

# ANNEX C

## GENDER GROUP EXERCISES





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Adapted from: **Planting Equality: Getting it Right for Girls and Boys, Plan's Gender and Child Rights Training Manual by Plan International**

The games, ice breakers, and other group exercises here may be used during orientations (for Facilitators or Catalyzers) to help people understand gender concepts and identify gender norms. They may be used during the recommended monthly or bi-monthly reflection meetings to help Facilitators and Supervisors deepen their comprehension of gender and examine their own gender assumptions and gendered behaviors.

### Gender Awareness Games

#### 1. Gender Proverbs

This is a fun activity that explores how ideas about women and men are created and reinforced through social customs. Use it as a warm up for sessions on gender awareness or gender analysis, or to break a large group into smaller groups.

**Preparation:** Collect proverbs or quotes that demonstrate different beliefs about women, men, and equality. We recommend that you use locally relevant and culturally specific proverbs.

#### Examples of Proverbs:

- A man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks. (English)
- When men and women die, as poets sung, his heart's the last part moves, her last, the tongue. (Benjamin Franklin)
- Girls we love for what they are; men for what they promise to be. (Goethe)
- Man is the head of the family, woman the neck that turns the head. (Chinese)
- Prudent men woo thrifty women. (German)
- A woman is a flower in a garden; her husband is the fence around it. (Ghanaian)
- The man dies in the wind, the woman in the house. (Ugandan)
- Men are gold and women are cloth. (Cambodian)
- Men may be tarnished by their deeds, but these can be wiped clean. Women, once soiled, will always be stained. (On the importance of women's "proper" sexual behavior.)
- Just as you shouldn't try to set aside delicious food for tomorrow, if your wife is desirable don't have her walk behind you. (Cambodian)
- The rice gives the soil that cultivated appearance and the soil helps cultivate the rice seeds. (Cambodian) (A metaphor for the complementarity of women and men.)

**Instructions:** Divide the participants into pairs, or into small groups of five to eight. Ask participants:

- What does the proverb say about women and men (and gender relations if that concept has already been introduced)?
- What are the implications for women's and men's access to rights?

At the end of the small group activity, ask each group to present the highlights of their discussion.

**Variations:** To encourage dialogue or creativity, add one of the following tasks:

- Ask groups to think of other proverbs, quotes, or songs from their context that convey similar ideas.
- Ask groups to find a way to change the proverb to communicate ideas of gender equality. Post the new proverbs and have everyone vote for their favorite.

## 2. Knives and Forks

This is a fun puzzle that can energize a group while introducing or reinforcing ideas about inclusion and exclusion.

**Preparation:** You will need a knife and a fork. Identify a helper and give her/him the secret before the game begins. **Secret:** “Crossed” or “uncrossed” does not depend on how participants position the knife and fork, but on whether their legs are crossed or not! The knife and fork are actually irrelevant.

**Instructions:** Ask participants to sit in a closed circle. You and your helper should sit in the circle across from one another to ensure a clear view of all participants. State that you are going to explain the rules of the game only once, so they should listen carefully.

State that participants’ task is to pass the knife and fork to the next person. Each participant will choose to pass the utensils *crossed* or *uncrossed*, and will correspondingly say aloud, “crossed” or “uncrossed.” Explain that you will tell them whether they are right or wrong.

You, the moderator, will start the passing. Cross your legs. Cross the knife and fork and announce “crossed” as you pass them to the next person.

As people pass the knife and fork and announce “crossed” or “uncrossed,” congratulate those who happen to get it right (saying “uncrossed” when their legs are *uncrossed*, and “crossed” when their legs are *crossed* – regardless of the position of the knife and fork). Also, announce when someone gets it wrong. Your helper can also announce right or wrong for the people on your side of the circle whom you may not be able to see.

Participants will soon realize that there is a secret code, and some people will solve it quite quickly. Encourage them to join in commenting on whether people get it right or wrong.

As the game continues, those who haven’t yet cracked the code may begin to feel frustrated, excluded, stupid, or apathetic. These experiences help make the game a learning exercise related to participation or institutions – but they are also signs that it will soon be time to end the game.

