



WOMEN AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT

Programming and Activities Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Objectives of this Guide | 3 |
| 1. Key Concepts and Definitions | 4 |
| 1.1 Understanding Gender | 4 |
| Suggested Exercise #1: Sex and Gender | 4 |
| 1.2 Gender Socialization and Its Effects | 5 |
| Suggested Exercises #2: Gender Socialization | 5 |
| 1.3 Key Definitions | 6 |
| 1.4 Influence of Gender on MN(C)H/SRH Outcomes | 7 |
| Suggested Exercise #3: Kabula's Story | 8 |
| 1.5 Intersection of Gender and the Social Determinants of Health | 9 |
| Suggested Exercise #4: Social Determinants of Health | 10 |
| 2. Featuring Women and Girls Empowerment in Communications | 11 |
| 2.1 Defining Social and Behavior Change Communications (SBCC) | 11 |
| 2.2 Developing an Effective Message | 11 |
| 2.3 Tips for Gender Transformative Communications | 12 |
| 2.3.1 Gender Transformative Communications Do's and Don't's | 13 |
| 3. Women and Girls Empowerment Curriculum | 15 |
| Activity #1: What Is This Thing We Call Gender? | 16 |
| Activity #2: Values Clarification | 19 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #2 | 21 |
| Activity #3: Hours in a Day | 22 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #3 | 25 |
| Activity #4: Learning About Human Rights | 26 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #4 | 31 |
| Activity #5: The Woman Box | 32 |
| Activity #6: Gender Stereotypes | 36 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #6 | 39 |
| Activity #7: Being assertive | 40 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #7 | 44 |
| Activity #8: Who Makes Decisions? | 45 |
| Activity #9: What Is Violence? | 50 |
| Homework Reflection for activity #9 | 54 |
| Activity #10: Myths about Gender-Based Violence | 55 |
| Resource sheet for Activity #10: Myths and realities | 58 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #10 | 59 |
| Activity #11: Healthy Relationships | 60 |
| Activity #12: Parents by Accident or By Choice? | 65 |
| Activity #13: The Effects of Child Marriage | 68 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #13 | 72 |
| Activity #14: Closing Circle | 73 |
| Annex 1: Kabula's story | 75 |

Please Note: This guide was developed by Plan International Canada's gender equality teams to provide knowledge and practical activities for the implementation of women's groups and women and girl's empowerment activities, primarily within the context of part of sexual and reproductive health projects. It is primarily intended for use by Plan International Country Offices implementing SRH projects. The information and guidance included in this document however, can be applied to any number of projects or organizations working on improved sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health and gender equality outcomes. They can also be adapted for use in any sector program.



OBJECTIVES OF THIS GUIDE

Promoting the **empowerment of women and girls or building the inherent individual and collective agency of women and girls** is a core objective of Plan International's mission and global strategy. As such, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is an important aspect of all Plan International programs and projects. Plan International defines power as **the ability to shape one's life and one's environment**. The lack of power is one of the main barriers that prevent girls and women from realizing their rights and escaping cycles of poverty. This can be overcome by a strategy of empowerment, and view gender-based empowerment as **building women's and girls' assets or capital (social, economic, physical, political and personal), strengthening their ability to make choices about their future and act on them, and developing women's and girls' sense of self-worth and their belief in their own ability to control their lives**. A key activity towards this end is invariably the formation or leveraging of existing local women's and/or girls' groups that serve as safe learning and sharing spaces, support networks and collective action platforms.

This guidance document is intended as a succinct go-to guide that Plan International country offices can use when designing and implementing women's empowerment interventions, particularly as part of sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health projects. This guidance document includes key definitions and concepts and activities that can be facilitated with women and girls' groups.

This guide was developed with a special focus on sexual and reproductive health programs since women and girls' empowerment is one of the three key gender equality strategies used by Plan International to help improve sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health outcomes (along with the engagement of men and boys, and the provision of gender responsive and adolescent friendly services). However, this can still be used and adapted for other projects.

1. KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

1.1 UNDERSTANDING GENDER

Sex refers to the biological differences between women and men- or the binary male/female differences. These are universal and timeless. E.g. only women across time and around the world bear children and breastfeed.

Gender refers to the social interpretations and values assigned to being a woman, man, boy or girl. More specifically, it refers to the way behaviours and identities are determined through the process of socialization. The roles and expectations of women and men are usually unequal in terms of power, agency and control over decision-making, assets and freedom of action. They are specific to every culture and change over time.

| Sex | Gender |
|--|----------------------|
| Biological | Socially constructed |
| Universal | Culturally Specific |
| Born with | Learned |
| Cannot be changed or difficult to change | Changes over time |

SUGGESTED EXERCISE #1: SEX AND GENDER

Ask the group to brainstorm/ “Wordstorm” or free-list of words describing men and women.

| Woman | Man |
|-------|-----|
| | |
| | |

Questions:

- What words describe a woman; what words describe a man? Write them in the table categories.
- Which words purely represent the sex difference between men and women?
- Which words can describe both men and women?

Note: For a group exercise and depending on where the groups meet, a flipchart/chalkboard can be used and if that is not available a chart can be drawn on the ground or simple props like a hat for a man and a skirt (or other culturally appropriate apparel) can be hung up to generate discussion. A note taker can write the words, where literacy is not a challenge. If it is a challenge one or two members can memorize the terms. The point is not to have a perfect chart with words but to get the group to think about what sort of labelling is assigned to women and men and how many of them are truly sex-based and gender-based differences.

1.2 GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Socially constructed gender norms and values affect all of us all the time- from the time we are born, across our life cycles. Messages of the social difference between boys/ men, girls / women are communicated to us by persons and institutions that are closest to us – family, community, school, religious institutions, media and continue to be communicated to us through society and its institutions.

SUGGESTED EXERCISES #2: GENDER SOCIALIZATION

Personal reflection in pairs

When was the first time you realized you were a boy or girl?

- What was the message that led to this realization?
- Who communicated it to you?
- Where was the message communicated?
- How did you feel?
- What impact can this have on us as boys/men or girls/women?

The effects of gender socialization

While social constructions of gender vary from place to place, inequalities between boys and girls and women and men occur everywhere; and as a result of them:

- Boys and girls **learn different skills** that give them different advantages over the other.
- Boys and girls **receive different opportunities and treatment** that give them different advantages over the other.
- Boys and girls grow up believing their **capabilities are different and develop behaviours** to conform, giving them different advantages over the other.
- Boys and girls as they grow end up taking **different roles and responsibilities** giving them different advantages over the other.
- Boys and girls grow up **limiting their expectations of each other** giving them different advantages over the other.

Gender socialization leading to discrimination and inequality:

Gender socialization boxes women and girls and men and boys into specific roles and stereotypes and has effects at several levels with damaging consequences not only for individuals but also for society:

At the personal level

- **It violates integrity** by reducing a person to a single characteristic or attribute which often cannot be changed
- **It denies** means of self-fulfillment to optimal potential
- **It has a negative cumulative effect** - not a singular one-time or isolated experience; faced in multiple settings and often through the life cycle

At the societal level

- It denies social cohesion and development
- It creates instability and conflict
- It reduces productivity (household and national)
- It causes poverty and exclusion

The effects of gender-based discrimination on women (and girls) by and large around the world are grave, placing women and girls at a disadvantage relative to men and boys:

- Women commonly have less decision-making power (in the community and household as well as nationally).
- Women commonly do not have equal control over household or development resources.
- Woman commonly face strong access barriers to information and resources.

However, certain gender norms within a society may not necessarily lead to harmful inequalities, such as when gender norms are flexible and women and men, girls and boys, have the opportunity to make their own choices.

1.3 KEY DEFINITIONS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</p> | <p>Gender-based violence refers to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence inflicted on a person because of being male or female. Girls and women are most frequently the targets of gender-based violence, but it also affects boys and men, especially those who do not fit dominant male stereotypes of behaviour or appearance. Gender-based violence may refer to criminal acts of aggression committed by individuals, or to socially sanctioned violence that may even be committed by State authorities. Among these are human rights infringements such as domestic violence, trafficking of girls or boys, female genital mutilation/cutting, or violence against men who have sex with men.</p> |
| <p>GENDER DISCRIMINATION</p> | <p>Gender discrimination describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male or female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities. For example, social exclusion, inability to participate in decision-making processes, and restricted access to and control of services and resources are common results of discrimination. When this discrimination is part of the social order it is called systemic gender discrimination. For instance, in some communities, families routinely choose to provide higher education for their sons but keep their daughters at home to help with domestic work. Systemic discrimination has social and political roots and needs to be addressed at many different levels of programming.</p> |
| <p>GENDER EQUALITY</p> | <p>Gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlements to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. Gender equality does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys are the same. Women and men, and girls and boys have different (but related) needs and priorities, face different constraints, and enjoy different opportunities. Their relative positions in society are based on standards that, while not fixed, tend to advantage men and boys and disadvantage women and girls. Consequently, they are affected in different ways by policies and programs.</p> <p>A gender equality approach is about understanding these relative differences, appreciating that they are not rigid and can be changed, and then designing policies, programs, and services with these differences in mind. Ultimately, promoting gender equality means transforming the power relations between women and men, and girls and boys in order to create a more just society for all.</p> |
| <p>GENDER STEREOTYPES</p> | <p>Gender stereotypes are socially constructed and unquestioned beliefs about the different characteristics, roles, and relations of women/girls and men/boys that are seen as true and un-changeable. Gender stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced through processes including the education and upbringing of girls and</p> |

boys, as well as the influence of social and political institutions and media. In many societies, girls are taught to be responsive, emotional, subservient, and indecisive while boys learn to be assertive, fearless, and independent.

Gender stereotyping occurs when such characteristics are persistently attributed to the roles and identities of males and females in society. Gender stereotyping shapes people's attitudes, behaviours, and decisions. It locks girls and boys into behavioural patterns that prevent them from developing to their full potential and realizing their rights. Gender stereotyping can lead to social exclusion of those who do not fit the stereotypes.

1.4 INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON MN(C)H/SRH OUTCOMES

The health status of women and men, girls and boys is influenced by gender also. Prevailing gender inequality and related barriers at the household, community and health facility level are key determinants of MN(C)H/SRH. While the impact of gender issues varies by degree and nature within each country's socio-cultural context, **three clusters of gender issues and barriers** are consistently pervasive that have direct bearing on poor MN(C)H/SRH access, utilization and outcomes.

1) Low status and low agency of women and girls contributing to:

- Disproportionate burden of domestic care work on women and girls
- High rates of child marriage and early child bearing
- Restrictions on autonomy, mobility and decision-making at the household level to seek MN(C)H/SRH information and services independently
- Lack of access to and control over financial resources
- High rates of Gender Based Violence
- Low educational status, low knowledge of MN(C)H/SRH and ability to access MNCH/SRH information
- Exclusion from community level participation in decision-making bodies-community health committees
- Low value accorded to women's representation and voice in community structures
- Isolation of adolescent married/unmarried pregnant girls

2) Existing patriarchal traditions leading to lack of/low male support for MN(C)H/SRH

- MN(C)H/SRH viewed as solely a women's concern thereby distancing or excluding men from taking up responsibility in caregiving in the household
- Low knowledge of men and boys about MN(C)H/SRH risks and issues
- Low participation in birth preparedness planning
- Low participation and support to women and girls over the MN(C)H/SRH continuum of care

3) Key gender-responsiveness gaps in health service provision:

- Fragmentation of services
- Inappropriate/culturally insensitive staffing such as male health service providers for reproductive health
- Lack of adequate privacy often resulting in client indignity (especially adolescent girls)
- Client-provider-interactions: negative or harmful attitudes and behaviours of health service providers (especially towards adolescents)
- Exclusion of men, thereby distancing them from active participation in MNCH/SRH
- MNCH/SRH facility infrastructure and facilities often not mindful of men's needs
- No designated latrines and washrooms for women

- Certain service protocols requiring male consent/presence, thus undermining women's (and girls') health-seeking autonomy
- Low representation of women/girls in health decision-making/governance resulting in inappropriate services
- National MNCH/SRH data by and large disaggregated by sex and age. HOWEVER, low capacity to analyze the data with a gender lens, resulting in assumption based planning and the invisibility of adolescent girls
- Women form large proportions of the health workforce. HOWEVER, women's representation in policy-making forums is low, resulting in, low voice representation and thereby gender-blind policy
- Low inter-ministerial coordination (health and gender/women's development) despite MNCH/SRH being high priority in most national women's policies/plans
- Low representation and participation of women in local/community level health committees, resulting in inability of women to hold duty-bearers accountable

SUGGESTED EXERCISE #3: KABULA'S STORY

Kabula (give local name) is a 17 year old mother of one daughter, now 5 months pregnant with another child...

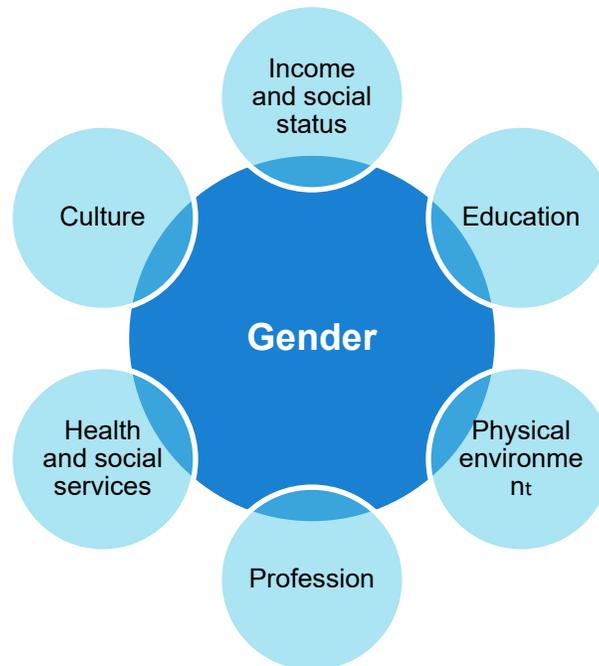
Group Discussion:

- What are key issues Kabula will face in accessing and utilizing MN(C)H/SRH services?
- Why does Kabula face these issues?

