



Sources for children

In 2017, the Department of Women and Gender Equality of the Federal Province of Tyrol (Austria) created a memo game for children to discover professions and to raise awareness of the broad spectrum of career choices. The game vividly conveys to children the message that both men* and women* can pursue all professions.

https://www.tirol.gv.at/fileadmin/themen/gesellschaft-soziales/frauen/downloads/Anleitung_beide_Spiel_neu_2018_gesamt.pdf

The biv-website (**Academy for Inclusive Education**) provides a collection of tools for children in primary school such as two card sets; “Activities” and “Competencies”, aimed at educational counselling and career orientation. Card sets are accompanied by a guide “So that I know what I can do” (Damit ich weiß, was ich kann).

<https://www.biv-integrativ.at/material/>

Project “**The Weaving of Professions for boys = girls**” (Prizma Foundation, 2016) (Slovenia) raise up the message that young people should make decisions about further education and career choices based on their own desires and interests, and not on the expectations of parents and society. Among many activities, the project included a public competition for pupils' artistic entries on the theme “Women in technology, why not?/Men in early childhood education, why not?”

[TKALNICA-POKLICEV.pdf \(fundacija-prizma.si\)](#)

Within the Slovenian project “**Active.All**”, a memory game about professions and activities has been created, which is suitable for both pre-school and schoolchildren.

Figure 1: Memory game "Active.All"



<http://aktivni-vsi.enakostspolov.si/spomin>

The Slovenian online newspaper for children Časoris¹ targets primary school children up to grade 6, parents and teachers. Gender stereotypes are addressed through practical examples, discussion questions, informational resources, and awareness-raising videos. Some headlines on gender stereotypes are: “What are gender stereotypes and how to talk about them”; “Girls don't like dusting either”; “Girls can have short hair too!”, “Girls can drive a tractor too. And boys can do ballet”; “Girls can run too, and boys can have long hair”.

The newspaper published a picture book Lučka and Tine (by Nina Jelen and Miha Klenovšek, 2018) about a friendship between a girl Lučka who is interested in science and a boy* Tine who is good in dance. Growing up they face gender stereotypes related to their interests. Nevertheless, as adults Tine becomes a dancer and Lučka a chemistry scientist. The message for to the children is to follow their desires and goals.

<https://casoris.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/lucka-in-tine.pdf>

The ongoing project **Boys Day** carried out in Austria and Germany aims at broadening the spectrum of career choices for boys* who are introduced to care professions in nursing, education and social work. In Austria, the programme has been commissioned by the federal Ministry of social affairs, health, care and consumer protection in the last 15 years and is planned and implemented by organisations in the provinces. However, the main target group are boys* from the 7th grade onwards (12 to 18 years old, with the majority being between 13 and 15 years old).

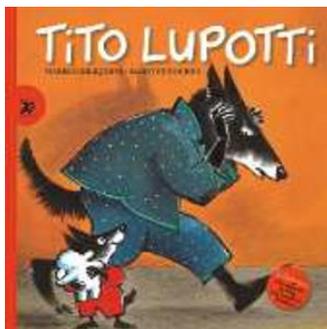
Group excursions or open houses at workplaces in care professions where men* already work are organised for boys*. In the project activities boys* are made aware of the professions and that they are considered welcome and competent in caring professions. Boys* can choose the areas according to their interests. Once a year there is an action day with a big event taking place in Vienna, while the remaining offers are organised throughout the year on demand. Workshops are offered in schools, external institutions or online. In addition, there is teaching material and information for children and pedagogues on the project's website.

<https://www.boysday.at>

¹ <https://casoris.si/>

Picture-books and fairy tales represent a site where active deconstruction of gender stereotypes are taking place, including those related to boys*, men* and masculinities and care work. Since 2011 in Italy new publishing companies (e.g., **Settenove**; **EDT Giralangolo Sottosopra**; **Lo Stampatello**) address gender stereotypes, the cultural roots of gender-based violence, and portray a diversity of family models in response to primary school textbooks that present a highly stereotyped set of images. The anti-princess model is often offered to girls*, along with promoting STEM subjects, while boys* are portrayed in situations where they can show their feelings, play with dolls, and not necessarily be heroes.² For instance, the fairy tale *Tito Lupotti* (by Judes, Marie-Odile, Bourre, Martine, 2014) targets children at the age of four. The main character is Tito, a wolf who wants to become a florist when he grows up, but has to confront his father's wish to introduce him to the world of hunting. The story flows along two opposite lines with regard to the role of the main character, i.e., on one hand there are the father's (and society) ideas spurring Tito to comply with the traditional masculine line, on the other hand there are Tito's wishes to follow the aspiration of a 'profession' defying masculine traditions.

Figure 2: Cover of the fairy tale book "Tito Lipotti"



In the illustrated book *Una bambola per Alberto* [A Doll for Alberto] (by Zolotow, Charlotte, Delacroix, 2014), the main character is Alberto, a boy* who is longing to own a doll but has to come to terms with his brother and his friends who make fun of him. In addition, his father wants him to play with a train, as it is more appropriate for boys*. However, Alberto's grandmother makes the father consider the chance that the boy* could become a good father one day. The story highlights not only stereotypes linked to masculinity and the choices of toys, but also the topic of caring and masculinity. The book is appropriate for children above the age of 3.

The **Scosse Association** engages in a systematic collection of illustrated books for children between 0 and 6 years of age ("Reading without Stereotypes. Educational for children between 0 and 6 years old to imagine the future" by Fierli Elena, Franchi Giulia, Lancia Giovanna, Marini Sara, 2015). The aim is to employ new literary products as a means to show new generations that it is possible to live in a society without having to feel locked into a stereotype.

In Lithuania there have been contentious cases about two fairy tales that tell a love story between people of the same sex. The story "The Amber Hearth" by Neringa Dangvydė soon after being published, it was effectively banned. While Lithuanian courts maintained that the book is harmful to children due to the depiction of homosexual relationships, the case is to be discussed by the Grand College of the European Court of Human Rights in 2022. This example shows that the issues of gender represent a highly controversial and sensitive political topic in some contexts.

Slovenian picture book "**Rozagroza and Plavalava**" (by Saša Eržen, Maruše Ivančič and Kobrowsky, 2016) presents social stereotypes through the different life situations of the main characters in a humorous way and draws attention to the importance of gender equality. The picture book was the basis for the theatre performance *Vijolašola*, which shows in a thoughtful, witty, informative and critical way that children are brought up in stereotypical gender roles. Twins Neža and Anže realise that they are very similar, but also very different. Neža likes to

² For an analysis of the new children's literature, see Bernacchi, 2020.

climb trees, build Lego blocks, and kick a ball, while Anže likes to bake cookies, dress up a doll, etc. Their parents constantly remind them what is appropriate for a girl and what is appropriate for a boy*. In their dreams, however, the monsters Plavalava and Rozagroza are chasing them, so Anže and Neža decide to set a trap for the monsters and bring them together. From blue and pink, a new colour, purple, is created. That is when they decide to take their parents to Vijolašola.

<http://aktivni-vsi.enakostspolov.si/slikanica>

<http://aktivni-vsi.enakostspolov.si/lutkovna-predstava>

“**Gender Matters! Strong girls, strong boys!**” are two theme boxes (one for children between four and eight years, and one for children between eight and twelve years). The box for younger children includes picture, read-aloud and non-fiction books that address questions such as what is the importance of different genders and information on topics such as body image, professions or sexuality.

<https://wien.edupool.de/home?pid=30cuec60hoo57kamiqb8s3j8g7>



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