

# Part

# 2



This part of the kit provides background information on gender and includes activities on gender, gender roles and stereotypes and where ideas about gender come from.



## What is gender and why is it important?

Every society has its own ideas about what is masculine and what is feminine, this is called gender (see box below). Ideas of gender roles—how girls and boys, men and women should behave—affect all our relationships, including our sexual relationships. Gender roles affect if and when young people have sex, whom they have sex with and if they protect themselves against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus)<sup>1</sup>. But most young people (and older people too!) are not aware of the effect of gender on their lives, or, that because gender roles are created by society, they can be changed.

### What is gender?

- **Sex** describes whether someone is male or female according to biological differences. It is determined before we are born.
- **Gender** describes whether someone is masculine or feminine according to behavioural differences, for example, how they dress, their work and their status in society. These characteristics are defined by each culture so they can be different in different cultures and they can change.
- **Gender roles**—ideas about how men and women should behave—are created by society, culture and traditions. As they grow up, girls and boys learn about how women and men should behave from their parents, community, religious institutions, schools, and the media. Gender roles are also different for people of different ages—for example, young girls may be given very different tasks and levels of responsibility from their grandmothers. Gender roles vary from one society to another and change as society changes. Because gender roles are created by society, it is possible to change them.

## Young people and gender

### Differences for boys and girls, men and women

In most cultures, girls and women, and boys and men, are expected to behave in certain ways.

Girls and women may be expected to:

- ✿ be caring, gentle, passive, respectful and obedient
- ✿ be responsible for domestic chores and childcare
- ✿ speak and dress modestly
- ✿ please and obey men
- ✿ control their sexuality, behave responsibly and not show their sexual feelings.

*'Women should wear purdah (clothes that cover them from head to foot) to ensure that innocent men do not get unnecessarily excited by women's bodies. If women do not want to fall prey to men they should take the necessary precautions instead of forever blaming the men.'*

*Comment made by parliamentarian during debate on reform of rape laws, Malaysia.*





■ When she is initiated into womanhood in some communities in Tanzania, a young woman is shown by older women how she needs to have three cooking stones to support a pot on the fire. One stone represents her. The second stone represents her husband. But even with two stones the pot will not be entirely stable. The stability provided by the third stone represents the need for her to look for outside help in the form of support from another man or men to ensure she always has enough money to support herself and her children. The implication is that this money will be received in exchange for sexual favours.

Source: *Safely through the night*, Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD).

### Boys and men may be expected to:

- ✿ make important family decisions, for example about household expenditure, how many children to have
- ✿ marry and provide for their family
- ✿ be strong and not show their emotions
- ✿ take the lead in relationships and in sex.

*'When I was a boy my parents told me not to cry, as only girls cry. Being a boy meant that I played rough games at school and had to learn to hide my feelings when I was hit by the teachers. . . Only girls are allowed to cry. I avoided any display of emotions.'*

### Young men and women know what these expectations are and often agree with them.

■ In the Solomon Islands, many girls have mothers who are in paid employment, but still believe that the woman's main role is to care for the home and children.

■ In Zimbabwe, the qualities of an ideal boy most commonly mentioned were economic stability, academic excellence and virility, whereas for girls the most commonly mentioned ideal qualities were virginity, submissiveness, dressing decently, helping with chores. Boys in Zimbabwe expect girls to be submissive, making comments such as 'I do not expect my girlfriend to initiate sex'. While it is OK for boys to go to nightclubs and to drink beer, 'girls should not be seen in nightclubs'.

■ In Malta, girls noted that they 'need to be careful' and boys noted that 'men are much better workers'.

Source: Focus group discussions with young people, Commonwealth Youth Programme.

### But young people also know that the reality is not always the same as the ideal, that they fail to meet these expectations, and that although society is changing, society's ideas have not changed.

■ Teenage girls in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali said that virginity is very important for women but that 'nowadays, virginity is very rare and very difficult'.

■ Girls in Guyana acknowledged that they do not always behave as they were expected to—that they have older male partners, have sex before marriage, allow themselves to be influenced by 'bad' friends.

