

# Through the Looking Glass



A Guide To Empowering Young People To  
Become Advocates For Gender Equality



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# NWCI and The Y Factor

Founded in 1973, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) is the leading national women's membership organisation in Ireland. We seek full equality between women and men. We represent and derive our mandate from our membership, which includes over 170 member groups from a diversity of backgrounds, sectors and locations.

Our vision is of an Ireland, and of a world, where there is full equality between women and men. NWCI is a feminist organisation.

We believe that feminism is about equality and we believe in working to change society so that women and men have an equal say in the decisions that affect their lives.

We see feminism as an important means of supporting the creative potential and talents of women, facilitating and enabling women's full contribution to the wider social, economic, political and cultural development of society. We recognise the multiple forms of discrimination that many women experience and we see feminism as a means of giving voice to all women.

Feminism is about ending patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in all social structures including politics, economics, moral and cultural life, and in families. We believe patriarchy is structural and is damaging to both women and men. We work to ensure that women's voices and issues are an integral part of national decision-making structures and processes in Ireland.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of groups of young women coming together seeking to challenge patriarchy and gender inequality. Groups such as Irish Feminist Network, Hollaback!, Endangered Bodies and feminist societies are examples of these new campaigns and voluntary groups. A growing number of schools and youth organisations are approaching NWCI and The Y Factor seeking advice and support in addressing gender inequalities.

In 2011, NWCI held discussions with young women about their interests in women's equality, in feminism and the kinds of supports they needed, gender stereotypes and inequality. In these conversations, many spoke of the discrimination they experienced as young women. They discussed discrimination in employment, education, within social and family settings and they highlighted experiences of sexual harassment and violence.

NWCI successfully applied for funding from Atlantic Philanthropies to establish a project that specifically set out to support young women and men to become active on, and advocate for women's equality. We called the project The Y Factor.

Our discussions with young women highlighted that schools and youth work settings key spaces where interest in gender equality issues can be nurtured and developed. The focus groups highlighted the importance of making the topic of equality between women and men **accessible, relevant, interesting and appealing**.



**The Y Factor works to:**  
**Dismantle the myths and stereotypes imposed on children from the earliest age; of women as incapable leaders and second-class citizens to their male counterparts, supporting others rather than being actors in their own right. These stereotypes harm young men as well as young women.**



## Background to This Toolkit

This toolkit brings together the learning from The Y Factor's experiences working with groups of young people in the formal and informal education sector. The Y Factor's education and youth group-based programme supports learning about gender equality and inequality by developing and delivering discussion-based awareness-raising programmes in schools and youth projects. The project promotes:

- discussion on gender equality issues
- empowerment of young people
- advocacy on equality and social justice

We designed and carried out a six-month pilot project in schools and youth projects across Ireland from January to June 2013. We worked with three schools, including one rural and one urban. One of these was an all-girls school and two were mixed-sex schools;

- **St Vincent's Secondary School**  
Dundalk, Co. Louth. Fourth Year, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Class.
- **Malahide Community School**  
Malahide, Co. Dublin. Transition Year Drama Class.
- **Lough Allen College**  
Drumkeerin, Co. Leitrim. Fourth Year Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Class.

The youth projects included two urban young women's groups and one rural young women's group:

- **Poppintree Youth Project**  
Ballymun, Co. Dublin
- **Bluebell Youth Project**  
Bluebell, Co. Dublin
- **The Pyjama Circle**  
Malin Head, Co. Donegal

All sessions took place in the setting in which the young people usually met and the programme design allowed us to respond to the issues as the young people presented them. In this way, the

**We focused not only on awareness raising but also on empowerment.**

young people led the direction of the inputs and so ownership was fostered. We used a variety of

participative methods; walking debates, documentary analysis, videos, facilitated discussions, and art and drama.

The young people identified issues affecting their own lives and these issues were contextualised within an analysis of social structures to create local to global links. Through connecting with the other work areas and campaigns of The Y Factor and NWCI, as well as ally organisations, we worked to raise awareness of how young people can affect change as well as identifying where inequalities exist.



## Who is this Toolkit For?

This toolkit is aimed at any person working with young people in a formal or informal education setting, including:

- Training and education providers
- Youth workers
- Staff working in front line services, such as mental health and residential care services
- Community groups working with groups of young people
- Teachers and staff in secondary schools

## Objectives of the Toolkit

- To increase the knowledge, understanding and confidence of youth practitioners to plan and deliver activities for young people that help them to identify and discuss issues related to equality between women and men.
- To provide youth practitioners with practical and reflective skills in working with young people around gender issues and women's equality.
- To provide step-by-step guides for young people to take action on issues that they want to take action on.
- To provide tools for ensuring that gender equality remains a core consideration at all levels within formal and informal education settings.

## Why Is This Work Important?

Historically, work with young women had the potential to come secondary to more crisis intervention work with young men.

In more recent times, issues around gender-based violence, reproductive health, body image, sexual harassment and increasing evidence of domestic abuse within younger and same-sex couples have highlighted the importance of making gender-conscious youth work a priority. When we speak about gender-conscious work with young people we mean work which considers gender in all of its approaches, both in programme design and delivery, and in policy and practice.

Increasingly young men and young women are under pressure to conform to ideals very often based around expectations associated with their gender. This often leads to increased risk of bullying and other issues youth practitioners face in their everyday work.

Despite excellent interventions combatting these and many other issues for young people, there has not historically been a strong focus on gender and gender stereotyping as a key contributor to the difficulties facing young people. Having a gender analysis can help us make the connections necessary to respond effectively to the root causes of many of the issues young people are struggling with today.

**Traditionally gender has been given little, if any, recognition in the development of curricula for working with young people.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Bessant and Evans, 1997, p.15 citing Hamilton-Smith & Brownell



# How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is organised into four main areas:

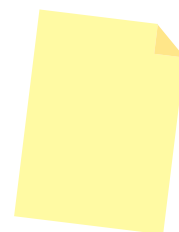
## What is Gender?

Provides background information on gender and gender inequality and introduces the practitioner to gender-conscious work with young people.



## Getting Going on Gender

Provides detailed guides to gender-based activities on a range of different issues.



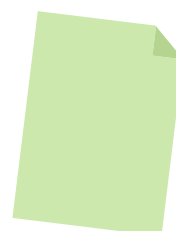
## Taking Action

Provides advice on working with groups of young people to become advocates for gender equality.



## Policy and Your Organisation

Provides step-by-step guides on gender-proofing policies and creating a gender equality policy within an organisation.





# What is Gender?

**Gender** refers to characteristics that are **socially** determined, or learned in society. **Sex** on the other hand, refers to characteristics which are **biologically** determined, such as genitals.

We are born as 'males' or 'females' but we learn, through our interactions with our families, communities, cultures and societies how to behave in masculine or feminine ways. For example, to be masculine you are told to be strong, and to be feminine you are told to be gentle. Gender characteristics are not 'natural' or inherent. Because gender roles can change over space and time, we can all contribute to changing these roles by challenging the 'norm' and seeking change for a more equal society.


## Why Focus on Gender Equality?

There has been a strong movement for women's equality in Ireland for more than a century, with key achievements like women's suffrage (women's right to vote) gained upon independence from Britain in 1928; the marriage bar in the public service lifted in 1973 (this was where women were forced to resign from their jobs when they got married on the grounds that they were occupying a job that should go to a man whilst they should be raising families); and only in 1991 was the sale of contraceptives liberalised; previously married couples only could obtain contraception with a prescription from their GP.

National Women's Council of Ireland has contributed to this movement for women's equality over the past forty years, helping to achieve increased maternity leave, successful campaigning for gender quotas in political representation and proposed changes to the Irish Constitution on women in the home and gender equality.

Despite these advancements, many gender inequalities still remain. Young women continue to face greater challenges than their male counterparts. Inequality between girls and boys becomes more evident during adolescence. When girls reach adolescence, they face a set of new challenges. Division of roles within the home, issues related to reproductive health, and increased risk of sexual violence are just some of the areas where these challenges become more visible. We need to continue to identify ways to address these challenges in a way that is empowering for both young men and young women. Consulting with young people about their gendered experiences and supporting them to express their needs will contribute to greater equality throughout society.

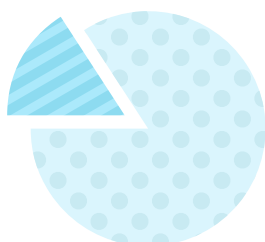
## Male and female are sexes while masculine and feminine are genders.



Young women continue to face greater challenges than their male counterparts. Inequality between girls and boys becomes more evident during adolescence.

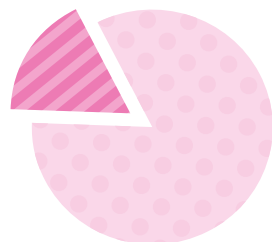
**ONLY 16%**

OF TDS IN DÁIL ÉIREANN ARE WOMEN MAKING IRELAND LAG BEHIND IN THE WORLD AVERAGE BY 5%



**ONLY 17%**

OF THE WORLD'S GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ARE WOMEN.



**JUST OVER HALF**

OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN IN IRELAND ARE IN EMPLOYMENT.



**86%**

OF CHILD-CARE IN IRELAND IS CARRIED OUT BY WOMEN.<sup>2</sup>

## Local to Global Issues for Women and Girls

**95% & 84%**  
OF YOUNG WOMEN OF YOUNG MEN

IN IRELAND REPORTED KNOWING SOMEONE WHO **HAD EXPERIENCED ABUSE, VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT** RANGING FROM BEING FORCED TO HAVE SEX, TO BEING FOLLOWED, TO BEING HIT BY A PARTNER.<sup>3</sup>



WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR **NEARLY TWO-THIRDS** OF THE WORLD'S 780 MILLION PEOPLE WHO **CANNOT READ.**<sup>9</sup>

**41 MILLION GIRLS**

WORLDWIDE ARE STILL DENIED A PRIMARY EDUCATION.<sup>8</sup>

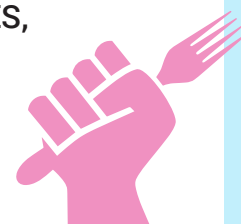
DESPITE PROGRESS IN RECENT YEARS, WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUE TO ACCOUNT FOR

**6/10**  
OF THE  
WORLD'S  
POOREST.



WOMEN PRODUCE UP TO **80% OF FOOD** IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES,

BUT ARE MORE LIKELY TO GO **HUNGRY** THAN MEN, AND ARE OFTEN DENIED THE RIGHT TO OWN LAND.



