

Gender equality in educational planning and management in Argentina

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This presentation:

- Overview of the general national context
- Women in education management in numbers
- Main findings of the opinions and perceptions of persons interviewed for the Argentina case study
- The way forward: some questions still open for continued research

Favourable national context:

- CEDAW is a part of the National Constitution
- Quota legislation demanding 30% of women in all legislative elections in force for 20 years
- Significant progress made:
 - As of 2007 a woman is President of the country
 - 37.7% of women in National Congress
 - 27.3% of women in legislatures at provincial level
- Persistent problems:
 - Weak national mechanism for the advancement of women (politically and financially)
 - Lack of a national equality plan (federal country)

Women in education and management:

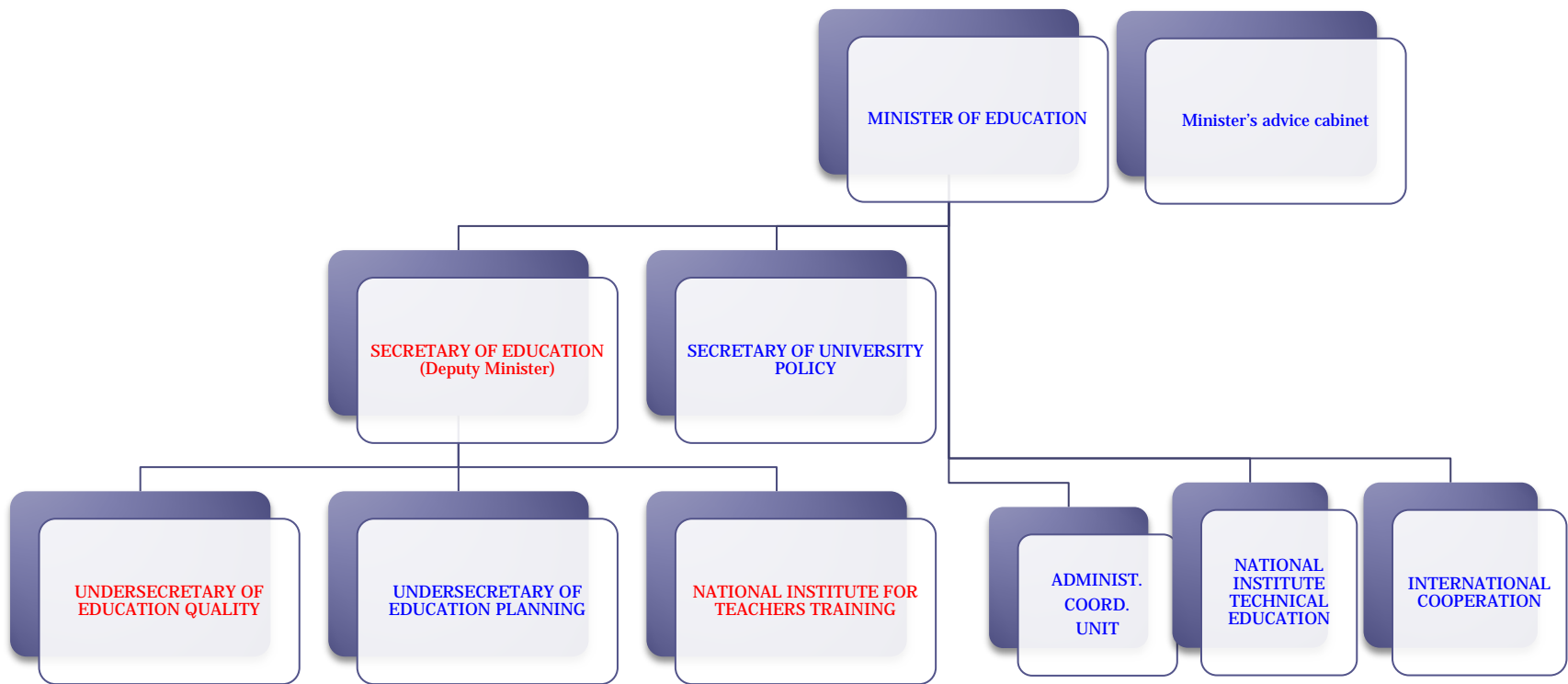
- 8 out of 10 teachers are women (Census 2004):
 - Nursery school: 94% women teachers
 - Secondary education: 70% women teachers
- 9 out of 10 principals at all levels are women (86.2%) (Census 2004):
 - Nursery school: 99% women principals
 - Primary school: 88% women principals
 - Secondary education: 64% women principals
- Since 1983 > 16 National Education Ministers:
 - 2 women and 14 men
- There are 24 provincial Ministries of Education:
 - 11 women and 13 men (45% women)
 - Higher than average female participation in provincial ministries (14% women)