■ In Zimbabwe, girls noted that while the ideal girl does not have a boyfriend when she is at school or sex before marriage, in reality girls exchange sex for money and things their parents cannot afford to give them.

Source: *Reproductive health in the Sahel: youth in danger*, CERPOD and Focus group discussions with young people, Commonwealth Youth Programme.

## Gender discrimination

Many societies value men and boys more highly than women and girls:

- ✿ Girls often receive less food than boys and are less likely to receive health care.
- ✿ Girls are less likely to go to school or to complete school and their brothers' education is given priority.
- ✿ Girls are expected to help with domestic chores in preparation for being wives and mothers. Women may not be allowed outside the household alone or at all.
- ✿ Girls are married, and become mothers, at a very young age in some countries.
- ✿ Girls who become pregnant often have to drop out of school and may be rejected by their families, whereas boys who father children usually stay at school.
- ✿ Girls and women cannot own or inherit land or property or decide about divorce or obtain custody of children in some cultures.
- ✿ Girls and women are more likely to be subjected to violence, especially sexual violence.
- ✿ Girls and women are not allowed to work or to do certain types of jobs and often receive lower pay for doing the same work as men.
- ✿ Women are under-represented in decision-making bodies.

*'The wife is the property of the husband and so has less power than the master. He is the breadwinner and has the freedom to move around. You can't say no.'* Unknown source

*'At 10 years old I was circumcised and married to a man twice my age. I have had 14 children and am abused by my husband's family if I produce a daughter. I am not allowed to go out of the house. I cannot get a divorce because I will lose my home and children.'* Unknown source

Men and boys may be discriminated against in other ways, for example, they may be:

- ✿ expected to be 'strong' and not to show emotions
- ✿ unable to play some games that girls play, they may be discouraged from spending time with their mother and other women
- ✿ expected to defend their family and to fight in areas of civil conflict or in national wars
- ✿ expected to marry and have children
- ✿ expected to work and support their family and may have little time to spend with their children.



# Activity set

## 2



Looking at gender, gender roles and attitudes



### Exercise

## 1

# Sex and gender

**PURPOSE** To understand the difference between sex and gender

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Sheets of paper

**PREPARATION** Write the following statements (without the answers that are included below in brackets) on sheets of paper. Add your own local examples

*Women give birth to babies, men do not. (sex)*

*Little girls are gentle, boys are not. (gender)*

*Men's voices break at puberty. Women's do not. (sex)*

*Women can breastfeed babies, men cannot. (sex)*

*In England most construction workers are men. (gender)*

*In ancient Egypt men stayed at home and did weaving, women handled family business and inherited property while men did not. (gender)*

1. Explain to the group the difference between sex and gender (see FACT SHEET 2 *Sex and sexuality*).
2. Give a sheet of paper with a statement to each person in the group.
3. Ask the people in the group to decide on their own if the statement refers to sex or to gender. Allow 5-10 minutes for this.
4. Ask different members of the group to tell you what they decided. Then discuss the answers.

### Discussion points

*Did any statements surprise the group? Gender roles vary between cultures and over time. Are any gender roles different for the cultures within your group? Are there gender roles which young people have changed since their parents time?*

### Exercise

## 2

# Being a girl, being a boy

**PURPOSE** To explore what is good and bad about being a girl or a boy

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Small pieces of paper, pens or pencils and a large sheet of paper

1. Ask the girls in the group to complete the following sentences:

*I'm happy that I'm a girl because...*

*I wish I was a boy so that I could ...*

Ask the boys in the group to complete the following sentences:

*I'm happy that I'm a boy because ...*

*I wish I was a girl so that I could...*

2. Give the group five minutes to do this. Or read out the sentence and ask the groups to do a drawing to answer the two sentences.
3. Collect the papers and write up the answers on a large sheet of paper under each of the four headings.
4. Bring the group together and ask them to discuss the differences in the answers given by the boys and the girls.

