

## C.3 Gender awareness and self-awareness

This section is in two parts:

- Building gender awareness
- Self-awareness for women and men

In this section we provide a number of awareness-raising activities for use with different kinds of groups. Please use those most suited for the level of gender awareness of your group, and to the kind of group you are training. It is, however, essential that any gender training course includes at least one of the gender-awareness activities in this section, so that the group has a shared understanding of gender before going on to gender analysis.

### Building gender awareness

The activities in the first part introduce the concept of gender, explore participants' emotions and ideas about gender relations, and begin to look at gender and development. Some of the activities are very basic, suitable for groups who are new to gender analysis and who have had no or very little exposure to gender training (e.g. The gender game, **Activity 16**). Others assume a familiarity with the concept (e.g. What is gender?, **Activity 17**). Some activities are controversial and should only be used after the first, basic activities or with groups who are familiar and comfortable with the basic construct of gender. Many of these activities throw up strong emotions, whether people are new to them or not, and facilitators should be prepared for this!

Before going through this section, we advise that you read through **Section A.2 Key Concepts** to refresh your memory if you haven't done very much gender training, or you have not done it recently. The activities are suitable for mixed-sex groups.

### Self-awareness for women and men

The activities in the second part are all potentially highly-emotional sessions. Activities such as Millie's mother's red dress **Activity 23** and Violence against women **Activity 31** are likely to touch some women very deeply. You should ensure that the feeling and atmosphere in the group are sufficiently supportive for women to be able to express their feelings without fear. The activities are for women-only or men-only. However, if you want to try them with a mixed group — and this could be very powerful and an important learning experience — it may work best to run the sessions concurrently with women-only and men-only groups, and then bring them together at the end for discussion.

## C.3 Activities

### 1 Building gender awareness

|    |  |                |                |
|----|--|----------------|----------------|
| 14 | Choosing the sex of your child   | 30-40 mins     | 83             |
| 15 | 'My organisation is a male/female organisation'  | 40 mins        | 85             |
| 16 | The gender game<br>( <i>Handout 3 Statements about gender</i> )  | 30 mins        | 87<br>89       |
| 17 | What is gender?<br>( <i>Handout 4 Why gender is a development issue</i> )<br>( <i>Handout 5 Unpacking gender</i> ) | 30 mins-1½ hrs | 91<br>93<br>99 |
| 18 | A baby is born   | 50 mins        | 101            |
| 19 | Gender circles   | 30 mins        | 103            |
| 20 | Choose your spot   | 1-1¼ hrs       | 105            |
| 21 | The two baskets  | 50 mins        | 107            |

### 2 Self-awareness for women and men

|    |  |                |                          |
|----|--|----------------|--------------------------|
| 22 | World upside down  | 1 hr           | 109                      |
| 23 | Millie's mother's red dress<br>( <i>Handout 6 Millie's mother's red dress</i> )  | 1 hr           | 113<br>115               |
| 24 | A Hindu story — Radha<br>( <i>Handout 7 Radha's story</i> )  | 30 mins        | 117<br>119               |
| 25 | What are male/female stereotypes?<br>( <i>Handout 8 A masculine boy</i> )<br>( <i>Handout 9 Dealing in used women</i> )                                      | 1-1¼ hrs       | 121<br>123<br>125        |
| 26 | Stereotypes: self-disclosure   | 45mins-1 hr    | 127                      |
| 27 | Breaking the chain<br>( <i>Handout 10 Readings</i> )   | 30 mins        | 129<br>131               |
| 28 | Man to man<br>( <i>Handout 11 Action checklist on sexism</i> )   | 1 hr           | 135<br>137               |
| 29 | Feminist poker<br>( <i>Handout 12 Women are oppressed because...</i> )   | 50 mins-1½ hrs | 139<br>141               |
| 30 | Becoming a man<br>( <i>Handout 13 Sentence completion</i> )  | 30-40 mins     | 143<br>145               |
| 31 | Violence against women<br>( <i>Handout 14 Our experience</i> )<br>( <i>Handout 15 Biblical background notes</i> )  | 50mins-1½ hrs  | 147<br>149<br>151        |
| 32 | Rape<br>( <i>Handout 16 Solicitor gets three years</i> )<br>( <i>Handout 17 A night of madness</i> )<br>( <i>Handout 18 Myths and realities about rape</i> ) | 3-4hrs         | 155<br>159<br>161<br>163 |

# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 14*

*Time: 30-40 mins*

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## **Choosing the sex of your child**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To bring out participants' assumptions about female and male children.
- 2 To examine how true and deep-rooted these assumptions are.

### **Method**

- 1 Tell the participants this story:

*A couple are struggling to conceive a child. They go to a diviner who tells them they will have a child, but only after they have decided which sex they want it to be.*

- 2 Give each participant a piece of paper and ask them to imagine being in this situation. Ask them to write down the sex they would choose for their child.
- 3 Ask participants also to write down their reasons for choosing the sex. Give them a few minutes, and collect the papers. Put the result on a flipchart: 'Number of those who chose girls' and 'Number of those who chose boys', and list the reasons.

*(10 mins)*

- 4 Discuss with participants:
  - a. Numbers of boys and girls.
  - b. Reasons for choosing the sex they chose.
  - c. The effect of assumptions like:
    - Boys will continue the kin.
    - Boys will take care of parents during old age.
    - Boys will remain with parents, girls will get married.
    - Boys will inherit, girls will not.
  - d. Discuss implications of how male and female children are socialised and treated, to prepare them for the roles they play in society.

*(20-30 mins)*

## ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 This activity was used with grassroots women and men in Kenya and it was quite revealing. The discussion took several directions. Almost all participants chose boys. Family planning became the centre of the discussion because women and men continue having children in order to have a boy. The whole question of who determines the sex of the child (biologically) was addressed.*

*2 It raised the question of how the community looks at a woman with only girl children and the implications of succession and inheritance differences for boys and girls.*

*3 The activity can provoke a great many issues. It is a good introduction to looking at socialisation processes and conceptualising gender roles and the relationship between men and women.*

*4 If the group is made up of people of different cultures, you may need to look at very different assumptions made about girls and boys, and discuss these differences between one culture and another.*

# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 15*

*Time: 40 mins*

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## **‘My organisation is a male/female organisation’**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To allow participants to discover some of the contradictions and complexities in the structure of their organisation.
- 2 To allow participants to practice putting forward their point of view and hearing the opposing points of view.
- 3 To raise the energy level and to get everybody involved.

### **Method**

- 1 Explain the activity and divide the group into two teams. One team has to hold the view that ‘My organisation is a male organisation’. The other team has to hold the view that ‘My organisation is a female organisation’. Give each team ten minutes to prepare their arguments. Tell the teams to consider staff, volunteers, and the programme, and look at issues of position, power and status in the hierarchy. Meanwhile, arrange two chairs in the centre of the room facing each other. (This is a ‘gold-fish bowl’ debate.)

*(15 mins)*

- 2 Each team chooses one representative to start the debate, sitting on the chairs. When the person on the chair has made their point, or when another member of their team feels they want to take over, the team member taps the person sitting on the chair on the shoulder. The team member then takes their place and the debate continues. This changing over of places must be done quickly in order to keep the discussion lively. A number of people should have the chance to put forward their views.

*(15 mins)*

- 3 At the end of the debate, discuss with the participants how they found the exercise, and whether any new information came out. Ask them how easy or difficult it was to think up arguments to support their position, and to rebut the arguments that the other team were putting forward. (10 mins)
- 4 At the end of the discussion bring out the key points about the organisation and hand out relevant documents, such as Equal Opportunities statements or policy documents.

## Materials

Handouts: The organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy Statement, or Gender Policy.

### *Facilitator's Notes*

*1 What is interesting about this debate is that it can bring out facts about the organisation which are true of the society in which we live.*

*2 The terms 'male' and 'female' rather than 'gender-aware' are used deliberately to enable people to look at all aspects of the organisation.*

*3 The exercise is an open one to encourage debate, but you should make sure that certain key points are covered. In many organisations, women are working voluntarily or in lower-paid positions than men. Many development agencies claim to target the 'poorest of the poor' and much research shows that on average women are poorer than men, so could be classified as the 'poorest of the poor'. Yet in many organisations the top positions are held by men, and many of the development programmes involve men more than women. This is unlikely to be because of a specific strategy to exclude women, but, because all organisations are operating within a context where women are excluded and discriminated against, this will happen unless there are specific steps to redress the balance. Even where there are women in some of the top jobs in an organisation, it does not necessarily follow that programmes will be gender-aware. Yet it seems unlikely that a gender-aware programme can emerge from an organisation which is itself very gender-imbalanced.*

*4 The activity described here is for a training where all the participants belong to, or are connected with, the same organisation. If people are from different organisations, you could simply get people into small groups to discuss this question, and list up the arguments for their organisations being a 'male' or a 'female' organisation, to look at any similarities and differences.*

# Building Gender Awareness Activity 16

Time: 30 mins

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## The gender game

### Objectives

- 1 To introduce the term 'gender' to a group unfamiliar with the concept.

### Method

- 1 Ask the group if they understand the difference between 'gender' and 'sex'.
- 2 Explain the difference quickly and simply. (5 mins)
- 3 Hand out sheets of paper to the participants and ask them to write the numbers 1 to 10 in a list on the paper.
- 4 Read out the numbered list of statements on **Handout 3** and ask participants to write 'G' against those they think refer to gender, and 'S' to those they think refer to sex. (5 mins)
- 5 Distribute **Handout 3** and discuss the answers with the whole group. Focus on these questions and key ideas:
  - a. Did any statements surprise you?
  - b. Do the statements indicate that gender is inborn or learned?
  - c. Gender roles vary greatly in different societies, cultures and historical periods.
  - d. Age, race and class are also major factors which determine our gender roles.
  - e. Women in every country experience both power and oppression differently.(20 mins)

### Materials

Paper, pens and **Handout 3**.

## ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 This is an activity to be used with participants who have very little, or no, understanding of gender, or who feel that they need to go back to basics to be sure of their grasp of gender.*

*2 Adaptation: The group can be split into small groups of four or five to discuss their classification of the statements.*

*(Source: **Class, Gender and Race Inequality and the Media in an International Context**, Focus for Change, 1992)*



## Statements about men and women

- 1 Women give birth to babies, men don't. (S)
- 2 Little girls are gentle, boys are tough. (G)
- 3 In one case, when a child brought up as a girl learned that he was actually a boy, his school marks improved dramatically. (G)
- 4 Amongst Indian agricultural workers, women are paid 40-60 per cent of the male wage. (G)
- 5 Women can breastfeed babies, men can bottlefeed babies. (S)
- 6 Most building-site workers in Britain are men. (G)
- 7 In Ancient Egypt men stayed at home and did weaving. Women handled family business. Women inherited property and men did not. (G)
- 8 Men's voices break at puberty, women's do not. (S)
- 9 In one study of 224 cultures, there were 5 in which men did all the cooking, and 36 in which women did all the housebuilding. (G)
- 10 According to UN statistics, women do 67 per cent of the world's work, yet their earnings for it amount to only 10 per cent of the world's income. (G)



# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 17*

*Time: 30-90 mins*

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## **What is gender?**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To allow each person to air their views on gender.
- 2 To encourage active listening to build up trust.
- 3 To arrive at a common understanding of the term 'gender'.
- 4 To start making the links between gender and development (optional).