Note: Full exercise can be found in **Annex 1**.

1.5 INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The social determinants of health refer to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, as well as the health systems that are put in place. These are decisive factors influencing people's health. Gender has a bearing on each of the social determinants



Education: an individual's education level influences their ability to read and understand health information. Gender norms often accord lower priority to girls' education, resulting in lower educational status of women and girls relative to boys and men, thereby limiting their ability to read and understand health/MN(C)H/SRH information.

Income and social status: an individual's access to and control over resources influences their ability to purchase nutritious food and seek health care. Due to gender norms women have fewer employment opportunities, are financially dependent on men/family members, have little independent access to financial resources or decision-making over the usage of income in households, thereby reducing their financial capacity to access health/MN(C)H/SRH care. Furthermore gender norms often restrict women's mobility, requiring permission from male partners or family members, restricting travelling far if services are at a distance, women's lower financial independences often leaves them incapable of paying transportation charges, women's household workload and care work often leaves little time for them to access services, thereby compromising their ability to access social or health/MN(C)H/SRH services.

Physical environment: an individual's living conditions and work patterns influences whether they are exposed to certain pathogens, such as malaria. Gender-related roles and responsibilities relating to women's role increases their exposure to water-borne diseases due to household water sourcing, pollutants related to poor stoves due to cooking and exposure to sanitation related diseases due to their cleaning and child and elder care, thereby contributing to increased MN(C)H/SRH risks.



Profession/work: an individual's working conditions will influence what they are exposed to, such as chemicals. Due to gender related values, women tend to be employed in precarious unregulated work or work as unpaid agricultural workers in rural areas. The tasks performed by them are invariably low technology based involving hard labour, such as manual weeding, seeding, cutting etc., thereby exposing them to higher risks of contaminants and poor posture related health/MN(C)H/SRH risks.

Culture: cultural and harmful traditional practices and norms such as female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), early marriage, or son preference, or dietary restrictions during pregnancy, or breastfeeding related restrictions etc. invariably affect women and girls more negatively relative to men and boys, thereby increasing MN(C)H/SRH risks and complications.

Health and social services: an individual's ability to access health and social services (such as health insurance) influences their health. Often the way health services are organized, in gender unaware ways, limits women's access. For example: hours of service provision don't fit with availability of women and their male partners; lack of privacy, lack of appropriate space for men, lack of separated toilets, etc. are forms of gender insensitive infrastructure.

SUGGESTED EXERCISE #4: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Small group work: divide participants in three equal groups giving them two Social Determinants of Health each; ask participants to brainstorm how gender-related barriers, issues and norms influence the social determinants of health.

Groups report back in plenary.

2. FEATURING WOMEN AND GIRLS EMPOWERMENT IN COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 DEFINING SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS (SBCC)

Social and behaviour change communications (SBCC) can be defined as those communications strategies designed to impact not only individuals’ beliefs, attitudes, and practices, but also community norms and supportive policies. These communications strategies are generally grounded in research and formed through consultative processes.¹

SBCC can target a spectrum of goals, for example: influencing social norms to support long-term behaviour change at the population level, improving provider and client relationships, increasing demand for health services, strengthening community responses, influencing decision- and policy-makers, and more.² It is most effective when also paired with direct action and engagement to impact and expand services, advance policies, and provide training on practices.

Within MNCH/SRHR projects, SBCC messages can **primarily** serve to promote women’s and girls’ empowerment and agency **at the individual level**, while also working to shift **broader social and gender norms** and perspectives, creating a supportive environment that promotes: women and girls’ empowerment and gender equality, stopping harmful traditional practices, and positive health outcomes for women and girls. Furthermore, SBCC can also contribute to changing existing **policies within institutions and governments**: as more and more women and girls are able to fully realize their SRH rights, in the context of the project, this change in behaviours and norms will begin to generate momentum and demand for MNCH/SRH policies which are more gender responsive and adolescent friendly.

2.2 DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE MESSAGE

Steps in the message development process:³

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1) Map out your audience Who are you trying to reach and what do you want them to learn from the messaging, what behavior or practice do you want them to change?</p> | <p>Different population groups (depending on age, sex, and other intersectional factors) may respond differently to the same message. Therefore, you may need different variations of the message for the different population groups you are trying to reach.</p> <p>For instance, if you are developing SBCC materials to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, you may want to tailor the message slightly for materials aimed at women/girls and those</p> |
|---|--|

¹ See: <https://www.manoffgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/DefiningSBCC.pdf>

² See: <http://sbccimplementationkits.org/courses/designing-a-social-and-behavior-change-communication-strategy/>

³ See: Center for Health and Gender Equality. “Creating and communicating an effective message”.

| | |
|---|---|
| | aimed at men/boys, or may want to have materials that are aimed at adult men and women, and materials aimed at adolescent boys and girls. This will depend on your program strategy. |
| 2) How might your audience respond to the SBCC materials and messages? Will they be received positively or negatively? | Once you have determined your target audience(s), make an effort to get to know them. A dialogue about the issues you want to address with members of your audience will help you understand their position and how to shape your message accordingly. A good message will focus on values that are shared between the project and its audience for SBCC. |

A strong message is credible, concise, relevant, compelling, and communicative of values:⁴

- 1) **Credible.** It is factually accurate, provides information to back up assertions, and is delivered by people that are trusted on the subject.
- 2) **Concise.** A good message is clear and simple. Crisp messages that people can understand and remember are much more effective than messages that are long or wade into policy minutiae.
- 3) **Relevant.** It starts with what a person’s interests are – what they already know and think – and moves them to where you want them to be.
- 4) **Compelling.** It touches people so they are inspired to act.
- 5) **Communicative of values.** Messages that are framed in a way that resonates with people’s core values (e.g. fairness, equality, freedom, honesty) are the most powerful.

2.3 TIPS FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Gender-transformative approaches aim to address the root causes of gender inequality and promote the value of women and girls. They aim to shift unequal power relationships between women and men and boys and girls in all their diversity. Therefore, **gender transformative communications** should:

- Feature the empowerment and agency of women and girls and the engagement of boys and men as equal partners and beneficiaries of change
 - Your hero is always the woman/girl (and the community as whole in their efforts to promote gender equality)
- Address/discuss the root causes of gender inequality i.e. the existing gender norms and practices that are at the heart of inequality
- Use gender-inclusive language and gender transformative images.

⁴ See: Center for Health and Gender Equality. “Creating and communicating an effective message”.

Language and images matter!

- Use gender-inclusive language: saying “communities” or “people” erases the importance of different identities. Instead, use “diverse women, men, boys and girls in communities” in the first instance, then use “communities”;
- Use neutral terminology, such as “native-language” as opposed to “mother-tongue,” or chair-person as opposed to “chairman,” etc.;
- Use gender-sensitive phrases that do not reinforce gender biases. E.g.
 - “Asana and Bob work full-time; Bob helps Asana with housework”
 - “Asana and Bob work full-time; they share the housework”;
- Use equal terms, labels, titles and forms of address.
 - E.g. avoid terms like: “Mr. Musa and his wife Salima” Use: Musa and Salima
- Use photographs/images/graphics that depict women/girls and boys/men in equal positions and poses.
 - E.g., all sitting on chairs or all sitting on the ground, and not women/girls on the ground and men/boys on chairs.

2.3.1 GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATIONS DO'S AND DON'T'S

| DON'T | DO |
|---|---|
| <p>DON'T Reinforce gender stereotypes</p> <p>We always want to keep in mind our end goal, which is advancing gender equality.</p> <p>As much as possible, avoid traditional roles played by girls and women as homemakers and mothers. This does not mean that we need to scrap all photos/videos where girls/women are portrayed in traditional activities; it means that we want to ensure diversity of representation. The same applies to men and boys.</p> | <p>DO Portray girls/women and boys/men in diverse roles as leaders, experts, spokespersons, ordinary community members, etc.</p> <p>DO Portray boys/men and girls/women in different contexts (family, work, leisure, and rural/urban etc.);</p> |
| <p>DON'T: Reinforce the disempowerment of women and girls</p> <p>We always want to keep in mind the intrinsic agency and power of women and girls, which we only help to amplify through our work.</p> <p>Avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing girls and women as being inherently vulnerable or “victims” who are entirely dependent on external help to lift them out of their plight; • Reducing girls and women to their reproductive functions, such as mother or care-giver. | <p>DO Focus on the situation or context that causes or contributes to girls’ and women’s vulnerability and risk;</p> <p>DO Illustrate the resilience and agency of girls and women;</p> <p>DO Feature female-driven initiatives;</p> <p>DO Highlight women and girl role models and leaders;</p> <p>DO Promote the equal value of girls and women as human beings with equal rights;</p> |

| DON'T | DO |
|--|--|
| | <p>DO Always depict women and girls in their individual identity and not in relation to others such as mother, wife;</p> <p>DO Always present activities as amplifying the intrinsic agency of women and girls and not as the external force creating change for them.</p> |
| <p>DON'T Take an instrumental approach⁵ to men and boys</p> <p>Engaging men and boys is key to achieving gender equality by challenging harmful gender norms and unequal power relations. This process benefits everyone.</p> <p>At the same time, DON'T portray men as gender equality superheroes. Portraying involved men as saviours, heroes, protectors, or “the solution,” can reinforce power inequalities</p> | <p>DO Depict men and boys as active and positive partners who see the benefits of gender equality for everyone. They are not just the means to an end;</p> <p>DO Feature male-driven initiatives for gender equality;</p> <p>DO Highlight male role models and champions for gender equality across age groups and backgrounds.</p> |

⁵ Instrumentalist means that you're doing something for the purpose of another outcome, rather than for its own innate value. An **instrumental approach** to achieving gender equality recognizes the gender differences between men and women, but takes advantage of these differences to achieve program objectives as opposed to transforming gender relations."

3. WOMEN AND GIRLS EMPOWERMENT CURRICULUM

NB: This part of the guide can be printed separately to be used in facilitation with different women and girls' groups.

| Activity | Page | Activity | Page |
|---|------|--|------|
| Activity #1: What Is This Thing We Call Gender? | 17 | Activity #8: Who Makes Decisions? | 45 |
| Activity #2: Values Clarification | 20 | Activity #9: What Is Violence? | 50 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #2 | 22 | Homework Reflection for activity #9 | 54 |
| Activity #3: Hours in a Day | 23 | Activity #10: Myths about Gender-Based Violence | 55 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #3 | 26 | Resource sheet for Activity #10: Myths and realities | 58 |
| Activity #4: Learning About Human Rights | 27 | Homework Reflection for Activity #10 | 59 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #4 | 31 | Activity #11: Healthy Relationships | 60 |
| Activity #5: The Woman Box | 32 | Activity #12: Parents by Accident or By Choice? | 65 |
| Activity #6: Gender Stereotypes | 36 | Activity #13: The Effects of Child Marriage | 68 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #6 | 39 | Homework Reflection for Activity #13 | 72 |
| Activity #7: Being assertive | 40 | Activity #14: Closing Circle | 73 |
| Homework Reflection for Activity #7 | 44 | | |

Exercises from this curriculum were adapted from the following sources:

- Promundo and Plan International. (2016). Father's Club Manual: Engaging men in maternal, newborn and child health, and in sexual and reproductive health for the multi-country SHOW program.
- Promundo, CulturaSalud, and REDMAS (2013). Program P – A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, D.C. USA.Promundo. <https://promundoglobal.org/resources/program-p-a-manual-for-engaging-men-in-fatherhood-caregiving-and-maternal-and-child-health/?lang=english>
- Instituto Promundo, Salud y Género, ECOS, Instituto PAPAI and World Education. (2006). Program M – Working with Young Women: Empowerment, Rights and Health. <https://promundoglobal.org/programs/program-m/>
- Gender Road Map (GRM) Guidebook: A Couple-based transformative model to address unequal power relations, developed by Oxfam and Gender and Development Cambodia (2014).



ACTIVITY #1: WHAT IS THIS THING WE CALL GENDER?

OBJECTIVE: *Understand the differences between sex and gender, and to reflect on how gender norms influence the lives and relationships of men and of women.*

MATERIALS (optional): *Large paper, adhesive tape, markers*

TIME: *2 hours*

Before the activity starts: It is important that the facilitator understand the difference between sex and gender. General information can be found in this guidance document, but if the differences remain unclear, it is important that these topics and questions be discussed with a trainer.

Sex is biological – that is, we are born with male or female reproductive organs and hormones with different reproductive functions.

Gender is how we are socialized—that is, how attitudes, behavior, and expectations are formed based on what society associates with being a woman or being a man. These characteristics can be learned from family members, friends, cultural, political and religious institutions, and the workplace. Some participants might confuse gender with sexual orientation. It is important to clarify that gender is a sociocultural construct by which certain attitudes and behaviors are assigned to individuals based on their physical and hormonal attributes. Sexual orientation, on the other hand, is the feeling of being able to relate romantically and sexually towards someone of the opposite sex (heterosexual), the same sex (homosexual), or persons of both sexes (bisexual). Independent of one's sexual orientation, every individual is influenced by social expectations based on their sex.

