professionals and technicians by field of study and occupation, OECD-14, 2005


## Teaching staff

- Gender stereotypical attitudes towards subjects and occupations are reinforced by the composition of the teaching staff.
- Today teaching is predominantly a female occupation (save for education management), especially at the lower levels of education


## Women dominate the teaching profession up to secondary education

Percentage of women among teaching staff in public and private institutions by level of education


## Policy implications

- Policy decisions should aim at encouraging talented girls to study mathematics and science at the most advanced levels.
- Policies aiming at helping boys to acquire reading skills are needed.
- Achievement-focused policies will not change the relative disadvantage of women in labour markets.
- School level policies aimed at attracting girls to mathematics and science as future career options.
- To be effective, policies to address stereotyping in education should be complemented by more general efforts to combat gender stereotyping in social, cultural and economic factors...


## Policy implications

- It pays to have highly qualified teachers who address gender-specific attitudes within the classroom.
- Teacher-training programmes for graduates have proven to be effective.
- Valuable additions could be gender awareness courses
- Attitudes are formed early in life, so start early
- Change in non-monetary of STEM occupations may also attract characteristics more women to these fields.


## Find out more about:

Gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship
www.oecd.org/gender email: Angelica.SALVIDELPERO@OECD.org

PISA at OECD
www.pisa.oecd.org
email: Francesca.Borgonovi@OECD.org
Education at a Glance
www.oecd.org/edu/eag2012
email: Eric.Charbonnier@oecd.org

## For more data and policies on gender gaps in education....

## Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now!

Publication to be released on 17 December 2012

www.oecd.org/gender<br>email: Angelica.SALVIDELPERO@OECD.org

THANK YOU