### **Method**

- 1 In pairs, discuss 'What is gender?' It is important that ideas are generated. Pairs should not be aiming to come up with a complete definition.

*(5-10 mins)*

**Additional option:** Why are development NGOs interested in gender?

- 2 In large group, 'brainstorm' answers and write all answers on a flipchart.

*(5-10 mins)*

- 3 Arrive at common understanding of the meaning of the concept of gender, including the key points of socialised, culturally-specific roles for men and women.

*(20mins-1hr)*

- 4 **Optional:** Lead discussion on the relevance of gender to development NGOs.

- 5 Give out **Handout 4 or 5** at end of session or end of day.

**NB:** The timings for this exercise will vary considerably depending on many factors such as language, how often participants have discussed this before, and how many different views come up.

### **Materials**

Flipchart

**Handout 4 and 5**

## **Facilitator's Notes**

*1 It is important to allow participants to express their discomfort with the word 'gender'. Many people feel it is an English word which is untranslatable. It may be worth pointing out that the use of the word gender, as distinct from sex, is relatively recent, and thus is a new concept for all. It is also important to point out that one does not need to have been using the word gender to have been aware of and working on the roles and relationships between men and women as a development issue. Participants could be asked, at some point in the training, to discuss what words they use to explain these issues to grassroots groups.*

*2 From the brainstorm, you should bring out the key points:*

- a. Gender is different from sex: it is not biologically determined.*
- b. It varies from culture to culture, and with the economic, social and political context.*
- c. It varies over time.*
- d. We learn gender roles: this implies that they can change.*
- e. People who act outside their gender roles may face disapproval.*
- f. It is important to consider gender relationships.*

*3 In answer to the second optional question, be prepared to let people discuss such answers as 'development NGOs are not really concerned about gender', or 'are only concerned because it is fashionable'. Point to the need to consider gender in order to enable development for both men and women.*

*4 **Adaptation:** An additional stage can be added in which two or three volunteers take the flipcharts and try and come up with a one or two-line definition of gender. This is then presented to the group for discussion. Definitions produced by other workshops or other people can be included for discussion to show similarities (and differences); but care should be taken not to confuse people.*

*5 This activity, or one similar to it, must be used at the start of every training, to ensure that people have a common understanding of the basic concepts. The time taken can be reduced if people have previously done gender training.*

*6 This activity is very useful for people who have done some work with gender, but has not proved helpful in workshops with people who are new to the concept.*

*7 We have included two handouts, one giving a historical perspective and more detail, and a shorter, simpler one, which also introduces some of the analytical concepts to be addressed later in the workshop. Use the one most appropriate for your group.*

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## Why gender is a development issue

The issues concerning women and their part (or not) in the development process have been increasingly examined over the years. However, the ways of addressing these issues have varied as understanding of women's position in development, and of gender roles themselves, has grown. Although the principle of equality of men and women was recognised in both the UN Charter in 1945 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the majority of development planners and workers did not fully address women's position in the development process. Several researchers have shown that development planners worked on the assumption that what would benefit one section of society (men) would trickle down to the other (women).

The ways of defining women's position in development has changed through the years:

In the 1950s and 1960s, women's issues in development were subsumed under the question of human rights, and women were viewed as objects to protect or make recommendations for but not necessarily to consult. UN Conventions of particular concern to women included:

1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others

1951 Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value

1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women

In the 1970s, although women were still not necessarily consulted, their key position in the development process became more widely recognised. This was especially so in connection with population and food issues. Women were viewed as useful resources to be integrated into the development process, thus rendering the particular projects more efficient and more successful:

'These are the women (the more than 500 million women illiterates) upon whom the success of our population policies, our food programmes and our total development efforts ultimately rely. The success of these policies depends, in other words, on those who are least equipped to carry them out.' (Helvi Sipilä, *The Times*, 23.4.75)

In 1972 it was decided to declare 1975 'International Women's Year', which led into the UN Decade for Women.

In the 1980s there has been a growing trend towards seeing women as agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of the development process. It is partly through an understanding of gender roles that this trend has emerged.

In 1985 the UN decade culminated in a conference in Nairobi which, after a period of intensive discussions involving women from all over the world, resulted in the adoption of the 'Forward-Looking Strategies'.

The Forward-Looking Strategies took the main themes of the Decade for Women (equality, development and peace, with the sub-themes health, education and employment), and set out the obstacles facing women in each of these areas; proposed general strategies for overcoming them, and made recommendations to governments and other bodies for creating greater opportunities for equality for women at all levels.

## **What is gender?**

The conceptual distinction between sex and gender developed by Anne Oakley is a useful analytical tool to clarify ideas and has now been almost universally taken up. According to this distinction sex is connected with biology, whereas the gender identity of men and women in any given society is socially and psychologically (and that means also historically and culturally) determined.

Biological and physical conditions (chromosomes, external and internal genitalia, hormonal states and secondary sex characteristics), lead to the determination of male or female sex. To determine gender, however, social and cultural perceptions of masculine and feminine traits and roles must be taken into account.

Gender is learnt through a process of socialisation and through the culture of the particular society concerned. In many cultures boys are encouraged in the acts considered to display male traits (and girls vice versa) through the toys given to children (guns for boys, dolls for girls), the kind of discipline meted out, the jobs or careers to which they might aspire, and the portrayal of men and women in the media. Children learn their gender from birth. They learn how they should behave in order to be perceived by others, and themselves, as either masculine or feminine. Throughout their life this is reinforced by parents, teachers, peers, their culture and society.

Every society uses biological sex as one criterion for describing gender but, beyond that simple starting point, no two cultures would completely agree on what distinguishes one gender from another. Therefore there is considerable variation in gender roles between cultures.

## **Division of labour in society**

The division of labour between the sexes is best explained by gender but, because reproduction is based on a universal biological difference between the male and female sex, societies use this as a basis for allotting other tasks. These tasks are allotted according to convenience and precedents in the particular culture, and determine masculine and feminine roles.

‘Professor George Murdock has surveyed the data for 224 societies (mostly preliterate) and shows that the tendency to segregate economic activities in one way or another according to sex is strong. Taking a list of 46 different activities, he suggests that some are more often masculine than feminine, and vice versa. For example, lumbering is an exclusively masculine activity in 104 of his societies and exclusively feminine in 6: cooking is exclusively feminine in 158 and exclusively masculine in 5. Hunting, fishing, weapon making, boat building and mining tend to be masculine, while grinding grain and carrying water tend to be feminine. Activities that are less consistently allocated to one sex include preparing the soil, planting, tending and harvesting the crops, ‘burden bearing’ and body mutilation.’ (Oakley 1972, p.128)

Even in child-rearing men play a substantial role in some societies:

‘The Arapesh, for example, consider that the business of bearing and rearing a child belongs to father and mother equally, and equally disqualifies them for other roles. Men as well as women ‘make’ and ‘have’ babies, and the verb ‘to bear a child’ is used indiscriminately of either a man or a woman. Child-bearing is believed to be as debilitating for the man as it is for the woman. The father goes to bed and is described as ‘having a baby’ when the child is born.... The Trobriand Islanders are renowned for their ignorance of the father’s biological role in reproduction, but they stress the need for the father to share with the mother all tasks involved in bringing up children.’ (Oakley 1972, p.134-135)

We see, then, that tasks and the division of labour do not relate to the sex of the individuals concerned, and so are not common to one sex from one culture to another, but are culture specific. Thus gender is culture specific.

Gender not only varies from one culture to another but it also varies within cultures over time; culture is not static but evolves. As societies become more complex, the roles played by men and women are not only determined by culture but by socio-political and economic factors.

## **Why is gender a development issue?**

The roles that women play are different in any given society, and their situation is

determined by the legislation, religious norms, economic status or class, cultural values, ethnicity and types of productive activity of their country, community and household. Women are usually responsible for domestic work; the care of children, family health, cooking and providing food and other household services. In most societies they also play a major role in the productive activities of the family; in farming, paid domestic labour, services, industries and income-generating activities. In some societies they also have clear community roles.

In each of these areas — reproduction, production and the community — women have often been adversely affected by the development process. There is a wide gap between women's high, yet unrecognised, economic participation and their low political and social power, and development strategies have usually taken the needs of the most vocal and politically active as their starting point. To understand gender the activities of men and women need to be addressed separately. The reproductive, productive and social or community roles women are playing must be looked at as well as the roles played economically and socially by men. By examining men's and women's roles a greater understanding of their needs and involvement in power and decision-making around specific tasks and issues will be reached.

Historically, development workers have used notions of gender imported from the North. The majority of projects were — and still are — based on the false assumption that the nuclear household supported by a non-productive wife dependent upon a male head, is universal. This is not the pattern for many cultures. In *The Family Among the Australian Aborigines*, Malinowski wrote:

'A very important point is that the woman's share in labour was of much more vital importance to the maintenance of the household than the man's work ... even the food supply contributed by the women was far more important than the man's share ... food collected by women was the staple food of the natives ... economically [the family] is entirely dependent upon women's work.' (Malinowski 1963 as cited in Oakley 1972, p.139)

Studies of women's roles in agriculture from a sample of African peoples living in Senegal, Gambia, Uganda and Kenya show that women contribute between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of the total agricultural work done.

## **How to approach gender in development**

It is of vital importance in development work not to use imported notions of gender, nor regard 'the community' and 'the household' as the basic units. One must go beyond the household and break it down into its component parts. By assessing and understanding the gender roles in a given society the specific needs of women (and men) can be ascertained and addressed within projects (Moser and Levy 1986).



The primary practical requirement for incorporating a gender analysis into development is to consult with and listen to women so that their roles and resulting needs are better understood. How the issues of gender are actually addressed depends upon the policy direction envisaged. One approach is to design projects and programmes to make life 'easier' for women and help them in their given gender tasks. For example, an agricultural project could include provision of support for female agricultural tasks, as well as those carried out by men. Women's needs for better equipment, improved seeds, and advice would be taken into consideration. In health projects, the particular concerns of the women would be elicited from them and their priorities addressed in the project. On the domestic front, projects could aim to alleviate the drudgery and heavy physical demands of women's work by providing more efficient grinders or stoves, or improving women's access to water. Whether working with women alone or within the community as a whole the primary objective would be to enable women to perform their existing roles better.

An alternative but complementary approach is to challenge the *status quo* or address the perceived inequalities between men and women. This could involve, for example, working for change in laws that discriminated against women; increasing women's access to land; giving women decision-making power within projects, etc. The aim is social change and the empowerment of women. For agencies such as Oxfam, which espouse social change, justice, and empowerment in their rhetoric, meeting women's needs for more radical change should be within the adopted policy approach to gender.

