



# GENDER EQUALITY



## BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

- Why is gender important in development?
- What are the main issues?
- Women and development facts

Including  
**WORKSHOP  
TOOLKIT**  
and  
**RESOURCES**

# WHY IS GENDER IMPORTANT IN DEVELOPMENT?

Despite some progress over the past two decades, gender inequality remains a central development challenge. Human or economic development cannot occur when major sections of the population are restricted, in terms of choice and opportunity, from realising their potential.

Women account for two thirds of the world's poor. In developing countries, although rural women are responsible for much of the food production, they have very limited control over land and other necessary assets. They may also be excluded from access to micro-finance loans, saving schemes and other entrepreneurial initiatives solely because they are women.

Gender inequality is exacerbated by poverty and is a key factor in its persistence. Women and girls bear the direct costs associated with this inequality and as a result, women's experience of poverty is different to that of men – it is often more severe and more prevalent.

The quality of life for society as a whole is adversely affected by these power differences.



Elizabeth Namfukwe and Showthem Sikombe, Northern Province, Zambia

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES?

**The pursuit of equal rights for women has been a slow process. In 2010 the UN General Assembly agreed on a new organisation known as UN Women which has access to a budget to help it tackle issues such as discrimination, education, poverty, conflict, gender-based violence, health and participation.**



### Discrimination

Promotion of women's rights has had to counter strong cultural and historical beliefs that women should be in a domestic environment and that only men should enjoy property rights. Discrimination denies equality for women by restricting their access to education and decent work, two key elements of economic status.

In many industrialised countries, the process of ending discrimination against women is relatively advanced. So too, in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa old laws are being changed to enable women to own land and property.



### Education and poverty

The importance of education in the empowerment of women to overcome inequality cannot be overstated. Educated girls are less likely to marry at a very young age, more likely to secure paid work, have greater competence as mothers and are more active in their communities.

However, for many in developing countries, access to primary and secondary education for girls is still out of reach. Many women in developing countries still face a demanding life of unpaid labour, combining subsistence farming and family care-giving. Where women are in paid employment, they are predominantly in low-paid roles or in the informal and temporary sectors, often with very poor work environments. Women are particularly susceptible to unstable food prices or recession, as they lack security. Further, the situation has been exacerbated by the HIV and AIDS crisis with over 30% of households in sub-Saharan Africa now headed by women.



## Gender-based violence

In 2008, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched his UNite to End Violence Against Women campaign, stating 'We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government'. This is a reminder that gender-based violence occurs everywhere, although the problems are perceived to be more serious in developing countries. This is often because circumstances of conflict or extreme poverty are associated with higher incidence of violence against women. Discrimination on cultural grounds facilitates the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in a number of countries in Africa and elsewhere, despite being banned in almost all of the countries where it survives.



## Health

In poor countries poverty reduction strategies are more effective when population growth is reduced. Reproductive health remains a great concern, especially for those women who cannot access the pre- and post-natal care they need. Although progress has been made, the majority of births in the developing world still do not receive skilled assistance, with resulting maternal deaths, often from preventable causes. The UN launched its Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health at the MDG summit in 2010, which is continued in the SDGs, and hopefully this will help realise universal access.



## Participation

Efforts have increased to encourage greater representation of women at all political and governmental levels. In post-conflict countries the political landscape is changing with parliaments voting a higher representation of women. In fact Ireland is lagging behind a number of developing countries. For example, the highest number of female parliamentarians for any country in the world at 63.8% is Rwanda while Ireland's highest number of Parliamentarians on record is only 22.3% (UN Women, 2017).

## WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT FACTS

- [In the countries SHA have a presence in Africa, women do 70% of the manual labour on small farms] – Rephrase – In parts of Africa, where communities depend on farming to survive, women produce up to 80% of the food grown
- Yields for them are 20-30% lower than men because they don't have the same support (land access, grants for tools, improved seeds, micro-finance loans, etc)
- "Food discrimination"- women eat last and least, which can lead to malnourishment.
- In Ethiopia 10% of girls attend second level school.
- Women could increase yields by up to 30% if they had the same access to productive resources as men.  
<https://selfhelpafrica.org/ie/celebrating-africas-rural-women/>
- While women work outside the home, they also do most of the work in the home: for example, caring for children and other members of the family, cooking and other housework.
- Girls are more likely than boys to do unpaid work in their own household.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, where many people do not have drinking water in their homes, many women have to travel long distances to collect water. This means they have less time to do other things.
- In politics, on average women have only 17 per cent of parliament positions around the world.
- Violence against women happens all over the world and women suffer many different forms such as physical, sexual, and psychological violence. This happens both within and outside their homes.
- In some countries, there are still laws that make it hard for women to own land and other types of property. In many parts of sub-Saharan Africa married women have no control over how the household money is spent, including their own cash earnings.  
(Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm>)

# GENDER EQUALITY

## WORKSHOP TOOLKIT

- Begin by asking students to move desks to the side and seats into a large semi-circle.
- Start with an ice-breaker (see Appendix for suggestions) such as the Geography quiz.
- Introduce the subject and what you intend doing with the class. We look at what Gender Equality means, examples in more traditional parts of Africa, and also we look at our experiences growing up here in Ireland.



## CASE STUDIES



### FELISTER NAMFUKWE

Felister Namfukwe left her husband a few years ago.

He was abusive towards her, she says. From then on, she had to manage her farm and provide for her family on her own.