When you tell participants to stop passing the utensils – but before telling them the secret code – ask people to raise their hands if they understand the secret. Ask those who have not solved the secret to state how they are feeling. Ask those who do know the secret to state how they are feeling. Then ask one of them to explain the code to those who did not figure it out.

**Debriefing:** Ask questions about the experience from participants’ perspectives:

- Why did participants who figured out the secret **not** tell the rest of the group what the code was? (They rarely do, even though the rules did not say they could not)
- What was it like to feel empowered (“cracking the code”) or disempowered (not understanding the rules of the game)? How did this affect their enjoyment of the game?
- How did they feel about others (that is, how did those who did not understand feel about those who did, and vice-versa)?

Next, discuss the implications for participation in real-world institutions and groups (formal and informal). For example:

- How is transparency and access to information important for participation?
- What challenges do previously-excluded individuals face when they are invited to participate (that is, when they are told how to solve the code)?

**Conclusion:** Conclude by explaining that this game is linked to learning about social institutions. Social institutions are how children and adults learn “the rules of the game.” The rules of institutions have their own internal logic, and seem “natural” to individuals who have been socialized in them, but in fact they are socially created. This means that they may be quite arbitrary in some ways, that they are different in different contexts and that they can be changed.

### 3. Gender Facts

**Preparation:** Research 5-10 gender facts that will be controversial or unknown, and organize these facts into a ‘quiz’ with multiple-choice answers (examples below). Create questions that will be relevant to your target audience’s technical expertise, geographical origins, etc. Print the quizzes or write questions and multiple-choice answers on a flipchart.

**Instructions:** If the quiz is done by individuals or in small teams:

- Give people a limited time to complete the questions.
- Take answers per question (people calling out or holding up their hand) and then give correct answers (optional: provide an explanation).
- Individuals or teams score their answers.

If the quiz is done in plenary:

- Read each question and ask participants to guess the answers.
- After some guesses reveal the answer (optional: provide an explanation).

#### Examples of Gender Facts (Correct Responses in Bold)

1. 24% of men in developing countries usually collect drinking water, compared to what percentage of women?<sup>1</sup>
  - a) 40%
  - b) 64%**
  - c) 75%
2. In 12% of households, children collect drinking water. Which statement is correct? <sup>1</sup>
  - a) Boys are twice as likely as girls to get water.
  - b) Girls are twice as likely as boys to get water.**
  - c) Boys and girls have an equal chance of getting drinking water.

#### Some great resources for Gender Facts:

Because I Am a Girl Report Series.

<http://plan-international.org/girls/resources/publications.php>

State of the World’s Children (UNICEF 2012)

[http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC%202012-Main%20Report\\_EN\\_13Mar2012.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC%202012-Main%20Report_EN_13Mar2012.pdf)

Facts on Gender-Based Violence (Oxfam)

<http://oxfam.ca/what-we-do/themes-and-issues/womens-equality/16-facts-about-gender-based-violence>

Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse Snapshot (UNICEF 2010)

[http://www.unicef.org/protection/CP\\_Thematic\\_Report\\_2010\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/CP_Thematic_Report_2010(1).pdf)

(Note: 8% of girls usually collect the drinking water, as opposed to 4% of boys.)

<sup>1</sup> Information for Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6 from: State of the World’s Children, UNICEF, 2012. [http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC%202012-Main%20Report\\_EN\\_13Mar2012.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/sowc2012/pdfs/SOWC%202012-Main%20Report_EN_13Mar2012.pdf)