Why is it that addressing gender inequalities is taboo and yet tackling inequalities in terms of wealth and class is not? It is often argued that by addressing gender the traditions or culture of a society are being tampered with. This is not necessarily the case and the attitudes to gender may be no more 'traditional' than attitudes to class or power. When the traditions and cultural attitudes to gender are clarified, then the actual gender relations can be assessed and addressed within a programme or project. Development is a process that should involve all members of a society to the same extent, according to their individual needs.

Source: Based on 'Why gender is a development issue', by April Brett in *Changing Perceptions*, Oxfam



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## Unpacking gender

Gender is an old word which has taken on a new meaning. It is a 'portmanteau' word, containing a set of inter-related ideas. Because this use of the word is new, a kind of shorthand, it is difficult to translate. The friend of an Oxfam worker in Ethiopia was both curious and amazed that Oxfam appeared to be spending three days 'discussing sex'. In fact, the workshop in Addis Ababa examined the distinction between sex and gender. Understanding this difference, and the concept of gender, is essential to our understanding of how development processes affect men and women, girls, and boys, in different ways.

Sex is a fact of human biology; we are born male or female; it is men who impregnate, and women who conceive, give birth, and breastfeed the human baby. On this biological difference we construct an edifice of social attitudes and assumptions, behaviours and activities: these are our gender roles and identities. Questioning them may feel threatening, attacking the very foundations of our understanding of ourselves, our personal and social relations, our culture and traditions.

Yet is important to understand how we learn to be boys and girls, to become women and men; how we define masculine and feminine behaviour; how we are taught activities regarded as appropriate for our sex, and the way in which we should relate to one another. What we learn depends on the society into which we are born, and our position within it, our relative poverty or wealth, and our ethnic group. For unlike sex, gender roles are variable. In some societies women are farmers, own oxen, plough their own fields; in others this is 'against God and nature'; in yet other instances where war, migration, or other factors have left many women entirely responsible for their households, custom has been modified to enable them to have the means of production to provide for their families. So, gender roles are not only different but also change over time.

Gender analysis looks not only at roles and activities but also at relationships. It asks not only who does what, but also who makes the decisions, and who derives the benefit, who uses resources such as land, or credit, and who controls these resources; and what other factors influence relationships, such as laws about property rights and inheritance.

This reveals that women and men, because of their different gender roles and responsibilities, have different experiences and needs. Both men and women play a role in the sphere of productive work and community life, but women's contribution may be less formal. While men's agricultural work may result in a cash income, women may be producing food for family consumption, and the cash value remains hidden. In community life, men generally have the role of public representation;

women's role of organisation may be crucial, but less visible, particularly to outsiders. Underlying both productive work and community life is the work of biological and social reproduction. This is the foundation of human society: the care of children and family, the maintenance of the household, collecting water, and fuel, preparing, processing and cooking food, keeping people and home clean and healthy. These tasks can be arduous and time-consuming — and taken for granted. Generally they fall to women. The result has been that this work is not valued and is not included in development planning, often with disastrous consequences. For example, failure to take into account both women's role as the managers of water, and also the many and varied tasks of their working day, has resulted in water supply projects which may be technically sound but are socially inefficient; providing water at too great a distance, at the wrong time of day for women, who already have to juggle a series of different activities to meet their practical needs.

Development programmes which have not been gender-aware have not only not benefited women; sometimes they have further disadvantaged them, adding to their workload and failing to recognise their roles in reproductive work and community life.

Gender analysis reveals the roles and relationships of women and men in society and the inequalities in those relationships. The much quoted UN statistics remain as true today as they were when they were formulated over a decade ago:

- women perform two-thirds of the world's work
- women earn one-tenth of the world's income
- women are two-thirds of the world's illiterates
- women own less than one-hundredth of the world's property.

Work on gender issues brings women out of the background and into sharp focus. We can classify women's situation in two main ways:

- the **social condition** of women: the material conditions they face of poverty, heavy workloads, poor health care, etc. and
- the **social position** of women: the social, political, economic and cultural position of women relative to men in the same group.

Development interventions designed to alleviate women's condition can be said to be responding to their practical needs. But it is also necessary to respond to the social position of women, to address their strategic needs, and overcome problems which stem from their subordinate position in society.

How do we address these needs? It is a basic principle of community development that people themselves should participate in making the decisions which affect their lives. This means that women as well as men must be consulted, and that men as well as women must tackle gender inequality. In western Kenya, a group of men and women have been working together to reduce the problems of poverty and increase agricultural production. People say that not only are they materially better-off as a result, but that the quality of community life and relationships has improved. The women value the fact that there is less drunkenness and beating; the young people feel more able to have a dialogue with their elders; men say they have discovered that the sky does not fall down if they share women's work. Gender has become a shorthand for relationships of mutual respect, a step perhaps on the path to a more just world.

# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 18*

*Time: 50 mins*

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## **A baby is born**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To introduce gender as a source of social differentiation in relation to other factors such as ethnicity, class, caste, disability.
- 2 To introduce gender in a non-threatening manner to groups which may be resistant.
- 3 To explain how gender cuts across many other areas of social differentiation.

### **Method**

- 1 **Preparation:** Before the session prepare 30 cards each with an opposite (eg rich/poor, boy/girl, dominant ethnic majority/marginalised ethnic minority, member of dominant religious group/member of marginalised religious group; labourer/land holder; child of single mother/child with mother and father; physically or mentally disabled child/child without any disability).

Prepare flipchart or two flipcharts, one for 'successful child' and one for a 'less successful child' and place them on a wall next to each other.

- 2 Introduce and explain the session to participants:
  - Ask participants to sit in a circle.
  - Ask the group to imagine that they are about to become a mother or father of a child and they wish for this child the best opportunities and options for the future. *(5 mins)*
- 3 Distribute two randomly chosen cards to each participant. *(2 mins)*
- 4 Then explain to the participants that his or her child will have more or less chances of 'success' depending on many social, cultural and personal issues. *(2 mins)*

- 5 Ask the first participant to bring his or her first card and place it on either of the charts and to explain to the group why s/he has chosen the 'successful' or 'less successful' chart. A short discussion could take place if generated spontaneously by the group.

(3 mins)

- 6 Then ask whoever has the opposite card to come forward and place it on the other chart. Ask the participant to explain why she believes that her card is the opposite one. Repeat the process until all cards are finished.

(30 mins)

- 7 Sum up the session highlighting:

a. Gender is one of many forms of social differentiation and thus needs to be understood in social contexts and not in a social vacuum;

b. In most societies gender differentiation means that girls have less chance of success (however that culture defines success);

c. Although gender is one form of social differentiation it is also affected by other aspects of social identity such as age, class or caste.

(5 mins)

## Materials

Cards with social opposites

Flipchart

### *Facilitator's Notes*

*1 This session is a good way to initiate a discussion of gender in social structures and institutions. You, as trainers, need to be fully aware of and informed about the main issues.*

*2 Because social differentiation is culture-specific, opposites need to be designed according to the background of the group.*

*3 With mixed nationalities it is more difficult to make generalisations and thus the activity may lose its sharpness. You may wish to experiment with difficult categories.*

*4 It is important for the success of this activity that the facilitator actively promotes discussion.*

# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 19*

*Time: 30 mins*

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## **Gender circles**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To allow participants to move around.
- 2 To help participants recall their emotions and ideas about gender.

### **Method**

- 1 Ask participants to form two concentric circles, facing each other, and move around in opposite directions.
- 2 After a few seconds, ask them to stop, and pair up with the person standing opposite them from the other circle.
- 3 Read out a statement about gender and ask the participants to react to it, talking about it in their pairs for about one minute each.
- 4 Ask them to move around again and repeat the exercise until they have talked about all the statements. *(20 mins)*
- 5 Ask participants to form a large group again, and comment on the exercise. *(10 mins)*

### **Materials**

A list of statements participants may commonly hear. Examples of such statements are:

- 1 Men and women can never be equal because they are biologically different.
- 2 Gender is just another word for women.
- 3 Women should be employed in NGOs because they are more efficient.
- 4 The word gender is not translatable and therefore not relevant in the field.
- 5 All this talk about gender brings conflict to the family.
- 6 My organisation talks a lot about gender but it is not reflected in the structure.
- 7 Work on gender should always respect people's social and cultural context.

## **Facilitator's Notes**

1 *This exercise is not very suitable if space is very limited as it may be rather difficult to hear conversation. You could use music, stopping the music when you want the participants to share views.*

2 **Adaptation:** *an alternative version is 'gender walkabout', where participants walk freely about the room and at the agreed signal stop and talk to whoever is nearest. In this case, stress that people should walk in different directions, not just stay close to their friends, since one of the aims of this exercise is to hear different people's opinions.*

3 *The statements should be chosen to be relevant to the group, possibly statements that you have heard in the past from the participants or people with whom they work. The statements should be those which will generate some discussion, although at this stage it may be better to avoid issues over which there is a lot of conflict, or personal issues.*

4 *It is possible to use words rather than statements for people to talk about. An example from a recent workshop in South Africa used the words: powerless, tradition, white men, middle-class, rural, ethnicity, sex, domination, mother, affirmative action.*

5 *This exercise can be used for many different purposes, depending on the words chosen and the discussion afterwards. It is an 'open' exercise i.e. one which has no right or wrong answers but which encourages exploration and sharing of ideas. The method can be used, with appropriate words or phrases to introduce any new subjects.*



# Building Gender Awareness Activity 20

Time: 1-1 ¼hrs

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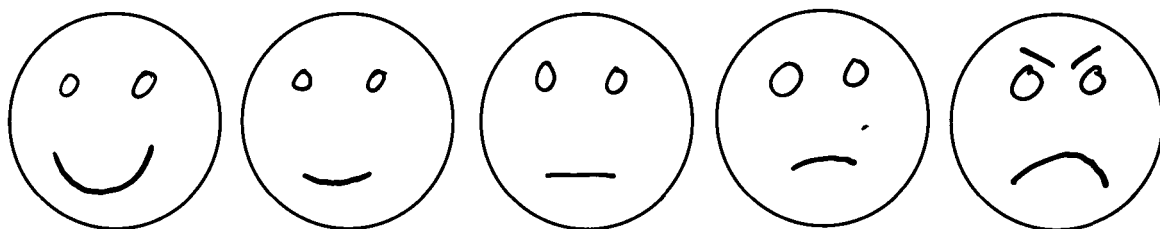
## Choose your spot

### Objectives

- 1 To get people moving around.
- 2 To start discussion about key topics.
- 3 To show up differences of opinion within the group.

### Method

- 1 **Preparation:** On five sheets of flipchart draw the five faces below:



Pin the sheets up on the walls around the room.

- 2 Explain to the participants that the faces represent the options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree; and that when each statement is read out they should choose the face which most closely represents their feelings.
- 3 Ask all participants to stand in the centre of the room as you read each statement, and then go and stand beside the face that represents how much they agree or disagree with the statement. After they have discussed each statement in their groups, they should choose a spokesperson to share key ideas from the group with everyone in the room.