IN A NATIONAL SURVEY ON DOMESTIC ABUSE IN IRELAND,

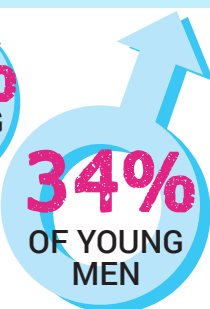
**ALMOST 60%  
OF PEOPLE**

WHO HAD EXPERIENCED  
SEVERE ABUSE IN INTIMATE  
RELATIONSHIPS EXPERIENCED  
THE ABUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME  
**UNDER THE AGE OF 25.**<sup>5</sup>

**19%**  
OF YOUNG  
WOMEN



**34%**  
OF YOUNG  
MEN



IN IRELAND  
DO NOT  
THINK  
BEING  
FORCED TO  
HAVE SEX  
IS RAPE.<sup>4</sup>

IN 2003,

**26%**

OF WOMEN WHO  
PRESENTED AS  
HOMELESS TO  
THE IRISH HOMELESS PERSONS  
UNIT HAD BECOME **HOMELESS**  
AS A RESULT OF **DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE.**<sup>7</sup>

**1/3**



OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD ARE  
SUBJECTED TO **VIOLENCE** WHETHER  
IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS,  
OR IN THE HOME.<sup>6</sup>

2 National Women's Council of Ireland Submission to the Constitutional Convention (2013) p. 6

3 Women's Aid, Teenage Tolerance: The Hidden Lives of Young Irish People, 2001

4 Women's Aid, Teenage Tolerance: The Hidden Lives of Young Irish People, 2001

5 Domestic abuse of men and women in Ireland, National Crime Council & ESRI 2005

6 General Assembly. In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General, 2006. A/61/122/Add.1. 6 July 2006

7 O'Connor & Wilson, Safe Home, Sonas Housing Association Model of Supported Transitional Housing, 2004

8 UNESCO, Education for all: Global monitoring report 2008, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2007, p184

9 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Adult Literacy Rates and Illiterate Population by Region and Gender," 2006

10 Food and Agriculture Organisation, The feminisation of hunger; what do the surveys tell us? 2001, and The state of food insecurity in the world 2005, Rome: 2005, p17

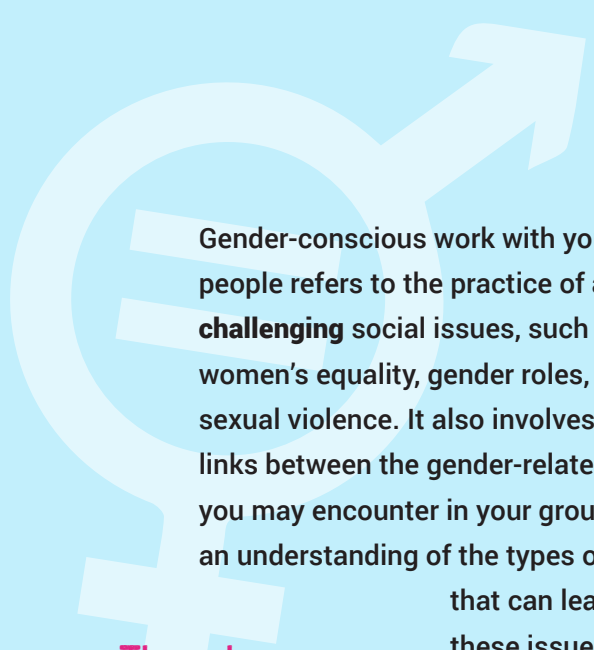
## What is Gender-Conscious Work with Young People?

The Y Factor works from a critical social education model of youth work. This means that we analyse and challenge the inequalities that exist in society which impact negatively on young people. We also see that gender, as a set of strict norms, has historically held back the personal development of young women and contributed to the inequalities that women face throughout their lives.

We work from the model that expands on personal development to enabling young people to critically assess the world around them and to empower them to act for social change, encouraging them to question the status quo and become creators and not consumers of social norms. One way in which we see this happening locally and globally has been with young women's activist groups challenging women's inequality in new and creative ways. Campaigns such as Re(AI) Productive Health, Don't Be That Guy and in the UK No More Page 3 and campaigns against lads mags have played an important role in demanding change.

**"Gender pervades every aspect of our existence and in so doing provides us with very powerful norms within which we as individuals are expected to behave. Gender-conscious work ... is **political** as it challenges the status quo of women and men in our society. It is **confrontational** in that it disputes the validity of gender roles and stereotypes. It is **painstaking** as it deconstructs all that is known about masculinity and femininity. It is also **reflective** as it continually questions workers on how their practice promotes challenges of gender expectations."**<sup>11</sup>

11 An Occasional Youth Work Practice Paper 2 – Gender-Conscious Work with Young People, YouthAction Northern Ireland.



Gender-conscious work with young people refers to the practice of **actively challenging** social issues, such as women's equality, gender roles, and sexual violence. It also involves making links between the gender-related issues you may encounter in your groups and an understanding of the types of norms

**Through gender-conscious work we can explore what parts of a young person's identity are impacted by being a young woman or a young man.**

that can lead to these issues. This practice not only involves doing specific programmes focused on gender equality but requires a whole organisation approach where workers embed

gender equality in all aspects of their programmes and daily work.

Gender-conscious practice involves reflecting on our own values and attitudes as they pertain to gender. A key component throughout this resource will be ongoing self-reflection on the part of the young people, but also on the part of the practitioner, you!

"The Gender-Conscious Practitioner is therefore deliberate in their work with young people. They are conscious of how they present themselves to others, their values and beliefs, how they plan their programmes and their interactions."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Morgan & Harland, 2009, p11

## Needs and Issues of Young Women

**"Feminist (youth) workers of the 1970s and 1980s singularly failed to influence generic practice. What they did achieve was to acknowledge there was some specialist work needed to work with girls."**<sup>13</sup>

**Feminist:** A person who believes in the **social, political, and economic equality of the sexes**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie<sup>14</sup>



The needs of young women are as diverse as young women themselves; however, gender inequality can cut across other completely different aspects of a person's life to have a negative impact on their experiences.

Through gender-conscious work, we can explore what parts of a young person's identity are impacted by being a young woman or a young man, how this might hold them back from certain life choices, and how we can challenge the assumptions that confine people to a particular sphere, set of behaviours and expectations.

<sup>13</sup> Spence, J. (2006) Working with girls and young women: a broken history. In R. Gilchrist, T. Jeffs & J. Spence (eds) *Drawing on the Past: Essays in the History of Community and Youth Work*. Leicester, National Youth Agency.

<sup>14</sup> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, We Should All Be Feminists, Speech at TedxEuston 2013 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU\\_qWc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc)



## Patriarchy

In a patriarchal world, gender inequality goes so deep that many young women, through the messages they get from society, can impose **self-limiting** expectations upon themselves which can stop them from putting themselves forward for opportunities, or developing the skills needed to take up opportunities. Young men and young women experience a process of gender stereotyping which tells them, from their earliest days, that it is appropriate for their gender to behave and look in certain ways and within certain roles. For example, research has shown that negative stereotyping affects women's and girl's performance in maths and sciences.

Even female students who liked and thought that they were good at maths could be directed away towards a more suitable 'feminised' subject choice, like home economics.<sup>15</sup> Gender stereotypes exist that tell us that science, technology, engineering and maths subjects are more suitable for boys, and attitudes still exist that these subjects are overly difficult and therefore not suitable for girls. In Ireland, there are roughly 117,800 people working in jobs that use science, technology, engineering and maths skills. The proportion of women employed in these roles is less than 25%, according to the Central Statistics Office.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Nguyen, H. -H. D., & Ryan, A. M. (2008). Does stereotype threat affect cognitive ability to test performance of minorities and women? A meta-analytic review of experimental evidence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 1314-1334.

<sup>16</sup> Accenture, Powering Economic Growth; Attracting more young women into science and technology

**Patriarchy** is the control by men of a much larger share of power in society than by women.

This is not to say that each individual man controls each individual woman but rather that the majority of power in society is controlled by **some** men, over **all** women, and **most** men.

However, it is not simply that young women are steered away from certain sectors but often those choices that are traditionally offered to young women


**The gender pay gap remains substantial, with women being consistently over represented in the lower incomes.**

are also seen to hold a lower **value** in society such as care and administrative roles and usually attract a lower

salary than many of the traditionally male professions.

**The latest 2014 Men and Women in Ireland report found over 50% of women earned €20,000 or less while women were only half as likely as men to be earning €50,000 or more. Women are also more vulnerable to a dramatic rise in precarious work and a steady erosion of job security.**<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Men and Women in Ireland 2013 - CSO (publ. July 2014)



## Needs and Issues of Young Men

While this resource is aimed at doing gender-conscious work which focuses on women's equality/inequality and how this affects young women particularly. We are aware of the potential impacts of masculine norms on young men, and how these norms are formed and reinforced in a patriarchal society. Highly gendered societies can have very negative consequences for men as well as for women, creating unrealistic demands on men and requiring them to behave in narrowly defined ways.

**"...current norms of gender marginalise many men and cultural constructions of gender exclude and alienate those who do not fit neatly into the categories of male or female".<sup>18</sup>**

While some groups of young women may be more comfortable exploring issues in single-sex groups this should be reflected in a similar single-sex young men's group. If possible, it would also be fruitful to mix groups on certain topics. It is important in this regard to develop young men's awareness of the positive roles they can play as advocates and allies for gender equality.

Bell Hooks argued that to create change you have to raise the consciousness of young men at the same time as young women. "Had there been an emphasis on groups of...boys and men about what sexism is and how it can be transformed, it would have been impossible for mass media to portray the (feminist) movement as anti-male."<sup>19</sup>



<sup>18</sup> Alsop, R., Fitzsimons, A. & Lennon, K. (2002). *Theorising Gender*, Oxford: Polity

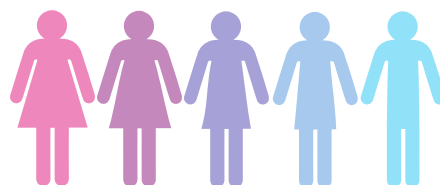
<sup>19</sup> Hooks, 2000, p11



## Trans\* Young People

The Y Factor recognises the spectrum of gender identity and the particularities of Trans\* issues and how they impact upon young people and their lives. We also recognise that there is an inseparable link between gender issues, patriarchy, feminism and 'Trans\*' issues. However, we will refer for the most part in this particular toolkit to 'man' as meaning anyone who identifies as male and 'woman' for anyone who identifies as female. Where appropriate, we will make reference to Trans\* to incorporate the myriad of other gender identifications. The Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) is an advocacy organisation which provides excellent resources and supports for work in this area.

**Trans\*** is an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the gender identity spectrum. Trans (without the asterisk) is best applied to trans men and trans women, while the asterisk makes reference to the diversity of gender identities, including transgender, transsexual, transvestite, etc.



# Before you Start

## Activities Outline

While this toolkit follows a learning rationale, it does not have to be used chronologically.

We have labelled activities according to their level of advancement rather than to specific age or class groups.

