



Gender differences in educational achievement – disaster, cul-de-sac or a new road towards the future?

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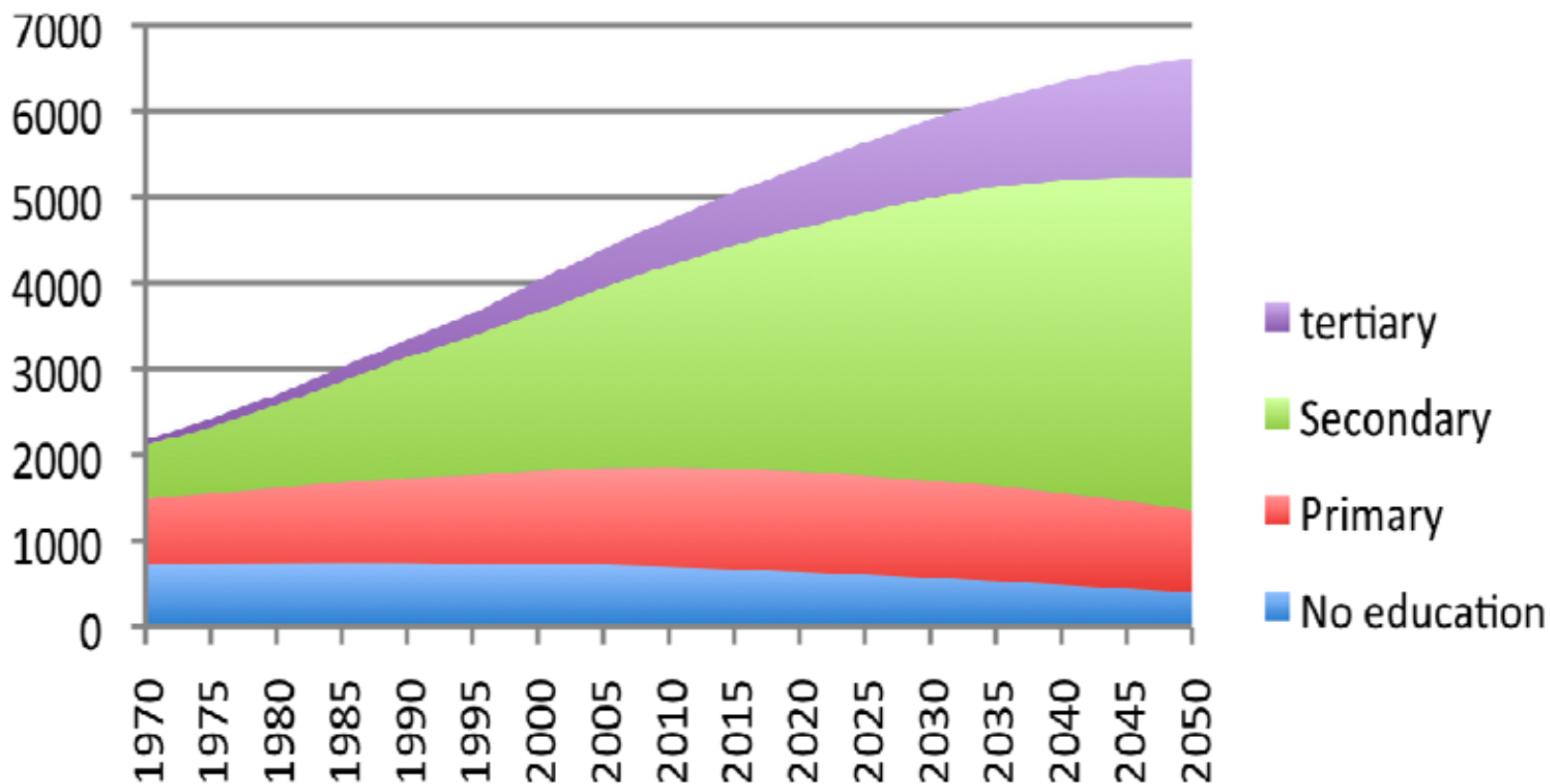
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Education patterns are strongly gendered - globally

- Women have accessed education through consistent pushing – no hard sell has been necessary to women or girls! (but sometimes to their families..)
- Gradually, often slowly, more levels of education have been opened to women.
- Step by step women have entered all levels of education – where men were already present.

Global population, by education level



Source: IIASA, 2008

Two starting points

- “Education is no longer a competitive advantage in a global perspective – it is an entry ticket to global markets.” (Malmberg 2009)
- In a gendered perspective, women now more than men are providing their societies with that entry ticket. True for EU Member States, true for majority of OECD countries, true for vast majority of other countries.

Gender and education behaviour

- For the first time, women seem to value education more than men do – according to observed gendered behaviour patterns
- One group specifically left behind: young men whose parents did not themselves have much education - a pattern not shown by women from the same backgrounds

Gender and labour market behaviour

- As a group and globally, women have flexibly adapted their paid and unpaid work patterns
- Women globally adapt paid work patterns to their own needs, economic incentives, family members' needs, education levels, new opportunities
- Women globally work in "atypical patterns" – flexi-time, full-time, overtime, part-time, night-time, shifting times – and they change with circumstances

Gender and economic rationality

- As a group and globally, men work full time.
- "Full time" is often defined by male traditional work
- Male work patterns do not generally adapt to circumstances
- Male overmortality at retirement and unemployment is high.
- **In this perspective: Who is rational?**

Possible ways forward?

- Traditionally women have been encouraged to adapt to new challenges (mentoring for girls, confidence training for women, maths for girls etc)
- Traditionally men have – for strong empirical reasons – been able to expect that new challenges be tailored to them.
- Time for change! How?

Girls as the new norm?

Role models – “school is for men too”

Programs targeted at boys and men, with the historical experience of women entering and mastering education as inspiration.

A bold proposal, a real challenge, but necessary to address global education problems:

Transforming and developing traditional masculinity into modern masculinity – or even modern humanity!

Action!

- Real innovation – starting with men mobilizing for pro-education attitudes in boys and young men (pre-school to graduate level).
- Recognizing female success in education, not as pushing out men but as an inspiration.
- Working for gender equality at all levels in the education system , including more women at the highest positions.

European leadership – a way forward

- We have the statistics
- We have enough research to start
- We have good access to teachers, schools and other education resources.
- What we now need is the courage to draw the conclusions of what we already know, and the courage to act on those conclusions.