(5 mins)

- 4 Read the statements one by one, allowing about eight minutes for discussion and reporting back on each one.

(60-70 mins)

## Materials

### List of statements

- 1 The most important goal of women's development is for women to attain economic autonomy.
- 2 Integrating women in development is important because it increases the efficiency of the project.
- 3 We should not support the development of an autonomous women's movement because it is divisive.
- 4 Domestic violence is a development issue that NGOs ought to address.
- 5 Supporting the development of traditional women's skills (sewing, cooking, etc) is an effective strategy for empowering women.
- 6 Relations between men and women in the family and the community are cultural; foreign agencies should not challenge it.
- 7 It is for women to decide about their own fertility and reproduction.
- 8 We should target our development aid to the family. This is the best way to ensure that the benefits reach all members.

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 Different statements can be included, or replace the examples given above, according to the nature of your group.*

*2 This is an effective activity for bringing out strong views, and provoking open discussion. Allow plenty of time for discussion, and emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers — it is all open to debate.*

# *Building Gender Awareness Activity 21*

*Time: 50 mins*

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## **The two baskets**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To create a space where participants can air their fears and difficulties about addressing gender issues.
- 2 To identify early in the workshop possible problems or issues that need to be tackled.

### **Method**

- 1 **Preparation:** place two baskets in a room with a gap of two to three metres between each one.
- 2 Explain the objectives of the session. *(5 mins)*
- 3 Ask participants to stand in a circle and to imagine that in this session thinking of gender will be like moving house: they will leave behind in the rubbish basket all the negative feelings they have about tackling gender issues and bring with them to the new house all the useful positive ideas. *(5 mins)*
- 4 Give each participant two papers. Ask them to write one thing they bring (a positive feeling they have about tackling gender issues) and one thing they leave behind (a negative feeling they have about tackling gender issues) on each piece of paper. *(5 mins)*
- 5 Ask each participant to put in the rubbish basket their negative paper and share the contents with the group explaining what it is and why they feel that way. Then they put their paper with positive feelings in the positive basket to take with them to their new home. *(25 mins)*

- 6 While participants play the game, write down key words emerging from participants' explanations on a flipchart.
- 7 Sum up the session highlighting the positive and negative feelings the group has to gender and explaining how some issues will be addressed during the workshop.

*(10 mins)*

## **Materials**

A new, colourful basket

An old, worn-out, ugly basket

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*This activity may be used to end a day or session, as it offers participants the chance to leave behind certain beliefs or ideas which may hold them back, and take with them those which may enhance their experience of the workshop.*

## World upside down

### Objective

- 1 To create an imaginary situation through which people can experience the way that beliefs about women and limitations on women's roles can affect their lives.

### Method

- 1 Ask participants to get comfortable. Tell them you are going to read them a story about an imaginary world, and that they may like to close their eyes and focus on the story. You may wish to have two readers alternating sections of the story.(3 mins)
- 2 Read the following story in a clear, soothing voice.

*Have you ever been bothered by the way the word 'man' is used to include all people? Does it bother you, for instance, that when people refer to 'the rights of all men', they really mean the rights of men and women, or the rights of all people?*

*Imagine a world that is similar to our own, but slightly different. In this imaginary world, 'woman' is the term that refers to all people. That is, when we use the word 'woman', we mean everyone.*

*Close your eyes and imagine that when you read the daily newspaper or listen to the radio, what you see or hear about are women politicians, women trade union leaders, women directors of large companies. Imagine a world in which most books, plays, films, poems and songs have women as their heroes. Imagine that women are the people you learn about when you study the great scientists, historians, journalists, revolutionaries. Imagine that it is women who will be making major decisions about the future in this different world.*

*Recall that everything you have ever read in your life uses only female pronouns — 'she', 'her' — meaning both boys and girls, both women and men. Recall that you*

*have no men representing you in government. All decisions are made by women.*

*Men, whose natural roles are as husband and father, find fulfilment in nurturing children and making the home a refuge for the family. This is only natural to balance the role of the woman, who devotes her entire body to the human race during pregnancy, and who devotes her emotional and intellectual powers to ensuring the progress and survival of the planet throughout her life.*

*Imagine further now, about the biological explanations for women as the leader and power-centre. A woman's body, after all, represents perfection in design. Even female genitals, for instance, are compact and internal, protected by our bodies. Male genitals are exposed, so that he must be protected from outside attack to assure the perpetuation of the race. His vulnerability clearly requires sheltering. Thus, by nature, males are more passive and timid, and have a desire to be protectively engulfed by the compact, powerful bodies of women.*

*In the world that we are imagining, girls are raised as free and self-confident beings. They play, they run, climb trees, take risks with the encouragement of all adults around them. The family puts a priority on the physical and intellectual development of girls, since they are the ones who will ultimately be responsible for the future of our society.*

*Boys, on the other hand, are raised to be timid and obedient. They are encouraged to play quiet games in the home which will prepare them for their life as caretakers of the family. From an early age, they are expected to help their fathers. They learn to look up to women, to try to please and care for them. They are taught to become the mirror in which the strength of women can be reflected.*

*Now remember back to the birth of your first child, if you have children. In your last month of pregnancy, your husband waits with anxiety, wondering what the sex of the child will be. Your first child is a boy. Your husband sits by your side holding this newborn, already instinctively caring for and protecting it. There are tears in your husband's eyes and you know that at the same time that he is filled with joy at your son's birth, he is also looking forward to having another, hoping for the birth of the girl child that will carry on the family name.*

*(15 mins)*

3 Small group discussion. Ask people to number off into five groups to talk about the feelings they had as they listened to the story. Were they angry, amused or confused? Did any part of the story make them laugh?

*(10 mins)*

4 Large group discussion.

- a. Ask them how the imaginary world compares to the world in which we live. Is it a complete role reversal? If you put the word 'man' in each place that

- 'woman' was mentioned, would you have an accurate description of the world in which we live? Why or why not?
- b. Would people like to live in the world described in the story? What would be wrong with this world? What would be right with it? Would we, as women, want to have the type of power that men currently have? If we did, would we use it in similar ways?
  - c. End the discussion by talking about what an ideal world would be like.

(40 mins)

(Source: *On Our Feet: Taking Steps to Challenge Women's Oppression*, CACE, UWC, South Africa.)

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*This activity can be used for either a women-only or mixed group. It is written up here for women, and would require a slight adaptation of the final paragraph of the story to make it suitable for men and women, and an additional question to ask men how they feel about taking on women's roles.*





## **Millie's mother's red dress**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To create an awareness for individual women that change begins with themselves.
- 2 To reflect on women's stories to draw out individual experiences.
- 3 To bring out through the stories or experiences that gender roles are socially, historically, and culturally constructed and can change.

### **Method**

#### **Preparation**

Try to obtain a red dress and have this hanging up in the room so participants can see it.

- 1 Ask two participants to read out **Millie's Mother's Red Dress (Handout 6)**, standing in front of the dress.

*(5 mins)*
- 2 Give participants copies of the story to read on their own.

*(10 mins)*
- 3 Discuss the following questions:
  - a. How does the story make you feel?
  - b. Does the story reflect the reality of women today in our society? Is it like your life? The life of your mother?
  - c. What factors influence women so that they give, sacrifice and deny themselves?
  - d. Should the situation be changed? What can women and men do to change the situation?

*(45 mins)*

## Materials

A red dress

### Handout 6

#### *Facilitator's Notes*

*1 Adapt the questions in this activity to the needs of the group and the level of sharing amongst participants.*

*2 This story can arouse many strong emotions, as women relate it to their own socialisation process. Draw out issues such as women sacrificing themselves and allowing men to be selfish; raise the question of how women and men reinforce social roles for girls very early in life, allowing boys to grow up believing girls are there to serve them.*

*3 You can choose other stories relevant to the group. If it is a long story, have different women reading sections. Or have the group act the story — this makes a powerful impact.*

*4 This is an activity for women only.*

*5 When this activity was used in Kenya it became a reference point for the women, to use in challenging the attitude within themselves, that they exist for the sake of others.*

## A reading for two women

I hung there in the closet  
While she was dying, Mother's red dress,  
Like a gash in the row  
Of dark, old clothes  
She had worn away her life in.  
They had called me home,  
And I knew when I saw her  
She wasn't going to last.

When I saw the dress, I said,  
'Why Mother — how beautiful!  
I've never seen it on you.'

'I've never worn it,  
Sit down, Millie — I'd like to undo  
A lesson or two before I go, if I can.'

I sat by her bed.

And she sighed a bigger breath  
Than I thought she could hold.  
'Now that I'll soon be gone,  
I can see some things  
Oh, I taught you good — but  
I taught you wrong.'

'Mother, whatever do you mean?'

'Well — I always thought  
That a good woman never takes her turn,  
That she's just for doing for somebody  
else.  
Do here, do there, always keep  
Everybody else's wants tended and make  
sure  
Yours are at the bottom of the heap.'

Maybe someday you'll get to them,  
But of course you never do.  
My life was like that — doing for your  
dad,  
Doing for the boys, for your sisters, for  
you.'  
'You did — everything a mother could.'

'Oh, Millie, Millie, it was no good -  
For you — for him. Don't you see?  
I did you the worst of wrongs.  
I asked nothing — for me!

'Your father in the other room,  
All stirred up and staring at the walls —  
When the doctor told him, he took  
It bad — came to my bed and all but shook  
The life right out of me. 'You can't die,

Do you hear? What'll become of me?  
 What'll become of me?  
 It'll be hard, all right, when I go.  
 He can't even find the frying pan, you  
 know.  
 'And you children.  
 I was a free ride for everybody,  
 everywhere.  
 I was the first one up and the last one down  
 Seven days out of the week.  
 'I looked at how some of your brothers  
 treat their wives now,  
 And it makes me sick, 'cause it was me  
 That taught it to them. And they learned  
 They learned that a woman doesn't  
 Even exist except to give.  
 Why, every penny that I could save  
 Went for your clothes, or your books,  
 Even when it wasn't necessary.  
 Can't even remember once when I took  
 Myself downtown to buy something  
 beautiful -  
 For me.  
 'Except last year when I got that red dress.  
 I found I had twenty dollars

That wasn't especially spoke for.  
 I was on my way to pay it extra on the  
 washer.  
 But somehow — I came home with this  
 big box.  
 Your father really gave it to me then.  
 "Where you going to wear a thing like that  
 to —  
 Soap opera or something?"  
 And he was right, I guess.  
 I've never, except in the store,  
 Put on that dress.  
 'Oh, Millie — I always thought if you take  
 Nothing for yourself in this world,  
 You'd have it all in the next somehow.  
 I don't believe that anymore.  
 I think the Lord want us to have something  
 -  
 Here — and now.  
 'And I'm telling you, Millie, if some  
 miracle could get me off this bed, you  
 could  
 look  
 For a different mother, 'cause I would be  
 one.  
 Oh, I passed up my turn so long

I would hardly know how to take it.  
 But I'd learn, Millie.  
 I would learn!  
 It hung there in the closet  
 While she was dying. Mother's red dress,  
 Like a gash in the row  
 Of dark, old clothes  
 She had worn away her life in.  
 Her last words to me were these:  
 'Do me the honor, Millie,  
 Of not following in my footsteps.  
 Promise me that.'  
 I promised.  
 She caught her breath  
 then Mother took her turn  
 In death.