It is also important that gender and sex are not presented as rigid or dichotomous identities. During the activity, the facilitator might want to discuss how transgender and transsexual people do not fit within these traditional gender and sex categories. Transgender people do not identify with the gender to which they were assigned at birth, such as an individual who was born female but identifies as male. Transsexual people are those who choose to medically transition to the gender that feels right for them. Intersexuals (also known as hermaphrodites) are persons born with partially or fully developed pairs of female and sex organs.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Draw two columns on a piece of flip chart paper (or use two large pieces of paper).
2. In the first column write "WOMAN." In the second column write "MAN."
3. Ask the participants to think of words and phrases associated with the idea of "being a woman." Write these in the first column while they are being said. The responses can be positive or negative. Help the participants mention both social and biological characteristics.
4. Repeat the same step for the column "MAN."



5. Briefly review the characteristics that were listed in each column.
6. Exchange the titles of the columns by putting “WOMAN” in the place of “MAN” and vice versa. Ask the participants if the characteristics mentioned for women could be attributed to men.
7. Exchange the titles of the columns by putting “MAN” in the place of “WOMAN” and vice versa. Ask the participants if the characteristics mentioned for men could be attributed to women.
8. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion about which characteristics the participants do not think can be attributed to both men and women, and why. However, as discussed above, it is important that these sex and gender categories are not presented as rigid or strictly dichotomous.

Note: as noted above, in groups where literacy or resources may be low, this exercise can be conducted by drawing the tables on the ground and hanging up appropriate props representing women/girls; men/boys.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What does it mean to be a man/boy?”*
- *“Do you think men/boys and women/girls are raised the same way? Why or why not?”*
- *“What characteristics attributed to women/girls and men/boys are valued as positive or negative by our society?”*
- *“What would it be like for a woman/girl to assume gender characteristics traditionally associated with men/boys?”*
- *“Would it be hard or easy? How would it be for men/boys to assume gender characteristics traditionally assigned to women/girls?”*
- *“How do our families and friends influence our ideas of how women/girls and men/boys should look and should act?”*
- *“How does the media (television, magazines, radio, etc.) influence our ideas of how women/girls and men/boys should look and should act?”*
- *“Is there a relationship between gender and power? Explain”.*
- *“How do these different expectations of how women/girls and men/boys should look and act affect your daily lives? Your relationships with family? Your relationships with intimate partners?”*
- *“How can you, in your own lives, challenge some of the negative, or non-equitable, ways that men/boys are expected to act? How can you challenge some of the negative, or non-equitable, ways that women/girls are expected to act?”*
- *“What did we learn with this activity? Is there anything we can apply to our own lives or relationships?”*

Key Message

Throughout their lives, women/girls and men/boys receive messages from family, media, and society about how they should look, act and how they should relate to each other. It is important to understand that although there are differences between men/boys and women/girls, many of these differences are constructed by society, and are not part of their nature or biological make-up. Even so, these differences can have fundamental impacts on girls/women's and boys/men's daily lives and relationships. For example, a man is often expected to be strong and dominant in his relationships with others, including with his intimate partners. At the same time, a woman is often expected to be submissive to a man's authority.

Many of these rigid gender stereotypes have consequences for both men and women, as we will be discussing throughout these workshops. As we become more aware of how gender stereotypes can negatively impact our lives and communities, we can think constructively about how to challenge them and promote more positive gender roles and relations in our lives and communities.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Tell the group that each session will end with a "check-out," where participants will have an opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed during the session.
3. Ask the group:
 - *"Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?"*
 - *"Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?"*



ACTIVITY #2: VALUES CLARIFICATION

OBJECTIVE: To listen to, to debate, and reflect on different perspectives and opinions about men and women's gender roles in society.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 pieces of paper: one with a 😊 drawn on it, one with a ☹️ drawn on it, and one with a 😐 drawn on it (one face for each paper).

TIME: 45 minutes

Before the activity begins: Hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have a 😊/happy face, the second should have a ☹️/sad face, and the third should have a 😐/neutral face drawn on the pages. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground. Or you can draw those face on the ground.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Tell the group that the purpose of this activity is to reflect on their own attitudes about men and women.
2. Explain to the group that you will read aloud a few sentences one by one. After each sentence is read, they should walk to the side of the space that best represents what they think. If they *agree* with the sentence, they should walk to the side with the "happy face." If they *disagree*, they should walk to the "sad face." If they're *unsure*, they can walk over to the "neutral face."
3. To begin, ask everyone to stand in the middle of the room.
4. Read out any one of the sentences below. Repeat it to make sure everyone understood.
***Note on adaptation:** You can add other sentences about gender stereotypes according to your context.

Statements:

- "Men should be leaders of the home."
 - "Women should always listen to and obey their husbands."
 - "A man should feel ashamed if he cannot earn enough money to support his family."
 - "A woman's main role is to take care of the home and family."
 - "Real men do not cry."
 - "Women are too emotional to make important decisions."
 - "A real man has many children" or "A real man has a male child."
5. Ask people to think about the sentence and then walk to the side that best represents their answer.
 6. Once everyone has chosen a side, give them a few minutes to discuss their responses.
 7. Do not respond to their statements with your own opinions. Just listen. However, do look for patterns in the responses. For example, if men are in the group, do women tend to answer one way and men another? Or do younger women tend to answer one way and older women another?



8. Share these observations with the group and ask them why they think some women might have different opinions than other women. Could this be based on any differences of age, education, or other factors? Encourage participants to pose questions to those who have opposing views.
9. After each side has had a chance to explain their responses, ask if anyone would like to change their answer. If anyone decides to change sides, ask them what led them to change their mind. If everyone chooses to stay where they are, that is fine!
10. After a few minutes, ask participants to come back to the center of the circle and read the next statement. Repeat the exercise once again. Depending on time, you may be able to read 1 or 2 more sentences before the time is up.
11. When the time is up, ask participants to sit back down in a circle so you can share the closing message.

Key message

It is good to discuss and debate men's/boys' and women's/girls' roles in society. This helps us gain new perspectives and share opinions in a respectful way, without offending others.

Both women/girls and men/boys often face rigid expectations regarding how they should act and what their roles in families, communities and societies should be. These expectations can limit individuals from expressing their full interests or potential, including how they want to dress, who they want to love, what career they choose to pursue, and the roles they want to assume in their intimate and family relationships. It is important to remember that with discussion people can change their opinions and begin to see things differently.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - “Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”
 - “Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”
3. After finishing the questions, assign the homework below and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMework FOR ACTIVITY #2

Share one to two things you discussed today with your close friend, a family relative or with partner. If you are comfortable, discuss with this person if this you changed your opinion on something as a result of the session's discussion.

Note: Please assign homework only if the women/girls in the group are comfortable in sharing these ideas outside of the group. Who they choose to talk to is entirely their decision and should not be imposed on them. Every potential risk must be well understood by age particularly, aligning with the do no harm principle. This caution applies to every homework. Potential risks are to be determined by the group itself and how those risks may be mitigated are to come from group members.

HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #2

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 2 and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

TIME: 30-60 minutes

***Note on adaptation:** This is an example of how you may choose to run a Homework Reflection session in between the “core” activity-based sessions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting. If none of the group members did the homework, please move on and don’t call them out in any way that may shame them or reduce their confidence.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #2

Share one to two things you discussed with your close friend, a family relative or with partner. Do you think it may lead to or has changed their opinion on something as a result of the discussion you had?

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner, family member or good friend.
5. If every member confirms they carried out the homework, go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “What did you discuss with your loved one? How did they react?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of men’s and women’s roles. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #3: HOURS IN A DAY

OBJECTIVE: To discuss how men and women spend their time differently, and to identify ways that men/boys and women/girls can work together to share household and care responsibilities towards a more equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities and labour.

MATERIALS: Flipchart or large pieces of paper; markers.

TIME: 1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Introduce today’s session by explaining to the group that they will explore how men/boys and women/girls spend their time differently during the day.
4. Divide participants into two groups.
5. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and markers.
6. Explain that each group will write down or draw the 24-hour schedule of a family member.
 - **Group 1** will write down/draw the schedule of a **man** who has a wife and two children (a girl and a boy) and lives in the community.
 - **Group 2** will write down/draw the schedule of a **woman** who has a husband and two children (a girl and a boy) and lives in the community.

Facilitator Tip: It is possible to change the location. For example, instead of COMMUNITY you can use VILLAGE, TOWN or CITY. It should depend on where the participants themselves come from.

7. Show an example of what you are looking for. An example might be*:

| Time | Activity |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 07:00 – 07:45 | Wake up, bathe, and have breakfast |
| 07:45 – 08:30 | Take children to school |
| 08:30 – 18:00 | Work |
| 18:00 – 19:00 | Relax with friends |
| 19:00 - 20:00 | Eat dinner with family |
| 20:00 - 22:00 | Watch TV |
| 22:00 – 07:00 | Sleep |

***Note on adaptation:** It’s useful to adapt this schedule to reflect common activities undertaken by people in the community where you work.



8. Give the groups 10 minutes to write/draw their schedules.
9. Give each group 5 minutes to present their respective 24-hour schedules to the larger group.
10. Ask all participants to return to the circle. Ask the Group Discussion Questions.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitator Tip: At some point in the discussion, share any data you have on time use to further reinforce the message about the unequal division of household and caregiving roles between men/boys and women/girls.

- *“How did you feel during the group work?”*
- *“How do you feel now?”*
- *“Do you think that this exercise reflects reality? Why or why not?”*
- *“What differences do you see between men/boys and women/girls regarding the roles they play at home? And in society more broadly?”*
- *“Why is it that men/boys are often not responsible for many of the household tasks that women/girls do?”*
- *“How does this unequal distribution affect women’s/girls’ health and well-being? Children’s health?”*
- *“How can we more equally distribute domestic roles at home? In society?”*
- *“What are the advantages of this more equal distribution?”*

Facilitator Tip: If you have time and access to a computer, play the film “Impossible Dream?”⁶ by the United Nations. It is a 10-minute, no-words cartoon about men’s and women’s roles inside and outside the home. Afterwards, have a discussion about the film and whether the impossible dream is possible!

Key message

Women/girls and men/boys are often raised to perform different caregiving roles, with women usually bearing a significant proportion of the childcare and domestic work. There are many benefits when men/boys and women/girls work together and share the burden of household and childcare work, such as a happier and healthier home and more open, honest communication between partners! It also created the time for girls and women to pursue their education, economic opportunities and reach their full potential!

⁶ The film can be found online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2JBPBIFR2Y>.



CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #3

Discuss with your partner, a loved one or a friend, times in your life where you noticed that men/boys and women/girls were expected to perform different roles and reflect on why that might be the case, if you think this was unfair, and if your thoughts on the roles have changed?

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.



HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #3

OBJECTIVE: *To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 3 and discuss how it went.*

MATERIALS: *None.*

TIME: *30-60 minutes*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #3

Discuss with your partner, a loved one or a friend times in your life where you noticed that men/boys and women/girls were expected to perform different roles and reflect on why that might be the case, if you think this was unfair, and if your thoughts on the roles have changed?

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the homework assignment go?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of men’s/boys’ and women’s/girls’ household responsibilities. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.



ACTIVITY #4: LEARNING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the meaning of human rights and how they affect the lives of girls/young women and women and others in their community

MATERIALS: Flip chart paper, markers

TIME: 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator Tip: Prior to the activity, you can research some local examples of how women’s and girls’ rights are not respected, from local newspapers or events, that can be discussed with the group.

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 1. “How are you?”
 2. “Has anything new happened to you that you want to share?”
 3. “Did you talk about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that this session will explore the meaning of human rights and how they affect the lives of girls, young women and women and others in our communities.
4. Ask the participants what comes to mind when they hear “human rights.” On a flip chart write the words and phrases that the participants provide. Conversely if you don’t have a flip chart and literacy may be a challenge, you can memorize some of words/phrases.
5. Review the definition of human rights, human rights conventions, and the examples of rights with the group.

Facilitator Tip: Depending on context, you can also print copies in advance to share with participants, or prepare flipcharts in advance with this, or share them by reading aloud with the group.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to ALL people everywhere.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

The United Nations was created in 1945 with the intent of preserving world peace and promoting human rights. Today, all countries belong to it. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. It is the basis for human rights protection and promotion around the world and has been endorsed by all countries. Many countries have included its provisions in their basic laws or constitutions.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDA) (1979)

In 1979, the UN adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often described as an international bill of rights for women. It defines discrimination against women as “...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of

equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

Excerpts from the Universal Declaration of Rights

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 10:

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 16:

- 1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- 2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

Article 23:

- 1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- 2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- 3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- 4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24:

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25:

- 1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- 2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

6. Divide the participants into two or three smaller groups. Tell them that they will have 20 minutes to think of a story, from their lives, their communities, or the news, when one of the rights listed in above were violated or not respected.

Facilitator Tip: You can also ask the participants to discuss stories you have selected from newspapers or magazines, or you can share stories that were prepared in advance. Alternatively, you can also use Kabula’s story copied at the end of the activity.

7. Ask each group to prepare a short presentation or skit based on the story they identified to present to the group in a plenary. The groups should discuss the following questions related to their story and be ready to present these to the plenary:
 - *“Whose rights were violated?”*
 - *“Which rights were violated?”*
 - *“How were these rights violated?”*
 - *“Was gender, age, race, ethnicity, or religion a factor in the story? How?”*
 - *“What could the protagonist (leading person in the story) and other people in the story have done differently?”* (If the group wants and depending on time, groups can also act out how the story would be different.)
 - *“Is this type of situation common in your community?”*

Facilitator Tip: You can also write these questions down on a flipchart for participants to refer to during the small group discussions.