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3. A national census in Bangladesh indicated what percentage of women aged 20-24 gave birth before the age of 18? <sup>1</sup>
- 20%
  - 40%**
  - 60%
4. A national census in Uganda asked boys and girls aged 15-19: “Do you think that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances?” Which are the correct findings? <sup>2</sup>
- Young men are much more likely to agree than young women.
  - Young women are more likely to agree than young men.
  - Equal numbers of men and women agreed.**
- (Note: When surveyed, 69% of young men and 70% of young women agreed with this statement.)
5. A national census in India assessed adolescents on their knowledge level of HIV/AIDS. What do you expect came from the research? <sup>2</sup>
- Young men are more likely to be knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS than young women.**
  - Young women are more likely to be knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS than young men.
  - Both young men and women had equal knowledge levels.
6. Comparing national level data: Which statement below is false about young women (aged 15-19) who are currently married or in union? <sup>1</sup>
- Niger has one of the highest indicators – at 60%.
  - A Ghanaian girl is as likely as a girl in either Sudan or Kenya to be married young.**
  - Young women in South Asia are nearly three times more likely than girls in South East Asia and the Pacific to marry young.

Note: 8% of Ghanaian girls aged 15-19 are married, compared with about 25% in Kenya and 26% in Sudan.

7. Each year, an estimated 800,000 people are trafficked across borders. Which percentage represents women and girls? <sup>3</sup>
- 80%**
  - 65%
  - 50%
  - 40%
8. Women are more susceptible to violence during times of emergencies or crises due to increased insecurity. <sup>3</sup>
- True**
  - False

<sup>2</sup> No source provided

<sup>3</sup> Information for Questions 7 through 9 from: Oxfam Website – ‘Facts about Gender-Based Violence’ <http://www.oxfam.ca/what-we-do/themes-and-issues/womens-equality/16-facts-about-gender-based-violence>

9. Globally, what number of girls are estimated to be “missing” as a result of sex-selective abortions or neglect? <sup>3</sup>
- 90 million
  - 60 million**
  - 20 million
  - 10 million
10. Of the 60 million girls worldwide who are child brides (marriage before the age of 18) which of the following are true: <sup>4</sup>
- Half of these girls are in South Asia**
  - Just over half of these girls are from Sub-Saharan Africa
  - 10% of these girls are from Sub-Saharan Africa

Note: Of the 60 million child brides worldwide, 31.3 million are in South Asia and 14.1 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. Violence and abuse characterize married life for many of these girls. Women who marry early are more likely to be beaten or threatened, and more likely to believe that a husband might sometimes be justified in beating his wife.

11. Worldwide, up to \_\_\_ percent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16. <sup>5</sup>
- 10%
  - 25%
  - 50%**
  - 75%

Note: An estimated 150 million girls under the age of 18 suffered some form of sexual violence in 2002 alone. The first sexual experience of some 30% of all women was forced. Among those who were under 15 at the time of sexual initiation, up to 45% report that the experience was forced.

#### 4. Balloon Stomp

This activity is a great way to explore stereotypes, myths, value judgments, and beliefs about gender. Participants will learn to make connections and link gender concepts together. This activity can also be used to break participants into pairs for future small group work.

**Preparation:** Choose a set of questions and answers (Q and A; see below for examples) on gender equality. Write each Question on a piece of paper, and each Answer on a separate piece of paper. Roll each piece of paper and place it in a balloon: each question will be in a separate balloon from its answer. Blow the balloons up.

#### Q and A Examples:

**Q: What is gender equality?**

**A:** The vision and end result whereby girls and women are not discriminated against because of their sex, and experience equal outcomes and opportunities (social, economic, political).

**Q: Gender equity should lead to what?**

<sup>4</sup> UN Women: The Facts: Violence against women and millennium development goals.

<sup>5</sup> Say No, Unite to End Violence Against Women. UN Women. <http://saynotoviolence.org/issue/facts-and-figures>.

**A:** Gender equality

**Q:** Apart from gender, what other factors influence girls' experiences of discrimination and oppression?

**A:** Economic status, sexuality, age, disability, ethnicity, religious affiliation

**Q:** Why is a gender perspective needed for child rights?

**A:** Boys and girls have unique needs and face different challenges in realizing their rights.

**Instructions:** In plenary, participants walk around the room (perhaps to music) until the Moderator says “*jump!*” Each person stands on a balloon to burst it, and releases the statement inside. Each participant then looks for the person with the Answer to the Question they have, or the Question to the Answer.