(Source: Adapted from 'Millie's mother's  
 red dress' by Anita Canfield *Self Esteem  
 for the Latter-Day Saint Women*)

## **A Hindu story — Radha**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To help women reflect on and relate their experiences by discussing Radha's story.
- 2 To raise awareness of different cultural rituals that are used to perpetuate women's subordination.

### **Method**

- 1 Hand out the story (**Handout 7**) to the participants. Ask each to read the story quietly for themselves.  
*(5 mins)*
- 2 Ask three people to read the story again aloud to the group.  
*(5 mins)*
- 3 Ask the group to discuss the following questions:
  - a What is Radha telling us?
  - b Is Radha's story familiar? In what ways?
  - c What are some cultural rituals, beliefs, and values that oppress women in our society?*(20 mins)*

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 The questions can be adapted to suit the group you are working with.*

*2 In Kenya, women identified the similarities between the situation of Radha and their own lives. The major concern expressed was awareness of how women are marginalised and oppressed, so that the same situation was not repeated with their daughters. Some participants felt that to think that the attitudes of this present generation could be radically changed was but a dream, but wanted to explore ways in which things could be different for the next generation.*

*3 When used with girl students from East African nomadic people, this activity raised strong emotions, for some girls saw their mothers in the story, others saw themselves being forced into the situation by being sold into marriage; others shared their experiences of having escaped forced marriages.*

*4 This is a women-only activity.*

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## Radha's story

'No sooner did I start understanding my surroundings than I realised that my preordained role was to be a dutiful daughter. When I grew up it was emphasised again and again that I should be a dependent wife and devoted mother. Though I was a bright student I was allowed to educate myself only up to higher secondary level.

As soon as I started menstruating, the elders in my family got obsessed with the idea of marrying me off. Those years were extremely agonising. According to Hinduism, for those five days when a woman has her 'period' she is supposed to be impure. Hence, she is segregated and treated like an untouchable. The thought of being treated like an untouchable for one-sixteenth of my life made me feel horrible. For the first time, I understood the plight of the Harijans — 'untouchables', 'shudras', 'dalits' — the oppressed caste in India. Manu, the one who created the code of conduct of the Hindu civilization stated that the drum, the stupid, the untouchable, the animal, and the woman deserve beating.

For two years, the husband-hunting business occupied my parents. Prospective grooms and their relatives would come for an 'interview'. I was paraded in front of them like a decorative piece. For some, I was not fair-complexioned enough, for others, I did not look beautiful enough. They all wanted a sweet and smart, dainty and slim 'girl' who could resemble the goddess Laximi — the goddess of wealth and prosperity. At last, one family decided to choose me for their son to marry.

Haggling over the dowry then started. My family was middle-class. I have one sister and two brothers who were studying at that time. The demands of my in-laws were too exorbitant for my parents to fulfil. My father pleaded with my in-laws, and after some arguments they settled the matter. The arrangement was that my father gave Rs.1,000 in cash, one set of gold ornaments, 25 saris, one set of stainless steel utensils, a tape-recorder with radio, etc. My father had to incur so much debt for my wedding preparations. The atmosphere was tense. I wondered whether my marriage was indeed such a joyous occasion to celebrate. Despite the tension that prevailed, my parents consoled themselves by saying 'We will enter heaven now that we have donated our daughter'. This is termed *kanyadan*. In the Hindu customs, *kanyadan* is considered one of the best offerings. In this respect the daughter is reduced to an object that can be given away as a gift.

## The wedding and the aftermath

On my wedding day, I was decorated with great care and concern by my friends. When my husband and I exchanged garlands to walk around the holy fire seven times, the Brahmin chanted Sanskrit holy verses. Some of them I remember very clearly, like:

‘May the holy fire protect this woman  
With a fertile womb may she be the mother of living children.  
May she experience pleasure in her sons.  
This am I, thou art you; the heaven I, the earth thou.  
Come let us join and unite, that we may generate a son.  
For increasing wealth, for blessed offsprings, for wealth.  
Bountiful god, bless this woman with sons and happiness.  
Give her ten sons and let her husband be the eleventh.’

After the wedding, I was to stay with my husband’s family. At first I was scared of going to the new place. I heard talk about newly-wedded brides being ill-treated and sometimes even killed by their in-laws. On the other hand I had started weaving romantic bridal dreams.

At my in-laws’ house, I got busy in my routine of washing, cooking, cleaning, scrubbing, putting up with scorn-taunts for bringing an ‘inadequate’ dowry, occasional beatings, and performing the duty of a wife. Hindu scriptures define a woman as one who is like a secretary in her work, a slave in her behaviour, a mother when it comes to feeding, and a sensuous partner in bed.

We have 3,600 million gods and goddesses. To fast for all of them would be impossible for a single woman. But I was made to observe as many rituals as possible for my husband’s welfare and to beget a son. But my prayers were wasted when I had a baby girl. Everyone mourned her birth. My husband refused to talk to me for several days. He did not even look at my daughter for weeks. My in-laws taunted me for my bad luck. During my second pregnancy, I was threatened by my in-laws that if I failed to produce a son, they would throw me out of the house and have my husband re-marry another girl. Luckily, I bore a son and everyone rejoiced. My husband and in-laws distributed sweets. I then understood why my friend Sheela killed her daughter just after the birth.

Sometimes I feel very angry whenever my daughter is unfairly treated. In the last seven years that I have been married, I have realised that even if I remain weak, meek, submissive, and a masochist I am not going to be treated well and respected. I asked myself: ‘Then why not assert yourself?’ Now I have made up my mind, I will assert my daughter’s rights. I want her to be well-educated, self-reliant, courageous, confident, and economically independent!’

(Source: Cited in *Awake — Asian Women and the Struggle for Justice*  
Asia Partnership for Human Development, Sydney 1985.)



## **What are male/female stereotypes?**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To increase awareness of male/female stereotypes.
- 2 To initiate discussion about some of the consequences of stereotyping.

### **Method**

- 1 Divide the group into small single-sex groups and give them two sheets of flipchart and pens.  
*(5 mins)*
- 2 Explain that 'We are going to look at what we mean by sex stereotypes'. Ask each group to brainstorm all the characteristics of the opposite sex which they believe or which they have heard commonly expressed e.g. women are: talkative, patient. They should write at the top of the first sheet 'women/men are....'  
*(5 mins)*
- 3 Ask them to repeat the list for their own sex. They should head the sheet 'men/women are ....' e.g. men are: aggressive, do not show feelings  
*(5 mins)*
- 4 The small groups take five minutes to share initial reactions to these lists.  
*(5 mins)*
- 5 Put up sheets and ask each group to present their ideas for five minutes.  
*(10-20 mins)*
- 6 Ask 'If these are some of the images of men and women that are commonly believed in our society, what are the consequences for men and women?' e.g. if the male image is aggressive and the female image passive, what can happen?

- Each small group lists up as many consequences as they can  
(10 mins)
- 7 Put up sheets, and allow people time to read them.
- 8 With the whole group, lead a discussion on stereotypes and their consequences. (Include points in *Facilitator's Notes*.)  
(10 mins)
- 8 Give out **Handouts 8 Masculine Boy** and **Handout 9 Dealing in Used Women**. Allow initial reactions and discussion.  
(10-15 mins)

## Materials

Flipcharts, pens  
**Handouts 8 and 9**

### *Facilitator's Notes*

- 1 *This exercise is a useful introduction to the notion of stereotypes, but be aware that it may cause some tension between the women's and men's groups. If it does, follow with a game or activity to bring the group together again.*
- 2 *In the final discussion, bring out the following points:*
- a. *We are looking at what is generally believed in society, and some of the results.*
  - b. *If these consequences are not as we would like them to be, what can we do to help change them?*
  - c. *We are not trying to prescribe — no 'oughts' or 'shoulds'.*
  - d. *Why be defensive?*
  - e. *There are 'personal' consequences.*
- 3 *Note that the handouts are very culture-specific; either adapt them or when you give them out, point out that they are very culture-specific and ask in what ways they correspond with participants' own experience, and what is different. What are the particular pressures and stereotypes in participants' own culture?*
- 4 *You may find it useful to ask a man to read out **Handout 8 Masculine Boy** and a woman to read out **Handout 9 Dealing in Used Women**.*

*(Source: This activity comes from a course for teachers and careers officers in a training project by Counselling and Career Development Unit, University of Leeds and Careers and Occupational Information Centre.)*

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## Masculine boy

If I would have had the slightest inkling of what being a 'man' really meant, I am quite sure I would not have spent a great deal of my childhood waiting for the 'Rewarding Day'.

Before I could reach the accomplished state of being the 'Masculine Man', I had to suffer the repressive and agonising stage of being the 'Masculine Boy'.

I learnt fairly early in life that one of my first accomplishments was to be superior to that other little creature that inhabited the earth, 'girl'. My parents guided me through this difficult period well. They gave me some helpful pointers. If I cried they told me not to, as only little girls cried. I had to avoid the usual girlie things: bright colours (especially pink), skipping ropes, dolls, ribbons, etc. If my parents wanted to intimidate me because my hair was getting too long or untidy all they had to say was 'we will have to put a ribbon in your hair, won't we'. I would cringe at the mere thought. If I was too shy and quiet in company, I was being like a silly girl again (cringe). My name is Ian. If my father happened to be in a somewhat jovial, sadistic mood, he would call me Yvonne and my brother would give him a hand. I hated that so much I would end up throwing great boulders at my brother.

Then I started school, where I soon realised how weak girls were. If any heavy objects were to be lifted, teacher always asked us 'boys'. Whenever a girl got the cane she always cried. We were strong: we at least tried to choke the tears back inside our ears (figuratively speaking of course). That reminds me of a most humiliating experience. I was about eight years old: teacher called me out to give me the cane on both hands. Ha! he didn't make me cry. I turned to walk away, my ears swollen with excess water. Then... crash! I felt the cane against the back of my legs. My ears drained and the tears rushed down my face. It wasn't too long before I became quite proficient at containing my feelings during moments of stress or pain. Being a boy, of course, meant playing all the rough games; football, rugby, boxing, wrestling etc. I avoided such things by studying too hard. I avoided all physical contact with other boys. I avoided any display of my emotions. By the time I was 11, I felt I had achieved much success at being the Masculine Boy. But, alas, there was a small price to pay .... *repression*.

Ian Douglas, (excerpt from *Man Against Sexism*)



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## Dealing in used women

What do I do?  
I deal in women,  
Used and new.