**Note for the facilitator** This activity can also be done as a song and dance game. Each person takes it in turn to sing their sentence as they dance in the middle of the circle.



# Activity set

# 2



Looking at gender, gender roles and attitudes



## Exercise

# 3

## Gender roles

**PURPOSE** To explore what is good and bad about being a girl or a boy and social attitudes and expectations

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Small pieces of paper, pens or pencils and a large sheet of paper

**PREPARATION** Write the incomplete sentences on a large sheet of paper

1. Choose six incomplete sentences (some examples are given below). Write these out before the session on a large sheet of paper and then read them out to the whole group.
  - The best thing about being a man is...*
  - A man would never let a women see...*
  - A boy would be praised by his parents if...*
  - The parents of a boys let him...*
  - A girl would be praised by her friends if...*
  - Men get embarrassed when...*
  - Parents expect boys to...*
  - Boys are allowed to...*
  - Women really want to...*
  - A girl would get teased if she...*
2. Ask the participants individually to complete the sentences using their sheets of paper. Give them 10 minutes to do this. Then ask the group to form pairs and discuss their completed sentences.
3. In the big group, ask each pair what their responses were. Are there any responses that most people got the same?

### Discussion points

*Are there different answers for boys and girls? Are girls and boys expected to behave in different ways?*

*Who has these expectations of your behaviour? Parents? Other grown ups? Friends?*

*Are there some attitudes towards women that you don't feel comfortable with?*

*How can you change things?*

*Are there some attitudes towards men that you don't feel comfortable with?*

*How can you change things?*

# Activity set

# 2



Looking at gender, gender roles and attitudes



Exercise

## 4

# Gender assumptions—Tendai

**PURPOSE** To think about what assumptions we make about boys and girls, based on their gender

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Copies of worksheets 1 and 2. Tendai can be a boy's or a girl's name. Instead of Tendai, use a local, gender-neutral name

1. Ask participants to form two small groups.
2. Give a copy of worksheet 1 to one group and a copy of worksheet 2 to the other group. Do not tell the group there are two different Tendais.
3. Ask the group to discuss the questions on the worksheet in their small groups and to write their answers.
4. In the large group, feed back some of the answers. Discuss what different assumptions are made when Tendai is female or male, and why we make these assumptions.

### Worksheet 1 Tendai

Tendai is 10 years old. He lives with his mum and dad. He likes playing sports and listening to music. His best friend lives next door.

1. Which sports do you think Tendai likes playing?

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2. Who do you think is his favourite band?

---

3. What do you think his best friend is called?

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4. What do you think he does when he comes home from school?

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5. What do you think his favourite colour is?

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6. What do you think his favourite food is?

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7. What job do you think he wants to do when he grows up?

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### Worksheet 2 Tendai

Tendai is 10 years old. She lives with her mum and dad. She likes playing sports and listening to music. Her best friend lives next door.

1. Which sports do you think Tendai likes playing?

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2. Who do you think is her favourite band?

---

3. What do you think her best friend is called?

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4. What do you think she does when she comes home from school?

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5. What do you think her favourite colour is?

---

6. What do you think her favourite food is?

---

7. What job do you think she wants to do when she grows up?

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**Note to facilitators** Exercise 2 on page 30 also deals with gender roles



