

## Aim: To learn about why gender still matters



### Objectives: Young people will...

- Learn about issues relating to gender and how that impacts on discrimination and women's inequality globally.
- Explore their own thoughts and feelings around gender issues.
- Decide whether gender matters in the 21st Century and what can be challenged and changed.

### Background:

This workshop was written in response to students' concerns from all over Ireland. UNICEF found gender inequality to be the most frequently raised topic by both girls and boys, when asked what issues most concerned them. Young people are eager to have conversations about why gender discrimination matters and the impact it can have on their friendships, relationships, self-confidence and life choices. Sexism, gender stereotyping, gender-based violence, and the sexualisation of young people are serious issues which affect both boys and girls and are becoming increasingly prevalent in schools, social media and society in general. It's important that adults offer young people the tools to deal with these challenges and that starts with providing a safe place to discuss their concerns, build understanding and learn about the root causes of gender inequality and its global impact.

### Resources and Links:

The New Internationalist article by Hazel Healy, [Is there a Feminist Spring?](#) takes stock of the challenges ahead.

Ted Talk by Sheryl WuDunn: [Our Century's Greatest Injustice](#) investigates the oppression of women globally.

Ted Talk by Jackson Katz: [Violence Against Women—It's a Men's Issue](#) shows the importance of men to act.

Ted Talk by Tony Porter: [A Call to Men](#) asks men and boys to break free from the "Man Box"

Ted Talk by [Cameroon Russell](#) questions societies need to commodify and sexualise girls and women.

BBC Programme [Blurred Lines The New Battle of the Sexes BBC Documentary 2014](#)

Videoblog by Laci Green [WHY I'M A...FEMINIST \\*gasp](#) - she lists of 60 reasons why she thinks feminism is still important and relevant in 2013.





**Sources:** Images from the discussion cards can be found on the [UNICEF It's About Us Pinterest page](#) "gender" folder. Many of the images are linked to more lengthy articles on the subject matter and where possible, sourced to the original image.

**You will need:** Does Gender Matter discussion cards



10m

**View:** Consider viewing all of the videos first, to choose the best video for your group.

- [Emma Watson at HeforShe 2014](#) - UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson gives a speech at an event focusing on gender inequality.



10m

### Discussion Points:

- How do you define Feminism? ...a movement establishing equal political, social and cultural rights for women.
- Are you a feminist Why? Why Not? Many people do not like to define themselves as feminists. They prefer to consider themselves as egalitarian or humanist. Feminists would argue that the terminology highlights the fact that females are generally the group that suffers from inequality. However words and labels should not get in the way of advocating for the rights of those who suffer from inequality.
- What is the role of men in gender equality? The battle for gender equality has mainly been fought by women, however in the last decade men have begun to realise the crucial role they play in building gender equality, especially around issues like violence against women.



25m

## Group Work: Why Gender Matters...

**Note to Teachers and Group Leaders:** The “Does Gender Matter?” discussion cards cover a wide variety of gender related issues, some of which are controversial like pornography or quite distressing like FGM. It is recommended that you choose the cards you feel appropriate for your class, their age group and your level of comfort in discussing the issue. It is always good practice to alert the students ahead of time, to the topics you will be covering, so as to give them the ability to opt out of the discussion. Discuss boundaries and create ground rules ahead of the workshop to ensure a safe and positive atmosphere. Be aware that issues like rape, FGM, sexual abuse and violence against women might touch on issues your participants have experienced. Also be sensitive to students who might be dealing with gender identity or sexuality issues. Depending on what you are comfortable with or what you feel is appropriate for the class or individuals, you can use this forum as a means to address these issues sensitively. These websites can provide further support, have them on view so that any participant can take note of the website anonymously: [rapecrisishelp.ie](http://rapecrisishelp.ie) , [cari.ie](http://cari.ie), [reachout.com](http://reachout.com) , [womensaid.ie](http://womensaid.ie) [spunout.ie](http://spunout.ie), [belongto.org](http://belongto.org)

There are three ways in which to facilitate the group work depending on your group size and ability, please choose the method you feel best suits the group.

- Divide the group into pairs and ask each pair to pick a gender card and discuss for 10 minutes and then feedback outcomes to the larger group. (Allow students to choose their partners so they are comfortable to discuss topic)
- Divide the group in to smaller groups of 4 people, assign a subject heading to each group, from which they can choose the image they want to discuss. After 15-20 minutes ask the groups to feedback outcomes to the larger group.
- Have a class discussion based on one card or subject heading.

After the discussions ask the group if there are any areas they feel need further discussion time. Take note yourself, if the subject might need further exploration. Finish by asking the participants to vote on “Does Gender Matter in 21st century?”