I've many models  
From which to choose.  
I'm sure I have one  
Just for you.

Here's a classic model:  
She'll do as she is told,  
Never acting knowing,  
Never acting bold.

Here's a housewife model:  
She really is a find.  
She sews and cooks and cleans and  
Mass-produces little minds.

Next, a secretary model:  
Her typing can't be beat.  
She makes good coffee, has good legs;  
There's one word for her: 'sweet'.

There's an educated model:  
In her class she's at the top.  
She can hold a conversation,  
But she knows when she should stop.

A recycled woman?

Yes, I have lots of those.  
But she may be more challenge than you need.  
She thinks ... She feels ... She loves ...  
She's real .... but she's not guaranteed.

(Source: Mary Ann Bornman, The Women's Center, Kean College of New Jersey, Union, NJ, USA).



## **Stereotypes: self-disclosure**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To express some of our feelings about our own sex roles.

### **Method**

- 1 Divide group into small groups of five (mixed men and women).
- 2 Explain that 'Within any situation in life, there are advantages and disadvantages; now is the opportunity to express some of our own feelings about being men and women'.  

*(5 mins)*
- 3 Ask each person, individually, to complete the sentence:  
'Sometimes I'm glad I'm a man/woman because.....'  

Ask them to list as many of the advantages to being a man/woman as they can.  

*(5 mins)*
- 4 Then, ask each person to complete the sentence:  
'Sometimes I wish I were a man/woman because.....'  

Again they should list as many reasons as possible.*(5 mins)*
- 5 Ask each member of the group to share their lists for three minutes each.*(15 mins)*
- 6 Ask each group to consider:
  - a. Was one list more difficult to make, if so, which one?
  - b. What did it feel like to hear others' lists?
  - c. What does it feel like to hear statements about your sex from the opposite sex?

- d. Did you want to challenge any of these statements?
- e. How free were the lists from stereotyping?

(15 mins)

7 In the large group, ask what people learned from the activity..

(15 mins)

## Materials

Pens, small pieces of paper  
Flipchart with questions written on

### *Facilitator's Notes*

*1 Stage 6 of the activity could be done in the large group. This might be especially important if the group was not evenly balanced for numbers of men and women. It is important that each sex hears the other sex's views, and that inaccuracies and stereotypes are challenged (e.g. if a man says he sometimes wishes he were a woman because then he wouldn't have to work).*

*2 This activity follows on well from the previous **Activity 25 What Are Male/Female Stereotypes** and comes from the same source (CCDU/COIC). It is useful as an introduction to thinking about stereotypes and more personal issues.*



## **Breaking the chain**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To give women time to think of themselves and their situation through symbolic action.

### **Method**

#### **Preparation**

- 1 Collect a series of readings from women, some oppressive and some liberating. **Handout 10** gives some examples
- 2 Ask the group to sit in a circle with a circular paper chain laid out in front.
- 3 Ask four or five members of the group to read the passages aloud.
- 4 Tell the group to listen to the readings, and when they hear something that enchains women, to put their hands into the chain. When they hear something that frees women, they should take their hands out of the chain.
- 6 Conclude the session with background music, with women holding hands together.

*(30 mins)*

### **Materials**

Series of readings (**Handout 10**)  
A paper chain  
Music

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 These readings have been provided as samples — you could seek out others, or ask the participants to produce stories about themselves or women they know. They should be short, so that the activity can move quite quickly.*

*2 Mix positive and negative stories, but make sure you end the session with stories which are liberating and help women 'unchain' themselves.*

*3 This is a women-only activity.*

## Readings

### The Samities of Bankura

In a small village in West Bengal, a women's Samity (society) obtained a land donation in 1980 from private landowners who lacked the resources to develop the degraded land. With unwavering focus, and collective will, the Samity reclaimed the wasteland, and in three years the land was thick with trees on which tasar silk worms are reared. As news spread, other Samities were formed by women in surrounding villages, each with land donation from villagers and today, 1,500 women in 36 villages are members of such Samities. The groups have also organised supplementary income-generating activities, on an individual or group basis.

### A freedom song

Atieno washes dishes,  
 Atieno gets up early,  
 beds her sacks down

In the kitchen  
 Atieno eight years old  
 Atieno yo.

Since she is my sister's child  
 Atieno needs no pay  
 While she works my wife can sit  
 Sewing every sunny day,  
 With her earning I support  
 Atieno yo.

Atieno's sly and jealous  
 Bad example to the kids  
 Since she minds them like a school girl  
 Wants their dresses, shoes and beads.  
 Atieno ten years old,  
 Atieno yo.

Atieno's had a baby  
so we know that she is bad  
Fifty-fifty it may live  
To repeat the life she had,  
ending in post-partum bleeding  
Atieno yo.

Atieno's soon replaced  
Meat and sugar, more than all  
She ate in such a narrow life,  
Were lavished at her funeral  
Atieno's gone to glory  
Atieno yo.

(Marjorie Mbilinyi, Kenya) (adapted)

## **Domestic violence**

Every night for four months she was beaten brutally and burnt with a hot iron. The neighbours, unable to bear her screams, complained to the Kalachowki Police Station. But the police did not take action saying it was a domestic matter. She died on 2 October. Her body was full of bruises and burns. The complaint was made in August, and a month and a half later the young woman of twenty-two years dies because no-one has a right to interfere with what happens within the family.

(Kelkar 1983)

## **The Chipko Movement**

A fight for truth has begun  
At Sinsyari Khala.  
A fight for rights has begun  
At Malkot Thano.  
Sister, it is a fight to protect  
Our mountains and forests.  
They give us life.  
Embrace the life of the living trees and streams,  
Clasp them to your hearts.  
Resist the digging of the mountains,  
That brings death to our forests and streams.  
A fight for life has begun  
At Sinsyaru Khala.

Ghanshyam 'Shalland, Chipko poem  
(Source: Chipko Information Centre, India IDOC *Internazionale*, March 1989)

## **A girl's life**

Now we are faced with a ten-year-old girl. Her body has been mutilated to encourage chastity by destroying sexual feeling. She is handed over to a man twice as old as she is or more. She will have 14 children. Half of them will die. If too many of them are female she may be abused by her husband's family. She will spend her life within the narrowest possible radius, walled in by ritual and tradition. If there is scarcity she may watch her youngest daughter be systematically starved; the sons will be fed, the daughter will not. If she is divorced she will lose any claim to her children, since they are the property of her husband. What words shall we use to comment on the life of this girl?

(Cheryl Bernard  
Edith Shlaffer 1981)

## **Kidan**

My name is Kidan Gebre Tensay, and I'm twenty-seven. My family and others were helped a lot by the TPLF after the famine. We now live near Edaga Hiberet town in Marmaz Wahta village.

Before liberation we were highly oppressed and dominated; we could not even look at men. We would have to hide if we saw them coming. Women could not go to meetings or make any decisions or suggestions. Muslim women were even more oppressed than us. The revolution has put an end to all this and we have become free and equal like our class brothers. The organisation has shown us the way and now we participate in all areas. From my personal point of view, before, I was an insignificant woman and now I have been given political education and I am a *shig woyanit* — a torch of the revolution.

(Source: *Sweeter than Honey: Testimonies of Tigrayan Women*, Jenny Hammond with Nell Druce — Links Publications. )

## **A daughter pregnant by her father**

When a mother discovered that her young daughter was pregnant the daughter said that she should ask the father about the pregnancy. When she ran off to Mombasa she was forced to return as she was unable to survive. When she returned she was told that she had brought disgrace and shame to the family by talking about this whole problem.

## **Sexual abuse**

A man told his daughter that in order to lessen her period pain that she should have sex with him. An elderly woman, who was a neighbour of this family told the wife what was happening. The wife took the case to court, but withdrew the case due to the shame of the whole situation.

## **Ndugu Josima Machel**

Ndugu Josina Machel, one of Africa's heroines died at the age of 25 — a militant in the struggle for liberation of Mozambique, she was dedicated and never faltered in her courage. Her own courage was a guiding force in the life of her husband. Yet she is remembered not for being the wife of Samora but in her own right. She is a symbol of women's contribution toward the liberation of Africa.

## **Women resist**

In the Dangs district of Gujarat, India, there is constant conflict between forestry officials protecting the State forests, and villagers, who have lived in the forest for generations. In 1989, a forest officer, accompanied by six policemen, arrived in a village to confiscate timber. The carpenters ran away into the forest. The mother-in-law came out armed with a sickle, and stood at her door. She told the officials to stay where they were, or face the consequences. Meanwhile, the younger women had called others to join them. The officials were soon surrounded by a large crowd of women of all ages, carrying whatever implements they had been able to grab. The forest officer ordered the women to disperse, but nobody moved. The old woman declared that they could touch the wood only 'over my dead body'. The police threatened to open fire, but were challenged by the women. Finally, after a heated discussion, the official party left, escorted by the women for a kilometre.

(Source: Adapted from an article by Shirley Varghese, in *Development in Practice*, Oxfam, 1992.)

## **Man to man**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To help men review and 'own' the implications of gender for men.
- 2 To develop ideas for positive action.

### **Method**

- 1 Ask the participants to form small groups or pairs to discuss what they have felt about the training activities so far, such as what they have or have not enjoyed, agreed or disagreed with, or felt angry or hurt about.

*(5 mins)*

- 2 Ask groups to feed back their responses to the whole group.

*(10 mins)*

- 3 Lead a discussion in the whole group around the following questions:

- a. Do most men find gender a difficult or easy subject to discuss? Why?
- b. Why are discrimination against women, sexual harassment and even rape sometimes laughed off as trivial by men? If your own sister or mother experienced these things, how would you feel?
- c. If a man is beaten up on the street, people do not ask what clothes he was wearing, or why he was out late — but women are asked these questions. Is it fair?
- d. Is gender a minor issue, compared with, for example, world hunger?
- e. Do you agree with this statement:

*'We earn 90 per cent of the world's income and own 99 per cent of its property. We commit around 90 per cent of violent crimes.... (but) why should we be equated with men who run countries.... who rape and kill? We ask women not to lump us indiscriminately together with hostile men. But in return we need to recognise that we benefit from sexual discrimination every day of our lives whether we like it or not!' (New Internationalist, Sept 1987)*

- f. How can men share power with women in society?
  - g. In what ways does society pressurise men? (20 mins)
- 4 Ask the group to discuss **Handout 11 Action Checklist** in pairs, considering the questions:
- a. Do you disagree with anything?
  - b. What is left out?

(10 mins)

- 5 In the whole group, lead a discussion around the following questions:
- a. Have you ever challenged sexism in other men? If so, what reactions did you get?
  - b. If not, why didn't you, and what would have helped you?

Encourage the participants to share experiences. Some of the situations could be role-played so participants can practise how to respond.