8. Ask each group to present.
9. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion about human rights.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What other rights are violated, or not respected, in your community?”*
- *Are there other rights, other than those shared today, that are also important to the lives and wellbeing of women and girls?”*
- *“Do women/girls and men/boys in your community have the same rights? Why or why not?”*
- *“Do girls and boys in your community have the same rights adult men and women? Why or why not?”*
- *“Do you think there is a connection between power and human rights? Explain.”*
- *“Who is responsible for protecting the rights of men and women in your community? What about the rights of girls and boys?”*
- *“How can you help to protect your rights and the rights of others in your community?”*

Key Message

Every human being – rich or poor, man or woman, young or old – has rights, including the right to have their own opinion, the right to education, the right to health and the right to live a life free from violence and discrimination.

Unfortunately, women’s and girls’ rights (as well as men’s and boys’) are not always respected. There have been significant successes in the last few decades in the struggle for women’s and girls’ rights, but there is still a long way to go. An important step is to ensure that more women and girls are aware of their rights and how to exercise them. In these activities, you will further explore different rights, including sexual and reproductive rights and work rights. You should feel encouraged to share these discussions and information with others in your lives and community.



CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #4

Find some time to think about and to reflect on what you can do, or what the group can do, to advocate for human rights, and/or for women and girls' rights in our community.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.



Kabula's Story

Kabula (Give a local name) is a 17 year old adolescent girl who was married 2 years ago pregnant with her 1st child. She lives in a village named _____. Kabula has a much higher chance of dying in childbirth as someone in their twenties and her child is much more likely to die in childbirth than women of any other reproductive age group. If a mother dies during childbirth, the child is 10 times more likely to die. Kabula like most rural women will likely give birth at home with neighbours and no skilled birth attendants and if there are complications, she is likely to lose her life or that of her child. She has not received more than one antenatal care visit and will likely not receive a postnatal care visit. She cannot get to the nearest health facility because it's too far to walk and she is burdened by household chores. Like many other women, her husband and/or family elders make decisions on whether she receives health care or not. These are everyday realities faced by women in rural _____ (name the country where your project is being implemented).

HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #4

OBJECTIVE: *To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 4 and discuss participants' reflections on human rights.*

MATERIALS: *None.*

TIME: *30-60 minutes*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *"How are you?"*
 - *"Has anything new happened that you want to share?"*
 - *"Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?"*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #4

Find some time to think about and to reflect on what you can do, or what the group can do, to advocate for human rights, and/or for women and girls rights in our community.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *"How did the homework assignment go?"*
 - *"What did you think of during your reflections? Did you think of any ways that the group can advocate for human rights?"*
6. Ask the participants if they would like to take any of the suggested actions as a group, and discuss how this can be done.
7. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of human rights. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
8. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
9. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #5: THE WOMAN BOX

OBJECTIVE: To recognize the challenges that women face in trying to fulfill social expectations about gender roles; to understand the costs; and to convey that it is possible to change.

MATERIALS: Markers, and Flipchart or large pieces of paper with the different titles for the Woman Box: Box 1: the Woman Box; Box 2: Advantages of staying in the box; Box 3: Disadvantages of staying in the box; Box 4: Advantages of getting out of the box. If you don't have a flip chart you can paste/hand the paper on walls/other surfaces around like trees etc.

TIME: 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - a. “How are you?”
 - b. “Has anything new happened to you that you want to share?”
 - c. “Did you talk about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that this session will explore how women are taught to behave in society the costs that this has on women, men, and children.
4. Place the flipchart stand in the circle. If you don't have a flipchart and stand the box can be drawn on the ground
5. Draw a box on the flipchart/ground and ask participants what comes to mind when they hear the phrase “A good woman/girl is...”



6. Write all the words on the flipchart as they are spoken. If literacy is a challenge, phrases/words can be memorized by a few members. Keep repeating the phrase “A good woman/girl is...” with different expressions in your voice to encourage participants to think of more words.

7. Ask: “Where do these messages come from? Who is the messenger?” Discuss whether the messages or delivery differ if they come from a man or a woman (mother, father, teacher, sibling, peer, partner, etc.).
8. Holding up or pointing to the list of associations and stereotypes you have just made say: “*This is the Woman Box.*”
9. Ask the group to share any experiences or feelings in relation to the message they have been given (or seen other women/girls close to them receive).
10. Explain that the “**Woman Box**” refers to the gender roles and expectations of how women and girls must behave; these expectations come from family, peers, society, media, stories, etc.
11. Ask the group: “What advantages are there for women/girls to follow these rules and fit inside the box?” For example, they may be seen as “respectable” and “proper” women who other women and girls should behave like.
12. Write the advantages down on the corresponding flipchart (**Box 2: Advantages of staying in the box**).



13. Ask the group: “What happens to a woman or girl who does not fit in the box, or who chooses not to follow the characteristics from inside the box?” For example, they get called mean names, they are threatened with violence or they are beaten.
14. Write these responses around the outside of **Box 2: Advantages of Staying in the Box**.
15. Explain to the group that there are consequences when individuals do not conform to these societal expectations of gendered roles.
16. Take a separate flipchart page and draw (or display) **Box 3: Disadvantages of Staying in the Box**.



17. Ask the group: “Are there any disadvantages to staying in the box? What does it cost individual women and girls to live inside the box?” For example, women can feel sad because they have to behave in ways that feel unnatural; they may feel pressure to follow their partners and families’ decisions, they may be afraid to voice their opinions. Ask: “What does it cost to the community?” For example, women may not participate in community activities or decision making.
18. Conclude by explaining how this shows us society trains women and girls to fit into a box by rewarding certain kinds of behaviors and punishing other kinds of behaviors.
19. Take a separate flipchart page and draw (or display) **Box 4: Advantages of Stepping outside the Box.**



20. Ask the group: “Are there advantages of stepping out of the box?” For example, women might feel more confident to contribute their opinions in their families and communities.
21. Ask: “Can you think of examples of women/girls in your own lives that do not conform to the messages inside the box? How are they able to move beyond the box?”
22. Take the flipchart stand aside and close the circle. Start a discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- “Much of what we discussed talks about women and girls in general, but are there some challenges that are specific to mothers. In what ways do you feel that **mothers** are expected or pressured to live inside a box?” For example, mothers are expected to always put their children first.

- *“How does this pressure affect women’s and girl’s opportunities or experiences?”*
- *“How does this pressure affect women’s relationships with their partners/husbands, or with their children?”*
- *“What are the benefits for ourselves as women and girls when we step out of our boxes?”*
- *“What are the benefits for our families, for our sons, and for our daughters, when we step out of the box?”*
- *“Do men and boys face similar constraints? What would a man box look like?”*

Key Message

Both women and men often face rigid expectations regarding how they should act and what their roles in families, communities and societies should be. These expectations can limit individuals from expressing their full interests or potential, including how they want to dress, who they want to love, how many children they want to have, what career they choose to pursue, and the roles they want to assume in their intimate and family relationships, the roles they want to take up in their communities/societies. It is important to remember that, just as gender stereotypes are learned, they can also be challenged and unlearned. It is necessary to support each other and to work together to build communities where women/girls and men/boys can move beyond the limits of what is considered “feminine” or “masculine”.

By challenging society’s expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl and mother, women and girls can become free of their “boxes” and able to decide for themselves how to pursue their full interests and potential.

CHECK-OUT

4. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
5. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*

Note: a homework assignment is not recommended for this session, other than encouraging group members to continue to think about the woman box and if they want to, discuss it with a family member or friend.



ACTIVITY #6: GENDER STEREOTYPES

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on how proverbs and stereotypes perpetuate gender norms in the community and the impact this has on relations between men/boys and women/girls.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 large pieces of paper

TIME: 1 hour

Before the activity begins: Hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have a 😊, the second should have a 😐, and the third should have a ☹️ drawn on the pages. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground or draw these faces on the ground.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss negative stereotypes about men and women and the impact they have on relations between men and women as well as on men’s involvement as fathers and in household care work.
4. Ask the group to name some of the stereotypes, sayings, or proverbs about men and women that are common in the community. You may share with them the examples below or add local ones:

Examples Of Common Sayings And Stereotypes About Men And Women

A bull can have sex with whomever he wants.

A woman’s place is in the kitchen.

A hen should not speak while a rooster is present.

Facilitator, what are some example sayings or proverbs about men and women that are common in your community?

Notes:

5. Write down the sayings, proverbs, or stereotypes the participants identify on the flipchart. Where literacy may be a challenge, these can be memorized by a couple of group members.



6. After the group has identified a number of sayings, ask the group to stand up. Tell the group that you are going to read the sayings out loud and ask each participant whether they agree with the statement, disagree, or are unsure. Explain that the 😊 represents “agree,” the 😞 represents “disagree,” and 😐 represents “unsure.” They will move and stand in front of the one of the three pieces of paper that represents their views.
7. After you read one of the sayings, ask the participants to share why they agree, disagree, or are unsure. Allow at least 1 to 2 participants from each group to share their views.
8. If participants begin talking over one another, remind them of the group agreement that everyone’s view is equally important and needs to be heard respectfully.
9. Once you have read 3 or 4 sayings, ask the group to sit down in the circle and open the discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Where do these sayings come from? Where do we learn them?”*
- *“What impact do you think these sayings and stereotypes have on how men and women are treated?”*
- *“How do these sayings and stereotypes help keep women in the ‘Woman Box’?”*
- *“How can sayings like this negatively impact women’s health, especially when they are pregnant or are taking care of small children?”*
- *“How can these sayings limit children’s potential?”*
- *“Do these stereotypes give some individuals power over others?”*
- *“How can we challenge others when we hear these stereotypes in our communities?”*

Key message

Stereotypes are generalizations of the characteristics, beliefs, habits and/or behaviors of a group of individuals based on some part of their identity, such as gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, or occupation. Stereotypes are learned at a young age, through parents, other family members, peers, school, social institutions and mass media, and can be difficult to unlearn.

Stereotypes and sayings about men and women have the potential to cause real harm to women’s health and well-being, as well as to men’s health and well-being. It is important for us to challenge these beliefs when we hear them in our communities!

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*



- *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*

3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #6

Invite group members to have a conversation with their friends or trusted family members, or their partners if they feel comfortable, about stereotypes. During this conversation, women should share how stereotypes about men and women affect their relationships and health. Women should ask what other stereotypes exist, and how they can challenge these together.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above



HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #6

OBJECTIVE: *To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 6 and discuss how it went.*

MATERIALS: *None.*

TIME: *30-60 minutes*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #6

Invite group members to have a conversation with their friends or trusted family members, or their partners if they feel comfortable, about stereotypes. During this conversation, women should share how stereotypes about men and women affect their relationships and health. Women should ask what other stereotypes exist, and how they can challenge these together.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the homework assignment go? What did you talk about? How did your loved one react?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of gender stereotypes. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #7: BEING ASSERTIVE

OBJECTIVE: To invite the group to embrace being assertive by differentiating between assertive, aggressive, and passive behavior, and understanding the merits of being assertive.

MATERIALS: Flip chart, 6 loose sheets of paper, markers

TIME: 1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to learn to distinguish between different types of behaviors. Tell the group that you will begin by acting out three ways in which a woman can act when asking her partner or male family member for something.
4. Inviting a volunteer to help you, act out the three scenes you came up with using the illustrations for **ACTIVITY #7: Being Assertive (page 43)**.
5. Ask: “Which of these scenes is the most effective way of approaching somebody with a request?” The group will likely agree that the third scene is most effective. If they don’t, ask why they think the others are better.

Facilitator Tip: Some may think that the passive option is the most effective way, particularly if this is the way they have always been taught to behave. If this comes up, take the time to explain that this may be the only way that women and girls are able to act in the families and communities, but that it is not particularly effective. Other girls/women may believe that the aggressive option is the most empowered, particularly if they have grown frustrated by gender norms and seen other use violence legitimately. Take the time to explain that violence is never acceptable, and that if a girl/woman ever becomes violent herself this should not justify other in using violence towards her. In either case, explain that you will learn more about why these behaviors are not effective in throughout the activity.