# Activity set

# 2



Looking at gender, gender roles and attitudes



## Exercise 5

## Gender assumptions—agree / disagree

**PURPOSE** To explore gender attitudes

**TIME** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Large sheet of paper

1. Explain that you will read out some statements. If they agree, participants should go to one end of the room. If they disagree they should go to other end of the room. If they are not sure they should stay in the middle of the room.
2. Read out the statements one by one—not more than six. Here are some examples to choose from, but you may want to use some of your own:
  - Boys are stronger than girls.*
  - The way you look is more important than the way you behave.*
  - Girls are more emotional than boys.*
  - Looking after children is not a man's job.*
  - Girls want to get married more than boys.*
  - A girl should always do what her boyfriend tells her.*
  - Sport is more important for boys than girls*
  - Girls need to find a good husband, boys need to find a good job*
  - A boy who likes cooking and looking after children is not a real boy*
  - Boys are less good at showing sympathy than girls*
3. When participants have moved to their chosen place in the room, ask one person from each end of the room to give reasons for their choice. Tell the group that they can change their mind and move after hearing other people's reasons.
4. When you have gone through all the statements, bring the group back together and discuss what people think. *Did the boys choose different ends of the room from the girls? Where do we get these ideas from? Did anyone change their mind after hearing what other people said? Why did they change their mind?*
5. Ask the group to try divide into smaller groups and rewrite the ideas so that girls and boys are equal. For example, *Sport is important for boys and girls.* Ask each group to read out one of their rewritten ideas.

# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



## Exercise

# 1

## Exploring media images of gender stereotypes

**PURPOSE** To explore how the media reinforces gender roles and stereotypes

**TIME** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Magazines, scissors, paper, pens

1. Divide the group into two smaller groups. Give each group some magazines. Ask one group to make a collage of the way women are portrayed and the other group to make a collage of the way men are portrayed, using pictures they have cut out of the magazines. If you do not have magazines, give them a large sheet of paper and pens and they can draw images instead of cutting them out. Allow about 20 minutes for this.
2. Bring the groups together to look at and discuss the collages they have made. Discuss the images, how these images maintain roles and stereotypes (a stereotype is a general assumption about what something or somebody is). Are these images accurate? How do young men and young women feel about being portrayed in this way?
3. Next, ask the whole group to think about television advertisements in which men and women are shown.
4. Return to the two small groups. Ask the groups to develop sketches and act out one advertisement, with gender reversed (males play female parts, females play male parts). Allow 15 minutes for this.
5. Ask the groups to perform their advertisement. Then with the whole group discuss how it felt to be a male playing a female and how it felt to be a female playing a male. Did it feel strange? If so, why?



## Exercise

# 2

## Exploring male and female images

**PURPOSE** To explore female and male images and gender stereotypes

**TIME** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS** Large sheet of paper

**PREPARATION** Bring examples of images of women and men, for example pictures from magazines and newspapers, the words of popular songs

1. Ask the group to brainstorm ideas about the way that women and men are depicted in films, TV dramas, songs, proverbs and religious epics. Write the words up on a large sheet of paper under the headings 'male' and 'female'.
2. Organise the group into pairs. Give each pair two pictures taken from a magazine that show a man or a woman. Ask the pairs to discuss these images and to think about the following questions: *What are the men and women doing? What characteristics do they show?*
3. Bring the group back together. Ask each pair to talk about their materials and what they noticed about the images of males and females.

# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



4. In the large group, discuss the roles that society expects men and women to play. What are the common stereotypes of males and females (for example, men are strong, women are weak)? Make a list of these stereotypes on a large sheet of paper.

#### Discussion points:

*From the materials, what are the images of male characteristics? Of females?*

*Which of these characteristics do you think are realistic or not realistic?*

*What do these images suggest that girls and boys can do?*

*How are you similar to the images? How are you different?*

*How do you feel about the stereotypes that are common in your society?*

#### Exercise

# 3

## Where do we get our ideas about gender?

**PURPOSE** To think about sources of information and attitudes about gender

**TIME** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Cards or small pieces of paper

**PREPARATION** Large sheet of paper or chalk to write on the floor

1. Brainstorm with the group all the sources of information and attitudes about gender, sex and sexual behaviour they can think of, until you have as many ideas as there are participants in the group. For example, friends, parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, television, films, teachers, health workers, churches, politicians, advertising, pop music, magazines, books.
2. Write one idea on each card.
3. Draw a line on a large sheet of paper or on the floor. Write 'very helpful' at one end, 'not at all helpful' at the other end, and 'somewhat helpful' in the middle.
4. Give one card to each person in the group.
5. Ask each participant to come forward and put their card at a point on the line depending on how helpful they think it is as a source of information.
6. Discuss with the group why they have put the cards in different places.