In plenary, have participants read aloud their questions and answers, and discuss with the group.

## 5. Gender Relay

This exercise energizes participants while clarifying key concepts of *and* differences between sex and gender.

**Preparation:** Place two flipchart stands next to each other, and allow enough space for each team to form a line in front. Mark a starting line on the floor at least 2 meters from the flipchart stands.

	Sex	Gender
Women		
Men		

Divide the flipchart paper into two columns, then draw a line across the middle to create two rows. At the top of the left column write “Sex” and at the top of the right column write “Gender.” Label the top row “Women” and the bottom row “Men.” Repeat on the second flipchart paper.

**Instructions:** In this activity, participants work in two teams and try to record as many correct sex or gender characteristics as possible. The team with the greatest number of correct characteristics wins.

Ask participants to form equal lines in front of the flipchart stands. Explain that this is a relay and the marker is the baton.

There are two gender terms on each flipchart, and spaces to put characteristics for men or women under each term. For example “head of household” could be written under men as a gender characteristic or “give birth” under women as a sex characteristic.

The first participant will run up to the flipchart and write down one characteristic (for either sex or gender, women or men), then run back to the line and pass their marker to the next person. Make sure participants understand the game, then begin the relay!

This should be a fast-moving and fun game. Put pressure on teams by reminding them how much time they have left and counting down the last 15 seconds. End the relay after about 5 minutes (depending on the number of participants and how fast they are moving).

Review each characteristic in plenary, awarding one point for each correct answer. When reviewing each team’s results, ask for explanations or rationales. The real aim of the activity at this point is not so much to see who wins but to clarify concepts for participants.

**Tips on difficult answers:** “Strong” is often written as a sex characteristic for men but it is more accurately a gender characteristic. Ask what is meant by strong: is it how many kilos someone can lift at one time, how many kilometres someone can walk with a heavy weight on their head, or how many hours they can work in the fields? Point out that what we think of as ‘strong’ is socially determined, and in fact by many definitions (such as stamina) women are as strong as or stronger than men.



“Tall” or “taller” is often written as a sex characteristic for men. This one is difficult – in most situations adult men from one group are taller than adult women from the same group. However, women from the Netherlands, for example, are likely to be much taller than men from Indonesia. Also, people’s heights have increased over generations due to better nutrition. So is being tall a sex characteristic? Or is it more of a result of ethnicity, nutrition, and other factors?

## Introductory Games

### 1. Bingo

This will energize participants while introducing them to a new subject and to each other.

**Preparation:** Prepare bingo cards (a table of five columns and five rows, forming 25 boxes), and write a different characteristic or experience in each box.

- If you know the participants well, choose an interesting characteristic of each one, such as “speaks four languages,” “once lived in Sweden,” “was once in a movie,” “has twins,” “collects children’s art,” etc.
- If you don’t know your participants, make a list of more general traits, such as “drinks tea instead of coffee,” “loves the color orange,” “has many pets,” “likes old movies.”
- You can choose traits or experiences that relate directly to the training topic, such as “has participated in shadow reporting for CEDAW,” “knows the difference between practical gender needs and strategic gender interests,” “shares domestic work with spouse,” etc.

**Instructions:** Give each participant a bingo card and a pen. Explain that, for the next XX minutes, participants will mingle, introduce themselves, and find people who match the traits on the card. They must put the person’s name in the corresponding box or have the person sign the appropriate square. The first person to fill five boxes across or down yells “**Bingo!**” and the game is over.

In plenary, ask participants to introduce themselves and share one of the interesting traits they learned about someone else.

### 2. What I Like; What I Don’t Like

This activity introduces participants to each other and to the training.

**Instructions:** Organize participants into small groups of no more than four people each. Ask them to discuss, by way of introduction, the following:

- Two things they like doing that are also considered traditional for their gender
- Two things they dislike like doing that are considered traditional for their gender
- Two things they like doing that are considered non-traditional for their gender
- Two things they wish they could do that are considered non-traditional for their gender

Return groups to plenary and ask one person from each group to introduce the members of his/her group and provide a short summary of their discussion.