

## PEER-TO-PEER ToT MODULE

### TOPIC 2

#### ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

##### Information for peer-to-peer trainers

Although many states have long ago departed from the classical patriarchal model, the norms of the patriarchal society still have an imprint on people's attitudes. A woman is primarily expected to be a good housewife and a mother, to take care of the home and the family, to ensure an atmosphere of family warmth and bring family members together. A man is still perceived as the figure responsible for the family's sustenance and support. These attitudes put pressure on many women to abandon their professional and career pursuits, while men are goaded by the expectations of becoming the main income source for the family.

Women face bigger challenges in combining their professional and family lives. Irrespective that having a part-time job is a matter of personal choice, women most often resort to it in order to balance between employment and family duties. All of this has a negative impact on women's opportunities and impairs their chances for career growth. It is women, who have to make a 'compromise in the name of the family' more often than men.

Education is an important factor, which exerts a huge influence on the choice of career and professional fulfilment. However, teachers' and parents' expectations about students' abilities and achievement, as well as about their behaviour at school and in society, are strongly influenced by stereotypes. Boys are expected to be more difficult to handle – absent-minded, naughty, disobedient, while girls are perceived as attentive, meek, diligent. These stereotypes are more and more often refuted by reality, but still, many girls and boys opt for educational and career choices reflecting men's and women's traditional roles. Girls are often encouraged to pick a major in areas traditionally perceived as 'feminine', which, for exactly the same reason, go together with a lower social status and, respectively, a lower income.

Traditionally, and almost uncritically, it is accepted that girls are doing less well in mathematics and that they have no aptitude for the exact sciences, but they are good at reading, writing and narration. With boys, it is exactly the opposite – they excel in math and the exact sciences, but they underperform in the humanities. These educational gender stereotypes often transform into self-fulfilling prophecies, which limit both sexes' development opportunities since childhood. Young people are particularly prone to the effect of stereotypes, which do not merely influence their views about the people around them, but shape their perception of themselves, of their abilities, of the boundaries they have to observe. Therefore, in almost any country, girls prevail in the university majors like teacher training (education), healthcare and social work, the humanities and arts. Boys choose mainly technical areas like engineering and computer sciences.

Women often get a lower payment for doing work of equal value to that of men. One of the main reasons is the manner in which women's and men's skills are assessed. Any work, which requires similar skills, qualifications and experience, is usually underpaid and undervalued when done by women.

Women often face harder challenges in finding a job, especially if they apply for higher positions, because employers fear that they might be incapable of fast and critical decision-making, that they and would be more emotional, indecisive and impractical than men, and, last but not least, they might go on maternity leave. All this results in the so called „glass ceiling”, which impedes women’s career development and access to top executive positions.

Women make up the better part of the unemployed labour force worldwide, while those who work, pertain to the informal sector. The roles of a woman as a mother and a housewife are dominant in the general perception of the female sex, whereby, a woman is expected to spend longer hours at home where her main responsibilities and duties cluster. This is the reason for women’s impeded access to the labour market and for the lower payment they get for doing work of equal value to that of men.

***The purpose of the suggested exercises is to allow trainees to understand what type of economic consequences might be generated by gender inequality, as well as to consider how gender stereotypes of men’s and women’s roles raise invisible barriers to the career development of women and limit the balanced inclusion of men in family duties, together with women.***

### Peer-to-peer exercises

#### Version No. 1

**Exercise duration:** 40 minutes

**Required materials:** role cards; a list of statements

#### **Exercise description:**

1. Trainers hand out role cards to the trainees – one card per participant (cards can be repeated). They must not be shown to the rest of the participants.
2. Trainers invite participants to read their cards and act ‘in character’. To help them, trainers read out some of the following questions, pausing after each question, allowing participants to think and acquire a better understanding of their character and his/her life:
  - What was your childhood like? What games did you play? What were you dreaming of? What kind of dreams did your parents have for you? Which was your favourite subject in school? Were teachers encouraging you towards higher achievements in your learning and in what way?
  - What does your daily routine look like now? Where do you go in your free time? What do you do in the mornings, at noon and in the evenings? Are you financially provided for? How much do you earn per month?
  - What are you excited about and what do you fear? What do you dream of?

3. After that, trainers invite participants to line up together.
4. Trainers read out a list of situations and events. Every time, when trainees feel their reply to a certain statement would be 'yes', they make a step forward. Otherwise, they stay where they are.
5. Trainers read out the situations one by one and pause, allowing trainees to move forward and consider their position amongst the rest of the group.
6. Finally, trainers ask everyone to remember the exact spot where they were standing and dismiss trainees, allowing them several minutes to get 'out of character' prior to making a wrap-up with the entire group.

#### Wrap-up and assessment

- What happened and how did you feel throughout the activity? What did you learn?
- What does it feel like when you make a step forward or stay where you are?
- At what time did those of you, who were moving forward faster, notice that others were not moving at the same pace?
- Can you guess their roles? (At this point in the discussion, participants disclose their roles).
- Was it hard or easy for you to play different roles? What idea did you acquire of the person, whose character you played?
- Was society reflected in your acting in any manner whatsoever? In what manner?
- Trainers invite their peers to think if the society where they live ensures better chances and for whom – for men or for women? What can be done as a first step to address the problem of gender inequality in society?

