

Team exercises to explore gender equality issues

You might want to consider using these exercises with your team to get people thinking and talking about gender issues and identity. These exercises need to be carefully and sensitively facilitated, remembering that some people identify neither as male nor female.

1. Gender stereotypes

Show this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pF1j22x-yU8>

Have a discussion within your team. Ask people to share their reactions to the video, bringing out issues of gender stereotypes.

You might want to talk about how:

- Gender affects the way society is structured and so affects how we work with people.
- We are not born knowing whether we are a girl or boy, and often understand this because of something someone does/says to us.

2. Sharing stories from our childhood

Think about the first memory you have of being a girl or a boy. Find someone to share your story with and answer the following questions and then swap round:

- What was the situation?
- How did it happen?
- What could be the long-term effects i.e. how has/could this influence the person you are today?

Think about the times when you had to make choices about being a boy or girl or fitting in.

Now have a plenary discussion and invite people to share their thoughts about the exercise.

You might want to encourage people to reflect on how stereotypes can be limiting for both men and women.

3. Daily time use exercise / 'a day in the life of...'

This can give insight into how girls, boys, men and women spend their time as individuals. It helps to identify the differences and similarities between the lives of women and men (or girls and boys) and to unpack some of the differences to understand why women and men have specific roles, how these roles are valued, how they are influenced by social norms and expectations of female and male behaviour and their responsibilities and opportunities.

Ask participants to select a woman or girl from their community or project and start at the beginning of their day and record how they spend their time, moving through the day from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. When they have done this for a woman/girl, ask them to do the same for a man or boy (or they can do it in 2 groups and then share the findings at the end in plenary). They can write this up on a flipchart or do it through drawings.

Discussion:

- Share the different timelines, pull out and explore the commonalities.
- Discuss 'free-time' – is there any?
- What do girls/boys or women/men do in their free time?
- What would they like to do in their free time?
- How do workloads and how people spend free time vary between the sexes and what about the mobility they have? - how do people feel about this?
- (If you selected a girl and boy, how do they think their time-use will change when they get older?)
- What do they think are the reasons for the differences between females and males?
- What are the underlying causes for these differences? Are there issues you think should be addressed through your project? What needs to change?

This can also be a helpful exercise to do as part of your consultation in communities to inform your project design. This should be done through single sex focus groups.

Guiding Questions for consulting community members:

- In relation to some of the differences in the daily time use exercise or any other issues affecting girls and boys/ women and men - what would girls/women like to change for themselves and what do boys/men think should change for girls/women?
- **What are the most important things that should change for girls/women?** (can prompt them e.g. in relation to decision making/choices, access to services/resources, mobility, legislation – **What to them would be transformative change?** And explain this in words that they would understand means transformative) [N.B. They may think that nothing needs to change]
- **WHAT has changed for girls/women and boys/men in the past few years?** (And are the changes over time significant or small? Do they see these changes as positive or negative?)
- **WHY are these things changing?**
- **What is enabling these changes?** (**What do they think is working well and why?** - explore what is influencing change – i.e. political, social, religious, economic factors, the influence of particular organisations, the role of the media etc. and what they themselves do and what others in the community do to enable change – i.e. the role of men, boys, older women, leaders, government officials etc. What is influencing change for the worse?)
- **What is NOT changing or which changes are small?**
- **Why are these things not changing?** (i.e. **What are the barriers to change?** – ensure we focus down on gender norms and barriers to gender equality, rather than broader barriers to development – so we need to go beyond lists of issues like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment as all these things affect men and women differently. **Which of these barriers are important to address for them and HOW?**)