These levels are:

Level 1:	Introduction to theme/issue
Level 2:	Developing understanding of theme/issue
Level 3:	Analysis of theme/issue
Level 4:	Critical analysis and debate of theme/issue

The following table sets out a guide to the structure and aim of the activities sections:

<b>1. Sex and gender</b>	To introduce the concepts of sex and gender and to identify the difference between sex and gender.
<b>2. Gender and Stereotyping</b>	To explore gender socialisation, assumptions and stereotyping.
<b>3. Nine Equality Grounds</b>	To look at laws protecting against discrimination and explore gender as one of the nine grounds.
<b>4. Where are the Women?</b>	To explore the role of women in political and public life and the root causes and effects of a lack of women's representation in politics.
<b>5. Media, Money and How to be a Honey</b>	To explore how the media portrays women and men differently and how that impacts on our image/stereotype of different groups of people.
<b>6. Body Image</b>	To draw connections between the media, advertising and body image.
<b>7. Killing Us Softly</b>	To explore the effects of advertising on relationships between women and men and to develop group participants' capacity to critically assess media.
<b>8. Relationships</b>	To discuss the indicators of relationship abuse and to explore relationship abuse in popular media.
<b>9. Sexual Bullying</b>	To examine the sexual aspect of bullying and to explore language use and its potential to cause harm.



Each activities section has an accompanying background briefing for the facilitator which will be identified by this symbol.

The following symbols will be used throughout the toolkit to correspond with actions to be taken.



**Read**



**Watch**



**Listen**

**Be prepared! NWCI can help.**

Go to our websites [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie) / [www.yfactor.ie](http://www.yfactor.ie) for back-up information and resources.

**Many youth workers and educators will use the practice of agreeing a group contract.**

Within this space, outline your expectations around confidentiality, hate speech and the nine equality grounds. This ensures clarity about group participant's freedom to express themselves on sensitive issues, ensuring that boundaries are in place. Allow group participants to commit their own expectations of you as facilitator and of each other. This should remain an open contract which can be added to or consulted throughout.

**Strong organisational policies around issues such as sexist language and inappropriate body contact will ensure a safe space where young people feel comfortable to explore sensitive issues.** These policies should be followed by the project staff also and they should be ready to challenge behaviours which go against the stated rules. By simply saying 'this is how we do things around here', you can create a culture of acceptance of equality approaches within the project which may also filter out into the other areas of their lives.

**Challenging gender stereotypes in your organisation may begin with looking at your programme design and delivery.** Many youth workers throughout our pilot process observed that in youth group settings, single sex-groups tended to be stereotyped into traditional gendered activities such as cooking for young women and football for young men. Careful consideration and avoidance of these practices will ensure that you do not unintentionally reinforce the inequalities you are attempting to challenge.

# Getting Going On Gender

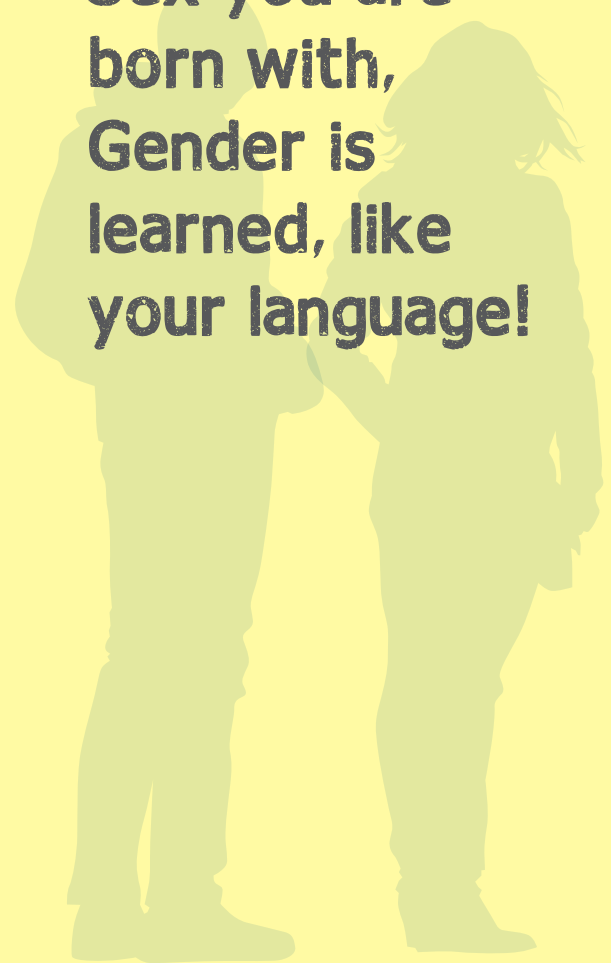
## Sex and Gender

This section introduces the young people to the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' and gender stereotyping.

'Sex' refers to the biological characteristics that define men and women. These do not change over time. (Women have breasts; Men have testicles; Women can have babies)

'Gender' refers to the learned roles, behaviours, and activities that society considers appropriate for men and women. These can change over space and time, and within and between cultures. (Women care for children; Men build houses)

**Sex you are  
born with,  
Gender is  
learned, like  
your language!**

The background of the right side of the page features a large, light green silhouette of two people standing and facing each other as if in conversation. The person on the left is taller and appears to be a man, while the person on the right is shorter and appears to be a woman. They are positioned behind the text 'Sex you are born with, Gender is learned, like your language!'. The entire page has a yellow background with a decorative top border featuring various geometric patterns in blue, purple, and black.

## 1. An Alien Asks

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEME/ ISSUE



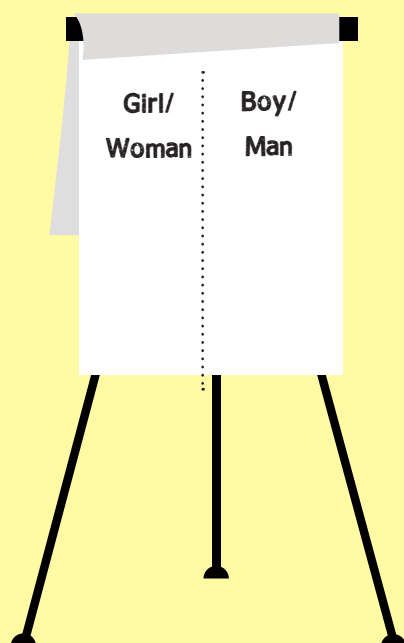
### Resources:

flipchart/ whiteboard and  
coloured markers

Read aloud to the group:

**"An alien has landed from outer space on a fact-finding mission to explore what a girl/woman is and what a boy/man is. You must help this alien by calling out whatever words come into your head. Say whatever you think of straight away and don't overthink it."**

As they call out the words, write them in under Girl/Woman in one column and Boy/Man in another. Keep it light and have fun!



When they are finished and have run out of terms, explain to the group the difference between words describing **sex** and words describing **gender**.

## Objectives

- ◆ To introduce the concepts of sex and gender
- ◆ To identify the difference between sex and gender
- ◆ To gain knowledge of what the gender issues are for the group
- ◆ To challenge gender stereotypes

Go through the list and ask the group to help you mark the words in the two separate lists (man/boy and woman/girl) with an 'S' for sex or a 'G' for gender and see how many are sex characteristics and how many are gender characteristics. Draw particular attention to words that are the same in both the boy/man list and the girl/woman list.

### Some sample questions:

- Which of these similarities/ differences are biological?
- Which of the above features are learned from our society?
- What are some of the features associated with boys that can also be adopted by girls?
- What are some of the features that girls might like to adopt, and why?
- What are some of the features associated with girls that can also be adopted by boys?
- What are some of the features that boys might not like to adopt and why?

## 2. An Alien Asks Part II

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE

Divide the group into pairs. Read aloud the following statements individually to the group allowing the pairs time to discuss whether they think the statement is true or false. (We have included the answers in brackets for facilitators).

After each pair has decided whether the statement is true or false, ask them to explain their decision to the group. When each pair has spoken, tell them whether the statement was true or false. You can then move onto the next statement.

- Girls and boys are born knowing that they are a boy or a girl. (False)
- Boys can wear skirts (True)
- Girls are naturally better cooks (False, cooking is a skill you learn and many good chefs are men!)
- Women and men have different hormones (True. Women – oestrogen/ Men – testosterone. Men have some levels of oestrogen and women testosterone)
- Men can breastfeed (False )
- In Celtic Ireland, women often led men into battle. (True)
- Women are more natural parents (False, either sex is capable of caring for and loving a child)

TRUE

FALSE



## Gender and Stereotypes

A stereotype is a belief that characteristics that some of a group have are the same for everyone in the group. We know that people can be members of many different groups all at once and these different parts of a person mix to create that person's particular individuality.

For example, a young black, Christian, lesbian girl who plays the guitar is a sum of all those parts at the same time; judging by one identity characteristic might stop us from seeing all of the other parts of a person and how they mix to make them who they are.



**Gender roles are decided by the communities and cultures we live in.**

**This means that we have the power to work together to change these roles by challenging 'gender norms' and stereotypes in our everyday lives.**

Gender stereotypes can create inequality and separation between men and women, rather than recognising difference and celebrating individuality. This can affect many aspects of life such as jobs, income, self-esteem and self-belief. An example of gender stereotyping is that 'a woman's place is in the home'. This idea has long been used to reinforce the idea that women's part in the paid workforce is of less value than men's and can create inequality for women at work.



The Irish Constitution states:

- 41.2.1° In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.
- 41.2.2° The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.<sup>20</sup>

By saying this, the Constitution places a woman's place firmly in the home. While it is important that society values care work, seeing care work as women's work denies men the opportunity and requires women to shoulder the responsibility.

Men are much less likely than women to take on care roles in the family or workplace. Although there are more women in certain jobs (such as education), even in these sectors management positions are more likely to be male-dominated. Of the 82% of women with a third-level qualification in employment, almost half (47.2%) are working in education or health<sup>21</sup>. So we see that even when women enter the workforce, they are more likely to take up care roles.

In this way, stereotypes can limit people's choices and opportunities in life, and their ability to realise their full potential.

## 1. Starburst Icebreaker

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEME/ ISSUE



### Resources:

flipchart/ whiteboard, coloured markers, sweets

Buy a few packets of brightly coloured sweet such as Skittles or Starbursts. Hand out the sweets evenly.

There should be at least four different colours in the packet.

Assign each of the colours a different task.

You may need to write this up to avoid confusion.

### Objectives

- ◆ To share stories of gender experiences

- Green** What is your earliest memory of being a girl/boy?
- Yellow** Tell a joke (Keep it clean!)
- Blue** What did you want to be when you were little?
- Red** Pat your head and rub your tummy!

(Add more as you see fit!)

You should go around the group and ask them to one by one to share their story/ do their task. They can only eat their sweet when they have done so.

### Discuss with the group:

- What colour task was the hardest to do? Why?
- Was there anything that surprised anyone?

<sup>20</sup> Bunreacht na hÉireann, Articles 41.2.1, 41.2.2

<sup>21</sup> Report on Equality between women and men 2010, European Commission.