## Materials

### Handout 11

#### *Facilitator's Notes*

- 1 *This activity must be led by a male facilitator. It is a man-only session.*
- 2 *It must be preceded by group trust-building activities (see **Icebreakers**) and the 'ground rules' activity to help men to cope with the defensive and threatened feelings they are likely to experience.*
- 3 *If done in a training for a mixed group, the men and women should come back together afterwards and briefly report from their own activities. It should then be followed by a physical trust game to build good relations between men and women, and mix them together for the next mixed-sex activity.*
- 4 *Stress that men have been encouraged to believe that to be 'real men' they have to oppress women. But this is not so. (e.g. slogan from Kenya 'Real Men Support Women's Empowerment'). Feeling guilty and defensive is not helpful to men or women. Action against sexism is.*
- 5 *The action checklist needs to be revised to be appropriate to the cultural context.*

*(Source: **Class, Gender and Race Inequality and the Media in an International Context: Focus for Change**, 1992.)*



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## Action checklist on sexism: a code for men

- 1 Look out for ways you unintentionally threaten women. Don't walk behind a woman at night — cross the road. Don't loiter in a group of men or block the path. Approach a man, not a woman, for directions at night or in lonely places.
- 2 Don't comment, stare or whistle at a woman's looks or dress; it's sexual harassment.
- 3 Share domestic tasks equally. Housework and childcare should not be only 'women's work'.
- 4 If you have a woman partner, you should both have equal access to income.
- 5 Express your emotions and acknowledge your feelings.
- 6 Confront sexism in other men; do not rely on women to do this for you.
- 7 Challenge sexism at work, and in your dealings with the State (e.g. health, welfare).
- 8 Don't limit children; both boys and girls can enjoy football and sewing.
- 9 What you call 'normality' is based on male power and should be questioned.

(This checklist was developed in the UK, adapted from the *New Internationalist*, August 1985, and you may need to adapt the items to be appropriate to the country and culture in which you use it.)



## **Feminist poker**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To enable men to identify the causes of women's oppression.
- 2 To enable men to discuss and rank these factors in order of importance.
- 3 To establish a consensus amongst the participants about which are the most important factors.

### **Method**

**Preparation:** Make three identical packs of 40 cards, each one of the 40 with a different statement (see examples in **Handout 12**).

Explain the objectives of the activity, and tell the group that the session involves a card game and will be in two parts. In Part One, the players are divided into at least three groups, and have to complete the statement: 'Women are oppressed because...' according to the phrases on the cards which will be dealt to them.

In Part Two, the small groups of players will have to get together to agree on five completed statements from those which have been selected during the separate games. Players will be scored according to whether their judgements of the cards are accepted by the group or not.

#### **Part 1**

Divide the participants into three groups of eight players each. This may be varied according to the size of your group. The groups should sit around tables, or in a circle on the floor, and the facilitator deals out the cards.

Deal out five cards to each player. Explain that there will be five rounds, in which each player in turn will choose one card from their hand and decide whether it is a strong or weak phrase for finishing the statement about women's oppression. Each new round is started by a different person.

Once the cards are dealt, the players look at their hands and think about them, and then, in turn, each places one card face down in front of him declaring whether their cards are IN or OUT according to whether they are weak or strong completions of the statement.

Then in the same sequence all the players who declared OUT turn up their card, and explain and justify their decision.

The group debates each decision. If the group accepts the player's decision about the card, the player gains one point. If the group rejects the decision, the player loses one point and the card is placed in the centre of the table.

After all the OUT cards have been discussed and decisions taken, the process is repeated with the cards which players declared IN. If the group agrees with the decision, the card is placed in the centre, if they disagree, the player loses a point.

At the end of the round, one card is chosen from all those placed in the centre after discussion. This card represents the group's view of the most accurate reason for women's oppression for that round. The player who selected the card gains two points. If a card originally declared OUT is chosen, the player who declared it OUT loses two points and all others in the round gain a point.

Repeat the process for each round.

## **Part 2**

Bring the three groups together.

Each group debates and discusses the choice of the five cards they have made. They have to defend their choice, challenge the choices of others, and finally all participants have to come to agreement on five statements about women's oppression.

## **Materials**

40 cards with statements in **Handout 12**. There must be a full pack of cards for each group.

### ***Facilitator's Notes***

*1 You may have to vary the size of the small groups according to the number of participants in the workshop, but there should be more than one group so that Part 2 of the activity can be carried out. You may also have to change the number of cards according to the size of your small groups. All the groups should have the same set of cards.*

*2 There are 37 statements given here. You may wish to add others, and replace some with your own.*

*3 This activity was developed for use with men, but you could use it with women, or for mixed groups — as long as you are confident of being able to deal with the debates which may emerge in a mixed group!*

*(Source: Karina Constantinos-Davids)*

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## **Women are oppressed because**

- They are last to be hired and first to be fired.
- They play a secondary role in decision-making.
- There is no sharing of household work.
- They are stereotyped into secondary/subordinate roles.
- Their intelligence and capabilities are undervalued.
- They are not acknowledged to be breadwinners.
- The law is biased against women.
- They receive lower wages than men.
- They are considered to be the weaker sex.
- They must be submissive.
- There are limited support services such as day-care centres.
- They are used to sell consumer products.
- Their self-worth is undermined.
- Their place is in the home.
- Men are the hunters and women are the hunted.
- Their self-concept is based on men's perceptions.
- Their contributions to economic production are not recognised.
- Parenting is primarily a woman's concern.
- They are treated as second-class citizens.
- They are treated as sex objects.
- They are victims of sexual harassment.
- They are all potential victims of rape and other forms of violence.
- They suffer from a double burden.
- Of men.
- There is a double standard in society.
- They are economically marginalised.
- Men are considered more capable than women.
- Men have more privileges.
- Societal institutions socialise women into subordinate roles.
- They have less access to opportunities.
- They have no control over their own bodies.
- They have limited control over their own development.
- They are brought up to serve men.
- Their work is not valued.
- Their primary role is reproduction.
- They are forced to give sexual favours to their bosses.
- They are discriminated against especially in leadership positions.



## **Becoming a man**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To help men to see the pressures on them to adopt certain attitudes.
- 2 To enable men to become aware of some of the origins of their attitudes and feelings towards women.

### **Method**

- 1 Explain the objectives of the activity to the group.
- 2 Hand out a copy of the list of questions (**Handout 13**) to each participant, and ask them to write completions of the sentences on the chart without consulting each other.
- 3 Then ask the participants to form pairs and to discuss with each other their answers, and their responses and feelings.
- 4 In the large group, draw out similarities in the responses and completions of the sentences, and discuss the following questions:
  - a. Do you feel your behaviour is limited by your peers? How and when does this happen, and why?
  - b. Are there some 'macho' attitudes towards women you would like to reject? How can you do this?

### **Materials**

List of questions in **Handout 13**  
Pens

## ***Facilitator's Notes***

*Source: This activity was adapted from one described by Thompson: 'As boys become men: learning new male roles' which was published in Update on Anti-Sexist Work with Boys and Young Men, edited by Janie Whyld, Dave Pickersgill and David Jackson, (Whyld Publishing Group, 1990). The trainer described it as providing a good starting point for discussion of the way boys are socialised. Although used in a mixed group, with a similar chart for girls, the trainer felt it would be most useful with a men-only group. We suggest it could be a good introductory activity to other more challenging activities about male gender roles and attitudes.*



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## Sentence completions

The best thing about being a man is...

A man would never let a woman see...

Men would reject another man if...

Men would be praised by his parents if he...

Boys can't...

The parents of a boy let him...

Teachers expect boys to treat girls like...

Men get embarrassed when...

Parents expect boys to...

Men/boys are allowed to...

A boy would get teased if he...

Women really want men to...

Men don't like...

(Source: Thompson D. *As Boys Become Men: Learning New Male Roles.*)



## **Violence against women**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To enable women to discuss violence against women.
- 2 To identify the root causes of violence against women.
- 3 To create a climate where women can share freely their experience of violence.
- 4 To raise these issues in a Christian context, where appropriate.

### **Method**

#### **Part 1**

- 1 Ask the group to look at **Handout 14** Our Experience..  
*(5 minutes)*
- 2 In groups of three discuss the following questions :
  - a. Are these statements familiar in your community? Share some of your stories of wife-beating and other abusive treatment. Is violence on the increase?
  - b. Do you think the reasons men give for beating their wives are acceptable?
  - c. What are the consequences for women who choose to leave their abusive husbands? What are the consequences for their children?
  - d. What are some effective and life-giving solutions for women who are frequently abused by their husbands or male companions?*(15 minutes)*
- 3 In the big group, ask small groups to share responses to questions b, c, and d. Give individuals who wish to do so the opportunity to share responses to question a. This should be optional.  
*(30 minutes)*

#### **Part 2 For Christian groups**

- 1 Give **Handout 15** Biblical background notes, and the appropriate texts to the group. (I Corinthians 13 1-13; Daniel 13 (Apocrypha); Judges 19; 2 Samuel 13: 1-21).
- 2 In small groups, discuss the texts and the background notes.  
*(30 minutes)*
- 3 In the large group, bring out the main points in Handout 15.



# Our experience

My husband comes home drunk nearly every night and always finds something to criticise or complain about! Sometimes it's my cooking, sometimes the noisy children, and other times it's money. And then he starts to beat me. I can't take much more of this treatment!



I know what you mean! My husband is just the same; beating! beating! beating! When I scream and complain, he just laughs and says that beating shows how much he cares for me. "It is a sign of love," he says! Frankly, I'd rather have less love and more peace!



Well, if beating means "love", I wonder if we can say that Margaret was "loved to death" last year when her husband beat her until she died from her injuries! How can you call that "love"?





## Biblical background notes

**A 1 Corinthians 13:1-13:** this passage from St Paul helps us to understand the Christian ideal of love better:

*'Love is patient and kind... it is not ill mannered or selfish or irritable: love does not keep a record of wrong...'*

Paul's definition of love leaves no room for such humiliating and brutal behaviours as wife-beating!

**B Daniel 13 (Apocrypha):** this is a tale of 'sexual harassment', of threats and trickery. Susanna, a good, beautiful and faithful wife, is approached by two elderly men and harassed sexually, that is, she is disturbed or bothered by these men who demand sexual favours of her. If she refuses, they threaten to accuse her falsely of adultery with another man. Refusing to yield to these men and their threats, Susanna is falsely accused and faces death by stoning if proved guilty. She is brought to trial and is saved at the last moment through the efforts of the young prophet Daniel. The old men met their match in Susanna, a woman who respected herself more than she feared death. She was ready and willing to die rather than dishonour herself.

**C Judges 19:** in this chapter from the Book of Judges we read of the most tragic, degrading and violent abuse of women imaginable. It is the story of a concubine who was freely sacrificed to men in order to spare her husband the humiliation of sexual abuse by a gang of thugs. Her life was sacrificed for his honour and dignity. The host in the story refused to allow his male guest to be dishonoured by homosexual acts, for this was 'an evil and immoral thing.' But he did not regard the abusive rape of women as equally evil and immoral since he voluntarily offered his own virgin daughter and his guest's concubine to satisfy the sexual appetites of the gang. In the end it was only the concubine who was thrown to the men outside to be used for their pleasure, and

*'They raped her and abused her all night long and didn't stop until morning...'*

When day at last dawned, the concubine was found to be dead. No Bible story points out as clearly the low status of women in society. Verses 23-24 establish

without any doubt the priority of value and the importance of men in that tradition and the inferiority of women. It was preferable, so men reasoned, to sacrifice a defenceless woman rather than allow a physically stronger man to be disgraced and abused.