6. Write the words ‘Assertive’, ‘Passive’ and ‘Aggressive’ as headings in three separate flipcharts. Ask the group if they know what the differences is between them, and take notes of what they say in the corresponding flipchart.
7. Listen closely to what they say, and add any ideas to ensure the girls/women understand these terms as they are described in in the table below. Make sure to link these terms to the scenarios you acted out.

| Passive | Aggressive | Assertive |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking no action to claim your own rights • Remaining silent when something bothers you • Giving in to the will of others because you are afraid • Apologizing a lot • Putting others first at your own expense • Letting others make decisions for you • Hoping to get what you want without actually having to say it • Acting submissive: talking quietly, laughing nervously, sagging shoulders, avoiding disagreement, hiding face or mouth with hands. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing up for yourself, with no regard for others • Overpowering others • Reaching your own goals at the expense of others • Shouting, not listening to others, saying others are wrong or pointing fingers at others • Expressing yourself in a way that threatens the other person • Acting confrontational: shouting, demanding, and not listening to others; always saying others are wrong; leaning forward; looking down on others; wagging or pointing finger at others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing with your body in a confident position • Being confident without being “pushy” • Respecting yourself as well as the other person • Taking turns listening and speaking • Speaking with confidence • Communication balanced and specific points • Respectfully telling someone exactly what you want • Expressing both positive and negative feelings • Standing up for your own rights, without putting down the rights of others • Acting confident: being specific; using “I” statements; talking face-to-face with the person; being calm and respectful; using body language that shows you are standing up for yourself. |

8. Divide the group into 3 smaller groups, and hand-out 3 blank sheets of paper for each group.
9. Ask the groups to suggest 3 animals – 1 that is passive, 1 that is aggressive, and 1 that is assertive. The groups should draw 1 animal on each piece of paper, and to write down the characteristics for passive, aggressive and assertive around the animal to which is belongs. Where literacy may be a challenge, some group members can memorize the characteristics. Encourage the group to also add any characteristics that were not discussed. Give the groups 10-15 minutes.
10. In plenary, ask each group to explain which animal they selected to represent being passive, being assertive, and being aggressive, and to explain why they chose that animal.
11. Continue with the discussion using the questions down below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What are the disadvantages and advantages of passive behavior?”*
- *“What are the disadvantages and advantages of aggressive behavior?”*
- *“Why is being assertive important for women and girls especially?”*



- *“Thinking back to the “Woman Box”, why might some women and girls be more comfortable with passive behavior?”*
- *“Can you think of any challenges that women and girls can face in embracing assertive behavior?”*
- *“What are some things that you can do to be more assertive or to encourage women and girls you know to be more assertive?”*

Key message

The way people behave can roughly be divided into three different types: assertive, aggressive and passive. Passive behaviour may seem polite, but it leads to disempowerment. Aggressive behaviour may seem empowered, but in fact it is a form of violence. Assertive behaviour is the most empowered way of interacting with others while still respecting everyone’s rights and feelings.

Being assertive is important for women and girls to live happy lives and to reach their potential. Therefore, embracing assertive behaviour is key for women and girls to begin their journey to empowerment.

Women and girls can support each other in being assertive. In many communities, women and girls learn that they are supposed to be submissive and obedient and that they should not speak out for themselves. Women and girls need each other’s support to challenge these rules and stand up for themselves.

CHECK-OUT

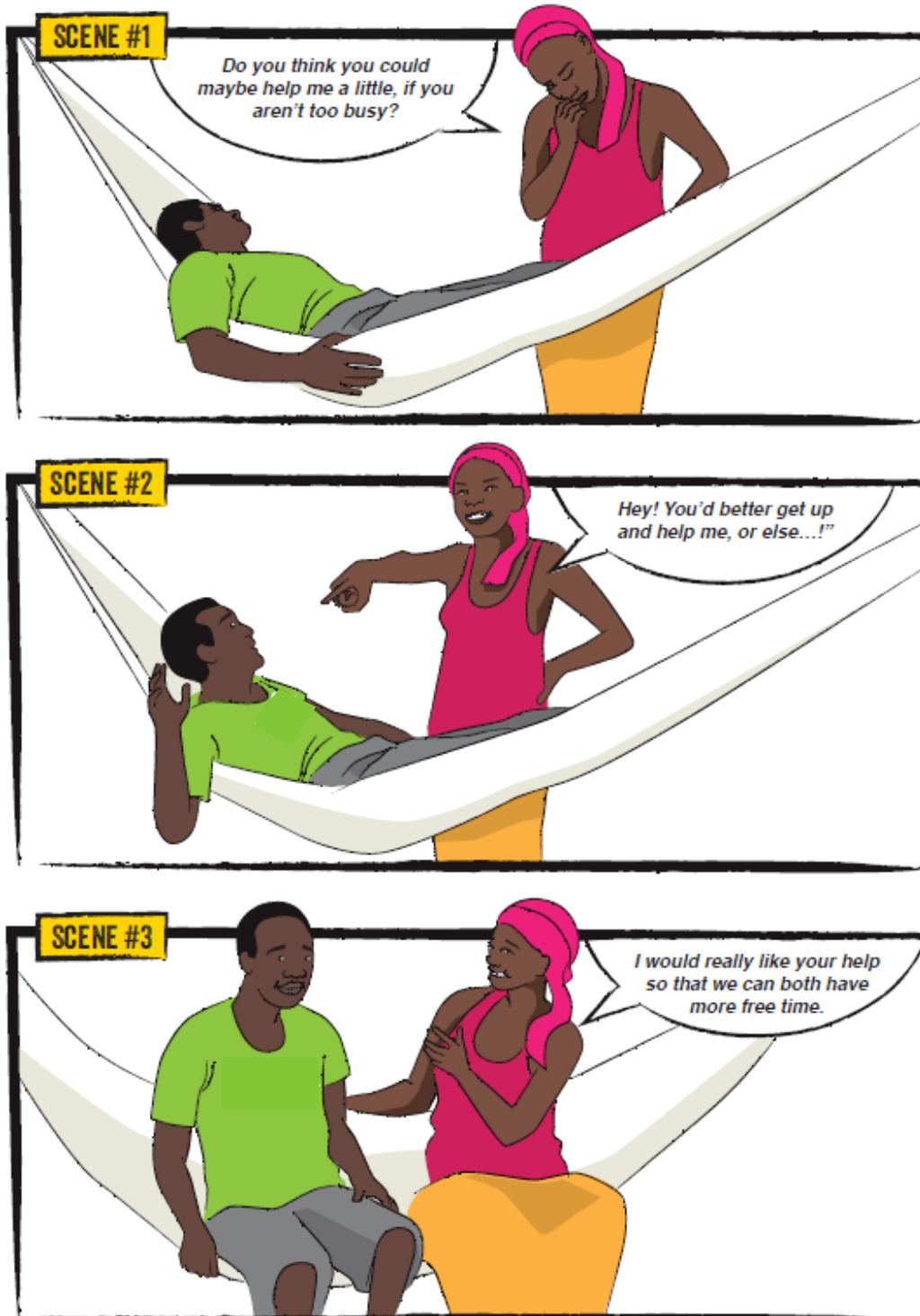
4. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
5. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
6. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMework FOR ACTIVITY #7

Ask the group to share the story of the three animals with a girl or woman that is not in this group. Encourage them to discuss the different types of behaviour with her peer, and to think about times when they used passive, aggressive and assertive behavior. They should discuss how they can support each other in being assertive.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.

Activity #7: Being Assertive



HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #7

OBJECTIVE: *To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 7 and discuss how it went.*

MATERIALS: *None.*

TIME: *30-60 minutes*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #7

Ask the group to share the story of the three animals with a girl or woman that is not in this group. Encourage them to discuss the different types of behaviour with her peer, and to think about times when they used passive, aggressive and assertive behavior. They should discuss how they can support each other in being assertive.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the homework assignment go?”*
 - *“Who did you have a discussion with and what did you talk about?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of being assertive. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #8: WHO MAKES DECISIONS?

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on imbalances in decision-making power between men and women and to discuss the advantages of women and men making decisions together.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 large sheets of paper, one with “Men” written on it, one with “Women” on it, and one with “Joint/together” written on it, *Illustration for Who Makes Decisions?*

TIME: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Before the activity begins: Hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have the word “Men” written on it, the second should have the word “Women”, and the third should have the words “Joint/together” written on it. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground or write or draw figures on the ground.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss who makes the decisions in our homes and relationships.
4. Ask participants first to think about an experience they have had with making decisions, and in particular where they were the ones making the decision.
5. Invite 2 or 3 of the participants to share their experiences with the group. Ask the volunteers the following questions to clarify the decision making process to the rest of the group:
 - “When you made that decision, did you discuss or consult with anyone? If so, with whom?”
 - “Did you discuss the matter with your partner?”
 - “What did you do if your partner did not agree with the decision?”
6. Ask everyone to stand up. Tell the group that you will read a series of questions, and the participants need to think about who usually makes these decisions.

Facilitator Tip: If it is a mixed group of men and women, divide men and women into separate groups. (Note: Each group will need a facilitator).

7. If the participants believe **MEN** usually make this decision: move to one side or to where you have hung the “Men” sign.
8. If they believe **WOMEN** normally make this decision: move to the other side or to where you have hung the “Women” sign.



9. If they believe **WOMEN AND MEN TOGETHER** make these decisions, they can stand in the middle or to where you have hung the “Joint/Together” sign.
10. Ask if everyone understands the directions. It may be helpful to demonstrate the activity to the group.
11. Choose 3-5 questions from the list below (you do not have to ask all questions).
12. After each question, ask a few volunteers to explain why they chose the side they did. Encourage a diversity of responses. If people are unsure about the questions, encourage them to think about who makes the decision **most of the time**.
 - *“Who decides who does the housework?”*
 - *“Who decides if or when a pregnant woman can go the health facility?”*
 - *“Who decides what the children will eat?”*
 - *“Who decides which food to buy?”*
 - *“Who decides what crops to grow?”*
 - *“Who decides how money is spent or invested?”*
 - *“Who decides purchases of small household items?”*
 - *“Who decides to buy or sell major household items (such as livestock)?”*
 - *“Who decides what to do with the money that is earned?”*
 - *“Who decides if children go to school?”*
 - *“Who decides if children need medical care or vaccinations?”*
 - *“Who decides if children should be punished?”*
 - *“Who decides when to have sex?”*
 - *“Who decides how many children they should have?”*
 - *“Who decides when a girl should be married?”*
- *Note on adaptation:** There may be important decisions that you feel are missing from the list above. There may also be decisions that don’t seem relevant for the participants in your group. You should adapt this list to your context.
13. After you have finished the statements, ask everyone to sit down in a circle. (If men and women were in separate groups, ask them to come together in a larger group if possible).
14. Show everyone the illustration on Who Makes Decisions located at the end of this activity. Ask them to compare what is going on in the first scene versus the second scene? Use the following questions to further analyze the illustration.
 - *“Which scene is typically more common in your community?”*
 - *“How does the first demonstrate typical roles of men and women?” (Think of the “Woman Box”)*
 - *“How do you think the man feels in the first scene? How do you think the woman feels in the first scene?”*
 - *“Looking at the second scene, what has changed? How did the woman get out of the “Woman Box”? How may their relationship have changed?”*
15. Continue with the discussion using the questions down below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- “What types of decisions do women usually make? Why is this?”
- “What types of decisions do men usually make? Why is this?”
- “What did you notice about who makes most of the important decisions?”
- “Is it fair that some people have more power in decision-making than others?”
- “What happens when someone does not have power to make or participate in decisions that directly affect their lives? What problems occur when one person makes all the important decisions for the family?”
- “What are some of the disadvantages for women or for children when men are the primary or sole decision-makers in the family? Are there any problems for men?”
 - **For example**, if men are the sole decision-makers on the number of children to have, this takes away his partner’s rights to make decisions over her own body and puts her health at risk. It also further burdens her with the task of taking care of more children than she may be able to. For men, they often report feeling large amounts of stress with having to make all the decisions in the family. They also feel a burden of being the sole provider for the needs of their family.
- “What are the benefits to men and women sharing power and making decisions together?”
- “Is it realistic for men and women to share decisions within the family? Why or why not?”
- “Are there any disadvantages to sharing decisions? Why or why not?”

Key message

There are many decisions that men make on their own, often because they are expected to as the head of the household. These decisions directly impact women and children’s lives and wellbeing. In many communities and contexts, people believe that women should only make “small” decisions, like how to manage daily expenses, and men should make “big” decisions, like buying land or organizing a child’s wedding. This perception needs to be challenged since both men and women are equally capable of making both big and small decisions

Lack of shared/joint decision-making can have negative consequences for children, women and men themselves. If women and men do not participate equally in decision-making processes, women’s and men’s specific needs and interests will not be taken into consideration equally

Shared decision-making brings benefits, but requires taking concrete steps to share power between men and women. Women and men should have equal opportunities for making decisions that impact their lives in the family and in the community, since both have the capacity to do so.