During the wrap-up and assessment session it is important for trainers to find out where the trainees had found information about the men and women whose characters they 'enacted'. Did they draw on their personal experience or on other sources (news, books, jokes)? Are they sure that the information about the characters, whom they had personified, was genuine? To what degree did the gender stereotypes and prejudices about the roles and qualities of men and women affect their depiction of character?

## ROLE CARDS:

- You are a man working in a software company and earning a lot of money but you decide to set up your own company.
- You are a man with a degree as a primary education teacher. You have never practiced your profession but you feel that this is your vocation and you apply for a job at a school.
- You are a woman applying for a job in a big IT company with 20 more candidates, mainly men. A day before the interview you find out that you're pregnant.
- You are a woman applying for a managerial position in a construction company and you're competing with two men.
- You are an attractive young woman who has recently graduated from the Technical University. You want very much to begin work in your field of specialisation but during the job interviews the questions you get are mostly related to your personal life.
- You are a housewife and a mother of two children. You have a degree in accounting but you do not practice your profession because you had to stay at home and take care of your children, who often get sick.
- You are a young woman who has recently earned an academic degree in Mathematics. You dream of a scientific career but your parents advise you to begin work as a teacher because it is a job more suitable for a woman.
- You are a young man who has recently earned an academic degree in Applied Arts. You still have no job where you could apply your knowledge and skills properly, and a female acquaintance, who is a kindergarten director, offers you a job.
- You are a young father. Your wife works in a company where she would not be allowed to take a long maternity leave to raise a kid, and you go on unpaid leave to take care of your child. Your colleagues and friends tell you that you're crazy.
- You are a man who goes for a job interview together with a female fellow student from the Technical University. Your female colleague was the honoured graduate of the class and you know that she is very well prepared for the job for which you are both applying because she's been helping you multiple times during your studies. The employers hire you for the vacancy.
- You are a woman who goes for a job interview together with a male fellow student from the Technical University. Your male colleague was a mediocre student and you have helped him multiple times during his studies. This is why you're convinced that they are going to hire you for the vacancy. However, the employers decide in favour of your colleague.
- You are a woman and you work as a financial consultant with a bank. However, you're the mother of a young child who often falls ill and you are not allowed to be out of work way too often. Your husband is a lawyer and he refuses to stay at home and care for the kid with the argument that a good career means everything in a man's life.

- You are a woman and you work in a big commercial company. You work wholeheartedly and diligently in a team membered predominantly by men. Your duties are the same as those of your colleagues but you're paid a lower salary.

### Statements:

Trainers read out the following statements. THE TRAINEES, WHO THINK THAT A STATEMENT IS TRUE FOR THEM, make a step forward. Trainers invite trainees to see how far they moved as compared to the rest of the group.

- Your competence is valued and respected in the society where you live.
- You can easily find a job in your field of specialisation.
- You are confident that you will succeed in your professional fulfilment.
- You can combine your family duties with your professional schedule.
- You are financially independent.
- You are satisfied with your life.
- You feel a successful person.
- You feel the need for professional fulfilment.
- You don't think that life has always been fair to you.
- You think that your gender comes to your aid sometimes.
- You think that your gender is an obstacle sometimes.

### Version No. 2

**Exercise duration:** 40 minutes

**Required materials:** posters, markers

### Exercise description:

1. Trainees split into groups (of 4-5 members). Some of the groups are assigned to present 'An accomplished woman', while the other groups have to present 'An accomplished man'. The groups continue their work for 15 minutes.

2. The groups additionally receive the following guiding questions;
  - Is he/she married?
  - Does he/she have children? How many?
  - What is his/her job?
  - What does he/she do in his/her free time?
  - What income does he/she earn?
  - What challenges does he/she face on a daily basis?
  - Whom/what does he/she rely on if there are problems in the family?
  - Whom/what does he/she rely on if he/she has problems at the workplace?
  - What are his/her successes?
  - How does being a man/woman make life easier/harder for him/her? In what situations?
3. The groups nominate a speaker to present their work.
4. After the presentations of the groups' working outputs, trainers start a discussion within the big group. Questions for discussion:
  - Is there a difference between an accomplished man and an accomplished woman?
  - How and where is our perception of a woman's and a man's fulfilment manifested? In what areas of action are their accomplishments expressed: in their family, professional, personal or public life?
  - Do gender stereotypes affect our perception? In what way?
5. How can gender inequality be explained from the perspective of our understanding about a woman's and a man's accomplishment? (For instance, in many cases, a woman's fulfilment is associated with her role of a mother, while a man's fulfilment is associated with his professional standing).
6. What economic consequences of gender inequality can we derive at the end of the discussion, based on the group presentations. (For instance, what incomes do women and men earn? What is the status of the professions practiced by males and females, etc.?)