#### Discussion points

*Do you receive different information from different sources? If so, what it is like to have so many different messages coming from different sources?*

*Which sources have the greatest influence on you?*

*Which sources are most helpful?*

*Which ones are most accessible?*

*How could less helpful sources become more helpful?*

*What consistent messages would you like young people to receive?*

*How do young people deal with confusing messages?*

# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



Exercise

## 4

## Early messages and influences

**PURPOSE** To consider who and what influences ideas about gender  
**TIME** 30 minutes

1. Ask everyone on their own to think what messages they received from their mother and from their father, or from any one else, about the way that men and women should behave
2. Divide into small groups of girls and boys and ask them to discuss these thoughts. Ask the girls to brainstorm messages that girls receive, using the following sentence beginnings:

*Girls are...*

*Women should...*

*Men like women who...*

*Girls who...*

*It is best if women...*

Ask the boys to do the same using:

*Boys are...*

*Men should...*

*Women like men who...*

*Boys who...*

*It is best if men...*

3. When the groups have finished, ask them to consider which messages are relevant to them, which have a positive effect on their behaviour and which may have a negative effect. What would they need to change the negative messages to if they were going to make healthy decisions?

Exercise

## 5

## Family expectations

**PURPOSE** To think about the way girls and boys are treated in families  
**TIME** 30 minutes

1. Divide the group into groups of two or three people. Ask them to think about the first time that they became aware that boys and girls are treated differently and to spend some time discussing these memories.
2. Then ask the small groups to develop a short role play to explain what they have discussed. Allow about 15 minutes to develop the role plays.
3. Ask each group to present their role play.

**Discussion points**

*How were the males and females presented differently?*

*What differences are girls and boys born with? What differences do we learn? How do we learn these differences?*

*Are girls and boys and men and women treated differently in families? In what situations?*

*What does your family expect of you?*



# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



## Exercise 6

### The value of boys and girls

**PURPOSE** To explore social gender attitudes and values

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Sheets of paper, large sheet of paper

1. Ask the participants to imagine they are recently married and expecting a child.
2. Ask them to think what sex they would choose for this child, and the reason for their choice. Go around the circle asking each person to say what sex and why—put the choices and reasons on two separate sheets of paper. Write the total number who would choose a girl and the total who would choose a boy.
3. Discuss the reasons and people's assumptions about girls and boys (for example, boys will continue the family name, support the family and care for parents in their old age, girls will help in the home, get married).
4. Ask the group if they think that this will happen to them. Have some of these assumptions changed?

## Exercise 7

### Male and female roles

**PURPOSE** To think about what roles men and women are expected to have

**TIME** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS** Papers, pens, large sheet of paper

1. Divide the group into smaller groups. Give each group a large sheet of paper and ask them to divide it into three columns: female, male, either.
2. Ask them to first think about clothing and to write under the columns which types of clothes they think it is OK for females to wear, which for males and which either can wear.
3. Repeat the activity for other categories such as jobs and tasks around the house, playing sports, etc.

#### Discussion questions

*How does your community view girls?*

*How does your community view boys?*

*How do you see yourself?*

*Are your views different from those of the community?*

*What ideas about girls would you like to change?*

*What ideas about boys would you like to change?*

*What can we do to change them?*

# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



## Exercise

# 8

## Radha's story

**PURPOSE** To consider what early marriage means for girls

**TIME** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Copy of 'Radha's story' adapted to the local situation.

1. Ask the group to tell a story about anyone they know who has been married at a very young age. Ask them to describe what happened to that girl.
2. Use the following questions to facilitate a group discussion: *What does early marriage mean for girls? Why does the community say marriage at a young age is good? What disadvantages? How can the situation be changed? Who can change the situation?*
3. Ask someone in the group to read Radha's story aloud.