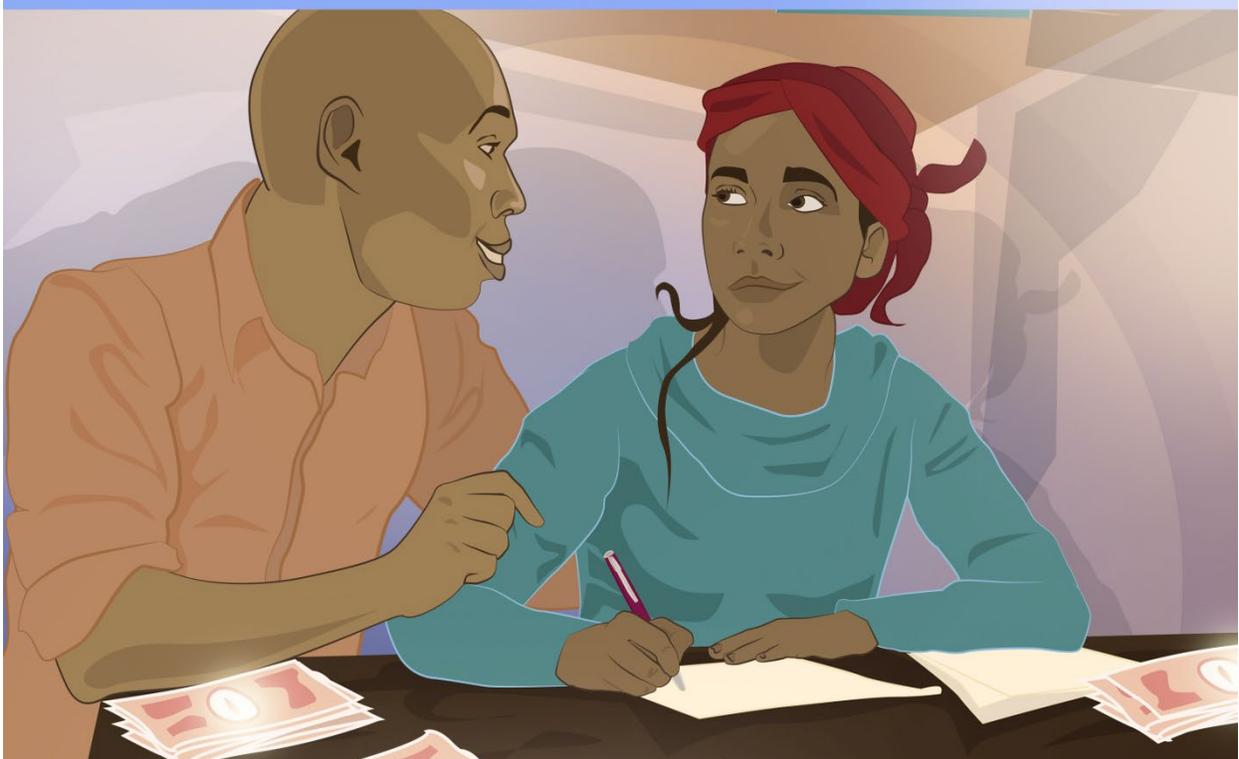
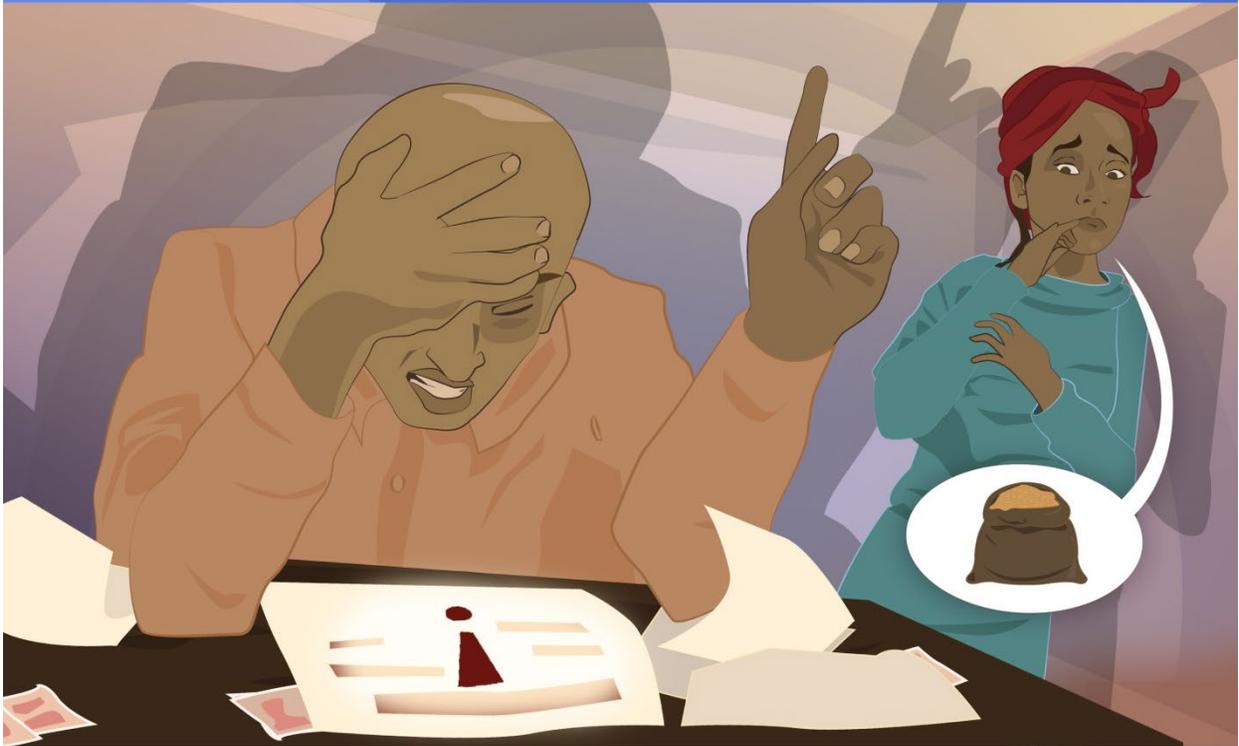
CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.



2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

Activity #8: Who makes decisions?



ACTIVITY #9: WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

OBJECTIVE: To identify the most common types of violence that occur in families and between partners.

MATERIALS (Optional): Flipchart or large pieces of paper, markers, post-its (or smaller papers and tape)

TIME: 1 hour

PREPARATION: Hang three flipcharts on the wall or any other surface: (1) Violence you have experienced; (2) Violence you have witnessed; (3) Violence you have used against another person

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain that the purpose of the activity they are going to do is to discuss what violence is and the different types of violence that exist.
4. Ask the group, “What is violence?” Allow them to share their opinions. You can write down the responses on a flipchart if you prefer. If literacy is a challenge, just discussion will be enough.
5. After everyone has shared their ideas, explain to the group that, “We’ve all experienced violence in one way or another – as a victim, a witness, or a perpetrator. At its simplest level, violence is the use of force or the threat of force by one individual against another. Violence is not a random act. **Violence is something that is learned, and therefore can be unlearned.**”
6. Tell the group that we will hand them three post-its or papers and tape and they will write down or draw the following:
 - 1 type of violence they have experienced
 - 1 type of violence they have witnessed
 - 1 type of violence they have used against another person
7. After a few minutes, ask participants to stick the post-its/papers on the relevant flipchart.
8. Once everyone has finished, ask participants to walk around to each flipchart and read or view the participants responses.
9. After a few minutes, ask everyone to sit down and then ask if one person would like to share their own personal experiences with violence. If no one volunteers, pick a post-it/paper and read it out or discuss the drawing to the group.



10. Ask the group, “Can anyone tell us what kind of violence this is?”
11. Allow a few participants to volunteer responses.
12. Repeat by asking for another example of a different kind of violence until you have examples of the four categories of violence.
13. At the end, provide the following definitions of violence:

“Physical violence is the use of physical force, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, burning or pushing.”

“Sexual violence includes pressuring or forcing someone to perform sexual acts (from kissing to sex) against their will, or making sexual comments that make someone feel humiliated or uncomfortable. It does not matter if the person has previously consented to sexual behavior – consent must be given at the time of the act.”

“Emotional or psychological violence is often the most difficult form of violence to identify. It may include humiliating, threatening, insulting, pressuring, and expressions of jealousy or possessiveness, such as controlling someone’s decisions and activities. It can also include restricting someone’s movements. This form of violence can be verbal or non-verbal.”

“Economic violence is when someone else exercises complete control over a person’s money and other economic resources. This type of violence is a way of exerting power and can be used to control someone’s movements, for example by keeping them from meeting with friends, etc.”

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- “What are the most common types of violence that occur in the family? In romantic relationships? Between friends?”
- “Are there types of violence that are related to a person’s gender? What is the most common type of violence practiced against women? Against men?”
- “Are only men violent, or are women also violent? What is the most common type of violence that women use against others?”
- “What are the most common types of violence that occur in intimate relationships?”
- “Does a person, man or woman, ever “deserve” to be hit or suffer some type of violence? Why or why not?”
- “Is there a relationship between power and violence? Explain.”
Encourage participants to think of the different types of power (i.e. economic, political, physical) that a person can have over another and the link to violence. For example, the threat of physical violence (a show of power) may be used against an intimate partner in order to control whom she speaks to or whom she socializes with.
- “How acceptable is it in our communities for men to use violence against women?”

- “What are some of the consequences of violence on individuals? On relationships and the family? On communities?”

| Some examples: | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Individual | For example, consequences for an individual can include physical injuries such as bruises, cuts or broken bones, and even death. Physical violence can also happen while a woman is pregnant – impacting the health of mother and child. Sexual violence, such as unwanted intercourse can lead to unplanned pregnancy and vulnerability to disease. Violence also causes psychological suffering and can have negative impacts on a person's mental health. |
| Relationship and family | Consequences for relationships and the family can include fear, mistrust and disharmony between partners. In addition, children who witness violence against their mother often suffer many of the same symptoms as children who have experienced physical or sexual violence themselves. These same children, particularly boys, often grow up to repeat these cycles of violence by perpetrating violence against a female partner when they become adults. |
| Community or society | Consequences for the community can include the high costs of health care for treating the physical and mental consequences of violence on individuals. Other costs include those incurred by the police, courts and legal services to prosecute perpetrators of abuse. Women who have experienced violence may be less able to work, or prohibited to do so, which can lead to losses in their earning potential. |

- “What needs to be done to stop violence within the family?”

Key message

At its most basic level, violence is a way to control or have power over another person. When people talk about violence, they think mainly of physical aggression. It is important, however, to also think of other forms of violence as well as the different settings and circumstances in which violence happens. Whether enacted against women, children, men, elderly people, individuals of different religious backgrounds or sexual orientations, violence is always a violation of human rights and is rooted in power imbalances. For example, violence against women is rooted in the power imbalances that exist between men and women, and violence against children is rooted in the power imbalance that exists between generations.

Too many young women have experienced or witnessed violence at some point in their lives, often at the hands of men. It is commonly assumed that violence is a “natural” or “normal” part of being a man. However, violence is a learned behavior - boys and men are often raised to think violence is an acceptable means of maintaining control, particularly over women, resolving conflicts or expressing anger. And just as violence is learned, it can be unlearned and prevented. In this way, it is the responsibility of all individuals, women and men, to strive to raise boys and men, as well as girls and women, to understand how violence, be it men's violence against women or a parent's use of violence against a child, prevents individuals from building positive and loving relationships.

Note: It is quite possible that a or some group members may be uncomfortable talking about violence or the discussion may lead to triggering of experiences that can cause distress. At all times the group facilitators must repeat that the group is a safe space and if anyone wants to leave the discussion, they can do so. If a participant discloses violence against themselves, facilitators (whether Plan staff, partner staff or community based facilitators) must know where appropriate psychosocial and other supports are. In the



case of a participant under the age of 24, Plan International's child and young person's safeguarding requirements kick in that facilitators must be aware of.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #9

Speak to 2-3 people, either friends, or trusted family members, about the different types of gender-based violence witnessed or heard about in your community. Ask these people what they think the consequences are of gender-based violence for women and girls. Consequences can include physical, social, emotional, or other forms of consequences.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.



HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #9

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 9 and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

TIME: 30-60 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #9

Speak to 1-2 people, either friends, or trusted family members, about the different types of gender-based violence witnessed or heard about in your community. Ask these people what they think the consequences are of gender-based violence for women and girls. Consequences can include physical, social, emotional, or other forms of consequences.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “What did you discuss and with whom?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of gender based violences. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #10: MYTHS ABOUT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

OBJECTIVE: To examine myths about gender-based violence and to learn how to reject and overcome these myths, and to learn about the different types of power and how gender-based violence against women and girls takes place as a result of unequal power relations between men and women, boys and girls.

MATERIALS (Optional): Flipcharts, markers, 2 bowls or containers, small pieces of paper (with 1 myth written) on each paper

TIME: 1 hour and 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain that in this activity you will learn about common myths and false beliefs about gender-based violence against women and girls.
4. Divide the group into smaller groups of about 3 each. Ask each group to pick one ‘myth’ from the bowl that you have already prepared. If literacy is a challenge, please read the myth out to the group yourself.

Facilitator Tip: If the group is unsure about the definition of a myth, share the following definition with them: “*Myths are widely held but false beliefs or ideas.*”

5. Ask each group to take 10 minutes to analyze the myth they were given. Show the flipchart with the following questions to guide the group discussions. Please read out the questions frequently to the smaller groups where literacy is a challenge. Encourage each group to note their discussions to help them share later with the wider group. This can be done by writing them down or a few members memorizing them for sharing.
 - a. How common is this myth in your community?
 - b. Does this myth relate to any ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman?
 - c. Which ones?
 - d. What evidence could you use to show that this myth is false?
6. Ask each group to take turns sharing the myth they chose and what they discussed. After each one, take some time to see if the other groups agree or disagree with the myth and agree with what the group presented. As each group finishes their presentation, share the *reality* that goes with that myth (**see the Resource Sheet for Activity #9**)
7. Ask the group “*What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about power?*”

Facilitator Tip: Listen carefully to try to identify the three different forms of power in what the girls/women say. It may be useful to write key words from their answers on a flipchart

8. Present the following definition of **power** to the group:

***“Power is:** The ability or capacity to effectively communicate an idea, influence people and take action – and can be experienced individually or collectively. It is a whole set of resources, ideas, knowledge and tools that anyone can use to effectively influence people or situations.”*

9. Explain to the group that there are 3 types of power and present the following definition of the **3 types of power** to the group:

***“Power over:** This is the ability to control others, or to impose views, needs or desires over them or over a situation. This kind of power can be positive or negative, depending on how it is used.”*

***“Power with:** This is the power that is gained from working with others to claim our rights and to achieve collective goals. It refers to the power that we give each other when we cooperate, and when we use each other’s different strengths, knowledge and ideas.”*

***“Power within:** This is the individual skills and feelings of self-esteem, value and dignity that give someone the confidence to claim their own rights.”*

10. Continue with the discussion using the questions down below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Can you provide any examples of **power over**, **power with** and/or **power within**?”*
- *“Why do you think that gender-based violence takes place? How is this related to power?”*
- *“How does the media (music, radio, movies, etc.) portray violence?”*
- *“Some researchers say that violence is like a cycle, that is to say, someone who is a victim of violence is more likely to commit acts of violence later. Do you think this is true? If so, how can you help to interrupt the cycle of violence?”*
- *“How can we support ourselves or others who have suffered from gender-based violence?”*
- *“Do you think that men have a role to play in preventing violence against women? Explain.”*
- *“What have you learned in this activity to help overcome violence? Have you learned anything that can be applied in your own life and relationships?”*
- *“How can we become advocates who promote freedom from gender-based violence at home, in schools, and throughout communities?”*



Key message

Myths about gender-based violence contribute to it being less visible, or even to justifying it. Myths can make harmful behaviors seem normal. Therefore, it is essential for us to identify and reject myths about gender-based violence. People are socialized to use or to accept gender-based violence. Boys learn to use violence as part of 'being a man' and many girls learn that experiencing and receiving violence is part of 'being a woman'. Men and boys are not violent by nature, but they do choose to use violence more than women and girls do. Male violence is often justified as a common or inevitable reaction to a threat, and so people learn to think that it cannot be avoided. But it is not true that men or boys use gender-based violence because they 'cannot control themselves'.

