Gender and Education in Developing Countries: The Difficult Task of Altering Sexual Stereotypes

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Abstract

Education policies related with gender in developing countries have generally focused on advocating for equal access to education for boys and girls. Although there is no question about the necessity of these public policies, assuring female access to education deals only with the consequences of a chauvinistic system, not with its causes. In 1991, the Argentine National Council of Women, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, developed an unprecedented program devoted to reforming the content of the educational system. The PRIOM’s (Programa de Igualdad de Oportunidades para la Mujer en la Educación) main objective was to reform the educational system by including new contents and perspectives promoting gender equity in all the spheres of the society.

In this paper, I first focus on providing enough evidence to support the idea that public policies should also consider a reform of the educational curricula. Second, I describe the process of implementation of the PRIOM in Argentina because it provides a good set of information from which to develop recommendations aimed at increasing the possibility of success of such
programs. Finally, in the third part of the paper, I illustrate two recommendations based on the lesson learned from the PRIOM.