Women in education management: opinions and perceptions

- Key informants were identified
- Selection of persons to be interviewed at NMoE
- First round of interviews: 6 interviews (in Spanish)
 - 4 women/ 2 men
 - 3 senior positions / 3 middle rank positions
 - 2 previously Provincial Ministers of Education
- Second round of interviews: to include additional middle rank positions and junior positions
- Critical issues:
 - Definition of “senior” / “middle” / “junior” positions
 - Understanding of the appointment process
 - Administrative career vs. political appointment

National Ministry of Education (2011)

Senior positions



Women in education management: opinions and perceptions

1. Women in education management: why should it matter?
2. Getting there: sacrifices and strategies
3. Women in leading roles: does it make a difference?

1. Women in education management: why should it matter?

“In the education system there is a very large percentage of women as principals and supervisors, but within the ministerial structure, the positions of Ministers of Education are more generally reserved for men. But this is not too important. The difference is not gender related but explained by personal political interventions... Diminished women presence [is explained by lack of] political expertise” (middle position, man).

- Men and women are appointed by the Minister of Education out of confidence, both at personal and professional levels
- Shared past experience plays an important role
- The claim should not be based on past discrimination / affirmative action but on merit: Public policies require de best talents, male and female

2. Getting there: sacrifices and strategies

“It is not possible to develop a professional career and aim at being a part of the selected group of women in decision-making positions, whether in education or in any other field, if you are not willing to make a significant number of personal sacrifices (middle position, woman)

“Women make bigger personal efforts because the job is not the only role we have. Raising our children is also a role we have (senior position, woman).

- Women interviewed acknowledged the complexity of family/work balance
- Long working hours are seen as a requisite, to be complied with by men and women alike
- Perception of changes in roles and attitudes by younger generation of men and women
- Public policies not mentioned

3. Women in leading roles: does it make a difference?

“There is no difference in terms of capacity ... but there is a different perspective due to womanhood, motherhood ... which we have in the first place for being with our children... Being a woman is more connected with being an educator. Women bring into education their personal experience in caring for their families. This is an asset for women.... There are some men who also have this. But there is something distinctive about women’s understanding of the learning process” (senior position, woman)

- Women made references to motherhood and the ‘essence’ of womanhood as an asset in education
- Women described differences in management style:
 - Horizontal / cooperative / based on relations
 - Vertical / hierarchical / one-to-one
- Men interviewed described those characteristics as depending on personality rather than gender

The way forward: further research

- Women participation in senior / middle education management follow the same logic as political participation generally
 - Previous political experience is fundamental (little democratization within political parties)
 - No established procedures for appointment in senior and middle positions - appointment based on personal confidence
- Women leaders are more aware of
 - Problems related with family / work balance
 - Confronting stereotyped expectations on motherhood
- Long hours “come with the job”: there seems to be little questioning of the effects towards family / work balance for both sexes
- Arrangements for family responsibility are negotiated individually: lack of written rules and procedures
 - Problems with transparency and accountability
 - Depends on individual negotiating capacity
- Public policies are not mentioned: care and caring should be put in the public agenda
- Identification of women with motherhood does not account for diversity among women

Thank you!

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