### Radha's story

*'When I grew up it was emphasised that I should be a dependent wife and devoted mother. I was only allowed to be educated up to secondary level. As soon as I started menstruating my family started talking about marrying me off. For two years my parents hunted for a suitable husband. Prospective grooms and their relatives would come to look me over. For some I was not fair skinned enough. For others I was not beautiful enough. At last one family chose me and the dowry haggling began. Eventually an amount was agreed upon. My father went into debt for my wedding preparations.*

*After the wedding I went to stay with my husband's family. I was soon into the routine of washing, cooking and cleaning. I was made to observe as many rituals as possible for my husband's welfare and so that I would have a son.*

*Unfortunately my first child was a daughter. Everyone mourned her birth. My husband refused to talk to me for several days. During my second pregnancy I was threatened with being thrown out of the house if I didn't produce a son. Luckily for me I had a son. I feel very angry when my daughter is treated unfairly.'*

4. After hearing the story, ask the group to discuss:  
*What is Radha telling us?*  
*Is her story familiar?*  
*Are there cultural beliefs and traditions that oppress women in our society?*  
*Who is responsible for the sex of a baby?*
3. Continue until all the pieces of card or paper have been read out. Remind the group about how they have voted.

### Discussion points

*Are the reasons why some jobs can and cannot be done by women and men valid?*

*What prevents men or women doing some jobs?*

*What do 'women's' jobs have in common and 'men's' jobs have in common?*

*How is society changing? Can the group think of things—in their country or elsewhere—that women do now that they didn't do in the past?*



# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



## Exercise

# 9

## How young men and women spend their time

**PURPOSE** To explore differences in gender roles and activities

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Large sheet of paper, paper, pens

1. Ask the participants to think about how they spend their time, what things they do every day (for example, spending time with friends, domestic chores), every week (for example going to the market, going to the disco), or less often (for example, visiting relatives, taking part in a local festival).
2. Ask the young men to form one group and the young women a separate group.
3. Ask each group to create their own activity clocks showing what they do each day, for example, 5:00 a.m. wake up, 5:30 a.m. milk the cows. Ask them to create activity clocks for adult men and women. Ask them to think about what they do during the day.
4. Bring the groups back together and look at the activity clocks.

### Discussion points

*Are there differences in the things that young men and women and adult men and women do?*

*Are there differences in work, responsibilities, leisure time and activities? Are these good? Are there things that you would like to change?*

*Do you think a man and woman who are married and have a family share the work load and responsibilities or do you think one of them does more work?*

*Do you think a man and woman who are married and have a family have equal power in their relationship or do you think that one of them has more power?*

## Exercise

# 10

## Women can't do that work

**PURPOSE** To think about gender roles and stereotyping and where these ideas come from

**TIME** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Cards or small pieces of paper, with various local occupations written or drawn on them, e.g. farmer, cook, maid, engineer, brick maker, bicycle repairer, teacher, nurse, doctor, food-stall vendor, vegetable seller, typist, architect, business person

1. Put the cards in a container.
2. Ask someone in the group to pick out a card and to act out the occupation shown on it. After the group has guessed what the job is, ask the person acting it if women can do this work. After he or she answers, ask the group whether they agree or disagree, and why. Then ask the group to vote on whether they agree or disagree and record the votes.

# Activity set

# 3



Thinking about how gender roles and stereotypes are created



Exercise

# 11

## Thinking about behaving differently

**PURPOSE** To encourage the community to consider gender roles and making changes

**TIME** 45-60 minutes

1. Ask the group of young people to create a drama to be shown to the community about gender issues and their effects.
2. Perform the drama in the community. Do this once without stopping.
3. Then repeat the performance, but this time give the audience a chance to stop the action at any point to discuss what is happening and how they think the characters could change what they do or say to improve the situation.
4. Follow the drama with a discussion. You can use the following questions to start discussion:

*How have gender roles changed in your lifetime?*

*How can greater equality between men and women benefit everyone?*

*What further changes would you like to see in the next generation?*

These activities can be taken further. For example, you can work with the community to draw a history map—draw a map of the village and the places that girls and boys go now and a map of where girls and boys went when their grandparents were young. Ask grandparents and young people to draw the map together and discuss the difference.



