

PEER-TO-PEER ToT MODULE

TOPIC 3

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF GENDER EQUALITY

Information for peer-to-peer trainers

Gender equality means that women have the same opportunities in life as men, including for participation in public life. Gender-based justice means the recognition of men's and women's different needs and interests, which requires a redistribution of power and resources.

Gender equality is also related to the honest and fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. Males and females have different needs and capabilities and that those differences have to be identified and resolved in a manner which adjusts the inter-sex imbalances.

Gender equality is a safeguard for the universal human rights of women and men, as well as for some of their specific rights. For instance, the labour rights of pregnant women and working mothers will be observed because gender equality embraces and recognises the different needs and interests of men and women stemming from their biological specifics.

Gender equality will ensure women's broader participation on the labour market and enable women to take high managerial positions. This will result in their involvement in decision-making, which, in its turn, would allow the inclusion of new viewpoints in the handling of issues and difficult cases.

On the average, women spend 2/3 of their working hours in unpaid activities, which include their household duties, against 1/3 of unpaid working hours for men. Equality of genders in the economy will lead to a more equalised distribution of resources: time, income, career opportunities.

Women's economic independence is an important prerequisite for a decent, violence-free life. The economic dependence of women on their husbands and partners is considered one of the main reasons driving men to commit violence or put their female partners under control, while women would swallow this suffering for the fear of losing their financial support and thus, their security, which is actually in question.

Last, but not least, gender equality ensures the unbiased choice of education and profession, which contributes not merely to the satisfaction of needs pertaining to physical survival and security, but of the need for self-respect and self-fulfilment. This means that women must be encouraged and supported to pursue professional development in areas like the IT sector, engineering, academic and scientific work, while men must be encouraged and supported to penetrate the care sector (child care, social work) and school education. A bigger number of men teachers in primary and secondary school will exert positive impact on the gender socialisation of boys and girls, as the male behaviour model is almost unrepresented in schools.

The purpose of the suggested exercises is to provide trainees with certain definitions related to gender equality and to understand the economic benefits of such equality.

Peer-to-peer exercises

Version No. 1

Exercise duration: 40 minutes

Required materials: posters, markers

Exercise description:

1. Trainees split into groups (of 4-5 members). Each group is provided with the definitions of: *gender equality; gender division of labour; access and control; discrimination on the grounds of sex.*
2. The groups work on the definitions and, based on their reflexion, list the possible economic benefits of gender equality. For better clarity and consistency, the benefits for men and for women, respectively, are listed separately.
3. After the groups complete the assignments, they nominate speakers to present their work.
4. The peer trainers open up a discussion in the big group to additionally clarify and complete the list of economic benefits resulting from gender equality. Questions for discussion:
 - For whom is gender equality important? For men or for women? Why?
 - How do women and how do men benefit from gender equality?
 - How does gender equality impact power relations in society?
 - What type of family and career restrictions to women and men does gender equality eliminate?
 - What in the *gender equality* concept is key to the fulfilment of women's and men's needs?
 - How does gender equality foster the freedom of choice – the choice of education; the choice of profession; the choice of leisure activities, etc.?

Version No. 2.

Exercise duration: 40 minutes

Required materials: posters, markers

Exercise description:

1. Trainees split into groups (of 3-4 members). Each group is assigned to depict *gender equality* with a metaphor.
2. Firstly, every group discusses what „gender equality” is and each group member shares with the rest what he/she understands by “gender equality”. Secondly, every group decides on the metaphor they would use to depict *gender equality*.
3. The groups present their metaphors of gender equality and provide arguments in support of the metaphors they came up with.
4. Trainers hand their peers definitions of ‘Gender equality’ and ‘discrimination on the grounds of sex’ and steer the big group into discussion.

Discussion questions

- Based on the suggested definitions, in your view, to what extent does gender equality exist in our society? What does society lack, which prevents it from attaining full gender equality?
- How will society change if full gender equality existed?
- What kind of benefits could be derived from gender equality in economic terms?
- Which restrictions, pertaining to family and career, would gender equality relieve men and women from?
- In what way is gender equality related to the freedom of choice: the choice of education; choice of profession; leisure activities, etc.?

Definitions

Discrimination on the grounds of sex – Systematic unfavourable treatment of individuals based on their sex, which results in the denial of rights, opportunities or resources

Sexual discrimination (also known as ‘**sexism**’) is a complex of prejudices and manifestations of discriminatory and/or hateful behaviour to individuals on the grounds of their sex, but the term may also refer to the general division of people based on this criterion.

According to sexist ideas and bias, sexes exhibit basic differences, which predetermine the different social roles, different degrees of sexual freedom and a different legal status for men and women. These theories refer to various beliefs and models of thinking:

- The belief that one sex is superior to the other;
- The binary understanding of sexes: each person belongs either to one or the other sex and may not possess any features of the opposite sex;
- Stemming from the above, the idea of stereotyping the concepts of ‘masculinity’ (a gender role) for men (as a sex) and the concept of ‘femininity’ (a gender role) for women (as a sex).

Sexist thinking, in the general case, is in favour of the male sex but its direction can sometimes be reversed. Women are often believed to surpass men in certain activities (such as housework, raising children, needlework, etc.), while men surpass women in all other areas of life. As a result, women are refused access to certain professions and, in some countries, they are deprived of education and of any social expression.

On a legislative plane, the developed states (mainly Western societies) invest efforts to fight sexist behaviours through anti-discrimination laws, especially concerning the workplace, because, irrespective of development, sexism in social areas and social stereotypes still affects them.

Gender equality – Gender equality means that women, as well as men, enjoy the same opportunities in life, including avenues to participate in public life. Gender-based justice means the equivalence of life results for men and women, recognition of their different needs and interests, which requires a redistribution of power and resources.

Gender equality is also related to the honest and fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept admits that males and females have different needs and capabilities and that those differences have to be identified and resolved in a manner which adjusts the inter-sex imbalances.

This includes the non-discrimination on gender grounds against individuals aspiring towards power positions, opportunities, distribution of resources and benefits and the access to services. Therefore, it is very important that society would assess correctly the commonalities and the differences between men and women and the different roles they play.

Sexual division of labour – Socially shaped ideas and practices, which determine the roles and activities suitable for women and men. This applies to the various types of work done by men and women, as a consequence of their socialisation and the adopted models of work within a certain context.

Access and control – The productive, reproductive and social roles require the use of resources. As a whole, women and men have different levels of access (opportunities to make use of the same thing) both to the resources required for their work and fulfilment, as well as to control over such resources. Resources can be economic, such as land and machinery; political: such as representation, leadership and legal structures; social: care for the children, family planning, education.