## 2. Toys for Girls and Boys

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

flipchart, coloured markers, bric-a-brac,  
household items, toys etc.

## Objectives

- ◆ To explore gender socialisation in different areas of our lives
- ◆ To discuss assumptions and question our own
- ◆ To recognise the potential burden of 'being a man' or 'being a woman'

Stereotyping begins at the earliest stage of our lives, both in the home and in the wider world.

Generally speaking, boys are encouraged to be active and adventurous in their play, and girls are expected to be and look 'nice' and to take on caring and nurturing roles from a very young age. Toys often encourage aggressive masculinity in little boys which may prevent them from exploring their creativity. Girl's toys can often neglect to develop skills, focusing instead on appearance. Consider for a moment the skill sets being socialised in girls with dolls and boys with guns.

Place a large flipchart sheet on the ground for each of the following:

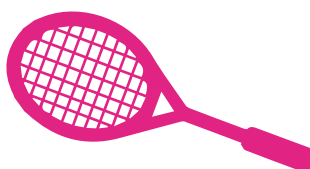
School

Work

Sport

Home

On each of the titled sheets, lay items which traditionally represent the gender roles within that area. For example, in home you may put household items such as rubber gloves, a toolbox, etc. Some of these should be traditionally associated with women and men, some of them can be funny and others should make a statement about the cultural messaging. For example: a 'Not for Girls' Yorkie bar, magazines, greeting cards. It would be useful to have this prepared before the session starts.





**Ask everyone to walk around and look at the different areas and discuss the following:**

- Which items are male-oriented or female-oriented?
  - Is an entire section more male-oriented or female-oriented?
- Discuss the nature of 'assumption' in gender stereotyping and how this can isolate and exclude those who may have a different social experience.**

**Assumption:** Presuming something to be true without having evidence to prove it.

Invite the group to form a circle in the middle of the flipchart sheets. Then ask one young person to volunteer to stand in the centre of the circle. Ask everyone else, in turn, to give her or him a 'gift' from the different sheets to help him or her to 'be a man'/'be a woman'. Ask the people giving to explain why they have given this 'gift' and how it will help the person in the middle 'be a man' or 'be a woman'. You can invite the group to continue to give the person in the middle items until that person can no longer hold any more.

**Ask the person in the middle**

- How are they feeling holding all of these 'gifts'?
- Did they feel that all the gifts were 'good gifts'?
- Did they feel all of the 'gifts' would help them to 'be a man'/'be a woman'?



**Explain that all of the messaging society gives us to fit our gender role can be a burden that makes it difficult to carry. The person in the middle represents all of the expectations around gender which can be contradictory and also difficult to carry.**

The person in the middle can now drop all of their 'gifts'!

**Evaluate with the group by asking them to take one object that they would like in order to 'be themselves' and explain why they would like to give this to themselves.**



### 3. Young People Today!

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE

As children grow into young people, the stereotypes continue. Studies show how articles about young men often focus on crime or aggression while the media paint women as victims and vulnerable. Interestingly, as males get older, they are more likely to be spoken about as 'men', whereas females continue to be described as 'girls'. This way of creating the image of 'women' as young and helpless as opposed to 'men' which creates ideas of power and strength, affects how we see ourselves, and each other.



#### Resources:

flipchart, coloured markers

Invite the group to think of words that are associated with young people. What types of images do you think of when you hear these words?

#### Objectives

- ◆ To look at how young people are stereotyped
- ◆ To see how these stereotypes can be very gendered
- ◆ To identify words which group members prefer to describe young people

youth  
minor  
young adult  
young offender  
victim  
child  
teen parent

- Do you think that each word would be more likely to be used to describe young men or young women?
- Where have you seen these words used to describe either?
- In what way does the use of these labels keep stereotypes alive?
- What words would you like to be used to describe your age group?
- Are there other words you like or don't like that are used?
- Have you ever been stereotyped?
- What did this feel like?



**Each group can draw a cartoon strip/ picture telling the story of three or more of the people described above.**

1	2
3	
4	5

#### CONSIDER:

- Who are they?
- What are they wearing?
- Where are they? Where are they going?
- How are they interacting with one another?

When the groups are ready, ask each to share their comic strip with the larger group and explain what is happening in their story. Display your strips in your project space with a statement about stereotyping young people.

## 4. Walking Debate: exploring gender

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING OF THEME/ISSUE

### Objectives

- ◆ To discover the social nature of gender
- ◆ To debunk gender myths



### Resources:

paper, markers, masking tape

Make a line on the floor with tape. To the far left and right of the line place a piece of paper with 'strongly agree' on one side and 'strongly disagree' on the other. Explain that the centre is the middle ground.

Clarify that you may be called upon to convince the others of what you think and that you can move if someone changes your mind. All opinions are to be respected!

Read out the following statements and ask the young people to move to the side (agree/disagree) they feel most strongly about.

- Women give birth to babies, men don't
- No one gender is better than the other
- Women are more beautiful than men
- Given a chance, both genders can do the same job
- Different cultures have different ideas and beliefs about what men and women should be like
- Little girls are gentle, boys are tough
- Men's voices break at puberty, women's do not
- Men cannot cook
- Only women can ice skate
- Women are bad drivers

These statements can be changed to suit the ability of the group or the level of the previous discussion. You could consider adding a few joke ones to lighten the humour around this as you want them to leave the group activity feeling safe around these issues.

# It's the law!

## Nine Equality Grounds

### Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust treatment of different categories of people, on a range of grounds, including race, age, gender, family status, marital status, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, class, social backgrounds.

**Discrimination:** is the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated.

There are two pieces of anti-discrimination law in Ireland; **The Equal Status Act<sup>22</sup>** and the **Employment Equality Act<sup>23</sup>**. The first bans discrimination on nine grounds in providing services, accommodation or education and the second bans discrimination in employment or training.

The grounds under which people are protected are:

**Gender:** Being a man, woman, or trans\* person. (See Glossary for definition of Trans\*)

**Civil status:** Being married, single, in a civil partnership, separated, divorced or widowed.

**Family status:** Being pregnant, a parent of someone under 18 years, or the main carer of an adult.

**Sexual orientation:** Being gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual or any other sexual orientation.

**Religion:** Different religious beliefs, backgrounds, or none.

**Age:** Being of any particular age, generally referring to any person over the age of 18 years.

**(Dis)ability:** Being physically, intellectually, learning, cognitively and emotionally disabled, including a range of medical conditions. This also takes into consideration mental health.

**Race:** Nationality, racial or ethnic origin.

**Membership of the Traveller community:** Being a member of the Traveller community as being identified, both by Travellers and others, as people with a shared history, culture and traditions. Travellers are identified historically with a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2000/en/act/pub/0008/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.equality.ie/en/Information/Employment-Equality/>

## 1. Discrimination Nation

LEVEL 3: ANALYSIS OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

a list of the nine grounds for each group, a copy of the Grounds Board (p. 31) for each group, a person cards sheet for each member of each group, scissors.

Explain to the group that the equality laws aim to do two things:

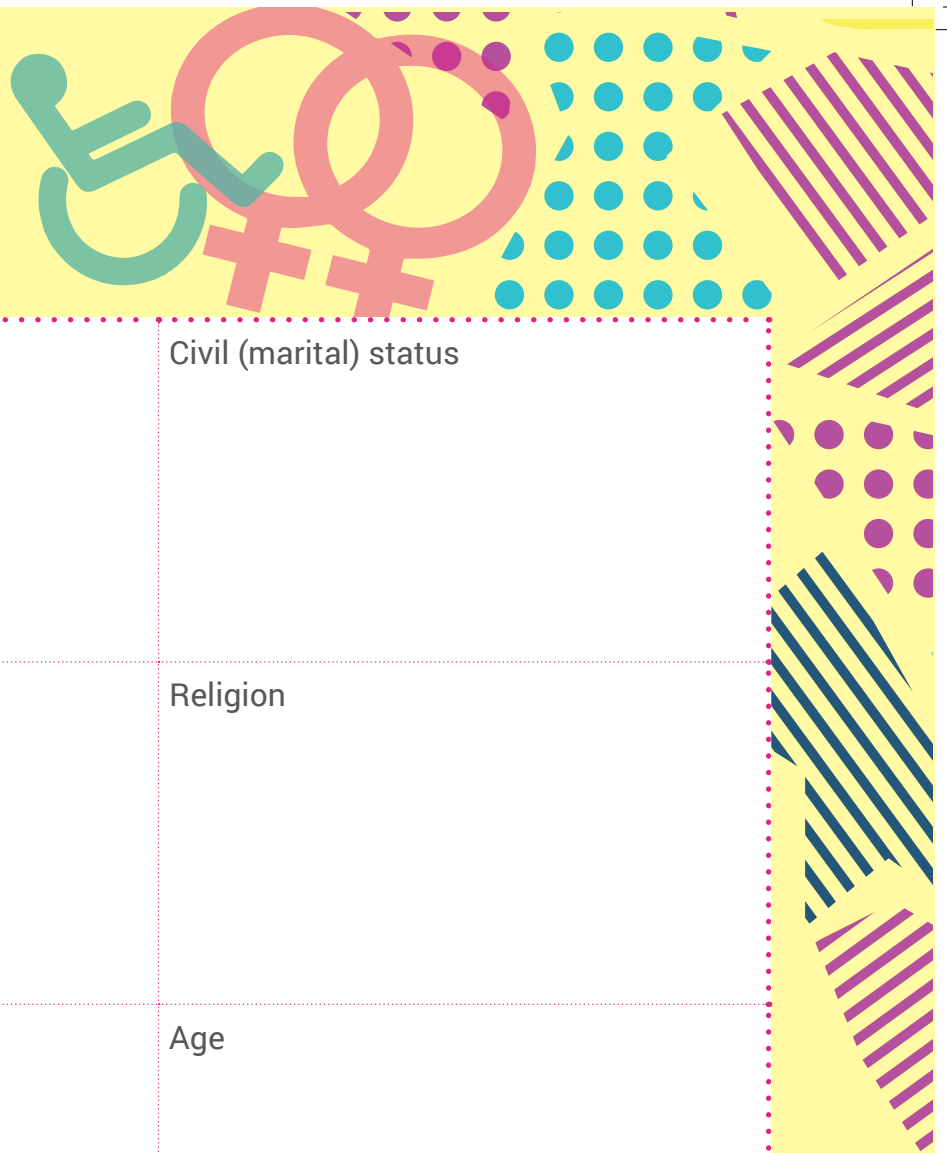
- Protect people from discrimination or harassment
- Promote equality

Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 and give the group an A3 copy of the nine grounds board and give each member of the group a copy of the person cards. They will have to cut the person cards and place them in an envelope/ container.

They will take the cards (p. 32) in turn and decide which ground, or group, that the person would fit into and lay them in the appropriate space. They must agree this between themselves. For instance: A lesbian Traveller may be protected from discrimination on the grounds of her sex (woman), her sexual orientation (lesbian) and membership of the Traveller community. These grounds are explicitly protected because it has been identified that these are areas where people commonly experience discrimination.