# Activity set

# 4



## Exploring the impact of gender



### Exercise

# 1

## Exploring gender stereotypes

**PURPOSE** To explore gender stereotypes and their effects

**TIME** 30-45 minutes

**MATERIALS** Cards or pieces of paper, tape

1. Brainstorm with the group all the words describing 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics that they can think of. Write each word on a card or piece of paper.
2. Give each participant a card and ask them to pass the cards among themselves until you say stop.
3. When you say stop, ask the participants to tape the card to the front of their clothes. Ask each participant in turn to describe how they feel about the characteristic on their card.
4. Discuss on how attaching fixed roles to males and females can limit opportunities for men and for women. Ask the group to imagine a world where there are no differences in the way girls and boys are treated in the family. Ask a few of the group to describe what they imagined.

### Exercise

# 2

## The advantages and disadvantages of being a man or a woman

**PURPOSE** To consider the effect of gender roles on women and men

**TIME** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS** Large sheets of paper, pens

1. Divide participants into four smaller groups. Give each group a large sheet of paper and pens. Ask each group to appoint a recorder to report back to the whole group.
2. Ask the first group to list all the advantages of being a woman in our society, the second group to list all the advantages of being a man, the third group all the disadvantages of being a woman and the fourth group all the disadvantages of being a man.
3. Display the sheets of paper and ask each reporter to read out their group's list.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences between the lists. Ask if men and women are limited by these roles and how? Are any of the roles interchangeable?

# Activity set

# 4



Exploring the impact of gender



## Exercise

# 3

## Hopes and dreams

**PURPOSE** To consider how gender roles and expectations affect young people's ideas about their future

**TIME** 45-60 minutes

**MATERIALS** Large sheet of paper, paper, pens

1. Ask the group to divide into separate small groups of young men and young women. Ask them to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future.
2. Each group should make a list of the ten things they would like to do in the next ten years. They should then arrange these ten things into three categories: *definite* (those they are certain they will achieve), *possible* (those they may achieve with luck or hard work), and *unlikely* (those they are unlikely to ever achieve). Ask them to write the ten things under each category on a large piece of paper.
3. Ask the groups to think about the barriers that prevent them from achieving the things in the possible and unlikely categories (for example, you may dream of becoming a pilot, but there are no women pilots in your country). Ask each group to write the barriers on a separate large piece of paper.
4. Put the pieces of paper up on the wall. Bring the groups back together and ask them to tell the rest of the group about their ten things and how and why they put them into the three categories.

### Discussion points

*What differences are there between young men's and young women's hopes for the future?*

*Are the barriers real?*

*Where do they come from?*

*Can they be changed?*



## 4



## Exploring the impact of gender



## Exercise

## 4

## Exploring the impact of gender on young men

**PURPOSE** To discuss young men's beliefs about themselves and about sex  
**TIME** 30 minutes

1. With a group of young men, discuss the following statements.

In general, men:

*Hide certain feelings*

*Are independent and don't ask for help*

*Avoid talking about personal matters*

*Compete with each other*

*Are brave, strong and take risks*

*Have a need to prove their manhood*

*Measure their value by their ability to earn money and support their family*

About sex, men:

*Pretend they know it all*

*Feel that sex keeps them healthy*

*Feel the need to perform*

*Find it difficult to talk about*

## Exercise

## 5

## Debate

**PURPOSE** To explore the possibility of change in gender relations

**TIME** 45 minutes

**PREPARATION** Write the statement on a large sheet of paper

1. Explain to the group that they are going to have a debate. The statement they are going to debate is '*The world would be a better place if men and women respected each other*'.
2. Divide the group into two smaller groups. Ask the first group to discuss among themselves arguments to support this statement. Ask the second group to discuss among themselves arguments against this statement. Allow about 20 minutes for the groups to develop their arguments.
3. Bring the two groups back together. Facilitate the debate, with each group taking it in turn to put forward their arguments.
4. Allow 20 minutes for the debate. At the end ask the group to vote in favour or against the statement. Ask the participants if any of them have changed their minds after hearing the arguments.