

## Policy enactment in schools – A culture of gender (in)equality

Set within a 'post-conflict' context, this research project addresses the mutual constitution between violence and the existence of unequal power in gender relations. Hereby, I contrast Colombia's legislature and policy on addressing gender equality in the education system with opinions and perceptions of local policy stakeholders, educational agents and students in Medellín.

*How can the enactment of legislature and education policies on gender equality enable a school culture that empowers youth to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions in Medellín?*

### Methodology

- two case study design
- in-depth interviews with local policy-stakeholders and educational agents
- focus group discussions with teachers and students (Likert-scale activity and photo-elicitation method)
- quantitative questionnaire with students

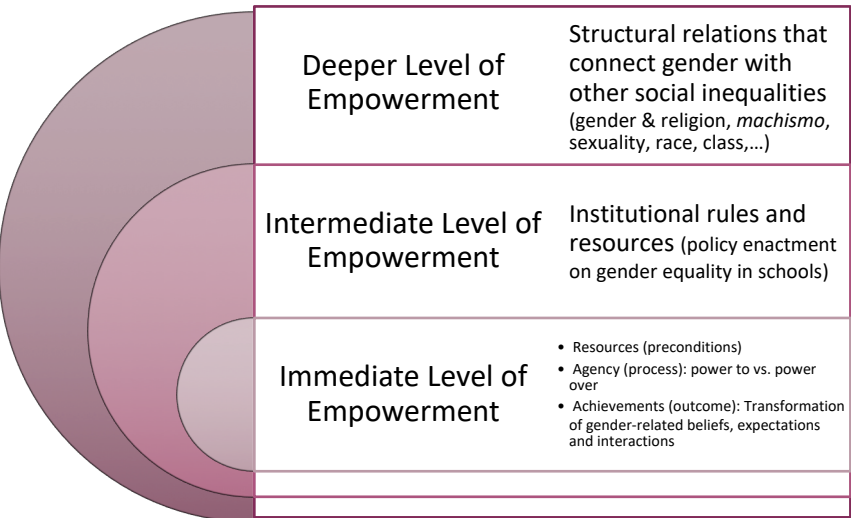


Fig.: Applying Kabeer's (2002) levels of empowerment to the **framework of this study**

### Resources

Kabeer, N. (2002). *Discussing Women's Empowerment - Theory and Practise*. *Sida studies* no. 3. Retrieved from [www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)

Mcevoy, K. (2007). Beyond Legalism: Towards a Thicker Understanding of Transitional Justice. *Journal of Law and Society*, 34(4), 411–440.

Colombian education policies, programming and pedagogical projects on SRHR need to **become more context-specific and youth-inclusive.**



Fieldwork site Castilla (Comuna 5)



Fieldwork site Popular (Comuna 1)

*"It's a conceptual contradiction because it's a state that talks about equity but the first thing they do is generate a foundation of inequality."*

### Results

Preconditions for empowerment	Tackling agency and achieving transformation
Coeducational model	Creating alternative life plans
School rules available for all members of the educational community ('Manual of coexistence')	Student-centred learning experiences (e.g. peer education, guided debates, investigative projects)
Sexuality education	Youth-adult partnerships (e.g. construction of school artefacts, organisation of diversity festival)
Psychological support	Youth-led educational projects (e.g. LGBTI club, mediation programme)
Health care	Youth-led accountability mechanisms against discriminatory practices

### Recommendations

- **Prevent "magical legalism" (Mcevoy, 2007) by**
  - holding schools accountable for poor implementation of sexuality education
  - imposing penalty on teachers for sexual misconduct
  - training male educators and engaging boys
  - focusing on unequal power relations
  - addressing gender issues in relation with conflict and peace processes
- **Shift onto self-learning experiences and meaningful youth participation (MYP) by**
  - acknowledging youth as active actors on policy and school-administration level
  - providing financial means for MYP
  - advancing capacity strengthening of young leaders
  - increasing adult commitment for MYP