### Objectives

- ◆ To look at how people are discriminated against and how this can impact on their lives
- ◆ To explore multiple forms of discrimination



## Grounds Board

Gender

Civil (marital) status

Family status

Religion

Sexual orientation

Age

Disability


Race (nationality, skin colour, ethnicity)

Membership of the Traveller community



<b>A youth</b>	<b>A lesbian Traveller</b>	<b>A male Traveller</b>
<b>An older person</b>	<b>A Polish carer of elderly mother</b>	<b>A single woman in Dublin</b>
<b>A Muslim woman</b>	<b>A person from a disadvantaged area</b>	<b>A lawyer</b>
<b>An atheist</b>	<b>An ex-prisoner</b>	<b>A model</b>
<b>A man with depression</b>	<b>A civil partner</b>	<b>A dyslexic teenage girl</b>
<b>A pregnant woman</b>	<b>A parent of a child under 18</b>	<b>A student</b>
<b>A wheelchair user</b>	<b>A single mother of two from Blanchardstown</b>	<b>An Irish divorced woman</b>
<b>A blind Traveller</b>	<b>A Pakistani barperson</b>	<b>A married soldier with no children</b>
<b>A Nigerian lesbian in Cork</b>	<b>A single mechanic</b>	<b>A British man living in Dublin</b>
<b>Trans* parent of a 3-year-old</b>	<b>An unemployed University graduate</b>	<b>An unemployed young person</b>
<b>A man from Ballymun</b>	<b>A teacher who has 5 children</b>	<b>A single Garda from Waterford</b>
<b>A Catholic bi-sexual from Leitrim</b>	<b>An engaged computer programmer</b>	<b>A Chinese single parent</b>





Remind group members to be respectful of each other's opinions, and of the group contract.

- Note that some person cards may not fit into any of the spaces and that those cards must be placed into the blank space. (Explain that this shows that there are people who are not yet protected by our legislation.)
- Note that not all cards will get used as there may be more duplicates than needed.
- Note that a single person card may fit into more than one space and they are to place the duplicate of this card into all the spaces it might fit. (Explain that this shows that one person may experience multiple discriminations at one time.)

Explain how some of the identities on a single card could work together to disadvantage a person, reducing their life choices and resulting in their being doubly discriminated against. Remind group members that while each card highlighted some aspects of the person's identity, for example religion, every person has multiple aspects to their identity that may not be obvious to us.

- Do you think there were any areas where a person may be protected from discrimination because of one aspect of their background but not another?
- Were there any person cards where you presumed the gender of the person where it was not stated?
- Do you think that a woman experiencing any of the other grounds might be more discriminated against than a man?

Ask them to take a moment to mentally see what grounds they themselves would be protected under. They do not have to share this with the group.



## 2. Jobs for the Boys

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE



**Resources:** 2 A4 sheets for each group, a copy of the jobs page for each group, scissors.

Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 and give each two A4 sheets. Ask them to write 'A Man's Job' on one and 'A Woman's Job' on the other. Give the group an envelope with the jobs cut from the grid on page 35.

Ask the groups to take the cards in turn and place them into the 'Man's Job' space or the 'Woman's Job' space. They must agree this between themselves. Remind them of the group contract promise to be respectful of each other's opinions.

At conclusion of activity remember to highlight that the law, the Employment Equality Act, is concerned with protecting people from discrimination or harassment in employment or training and promoting equality on the basis of the nine grounds previously outlined.

- Note that group members may not be able to agree in which space a job should go. Tell them that if they are very unsure, or cannot agree on some, to leave them out and they will be discussed later.
- Note that this is an exercise about stereotypes and it does not mean that we think they **should be** men's or women's jobs.

## Objectives

- ◆ To question stereotypes we hold about women and men's roles
- ◆ To highlight how traditional roles in employment can limit the job choices for women and men

Ask the entire group to come back and discuss:

- What jobs were difficult to assign? Why? Do you think that they could be either?
- What kinds of jobs were in the 'Man's Job space? What skills do you think define this as a 'man's job'?
- What kinds of jobs were in the 'Woman's Job space? What skills do you think define this as a 'woman's job'?
- Which space had more jobs?
- Do you think that a person's gender has something to do with their choice of work?
- What kinds of jobs would you (the young person) like to do and were they in the 'Man's Job space or the 'Woman's Job space?
- What kind of difficulties do you think people might experience doing a job which is not usually associated with their gender? How could these be addressed?
- Which jobs are valued more?



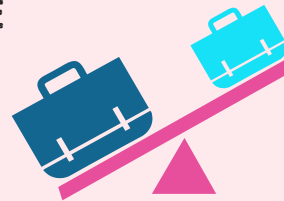
<b>Hairdresser</b>	<b>Bus Driver</b>	<b>Play-school Teacher</b>
<b>Bus Conductor</b>	<b>Child-minder</b>	<b>Singer</b>
<b>Journalist</b>	<b>Nurse</b>	<b>Security Guard</b>
<b>Lawyer</b>	<b>Garda</b>	<b>Judge</b>
<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Doctor</b>	<b>Factory Worker</b>
<b>Cleaner</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Fashion Designer</b>
<b>Chef</b>	<b>DJ</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Shop Assistant</b>	<b>Housekeeper</b>
<b>Sailor</b>	<b>Bin Collector</b>	<b>Army Officer</b>
<b>Builder</b>	<b>Lorry Driver</b>	<b>Detective</b>
<b>Driving Instructor</b>	<b>Bank Manager</b>	<b>School Principal</b>
<b>Youth Worker</b>	<b>Soldier</b>	<b>Plumber</b>
<b>Painter</b>	<b>Writer</b>	<b>Photographer</b>
<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>Jewellery Maker</b>	<b>Gardener</b>
<b>Pilot</b>	<b>Mechanic</b>	<b>Midwife</b>
<b>Bar Tender</b>	<b>Professional Soccer Player</b>	<b>Politician</b>
<b>Vet</b>	<b>Dancer</b>	<b>Graphic Designer</b>

# WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?

**WOMEN ARE  
MORE THAN  
1/2 THE  
WORLD'S  
POPULATION**



**BUT ONLY  
1/3 OF THE  
OFFICIAL  
LABOUR  
FORCE**



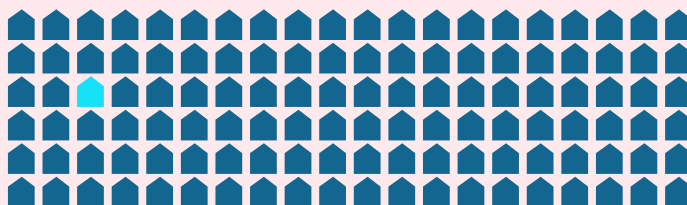
**WOMEN DO  
NEARLY  
2/3 OF THE  
WORLD'S  
WORK  
HOURS**



**YET RECEIVE  
DIRECTLY  
ONLY 1/10  
OF THE  
WORLD'S  
INCOME**



**AND YET THEY  
OWN LESS  
THAN 1/100 OF  
THE WORLD'S  
PROPERTY**



The figures show that many people are living in poverty in Ireland and a majority of them are women, particularly single women with young children. Lack of childcare facilities and financial support to pay for childcare are among the most significant barriers to women being able to take part in employment, education and training, which are the major routes out of poverty. More than half of those earning below the minimum wage are women. Lone parents, who are mostly women, are consistently at high risk of poverty, and this is getting worse.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Shaping Ireland's Future', Social Justice Ireland, 2012

## Women's Representation Information Sheet

**50.39% of the total population of Ireland are women, 49.61% are men.**

**Office workers in the Civil Service are 80% women, 20% men.**

**Of head directors in the top 100 companies in Ireland 96% are men, only 4% are women.**

**Women earn 13.9% less than men.**

**70% of part-time workers are women, 30% are men.**

**80% of local councillors are men, 20% are women.**

**84% of TDs are men, 16% are women.**

**84% of lone parents are women, 16% are men.**

**Of those who get carers' allowance, 79% are women, 21% are men.**

**In universities, only 4% of professors are women**

**Worldwide, women still earn between 10% and 30% less than men.**

**Globally, women make up only 21.9% of parliamentarians, with only 19 female world leaders.**

**Of the 500 largest corporations in the world, only 25 have a female chief executive officer.**

*Adapted from Putting Women in the Picture<sup>25</sup>; Jobs for the Boys, NWCI, 2003<sup>26</sup> and State of the World's Girls Report 2014, Plan Ireland<sup>27</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.nwci.ie/download/pdf/puttingwomeninthepicturenwciincwnsubmission2013.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.nwci.ie/download/pdf/irpol4.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.plan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Full-BIAAG-Report-2014.pdf>

# What Prevents Women from Participating... in Politics?



Just 16% of TDs in Dáil Éireann are women.<sup>28</sup> A 2009 Government report called Women's Participation in Politics produced by the Joint oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights identified the five main challenges (the Five Cs) preventing women from entering politics.<sup>29</sup>

The 'five Cs' can be used to understand the barriers preventing women from entering and/or participating in local and national politics.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.plan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Full-BIAAG-Report-2014.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/committees30thdail/j-justiceedwr/reports\\_2008/20091105.pdf](http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/committees30thdail/j-justiceedwr/reports_2008/20091105.pdf)

## 1. Confidence


Women's confidence to participate in public life can be affected by how they learn what behaviour is appropriate for women in society. Characteristics which are favoured in women, even from early childhood, favour gentleness and quietness over the active and loud characteristics, which are often favoured in boys.

## 2. Candidate Selection

In order to run for a political party, you must be asked to do so or compete against others to be nominated as the party's candidate. NWCI and other groups convinced the Government to put in place "candidate selection gender quotas" to make sure that parties had to select at least 30% female candidates for future General Elections.

### 3. Culture

Culture plays a large part in preventing women from participating in public life as most cultures have an idea of women's position in society as being lower to men's. Because there are few women role models in these positions, it makes it difficult for women to think about taking up these roles. In addition, because these spaces have for so long been male-dominated, the culture within the structures of politics and public life are often very masculine and unfriendly to women.

For example, macho behaviour was displayed in 2014 when a male politician pulled a female politician onto his lap during an important debate in parliament. This received a lot of attention in the  media: google "lapgate" to read more.

### 4. Care

Most of the care given to older people, children and people with disabilities is provided by women. Care is, therefore, a huge factor in preventing women from taking a public role. Often Government meets at times which do not suit carers and male spaces can be very inflexible to family concerns. Fathers and male carers can also face this difficulty.

### 5. Cash

Because how much a woman can earn in her lifetime depends on factors such as care and career choice as well as the wage gap, women are often at a disadvantage when it comes to having enough money to pay for a campaign to run for a political position. Women earn, on average 14% less than men, and in general less resources to fund expensive election campaigns.