Felister dreamt to make their life better: "I joined the project with a strong will to work hard and, after receiving training, I was certain I would be able to produce more food from the bean and groundnut seeds that I received"



### EMMA KAYELA

After her husband passed away and her seven children grew up and left the farm, Emma Kayela found herself struggling to maintain her six acres land on her own.

Emma's situation changed when funds provided from the new savings and credits group allowed her to buy flour and cooking oil, with which she made fritters that she sold at monthly markets.



## CONCEPT

Ask for ideas on what the term 'Gender Equality' means to the students.

"Treating men and women in the same way, with the same rights and opportunities".



## THE GIRL EFFECT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg>

Introduce the video by explaining that the video shows a reality for many young women around the world including areas where SHA works. Ask the students some questions first. Perhaps to think of what they think is a normal upbringing for a 12-year old girl.

*\*Perhaps not appropriate viewing for under-14s.*

### Discuss

- "What did you feel - was that disturbing/ inspiring/ unrealistic?" It's still the case in some poorer, and more traditional communities in Africa. "Did the video suggest



there is a way out?" Education for girls is suggested as a powerful way to escape that kind of fate.

- How does that compare to Ireland? Was it very different in past generations? Suggest ask mother or grandmother "was Ireland a different place?"
- Explain that we try and look at Gender Equality as it affects our lives too, not just poor, traditional African communities "over there".



Caption 1



Caption 2



Caption 3



Caption 4

### 3

## GROUP WORK

In a mixed class, ensure there is a mix of girls and boys in each group.

### 'How Gender affects my life choices'

(see Resources list below for questions)

- Each group has a sheet of paper divided into 2 columns: 'As a girl', and 'As a boy'. Ask a question then give them a minute or two to discuss and write down responses.
- At the end of the exercise, review the responses with the class and discuss. Always gets a good engagement.
- Ask the groups to jot down where we learn these gender roles: prompt by asking who teaches us these roles? Where do we see/hear gender messages? Allow a few minutes for each to share their answers.

Predictable patterns emerge from the exercise. Point out that we're all subject to influences from a very young age about what it means to be a boy or a girl.

OR

### Gender Stereotypes

Put the words 'Boys; and 'Girls' on the board and ask the students to tell you the first things which come into their heads relating to each in turn. Suggest colours, toys given as children, subjects in school, behavioural characteristics, hobbies, chores, etc. Write in relevant column.

The exercises highlight that we tend to think in stereotypical ways. When we examine each of the responses, interesting comments, observations and discussion usually emerge.

You may wish to further this exercise by then showing the video below on gender norms which also highlights norms for women and girls in parts of the world where SHA works.



### Gender Equality: Gender Norms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4viXOGvuu0Y>

Ask the students what they think is fair and unfair. Perhaps move straight into the walking debate after the video (skipping the warm-up)

### 4

## 'EQUALS'.

Introduce the video by asking who is the current James Bond? (Daniel Craig). Tell them the video is from the UK, it was made for International Womens Day in 2011 and a little dated but still relevant.

- Brief video with Daniel Craig imagining life as a woman. Judi Dench voiceover with some startling facts, finishing with the question, "Well 007, are we equal?... Until the answer is yes, we must never stop asking."
- Ask the class the same question.

### Equals: International Women's Day Video on Gender Equality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC8Ls-5nRxM>





## MOVING DEBATE

As an optional warm up (and an exercise in self-managing and negotiation), divide the class into lines - works best with 10-12 in a line. Challenge each line to complete the task first, asking them to line up:

1. Alphabetically by first names. Check winner by asking them their names quickly. If same name, reason for one in front of the other? (Maybe because of surname, or second name?)
2. Next, alphabetically by Surnames.
3. Finally, alphabetically by mothers' first names.

Then they're ready! Stress that listening to others is important if the Moving Debate is going to work.



### Example statements

*"It's fine for women and girls (of any age) to be encouraged to participate in beauty pageants"*

*"Single sex schools should be abolished"*

*"There should be quotas for women in high government positions"*

*"Employers should be legally obliged to pay half of salaries into the spouse's accounts"*

*"Women should retain their birth names when married"*

*"Women have always done more work and that's normal"*

*"Work in the home should be acknowledged (and paid for)"*

*"In Ireland there are still glass ceilings and glass elevators (e.g. men in nursing) in the workplace."*

*"Gender inequality makes poverty worse in Ireland and/or the developing world"*

*(Women are more likely to use income to improve their family's education, nutrition and health)*

## RESOURCES

### The Girl Effect: The Clock is Ticking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg>

### Equals: International Women's Day Video on Gender Equality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC8Ls-5nRxM>

### National Women's Council of Ireland

50 People 1 Question – Would Ireland be better if it was run by Women?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0EDvAxmBY>

### Are Men and Women Equal in Irish Society?

Y Factor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6u7oQh8XBg>

### Katherine Zappone series:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks\\_J-qy7Hws](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks_J-qy7Hws)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlkfnZTvfDE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKSg5Acjj1c>

### Link to DevelopmentEducation.ie Gender Resources

<http://developmenteducation.ie/resource/resource-category/gender/>

### "I Am".

SUPPORTING AFRICA'S WOMEN FARMERS, an upbeat, forward-looking exhibition available on loan to hang from Self Help Africa, or as a .pdf file to download. Ten large, striking portraits with explanatory captions illustrate the importance, and positive benefits of supporting Africa's women farmers. As an aid to engage students there is a quiz to accompany the exhibition.



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