**D 2 Samuel 13:1-21:** here we read of incest-rape where one of King David's sons, Amnon, raped his own half-sister, Tamar. It is rare indeed when the Bible quotes the words of mere women, so it is all the more unusual to read here of Tamar's verbal as well as physical struggle with her brother.

After raping her, Amnon turned against her with hatred, throwing her out of his house. Tamar covered her head with ashes and tore her garments, symbolically proclaiming her deep sense of shame, mourning and sorrow. Another brother, Absalom, took Tamar into his own home and cared for her, later taking revenge on Amnon for destroying Tamar's life. She was apparently unable to marry because of the disgrace of being raped by her own brother. Her story ends pathetically. Tamar lived in Absalom's house, sad and lonely.

## Points to ponder

1 Susanna in Daniel 13 is a remarkable example of a courageous woman who respected herself and honoured her marriage vows — even at the risk of possible death by stoning. She stood alone against corrupt men and their evil designs, resisting both sexual harassment and lies. And against all odds, she won! Susanna is a true sign of hope and resistance for women today in a patriarchal world that increasingly harasses and abuses women.

2 Men all too often abuse their God-given gift of strength by attacking and beating those who are physically weaker than they. Using superior strength to control and subdue others is behaviour worthy of a bully and a coward. A man who beats a woman in order to punish or control her shows lack of self-control as well as disrespect and contempt for women.

Today, unfortunately, we see evidence of wife beating all around us. Some of these battered women are so severely injured that they die as a result of such harsh treatment. So it is altogether incredible when we sometimes hear from women themselves that 'beatings show how much a man loves his wife; the more he beats, the more he loves!' This is total myth! How can the act of physically injuring another person be an expression of love? If a man beats his wife until she dies, does this then demonstrate the deepest love of all? It may help at this point to reflect once again on the Christian ideal of love as found in Paul's First letter to the Corinthians 13: 'Love is patient and kind...'

Nowhere does Paul mention physical abuse as a sign of love and caring. If we truly love someone, we will do everything possible to protect that person from injury and harm.



3 Violence against women wears many faces, aside from that of wife bashing or beating. Women are frequently abused at work through sexual harassment where their employers or male co-workers demand sexual favours in return for the woman's promotion or fair treatment. Women are violated on the streets when they are verbally or physically attacked and raped. Women are dishonoured and shamed in the media (press, TV, radio) through stories and advertisements that humiliate and exploit women and their physical attractions.

4 Women are also abused through prostitution, a 'profession' that humiliates and degrades men as well women. The majority of women who become involved in prostitution do so for economic reasons alone. Given alternative skills and ways of earning a living, most would probably give up prostituting themselves.

It is indeed strange how society condemns prostitutes as 'vulgar' and 'sinful', and in some countries, 'unlawful', yet winks playfully at the men who keep these women in business. How can it be wrong for one sex, but right for the other? This is patriarchal thinking at its worst!

5 Newspapers inform us that crimes of rape and incest are on the increase in our communities. Many, including the police and some women themselves blame the female victims for this, claiming that they invite such treatment by their manner of dress or provocative behaviour. If that is so, how does one explain the rape of tiny children and elderly women?

Social scientists tell us that men frequently turn to rape, not so much out of strong and uncontrollable sexual urges, but rather, out of a sense of frustration and anger aimed at society in general and women in particular. Men who feel they have lost their role and status in society, men who are unemployed and impoverished, men who feel useless and no longer needed, all these frequently turn to crime and violence to help release their inner rage. And women are among the easiest victims to attack. Women become targets of male aggression.

6 In order to effectively to challenge male domination and aggression in the community, women need to join together in support groups, sharing their stories and designing new strategies for survival. But these strategies must include not only steps towards justice and equality between the sexes; they must also include plans for active peace-building that will serve to bridge the anger-isolation gap that presently exists between women and men. At present, support groups for women are essential; there is strength in numbers and courage in sharing.

**7 Violence against women is a crime!**

(Source: *Choose Life*: Jacqueline Dorr MM.)



## **Rape**

### **Objectives**

- 1 To create space and time to discuss rape and experiences of women who have suffered this crime.
- 2 To discuss myths held about rape.
- 3 To talk about the responses of courts, police, psychologists, doctors, family and community to women who have been raped.
- 4 To discuss the strategies and support mechanisms needed to support raped women.

### **Method**

#### **Part 1**

- 1 Ask participants to walk around the room and study newspaper cuttings of rape cases that have appeared in the newspapers in the last three to six months. You can retype these (and see **Handout 16**) or photocopy articles to a larger print size to make them easier to read.

*(10 mins)*
- 2 Ask one participant to read out the newspaper cutting: 'A Night of Madness' (**Handout 17**).

*(5 mins)*
- 3 Ask the participants to form groups of five, and discuss the following:
  - a. What do these experiences of women make you feel?
  - b. What does the response of the deputy principal in the case we have just read make you feel, and tell you about people's views about rape?

- c. Are there any cases in the newspaper cuttings that you want to talk about?
- d. Are there experiences you know about of women who have suffered rape, that you want to talk about?(30 mins)

4 In the large group, share responses to the questions. Allow enough time.  
(5 mins)

### Part 2

5 Give each participant **Handout 18** on myths about rape. Discuss again the striking issues that the handout provokes.  
(15-30 mins)

6 Ask participants to think about more myths that are missing in the Handout and list on a flipchart. Add any they omit.  
(25 mins)

### Part 3

- 7 Give an input on women's experience of rape in your country.
- Police procedures
  - Medical check-ups
  - Legal aspects and court proceedings
  - Psychological trauma — long-term and short-term

(If possible arrange for progressive, non-prejudiced experts to come and give the inputs.)  
(30 mins)

8 Ask participants to form the same groups of five to discuss the following questions and write the answers on flipcharts:

- a. What support do raped women need from:
  - family
  - community
  - doctors
  - police
  - lawyers/courts

- b. What needs to change in the existing laws, court proceedings, medical and police procedures?  
(30 mins)

9 Each group then reports back in turn on one question, followed by discussion.  
(30 mins)

## Materials

Newspaper cuttings  
**Handouts 16, 17, and 18.**

## **Facilitator's Notes**

1 Note that the timing in this activity is approximate; you need to be flexible, especially when women's personal experiences are brought out in the activity, or where there is prejudice. For example, in a workshop that took place in Kenya it was very clear how deep-rooted the myths were. It took a whole morning to demystify the myth 'She asked for it'. It is important for a trainer to realise a lot of cultures are silent on issues around rape. So the group needs time to build trust to be able to share their experience.

2 It is important at the end of the workshop to come up with ideas of ways for raped women to get support. Participants need to come with recommendations on what needs changing and how to channel this into legal reforms in their countries.

3 This activity was done with women only, but it could be tried in mixed groups. You would need to think carefully about the methodology, perhaps putting Part 3 first as it is less personal.

4 If time is limited the three parts could be done separately. In Part Two bring out the following:

### **Myths**

Women are raped by strangers in dark places outside the home.

There is no rape in marriage.

Women say 'No' when they mean 'Yes'.

Men rape because they are overcome by sexual urges.

Men who rape are obviously abnormal.

### **Facts**

Most rapes take place at home by someone known to the woman

Women do get raped by their husbands.

'No' means 'No'.

Most rapes are planned for some time.

Every man who rapes is somebody's son, brother, husband.

5 You will need to prepare for this activity by collecting, before the workshop, stories about rape in the press. You could also ask participants to bring cuttings from their own countries or towns with them to the workshop.



## **Solicitor gets three years for rape attempt after Highland Ball**

A solicitor who tried to rape a woman lawyer who was his guest at a Highland Ball was jailed yesterday for three years.

Angus Diggle, aged 37, of Bolton, Lancashire, attacked the 25-year old lawyer after they left the St Andrew's Day ball at the Grosvenor Hotel, London, last November. The terrified woman awoke to find Mr Diggle on top of her wearing nothing but the frilly cuffs of his Highland outfit and a green condom.

Judge David Williams QC told him yesterday as he passed sentence at Swansea Crown court: "I have come to the conclusion that your attitude to women leaves a great deal to be desired."

Diggle's barrister, Michael Borelli, told the court his conviction meant complete ruin and it was inevitable that he would be struck off as a solicitor. Describing him as sexually inexperienced and naive, Mr Borelli said Mr Diggle was wholly unsuited to prison life. "He is utterly terrified of what will happen to him."

The Old Bailey heard how after the rape attempt the woman's friends confronted Diggle as he was lying on the floor. He demanded that they help him get dressed, saying "A man should never have to dress himself."

Later he told the police: "Well, I have been out with her. I have spent £200 on her. Why can't I do what I did to her?"





## **A night of madness**

Sometimes it takes a tragedy to startle people from the complacency of old — and destructive — attitudes. On July 13, Kenyans received such a shock, when 271 teenage girls were attacked during a rampage by dozens of their male classmates at St Kizito, a boarding school in central Kenya. Chased into a corner of the dormitory where they were trying to hide, 19 girls died of suffocation in the crush. Doctors say another 71 were raped. Last week 29 boys ages 14 to 18 were charged with manslaughter, two were also charged with rape.

The assaults were rendered all the more chilling because of the dismissive note struck by some officials. The *Kenya Times* quoted Joyce Kithira, the school's deputy principal, as saying, "The boys never meant any harm against the girls. They just wanted to rape." The episode is forcing Kenyans to re-examine attitudes that have long permitted rape to be a part of many girls' school years.



# Myths and realities about rape

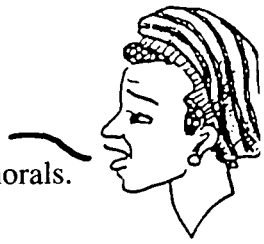
Rape is one of those crimes which causes emotional reactions in people. Some even think that rape is impossible, that a woman really wants it to happen. When a rape victim goes to the police station or to court, she will find that she has to prove that she did not provoke the rapist in some way.



MR. KOFIA

Rape happens a lot these days because women have loose morals.

Yes, I think it does happen more often today. But I don't think it is because women have loose morals.



MRS. KOFIA



MRS. KIBERENGE

But even if they have loose morals, do they deserve to be raped?

Have you noticed how women dress these days? All those tight trousers provoke men.



Eh! But I am an old grandmother and even I was raped.

And my friend's daughter was raped and she is only 9 years old.



Eh, you people! My neighbour's little 2 year old daughter was raped. Is she provocative?

Adapted from Oxfam Kenya: *Women, law and development legal guides*