In addition to the above, social class can also act as a barrier to women's participation. The political spaces have historically been taken up by middle class white men. Often the things that prevent women from taking part in political or public life are more difficult for working class women.



## 2. The Gender Tree

LEVEL 4: CRITICAL ANALYSIS  
AND DEBATE OF THE ISSUE



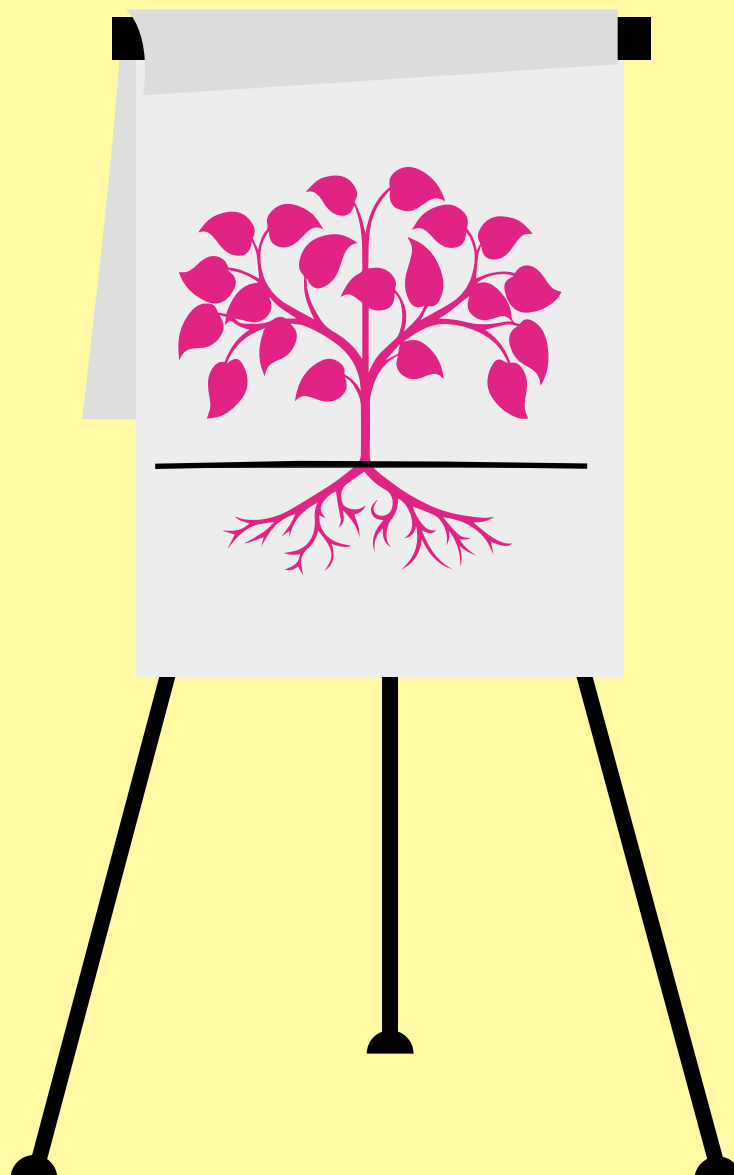
**Resources:** A3 paper, coloured markers, facts about women information sheet for each pair.

This activity will help young people to develop the tools to debate and discuss topical issues around gender inequality and relate them to their own lives. It can be used instead of the group activity 'Party On' or as a way to further explore their own opinions around issues preventing women from reaching their own potential.

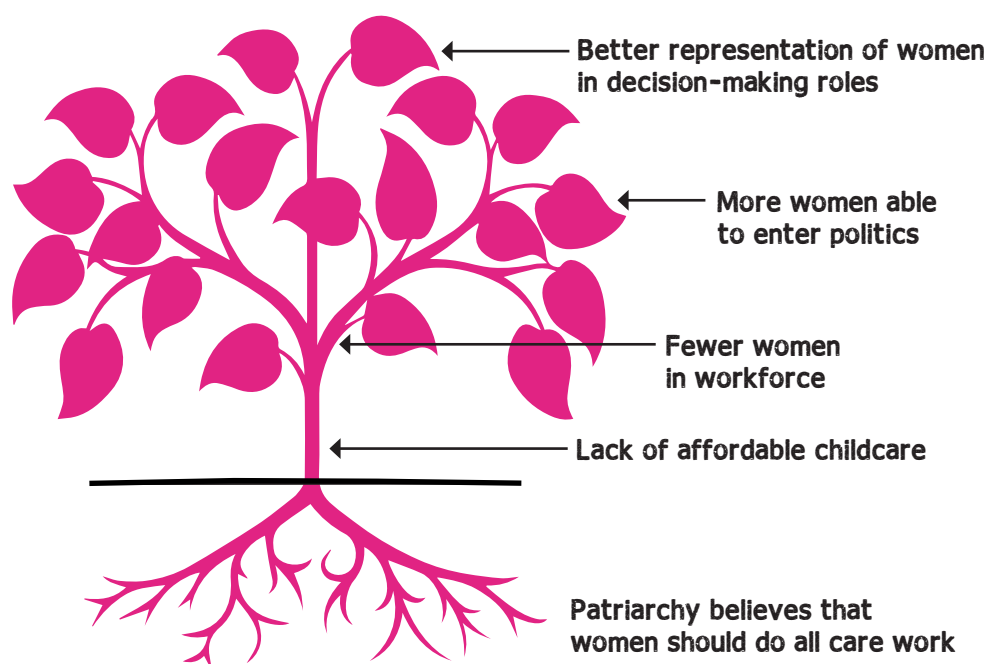
- The roots of the The Gender Tree are the root in which the inequality occurs
- The trunk of the tree represents the factors that allow inequality to keep happening.
- The bare branches are the effects of inequality on society.
- Leaves, flowers and fruit symbolise the things that can bring about equality and how that makes society better.

### Objectives

- ◆ To identify root causes and effects of gender inequality
- ◆ To seek ways that this could be improved and ways we could work to change it



### An Example



Break the larger group into pairs. Give each a sheet of flipchart paper and some coloured markers.

Explain to the group that they are going to each draw their own 'Gender Tree'. Invite them to share their trees to the rest of the group explaining what their 'Gender Tree' represents.

After they have explained what their 'Gender Tree' represents ask them what would make the tree plentiful and to illustrate this with leaves, flowers, and fruit.

Discuss with the group that their TDs and councillors represent them and that they can contact them on any of these issues. See our Taking Action section to discuss what can be done to take action on these issues.

## 1. Party on

LEVEL 4: CRITICAL ANALYSIS  
AND DEBATE OF THEME/ISSUE



Just 16% of TDs in Dáil Éireann are women and only 17% of the world's government representatives are female. Much of the work women do, for example, working in the home, child-rearing and other caring is unrecognised and unquantifiable because it is not paid work.<sup>30</sup>



### Resources:

A photocopy of the Five Cs for each group and a photocopy of Women's Representation Information Sheet for each group, flipchart paper and coloured markers.

Break the group up into groups of 3 - 4. Tell them that they are 'political parties' running for government. They will look at the Facts about Women Information Sheet and choose an issue to focus their election campaign on.

### Objectives

- ◆ To recognise the issues preventing women from fully participating in politics, work and other arenas
- ◆ To identify which issues the group feel strongly about and may wish to advocate on
- ◆ To problem solve ways to improve women's participation
- ◆ To improve group participants' debating and presenting skills

**For example:** "As an issue, 'care' prevents women from entering politics because women hold a large majority of the responsibility for care. In order to combat this, we as a party will deliver free childcare for everyone."

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.plan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Full-BIAAG-Report-2014.pdf>

Each group will propose a leader from their group who will speak for the group and convince everyone else in the broader group of their party's solutions.

Be sure to give plenty of time to this as some of the issues may be difficult. This can be a bit of fun but encourage the groups to explore the issues amongst themselves.

The small groups will work together to try to find three solutions to the issue they have chosen. This is not a competition and no voting will take place. This is simply a way for the young people to explore their own thinking on these issues and what they might see as causes/solutions.

- Decide on a political party name. Have fun with this and be creative!
- Discuss the issues you think are most important. Are there any that could go together and be solved by the same solution?
- Try to come up with a number of solutions
- Record your thoughts on flipchart paper
- Choose your main speaker

**Ask the group to consider:**

- Is it possible for your solutions to happen?
- Why do you think these issues are the way they are?

Invite each party to stand in turn and with their leader present their issue and their solutions to these problems in a convincing way.

At the end of the exercise, discuss what the process was like for the groups:

- Did everyone feel fairly represented?
- Was it difficult to find solutions? Did people agree easily on the solutions?
- What was the process of standing up and convincing others like?

You may wish as a group to take action on some of the solutions proposed. See the 'Taking Action' section further on.

### 3. Women Rising World Cafe

LEVEL 4: CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND DEBATE



The World Café concept involves groups of people sitting at themed tables. Periodically, people will move to different tables to discuss different topics with different people. As well as speaking and listening, individuals may be encouraged to write or doodle on large sheets so that when people change to different tables, they can see what other groups have discussed.



Resources:

flipchart paper, coloured pens, video, NWCI Women Rising Manifesto<sup>31</sup> which outlines the themes for this activity and The Y Factor website for information on our health campaign<sup>32</sup>. See more at [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie) and [www.yfactor.ie](http://www.yfactor.ie).

Break the larger group up into four groups. Ask each group to sit around one of four large flipchart pages which you have placed on tables or on the ground. The pages will be titled 1 to 4 as follows:

- 1 Women as leaders
- 2 Violence against women
- 3 Young women's health
- 4 Young women, money and independence.

The groups will discuss the topics and how they see these issues related to their own lives. They will have 10 minutes to discuss the topic and to record some of their thoughts on the flipchart. Move around the room and ensure that the groups are not having difficulty with the topic. Write the following questions on a flipchart that all the groups can see in order to aid discussion.

- Is this theme relevant to you? Why? Why not?
- How does this theme affect me/us?
- What might some problems for young women be in this theme?
- What could the Government/society do to improve this issue?
- What could we do to improve this issue?

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWCI\\_Women\\_Rising\\_Manifesto\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/NWCI_Women_Rising_Manifesto_2014.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.yfactor.ie/index.php/our-work/your-health-matters>

After 10 minutes, invite each participant to move to a new sheet. Ask them to pay attention to who was in each group and try to move to a group with some people they have not yet worked with. The idea of this style is that each group has different members each rotation.



After four rotations, everyone should have had a chance to speak at each of the flipchart sheets. Now hang the flipchart sheets up and discuss as a group what thoughts emerged from the different discussions.

- What was the process like?
- Which theme was particularly difficult/easy to speak about and why?
- Are there any actions that you as a group could take?

See the 'Taking Action' section further on.