**Discussion Subjects:** Click on each heading to view and download the discussion cards

### **1. Gender & Representation**

Why are women consistently underrepresented in the media, politics and leadership roles? They make up 50% of the world's population yet are only in 24% of news stories. There are 9 out of the 152 elected heads of state that are women and they make up only 21% of Parliamentarians. Women are underrepresented in the corporate sector with only 14-15% representation and 20% in the non-profit sector. How does this affect agendas, decisions and choice? How do we change this? These cards discuss these issues and aim to address the lack of progress in female representation.

### **2. Gender & Development**

Globally are women suffering because of their gender? Gender based violence is routinely committed against women, often sanctioned by their families and communities due to tradition. 70% of the 130 million children out of school are girls. Pregnancy is the leading cause of death in girls aged 15-19 and by 2016 almost 165 million girls will be married before they turn 18. Research has shown that investment in girls breaks cycles of poverty, it reduces population growth, improves economic growth, builds stronger and healthier communities and families. These cards discuss these issues and aim to explore the affect of gender on global development.

### **3. Gender & Stereotyping**

What is stereotyping and how does it impact on girls and boys? From a young age women's roles in society are formed through princess role models of being pretty and appealing. Gender based toys pigeonhole girls as loving carers and gentle, delicate fashionistas and boys as fighting machines, who need to save the world. Boys/Men are stereotyped in to rigid boxes, told to be strong, tough and brave or face being called a wimp or worse a "girl". These cards discuss these issues and aim to break through the limits of gender stereotypes.

### **4. Gender & Sexism**

What is sexism and how does it affect women? Will society ever succeed in resolving the gender pay gap or increase women's participation and representation in decision-making roles, without first tackling the gender power imbalance that fuels sexism? What is the role of men in addressing this? How is feminism viewed today and should men identify themselves as feminists? These cards discuss these issues and aim to challenge embedded sexism.



## **5. Gender & Oppression**

Should women's rights be protected over cultural beliefs and traditions? Who protects them and how? Women's inequality is often deeply rooted in traditional, cultural or religious attitudes. As a result, women suffer from being unable to access their human rights. Thousands of girls and women are killed every year in "honour killings"; thousands more suffer acid attacks; millions of girls undergo genital mutilation and are forced to become child brides all in the name of tradition and cultural practices. The international community must do more to protect women and girls and keep them safe from harm. These cards discuss these issues and question societies responsibility to affect change.

## **6. Gender & Violence**

Is violence perpetrated on people based on gender? Why is violence directed at women and girls? Does inequality cause this violence? Domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and harmful traditions such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages and honour crimes, trafficking in women, forced prostitution and violations of human rights in armed conflict (in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy), forced sterilisation, forced abortion, coercive use of contraceptives, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection are all forms of gender based violence. Violence against women and girls will continue, unless society addresses the root causes of gender based violence. These cards discuss these issues and aim to confront the issue of violence against women.

## **7. Gender & Media**

What is the role of women in the media? How does it differ from the role of men? Does the media promote gender stereotyping and in so doing perpetuate sexist attitudes toward women, putting them at risk of sexual violence and encouraging dominating behaviour from men? These cards discuss these issues and aim to encourage a more balanced representation of women.

## **8. Gender & Sexualisation**

Are girls being sexualised in our society and are we doing anything about it? Sexualising young girls refers to forcing adult sexuality on children at an age when they are physically, mentally and emotionally not ready. It gives children confusing messages and imparts the belief that they are valued for their physical attractiveness. This sexualisation occurs in everyday products, television, film, music and advertising. Examples include: Clothing, such as bras and G-strings marketed for 7 to 10-year-olds, adult models dressed as young girls to sell magazines, young pops stars like Katy Perry sending mixed messages, toys and dolls aimed at young girls with sexual clothing like fishnet tights and G-strings. These cards discuss these issues and aim to challenge societies acceptance of it.



5m

### Closure:

"Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all,"

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**



10m

### At Home:

Each card has take action steps to take home. Encourage the participants to take positive actions on what they have discussed.



### Take Action 'Taking on the responsibility challenge'

1. Brainstorm and decide on how your group can take action and encourage people to take on the responsibility challenge.
  1. Hold an art exhibition on gender issues
  2. Perform a flashmob about gender, sexism, stereotypes etc
  3. Create an art installation, graffiti wall, mosaic, community garden
  4. Stage a play
  5. Put up an information stand, about a specific gender issue and ask people to make a commitment pledge
  6. Hold a screening of [Girl Rising](#)
2. Plan your event using our toolkit
3. Contact local media to cover the event
4. Spread your message online
5. Prepare, Rehearse, Motivate and Participate