No one has the right to use violence against any person. Those who use violence are actively choosing to abuse power and exert control over another person in large part because they believe they have the right to do so. This is why it is so important for everyone to understand that we all have the right to live free from violence which means that no one has the right to use violence against us.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *"Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?"*
 - *"Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?"*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #10

Take some time to speak about these myths to a trusted female friend or family member, to ask them why they think these myths exist and what evidence can prove that these myths are false.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.

RESOURCE SHEET FOR ACTIVITY #10: MYTHS AND REALITIES

- MYTH #1** **THE VIOLENCE CANNOT BE THAT BAD. IF IT WERE, SHE WOULD LEAVE THE RELATIONSHIP.**
Reality: There are many explanations as to why it is so difficult for a girl or woman to leave a violent relationship. For example, many women experience an endless 'cycle of violence', or are subjected to even worse violence when they try to leave. Others might have lost their ability to make their own decisions, or do not have the support network they need in order to leave.
- MYTH #2** **SOME WOMEN AND GIRLS LIKE BEING HIT.**
Reality: Nobody likes to be threatened, beaten, insulted or injured. This myth seeks to blame victims and makes it so that perpetrators of gender-based violence are not held responsible.
- MYTH #3** **IF A MAN CONTROLS OR BEATS A WOMAN OR GIRL, IT SHOWS HE LOVES HER.**
Reality: Abuse and violence are not expressions of love or affection. Someone who loves a woman or girl will not hit or harm her.
- MYTH #4** **SOME WOMEN DESERVE TO BE BEATEN FOR THE THINGS THEY HAVE DONE.**
Reality: Nobody deserves to be treated violently, no matter what they have or have not done. Violence is never the result of anything a victim has done or did not do; it is the result of the abuser taking advantage of their power over the victim.
- MYTH #5** **WOMEN PROVOKE RAPE BY THE WAY THEY BEHAVE: WEARING PROVOCATIVE CLOTHING, GETTING DRUNK, HANGING OUT IN THE STREET AT NIGHT, ETC.**
Reality: Women and girls have the right to dress however they wish. Looking or dressing a certain way does not make anyone more or less likely to be a victim of violence. No one asks to be sexually victimized. The aggressor is the only one responsible for the crime.
- MYTH #6** **HE FORCED HER TO HAVE SEX WITH HIM BECAUSE HE IS A YOUNG MAN WHO COULD NOT CONTROL HIMSELF. BOYS WILL BE BOYS.**
Reality: Forcing anyone to have sex is rape. Men and boys are completely responsible for their own actions; the stereotype that they cannot make decisions when it comes to sex is untrue and harmful.
- MYTH #7** **VIOLENCE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PERSON WHO PROVOKES IT.**
Reality: Violence is not an appropriate response to a provocation and it is the responsibility of the person who uses it. Therefore, it is the aggressor that must take responsibility for their violence.
- MYTH #8** **A WOMAN WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY CONSENTED TO SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH SOMEONE CANNOT BE RAPED BY THAT PERSON.**
Reality: Any occasion in which a person does not want to have sexual relations but is forced into it is a violation or rape. Accepting kisses and touches does not mean accepting sex. A person can say "NO" to sex at any point, no matter what happened up to that point.
- MYTH #9** **WHAT HAPPENS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IS NOBODY'S BUSINESS. ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OR GIRLS ARE PRIVATE MATTERS TO BE DEALT WITH WITHIN THE FAMILY.**
Reality: Violence against women and girls is a social problem – not a private one. Gender based violence is a human rights violation, and must be addressed by all girls, boys, women and men in order to transform harmful gender norms that lead to gender-based violence. Violence is also illegal in many countries to be dealt appropriately by the law.



HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #10

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 10 and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

TIME: 30-60 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #10

Take some time to speak about these myths to a trusted female friend or family member, to ask them why they think these myths exist and what evidence can prove that these myths are false.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “Who did you have a discussion with and what did you talk about?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the myths around gender-based violence. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.



ACTIVITY #11: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the characteristics of a healthy, non-violent relationship and how to use communication to resolve conflict and build more equitable, respectful relationships.

MATERIALS (Optional): Illustration on Healthy Relationships, Flipchart or large pieces of paper, markers.

TIME: 1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS

11. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
12. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”

Facilitator tip: If men and women are present, you can divide the participants into one group of women and one group of men. Each group will require a facilitator. Ask the groups to move to different parts of the room, to allow enough space for each group to talk openly without disturbing the others.

13. Open up the illustration for this activity on Healthy relationships.
14. Pointing to the illustration, ask participants what is the difference between the two scenes shown on the page? Alternatively, ask for participants to split into pairs or small groups of three and discuss the differences between the two scenes. Then ask them to share insights from their discussion.
15. Explain to the group that in this activity they will discuss what a healthy relationship looks like and how to build a healthier relationship with their partners.
16. Ask the group: “A couple can feel lots of stress right after a child is born because they have many new responsibilities. It is important that they have a healthy relationship to deal with this stress. In your community, what does a healthy, respectful relationship look like? How do the partners in a healthy relationship treat each other?” You can record the responses on a flipchart if you prefer.

***Note on adaptation:** In some settings the term “respect” or “respectful” is understood in different ways (e.g. the respect you show a teacher or elder) or is interpreted to mean the “respect” that men, as the head of the family, deserve to receive from their wives. In such cases, you might want to substitute the term “equitable”, meaning relationships that are characterized by a shared, or equal standing and between men and women, where both partners care for, value, and support each other.

Examples of Healthy Relationships

Partners/spouses:

- Communicate calmly without using violence
- Share household responsibilities equally
- Have equal and positive involvement in the health of children
- Male partner is positively involved in and supports the health of his partner
- Male partner respects the ideas and opinions of his female partner
- Give love and respect one another
- Give each other space
- Are honest with one another
- Encourage / cheer on one another
- Give privacy to one another
- Have their own friends

17. After the group has shared their ideas of what a healthy, respectful relationship looks like, ask the group: *“How do the partners in a healthy relationship feel?”*

Examples of Feelings in Healthy Relationships

- Women feel heard and respected
- Men may feel less stress because they communicate and listen to frustrations and solve problems together
- Men feel more connected to their children because they are more involved
- Both partners feel loved and respected
- Both partners feel that the relationship is honest

18. Next, ask the group: *“What does an unhealthy relationship look like? How do partners in such a relationship treat each other?”*

Examples of Unhealthy Relationships

Partners/spouses:

- Accuse one another of cheating (infidelity)
- Lie to one another
- Do not share responsibility, giving an unfair burden of household and caregiving chores to women
- Do not communicate about the number of children to have
- Use violence to resolve conflict
- Criticize one another
- Act controlling or jealous, such as wanting to know where you are at all times
- Check one another’s Facebook page/ phone to know who they communicate with

19. Next, ask the group: *“How do the partners in an unhealthy relationship feel?”*

Examples of Feelings in Unhealthy Relationships

One or both partners may:

- Mistrust each other
- Feel scared of the other
- Fear for the safety of the children
- Have paranoia and jealousy
- Feel overwhelmed or trapped

20. Tell the group, *“Once we know what a healthy relationship looks like, we can begin to think about the steps we need to take to create healthier, happier relationships with our partners, our families and our friends. Creating a healthy relationship is a daily, on-going process that requires **mutual respect and commitment to improving partner relations**. Healthy relationships also help ensure that children grow up in a happy and safe home.”*
21. Tell the group, *“Sometimes when we are angry, or having a disagreement with our partner, we behave in ways that aren’t respectful or constructive. Communicating our feelings is a very important way of resolving, or even avoiding conflict in the first place. But, many of us find it difficult to communicate to our partners why we are upset. We will now discuss and rehearse creative ways of communicating in order to resolve conflict – ways that can be used in our relationships with our spouses/partners, but also with friends, family members and others.”*
22. Use the four phrases below as a guide to help facilitate role-play and discussion. Participants should also be encouraged to think of their own phrases that can be useful when resolving conflict.

Four phrases for communicating during conflict:

- ***I can see...*** This is how we can express the behaviour that we see in the other person. For example: “I can see that you are upset with me.”
- ***I imagine...*** This phrase is how we say what we imagine when we observe the other person’s behaviour. For example: “I imagine that you are upset because...”
- ***I feel...*** This phrase is how we say what we feel to the person about what we can see and imagine. For example: “I feel sad and what happened really hurt me because our relationship is important to me.”
- ***I want...*** This phrase is how we make a proposal for how to improve things. For example: “I want you to tell me if something is bothering you.”

23. After sharing the phrases (or asking participants to role-play different situations in which they could use the phrases), open a discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Think about all the stresses a couple with young children must experience. Do you think these phrases could be useful for you to communicate when you have conflicts in your relationship? Why or why not?”*
- *“Are there other ways of communicating your feelings that you think would help you to resolve conflicts without violence?”*
- *“Do you think it would be easy for a man to express his feelings during an argument? Why or why not?”*
- *“Do you think it would be easy for a woman to express her feelings during an argument? Why or why not?”*
- *“What are the benefits of communicating your feelings during a conflict?”*



- *“Do you think using these communication skills could help improve your relationship with your partner? With your children?”*

Key message

Communication is an important characteristic of a healthy, non-violent and respectful relationship. It is a good way to ensure that everyone feels like they are being heard. Sometimes when we are sad or frustrated, we don't talk about it, and the frustration or anger builds up until it is expressed through physical aggression or shouting. Take the time to talk with and listen to your partner. When we communicate, we can often resolve or stop conflict before it starts. This will also benefit young children when they see that their mother and father are able to resolve problems together.

CHECKOUT

4. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
5. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
6. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

Activity #11: Healthy Relationships





ACTIVITY #12: PARENTS BY ACCIDENT OR BY CHOICE?

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the benefits of using a family planning method and the value of couple communication in this process.

MATERIALS: 2 containers of beans, or other items to represent household resources; (Optional): rocks, paper, rope, or other objects to mark 2 squares on the ground

TIME: 1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS

***Note on adaptation:** This activity is best when it is conducted in conjunction with the provision of accurate information by a trained health professional on the specific contraceptive methods available in the community.

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that the purpose of this activity is to discuss couples’ use of family planning to and birth spacing to delay pregnancy.
4. Construct two squares on the ground or floor (this can be done with paper, by drawing in the dirt, or by using rope or other materials to demarcate the two spaces. Each square should be big enough to accommodate six people standing).
5. Explain that each square represents a house. You are going to tell the story of two couples, and you will need some volunteers to help illustrate the story. One person in each couple will be the mother and the other will be the father. Ask four volunteers to take on these roles:
 - **Couple # 1:** man and woman
 - **Couple # 2:** man and woman

***Note on adaptation:** It is good to provide locally relevant names for each couple and to use these names throughout the story.

6. Tell the volunteers that while you read the story they will act out the story. When the story requires it, the volunteers can ask for new volunteers to join them in their home (square). Begin the story:

“This is the story of two brothers who decided to get married on the same day.”
Ask each couple to enter their “house”. The observers can clap or sing to celebrate the marriages.

“Within a year of marriage, both couples have their first child.”
Ask for two volunteers to play the children and join their parents in their respective house.

“After the birth, Couple #1 decides to space their next child and begins using a family planning/child spacing method recommended by the local health facility.”
Remind the volunteers to continue the role-play as you continue reading the story.

“Couple #2 does not use a family planning/child spacing method. In fact, the husband refuses to even discuss it. A year later, the couple has a 2nd child.”
Ask a volunteer to play the second child and join the parents in their house.

“The following year, both couples have another child.”
Ask two volunteers to play the children and to join the parents in their respective houses.

“After the birth, the Couple #1 begins to use a family planning/child spacing method again. Couple #2 does not use family planning/child spacing. The following year, couple #2 welcomes their 4th child.”
Ask a volunteer to play the fourth child and to join the parents in their house.

“Two years later, both couples welcome a new child. It is the 5th child for couple #2 and the 3rd child for couple #1.”
Ask for two volunteers to play the children and to join the parents in their respective houses.

7. Remind the volunteers that each family needs to remain inside their house (within the square).
8. Give each couple a container of beans (or other object representing the family’s resources). Ask each couple to distribute the beans among the family members and ask each family to take a few minutes to role play/act out what it’s like to live in their household. Ask the rest of the group to observe.
9. After the role-play, thank the volunteers and ask them to “step out” of their roles. Open a group discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **For observers:** “What did you notice as you listened to the story and watched these families?”
- **For actors:** “How did it feel to participate in this activity?”
- “Is there anything wrong with having a large family?”