If facilities are available, why not watch one or all of these videos below to aid discussion on these topics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7o4646QRsSU>

Young Women as Leaders

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KND9ceoeF4A>

Violence Against Women

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgyxXdQN\\_Fc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgyxXdQN_Fc)

Young Women's Health

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSe\\_tqbwt0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSe_tqbwt0w)

Young Women, Money and Independence

## Media, Money and How to be a Honey



Media and marketing in mainstream television, social media, newspapers and magazines focus mostly on women in relation to their image, beauty or 'sexiness', ignoring other more important qualities and skills. This has a huge effect on how boys, girls, women and men understand themselves and each other.

These confusing and often contradictory media messages impact particularly upon young women's body image, self-esteem and confidence. Young women are often told, as the quote to the right expresses, that they are to be sexy and pure. Predominant media images and messaging places the greatest value on physical attributes. This clearly has a negative impact on young women's self-esteem, self-image, and expectations of themselves.

This type of messaging also has negative effects on young men as both young women and men try to navigate through relationships and emerging gender and sexual identities. Images of women as submissive beings and men as heroes/aggressors in over-sexualised scenarios create unhealthy relationship norms and place unrealistic expectations on young people in their interactions with one another.

**Be sexy,  
but be pure**

Young person,  
The Y Factor pilot, 2013







Many young people, however, are using social media to exercise their critical choice and to critique this dominant messaging. Positive campaigns such as 'No More Page 3' (<http://nomorepage3.org/>), 'Don't Be That Guy', (<http://www.theviolencestopshere.ca/dbtg.php>) and video bloggers such as Laci Green (<https://www.youtube.com/user/lacigreen>) can be useful tools for empowering young people to critically review the media messages they are receiving.



## 1. Media Audit

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

flipchart paper, magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue



Break the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 and give each a magazine and a newspaper. Give each a pair of scissors and a large flipchart sheet and glue.

Ask the groups to take some time to look through the magazines and paper(s) and to examine how women and men are portrayed. Often we see particular themes represented in the newspaper media such as mother, victim, or fashion model etc.

Ask them to pay particular attention to the news, to sports pages and to advertising.

## Objectives

- ◆ To examine the portrayal of women in different forms of print media
- ◆ To explore how the media portrays women and men differently and how that impacts on our image/stereotype of different groups of people

Questions to consider:

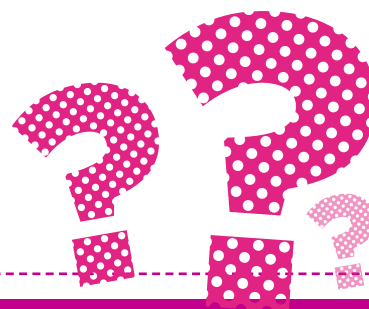
- What struck you about the images and messages you saw?
- Are there more photos of men or women?
- What are the women in the newspapers doing?
- What are the women in the magazines doing?



## Media Audit Collage

- Now ask the groups to create collages by pasting the various pictures they select into different themes that they see emerging, for instance 'sexy' or 'sad' or whatever stands out to them.
- When they are finished, ask them to present their collages. In the larger group, discuss the images considering the following:
  - How are the women and men represented in each? Is this a real representation of women? Which is more realistic to you?
  - What is the overall message you get about women from these representations? Is it a positive message for young women and men, or negative?
  - Would you change anything about how these women and men are represented? What would you change?

Invite the groups to create a new collage which is a collection of words and images from the papers and magazines that depict positive non-stereotypical images of women and men. Consider displaying their collages in the project space as a way of combatting stereotyping.



## 2. Power Pop Songs!

LEVEL 2: DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

song lyrics, a music player and  
speakers, video

## Objectives

- ◆ To develop an awareness of the portrayal of women in popular culture
- ◆ To increase understanding of how music and the media impact on gender stereotypes
- ◆ To make connections to how this impacts upon their own understanding of gender equality



As a group listen to a current (or not!) pop song and consider what the song is about; for example Beyonce, (Run the World, Girls), Eminem (All About That Bass by Meghan Trainor), Kanye West (Gold Digger)

- Who is speaking and to whom?
- Who is the song aimed at?
- What does this song tell us about the artist?
- Is this song positive or negative towards women?



**NOTE YOU MAY  
WISH TO READ  
THE LYRICS  
ALoud ALSO**

Hand out the lyrics of the pop song to each member of the group. Give everyone a few moments to read the lyrics and consider the following:

- What are the key themes or messages coming out of these lyrics?
- Do these messages relate to your life? Do you identify with the song?
- What messages could young women (and young men) take from this?
- Are these messages positive or negative?
- Have your thoughts about the song changed since reading the lyrics?



Now, as a group watch the video of the song and consider:

- How does the video visually represent (or not) the message of the song/ lyrics?
- How does the video represent women?
- How does the video represent men?
- How do you feel when you watch the video?

For further discussion as a group consider these questions:

- How do music and the media affect how young women and men live their lives?
- How can highlighting this encourage young women and men to think differently?
- Can you think of songs that are positive for young women?
- Who makes the decisions about music artists' choices?
- Do different types of music portray women differently? Why do you think this is?

As a follow-up, you could ask the group to come up with an alternative video, or even write the lyrics of a song about their lives as young women or men in their community and how they would like to be represented.



### 3. Film: Miss Representation

LEVEL 3: ANALYSE THEME/ISSUE



#### Resources:

Video Miss Representation



Miss Representation is an American documentary which explores the representation of women in the media. You can get a nine-minute clip of the Miss Representation documentary from YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5pM1fW6hNs>

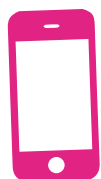
The film challenges the media's limited and often negative portrayals of women and girls, which are disempowering and create further barriers to women's progress.

In a society where media is the most persuasive force shaping cultural norms, the collective message that young women and men receive daily is that a woman's value and power lie in her youth, beauty, and sexuality, and not as an individual with her own unique identity and capabilities.



Consider:

- Did you learn anything new from what you watched? What stood out for you?
- Did anything surprise you in the clip?
- Did the clip make you think differently about the TV or films you watch?
- What one step can you take to change the way media portrays women and girls?
- How would you like the media to represent you?
- What is this media telling you about what it means to be a boy (man) or girl (woman)?
- As a community, what can we do to change the way women and girls are portrayed throughout our culture?



Consider asking the young people to make a short video which tackles some of the issues discussed.

This activity encourages them to see themselves as creators and not just consumers.



# Body Image



Thanks to the media, we have gotten used to extremely rigid and uniform standards of beauty, making unreal looks seem real, normal and attainable.

In adolescence, the changes to many young women's bodies coupled with media saturation of false beauty ideals can create body dissatisfaction in many young women. A Harvard University study showed that up to two-thirds of underweight 12-year-old girls considered themselves to be too fat. By 13, at least 50% of girls are significantly unhappy about their appearance. By 17, only 3 out of 10 girls in the US had not been on a diet. Endangered Bodies and Dáil Na nÓg carried out a survey (How We See It: Survey on Young People's Body Image) which found that in a group of 2,156 young people in the 10 to 21-year age group, 12-year-olds are the most satisfied with their body image and 15-year-olds are the least satisfied.<sup>33</sup>

**70% OF GIRLS &  
46% OF BOYS**

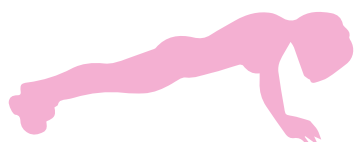
SAY THEY FEEL  
PRESSURISED TO  
LOOK GOOD FOR  
OTHER PEOPLE

**60% OF GIRLS**

SAID THAT THEY PUT  
EMOTIONAL EFFORT INTO  
THEIR APPEARANCE  
(SUCH AS PLANNING,  
WORRYING, THINKING  
ABOUT) AS OPPOSED TO  
34% OF BOYS

**97% OF THE  
YOUNG PEOPLE**

SURVEYED TAKE PART IN  
SOME FORM OF EXERCISE.



**TWICE AS  
MANY GIRLS**

(52%) THAN  
BOYS (29%)  
EXERCISED  
TO CONTROL  
THEIR WEIGHT

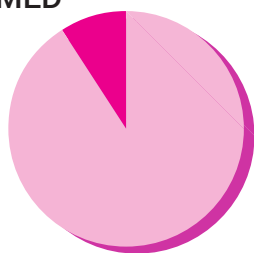


<sup>33</sup> <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/childyouthparticipation/BodyImage/A6BodyImageYP.pdf>

Research indicates that at least 80% of women over 18 are are unhappy with what they see when looking at themselves in the mirror. Many will not even be seeing an accurate reflection. Body image does not relate only to body size. Media emphasis on and promotion of unrealistic beauty ideals means girls are constantly bombarded with airbrushed images of supermodels in order to sell one thing or another.<sup>34</sup>

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase globally in in the amount of cosmetic procedures being performed:

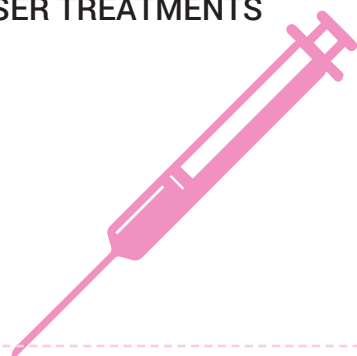
**91%**  
OF ALL  
COSMETIC  
PROCEDURES  
ARE PERFORMED  
ON WOMEN



FROM 1997 TO 2007,  
THESE PROCEDURES,  
OVERALL,  
**ROSE 457%**  
TO ALMOST  
**12 MILLION**  
PER YEAR



OVER THE SAME PERIOD,  
THERE HAS BEEN AN  
**INCREASE  
OF 754%**  
IN NON-SURGICAL  
PROCEDURES LIKE BOTOX  
AND LASER TREATMENTS



IN THE SAME PERIOD TOO  
THERE HAS BEEN AN  
**INCREASE  
OF 114%**  
IN ACTUAL SURGERIES,  
LIKE BREAST IMPLANTS,  
LIPOSUCTION, AND EYELID  
SURGERY.

