



# genderaction

Gender Action is an evidence-based awards programme for schools, nurseries, and colleges. We support educators by promoting and celebrating work that challenges gender stereotypes.

## Why focus on gender stereotypes?

Over the last few decades there has been great progress in gender equality – but sadly we have so much further to go. The detrimental effects of gender stereotyping, including limited aspirations, behavioural issues, and imbalances in the world of work, are widespread.

- Only 12% of the engineering workforce is female; and 11% of registered nurses are male
- Just 3% of early years educators are male
- Only 23% of physics A-level students are female, whilst only a third of GCSE art and design students are male

Socially constructed, rigidly gendered roles negatively impact on many young people's aspirations and limit the choices they make.

**Education has a vital role to play in transforming this picture.**



*"We support Gender Action because we would like to change the attitude of the next generation on stereotyping and allow the kids to choose their path not according to their gender but their passion."*

- Supporter Teacher

## stereotype

/ˈstɛrɪə(ɔː)tʃaɪp, ˈstɪərɪə(ɔː)tʃaɪp/

noun

a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

## Isn't this a larger issue in society, not just education?

Yes, absolutely. These issues are deep-rooted and multi-faceted. But we know from education research that where we work together to challenge rather than channel society's biases, we can have a positive impact on the next generation.

True impact and change needs an effort across the nursery or school, led from the top, through departments, via careers information and PSHE, through the school gates to parents, out on the sports pitches, and always learning from and including the voices of children and young people.

Gender Action's whole-setting approach focuses on the following areas of nursery and school life:

### PERSONAL PRACTICE: SUPPORTING STAFF TO REFLECT

It's important to involve all staff within the school or nursery, to ensure everyone is working towards gender equality, trained to play an active role, and aware of the effects of unconscious biases.

### STUDENT VOICE: PUTTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

A crucial step is supporting children and young people to understand and challenge gender injustice and stereotypes, allowing them ownership of the issues.

### CURRICULUM AND LEARNING

Resources and the curriculum should be balanced to ensure equal opportunities. Learners should be able to choose subjects and activities based on their preferences and skills, rather than being guided by their gender.

### PROGRESSION, CHOICES AND JOBS

Everyone has a role to play in opening learners' eyes to the diversity and range of options available for their future, without their own or others' gendered expectations.

### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Schools communicate with a wide variety of audiences, including parents/carers, students, staff and the wider community. It's important to ensure communications materials are not reinforcing gender bias.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH PARENTS, CARERS, AND THE WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The biggest impact will be made when the whole nursery or school community works together. Involving parents/carers from the start can help children and young people challenge gender inequality in wider life.

*"We support Gender Action because stereotypes play a significant role in how children view themselves and their abilities."*

- Supporter Teacher

*"We are delighted to work with Gender Action as a key initiative to take this work forward and truly embed gender equality in education."*

Ros McNeil, Head of Equality,  
National Education Union

*"We are delighted to support Gender Action's whole-school approach. Gender stereotypes are at the root of the persistent inequalities we see throughout our society."*

Andrew Bazeley,  
Policy and Insights Manager,  
Fawcett Society

## Our impact so far

With schools, nurseries and colleges signed up across the country and beyond, we have a growing community of educators passionate about putting gender equality at the heart of their policy and practice. Our award has four levels: Supporters, Initiators, Champions and Beacons.

Here is a flavour of what our Supporters are working on, in their own words:

- ★ "Improving staff awareness of unconscious bias in their language, praise and reinforcement of stereotypes, and how these interactions affect children and their progress."
- ★ "Ensuring students feel empowered, informed and able to discuss gender issues when they recognise them, both at school and in their lives outside school."
- ★ "Making the curriculum as diverse as the students it is designed for, and to actively challenge negative stereotypes and improve representation."
- ★ "Open up possible career choices to children through the use of positive role models, displays, available literature and other innovations."
- ★ "Increasing the use of displays to promote gender equality within the school."
- ★ "Making all parents more aware of opportunities related to gender equality and ensuring that they are all well-informed about the benefits of subject choices for students."

In 2019, our  
community  
included:

300+  
Registered

100+  
Supporters

25+  
Initiators

## Who is behind Gender Action?

The accreditation programme is being developed and run by a consortium of experts from the Institute of Physics, King's College London, UCL Institute of Education and the University Council of Modern Languages. It brings over a decade's worth of research to life.

The Mayor of London funded a rollout in the capital in 2019.

### Get involved

Join our growing community of passionate and proactive schools, nurseries and colleges. Register at: [www.genderaction.co.uk/register-now](http://www.genderaction.co.uk/register-now)

Further reading, research and evidence: [www.genderaction.co.uk/online-resources](http://www.genderaction.co.uk/online-resources)

### By registering as a Gender Action Supporter, you are:

- Publically pledging your commitment to gender equality
- Resolving to actively challenge gender imbalance with colleagues and your nursery or school community
- Joining a network of passionate educators
- Teaming up with leading educational institutions

**And you will be able to access events, professional development and resources for the whole school.**

FOUNDED BY:



SUPPORTED BY  
**MAYOR OF LONDON**

#### References:

- UK government** - Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England 2016-2017  
**National Education Union and UK Feminista** - "It's just everywhere" a study on sexism in schools - and how we tackle it, 2017  
**Physics: Joint Council for Qualifications** - [bit.ly/physics-jcq](http://bit.ly/physics-jcq)  
**Engineering WISE** - [bit.ly/wise-engineering](http://bit.ly/wise-engineering)  
**Nurses: Nursing and Midwifery Council** - [bit.ly/nmc-nurses](http://bit.ly/nmc-nurses)  
**EY Education: MITEY** - [bit.ly/mitey-edu](http://bit.ly/mitey-edu)

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