Note to the facilitator: The point of this question is to say that there is no such thing as the ‘perfect’ family size. However, each couple has to decide together how many children they can provide for so that each child has the opportunity to have a healthy start in life.

- “Why do some couples choose not to use family planning/child spacing methods or to space their children?”
- “What effects can lack of family planning/child spacing have on women? On women’s health? On the family? On the family’s resources?”

| Some examples | |
|-----------------|---|
| Women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased likelihood of depression • Reduced likelihood of breastfeeding, resulting in less healthy children • Increased risk of physical violence during pregnancy • Greater risk of maternal mortality / morbidities |
| Men | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stress and risk of abandoning family as a result of having to provide for a large family • Perpetrate violence against his pregnant intimate partner |
| Children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born with low birth weight • Increased risk of infant mortality |

- *“What are the benefits of men and women planning their family together, meaning to discuss and agree how many children they want to have and to space their pregnancies (waiting 2 to 3 years in between children)?”*
- *“What challenges do men and women face in using family planning/child spacing?”*
- *“Do most couples discuss family planning/child spacing? What could make it easier for men and women to discuss family planning?”*
- *“How can men contribute to, support or participate more in family planning/child spacing?”*

Key message

Every couple, and every woman and girl, has the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of their children. Unplanned pregnancies can put an emotional and financial strain on women, men and the entire family. There are also serious health consequences as well particularly for mothers and young children. It is important for couples to discuss and agree on the number of children they want to have, and whether they have the resources to support them.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

ACTIVITY #13: THE EFFECTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

OBJECTIVE: To understand the effects of child marriage on girls and girls and women's rights, and to discuss the causes of child marriage.

MATERIALS: Flipchart paper, markers

TIME: 1 hour and 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?"

3. Explain to the group that you would like to discuss the issue of child marriage and its effect on girls and women's lives.

4. Ask: "What key words, ideas or images come to mind when you hear the words 'child marriage'?" Record each idea, word or image on a flipchart.

5. Share the following definition of child marriage, and check with the group if there are any questions.

"Child Marriage is any marriage – whether under civil, religious or customary law, and with or without formal registration – where either one or both spouses are children under the age of 18."

6. Ask the group: "What do you think of this definition? Is there anything you would change to the definition?"

7. Ask the group: "Do you know of any unions that would fit this definition of child marriage in your community?"

8. Explain that we are now going to consider the impact of child marriage on girls and women.

9. Present a prepared flipchart listing the broad types of impacts child marriage can have:

Child Marriage can have negative effects on:

- Girls' development, empowerment, and self-esteem
- Girls' education
- Girls' income and economic well-being
- Girls' health
- Girls' lives
- Girls' safety and protection
- Girls' human rights

10. Divide the group into smaller groups of 2-3 people. Ask each group to discuss one of the listed effects of child marriage for about 5-10 minutes.
11. Ask each group to share with the plenary group what they discussed. As they discuss, you can share any or all of the following facts about the effects of child marriage with the group (you can also write these out and share these with group members for them to read aloud where feasible).

| Harmful Impacts of Child Marriage | |
|--|---|
| Education | <i>Child marriage often means the end of education for girls. This denies girls the education they need for their personal development, their preparation for adulthood, and their ability to contribute to the family and community.</i> |
| Income and Economic Well Being | <i>Child marriage limits girls' access to the skills needed to earn income for themselves, and contribute to their families and their communities. Child marriage often ends a girls' education – one additional year of secondary schooling alone boosts girls' earning potential by 15-25 percent.</i> |
| Health | <p><i><u>HIV risk:</u> Once married, girls are likely to feel, and in many cases are, powerless to refuse sex. They are likely to find it difficult to insist on condom use by their husbands, who commonly are older and more sexually experienced, making the girls especially vulnerable to HIV.</i></p> <p><i><u>Unwanted pregnancy:</u> Married girls are often under pressure to become pregnant immediately or soon after marriage, although they are still children themselves and know little about sex or reproduction. A pregnancy too early in life before a girl's body is fully mature is a major risk to mother and baby.</i></p> |
| Life | <p><i><u>Death during childbirth:</u> Complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the main causes of death among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years old in developing countries. Girls aged less than 15 years old are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women aged 20-24.</i></p> <p><i><u>Survival of infants:</u> When a mother is under 20, her baby is one-and-a-half times more likely to die within its first weeks of life than a baby born to a mother in her 20's.</i></p> |
| Safety and Protection | <i>Rape resulting in pregnancy is a risk factor for girls being forced into early marriage. Girls married before 18 are more likely to report being beaten by their husbands and forced to have sex ('marital rape') than girls who marry later.</i> |
| Development, empowerment, and self-esteem | <p><i><u>Social isolation:</u> Marriage often causes girls to be socially isolated, bringing unwanted separation from their friends and family. This further limits girls' access to information and key resources.</i></p> <p><i><u>Development and empowerment:</u> Child marriage robs girls of their childhood, and the opportunity to develop and realize their vision for their own lives and well-being. Linked to this, child marriage cuts girls off from the support to develop the resources and experiences of their own power within, and isolates girls from other peers and the related sense of solidarity that contributes to girls' power with others to realize their goals.</i></p> |
| Human rights | <p><i>Child marriage violates the following rights:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Right to marry and establish a family, and to decide if, when and who to marry</i> • <i>Right to education</i> • <i>Right to life</i> • <i>Right to freedom of expression</i> • <i>Right to development and health</i> • <i>Right to sexual and reproductive health and rights</i> • <i>Right to equality</i> • <i>Right to participation in decisions that affect one's life</i> |

12. Open a group discussion using the following questions.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Is child marriage in our community common?”*
- *“What are some of the reasons that girls are married early? What leads to their (or their families) decision?”*
- *“Are there certain girls in our community who are more at risk to be married early?”*
- *“What are some of the reasons that women over 18 get married? What leads to their (or their families) decision?”*
- *“Are there differences between the reasons why a girl under 18 would get married and those for a woman over 18? If yes, what are the differences? If no, why are there no differences?”*
- *“What are some of the reasons for a girl younger than 15 might be married? Are these different than women over 18? Are these different for girls aged 16-18?”*
- *“What are community attitudes towards child marriage? Have these changed between generations?”*
- *“How is the situation today for girls’ compared to your generation? What about compared to your parents’ generation? Are they better able to choose if, when and whom to marry?”*
- *“Do you think changes need to be made with regards to child marriage? If yes, what needs to change? If no, why not?”*
- *“How do you feel about what we have discussed during this session?”*

Key Message

Child marriage occurs when one or both spouses are younger than 18. When girls know more about child marriage and its harmful effects, they can help to increase their and their peers’ ability to shape their life choices.

Girls are most affected by child marriage. Child marriage limits the healthy development and life options of girls. Girls’ lack of power in child marriages is at the heart of these harmful effects. Child marriage is a violation of girls’ rights. Child marriage is also a barrier to girls’ right to education, health, life, safety and self-determination.

Some girls are more vulnerable to child marriage than others. Factors that make girls vulnerable include poverty, practices such as bride price and dowry, withdrawal from school, family and community traditions, fears about girls’ sexuality, fears for girls’ safety, underlying gender norms and inequalities that value girls less than boys. Being socially isolated and living in rural areas are additional risk factors.

Learning how common child marriage is in a girl’s own community and in her country is an important first step in discussing what can be done to change this reality, and to support their peers who are already married. This informational can also support girls in considering what they can do to influence change in their lives and in their communities.



CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK FOR ACTIVITY #13

Discuss with your trusted family members or friends or partner what some of the beliefs or ideas that encourage child marriage are. You can also discuss some of the harmful effects of child marriage that were discussed in the session with trusted family members or friends or partner.

Please see note about homework assignment on page 20 above.

HOMWORK REFLECTION FOR ACTIVITY #13

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on the homework assignment from Activity 11 and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

TIME: 30-60 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous meeting.

HOMWORK FOR ACTIVITY #13

Discuss with your trusted family members or friends what some of the beliefs or ideas that encourage child marriage are. You can also discuss some of the harmful effects of child marriage that were discussed in the session with trusted family members or friends.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first group meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “Who did you talk to and what did you discuss together?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to child marriage. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY #14: CLOSING CIRCLE

OBJECTIVE: *To appreciate how the group meetings have impacted the participants and the positive changes participants have made in their lives and relationships.*

MATERIALS: *(Optional) Ball of string or rope (at least 10 meters in length)*

TIME: *1 hour*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain that this is the last official meeting of the group, where each participant will have time to reflect on her experiences in the group and the connections made with each other.
4. Tell the group: *“Change is a gradual process. It is important to reflect on where we have come from and the changes we have made. You can continue to use the information learned in this group and from each other to make changes that will benefit you and your families.”*
5. Ask the participants to stand up in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
6. Explain that each participant will share one thing she is **grateful for** after participating in the group sessions. Each person will say, *“Something I am grateful for about this group is...”*
7. Allow each participant to share and then share what you, as the facilitator, are most grateful for.
8. Next, explain that everyone will go around the circle one more time and share one thing they **learned** in the group. Each person will say, *“One thing I have learned that I will take with me is...”*

Facilitator Tip: If you have a ball of string or rope, you can create an actual “web” to illustrate the connections between the group members. Each person will hold on to the end of the rope and toss the ball of rope to another person in the group. Each person should hold onto a piece of the rope before throwing the ball. This will continue until everyone has had something to say. Once everyone has finished, a web will have formed.

9. After everyone (including you as the facilitator) has shared what they have learned, tell the group: *“Take a moment to look at everyone standing around the circle and appreciate all that we have experienced and learned during our time together. There is an invisible web connecting all of you, which represents the sum of your experiences in this group. You are all now connected because you have acquired a*



new definition of what it means to be a parent and a partner.”

10. Allow the group a few moments to look at each other and appreciate what each person has contributed.

Facilitator Tip: This can be done silently, with a nod of the head, or in another way that is a culturally appropriate form of showing thanks or appreciation.

11. Close the activity by saying: *“Now we have the opportunity to take what we have learned together and share it with your family and friends. Remember, the changes you have all made inside yourselves are like a drop of rain on the surface of the water, creating ripples that affect everyone around you.”*

12. Congratulate everyone for completing the sessions and thank them all for contributing to the group.

13. Encourage the group members to continue to meet and find ways to support each other. Everyone who wants to can share her contact information (phone number, or where they live) with each other in order to stay in touch.

Closing message

All of you should be proud of the positive changes you have made in your lives. This is only the beginning of the process of change. I encourage all of you to support each other and seek support from your family as you continue in this process of change.

As you all know, the problems in our communities cannot be solved in one day, or by one person working alone. A good place to start, though, is with your own lives. Changing your attitudes and behaviors is not always easy. It is important to keep this in mind and to think about how you can support each other to make changes in your lives and relationships. Try to also think about how you can share the information you have learned in this and other activities with other women and men, and girls and boys, in your communities and engage them in the kinds of questioning and discussions you have had here. Remember, everyone has a role to play in building more equitable and peaceful communities, and starting with your own lives and relationships is an important first step.

ANNEX 1: KABULA'S STORY

AN EXPERIENTIAL GROUP EXERCISE

The experience of married adolescent girls and young women is illustrated in the Story of Kabula. This story is an experiential exercise that can be used in the training of health providers/supervisors to raise awareness of these stakeholders on the gender-related barriers women and adolescent girls face in accessing care.

Opening

Kabula (Give a local name) is a 17 year old adolescent girls. She lives in a village named _____. Kabula has a much higher chance of dying in childbirth as someone in their twenties and her child is much more likely to die in childbirth than women of any other reproductive age group. If a mother dies during childbirth, the child is 10 times more likely to die. Kabula like most rural women will likely give birth at home with neighbours and no skilled birth attendants and if there are complications, she is likely to lose her life or that of her child. She has not received more than one antenatal care visit and will likely not receive a postnatal care visit. She cannot get to the nearest health facility because it's too far to walk and she is burdened by household chores. Like many other women, her husband and/or family elders make decisions on whether she receives health care or not. These are everyday realities faced by women in rural _____ (name the country where your project is being implemented).

Instructions

1. Ensure a large enough space for all participants to stand in a circle.
2. Come to the session with a big roll of wool or string.
3. Ask for a volunteer to be a fictional girl/Kabula.
4. Ask her/him to stand or sit on a chair in the middle of the circle and to hold the ball of wool.
5. Ask everyone to stand around Kabula.
6. Explain that everyone is a part of Kabula's story. Ask all the participants to imagine that they are in a rural area.
7. You will narrate parts of her story, statement by statement, and they will have to explain why the girl is in that particular situation. You will help them by reformulating the questions behind the statement.
8. Explain to the group that every time a gender issue or barrier is identified with the statement, Kabula has to pass a ball of wool to the person who identified the gender issue and then they wrap it around themselves and give the ball back to her and she has to wrap it around herself before the next statement is read aloud.
9. Another facilitator will write the gender barrier identified by each participant.
10. As the gender-related barrier is identified, ask the question "why is it like that?" and let participants respond.

Example: Read the first statement of the opening: "Kabula has a much higher chance of dying in childbirth as someone in their twenties and her child is much more likely to die in childbirth. If a mother dies at childbirth, the child is 10 times more likely to die."

Ask the question: "Why is Kabula and her child likely to die?"

At the end of the story, Kabula will be entirely wrapped.

When all the statements are read aloud ask people the following questions:

- What do you see/observe?
- To Kabula: how do you feel?
- As health providers, what can your role be once you understand these barriers?