THERE ARE NOW  
MORE THAN  
TWO MILLION  
OF THESE A YEAR



34 <http://www.sirc.org/publik/mirror.html>

## 1. The Little Matchstick Girl/Boy

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

paper, coloured pens

## Objectives

- ◆ To draw connections between the media, advertising and body image
- ◆ To make reference to the relationship between advertising, selling products, and how we feel about our bodies



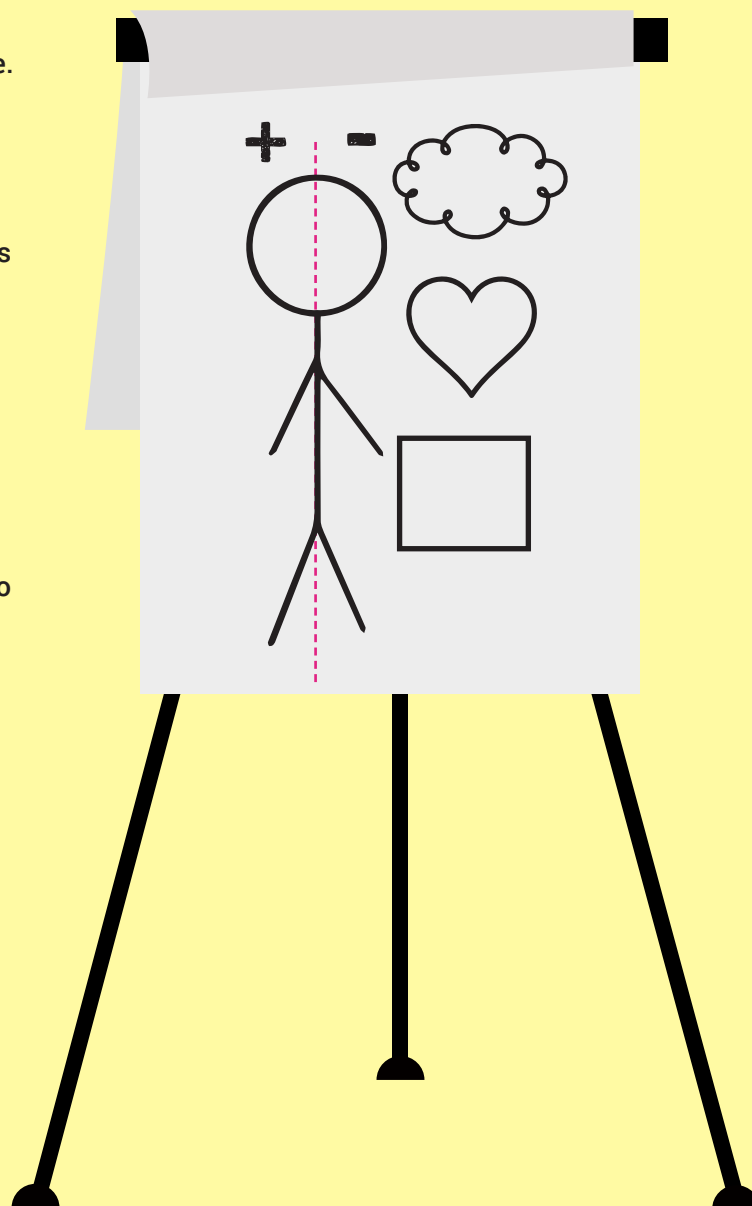
Discussing issues of body image can be personal and not everyone may wish to contribute. Be transparent with group members and admit to your own vulnerability to advertising!

Ask the group to draw a matchstick man/woman on a large flipchart page.

Ask them to:

- Draw a line down the middle and put a plus on one side and a minus on the other
- At the head draw a cloud
- At the chest a heart
- At the hands a box

It is helpful and creates trust if you do this acvwith them




On the plus side, they will write something they like about their body in the head cloud. On the minus side, something they are not so happy about.

In the heart box, they will write how this makes them feel.






In the hands box, they will write what this makes them do.

I think 

It makes me feel 

I do this action 

When they have completed their matchstick women, ask them to look privately at their plus and minus side.

- What is the connection between what they think  about their bodies and how this makes them feel ?
- What is the connection between what they think  about their bodies and what it makes them do ?
- Consider whether the 'do'  of their sheets involved spending money?

Explain that even the things we like about our bodies are played on by advertising to make us want to spend money on improving or perfecting these aspects. Advertising is so strong that we may begin to dislike aspects of our bodies because we do not feel they meet the standards set for us by advertisers.

Discuss as a group:

- Why would the advertising industry want young women to feel bad about their bodies?
- Why would agencies use photo-shopping and unrealistic body imagery in advertising?

To finish, ask the group to take their page and tear it in half along the centre line. Tell them to keep the positive half and tear up and throw the negative side in the bin. (Make sure they tear it up to maintain their privacy)

## 2. Boaster Poster

LEVEL 1: INTRODUCTION TO THEME/ ISSUE



### Resources:

flipchart or paper for each group member, coloured pens, and glue

Give each individual a photocopy of the Boaster Poster and ask them to create a positive self portrait. A Boaster Poster is a poster which the young people create themselves. It can be a picture or a drawing where they illustrate or write what they like about themselves.

For example, if they are good listeners they could draw big ears. If they are musical, they could draw music notes.

If the group feels, comfortable together, they could get other members of the group to write on the poster or draw what they like or value about that person.

This activity can increase a young person's self-esteem and bring out characteristics that the person themselves could never see. It can also create solidarity within the group as they explore each other's strengths.

### OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To build group solidarity and trust
- ◆ To build self esteem

Further examples of characteristics that can be illustrated include "kind" (e.g. draw a present), "friendly" (e.g. draw a big smile), and "funny" (e.g. draw a speech bubble with "ha ha"). There are many more, sporty, smart, creative and so on.

Me

## Killing Us Softly



Young men in advertisements are often portrayed as physically strong, powerful, athletic, dominant, and emotionally detached while lacking sensitivity, vulnerability, and compassion. Many ads show men engaging in physically challenging, dangerous, or aggressive sports or acts which exhibit their physical or sexual prowess. Young men can feel pressure to live up to these images.

Girls are often pictured in ads with their hands over their mouths. Their body language is usually passive, vulnerable, and very different from the body language of boys and men. This over-sexualises childhood in the same way that it makes children of grown women. In 2007, the American Psychological Association released a report saying that girls exposed to sexualised images from a young age are more prone to depression, eating disorders, and low self-esteem.<sup>35</sup> Girls are constantly given the mixed message by popular culture that they should be sexy but innocent, experienced but virginal.

There has also been an increase in ads that objectify men. Masculinity is often linked to violence. Boys grow up in a world where men are constantly shown as perpetrators of brutal violence, encouraging toughness and insensitivity. Advertising and popular culture offer young men a distorted view of what women are, causing additional harm by representing men as aggressors. This pressure on young men can cause them to conform, perhaps against their will, to this gender stereotype and to reject the seemingly feminine characteristics of sensitivity, compassion, emotion and empathy. Rejection of these important human characteristics by young men can potentially lead to poor relationships and even greater frustration.

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/241/studyguide\\_241.pdf](http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/241/studyguide_241.pdf)



## 1. Movie night

LEVEL 4: CRITICAL ANALYSIS  
AND DEBATE OF THEME/ISSUE

*Killing Us Softly 4* is a documentary that focuses on images of women in advertising, in particular on gender stereotypes, the effects of advertising on women's self-image and the objectification of women's bodies.



### Resources:

video, internet,

Choose whether you think the group would benefit from a short or long film input. The material should be watched by the facilitator in advance of viewing with the group.



You can watch the entire film *Killing Us Softly 4* at this link:

[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1n3d88\\_killing-us-softly-4\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1n3d88_killing-us-softly-4_news)

Or a short trailer-length version here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTImho\\_RovY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTImho_RovY)

You can download images used in *Killing Us Softly 4* here to aid discussion:

<http://goo.gl/GW7ntT>

Allow 45 minutes for the film and at least 30 minutes for discussion afterwards.

## Objectives

- ◆ To develop the participants' capacity to critically assess media
- ◆ To explore media representations of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'
- ◆ To explore the effect of advertising on women and men's sense of self
- ◆ To explore the effect of advertising on relationships between women and men.

### Questions:

- How is happiness portrayed in advertisements? Be specific about the kinds of happiness that ads typically appeal to, or put on display. What do these ads say is the secret to happiness?
- What kinds of products are sold using sexuality? Why do you think advertisers would use sex to sell their goods? What does it mean when people say "sex sells"?
- Do you feel that the media reflects or creates the ideal image of beauty in our society? Or is it a bit of both?
- How and why do you feel individuals are so vulnerable to media influence?
- What role can girls and women play in creating more positive images of what it means to be a woman in our culture? What role can boys and men play?

## 2. In the paper today

LEVEL 3: ANALYSIS OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

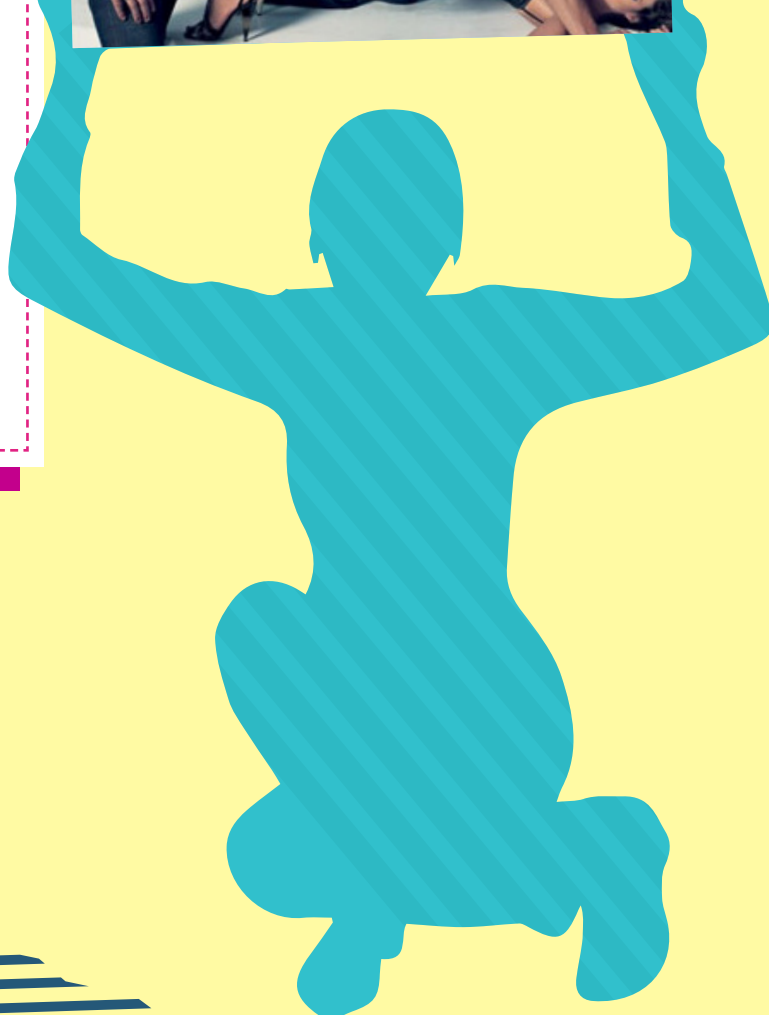
magazines, advertisements

## Objectives

- ◆ To question advertising and its influence on women's self-image
- ◆ To relate the objectification of women's bodies to selling products

**1** Look through popular magazines, and see if you can find advertisements that objectify women in order to sell a product. Study these images and discuss:

- What effect(s), if any, do you think the objectification of women's bodies has on society?
- Why do you think that women are objectified more often than men are?



**Objectification** means treating a person as a thing or object, without regard to their dignity. This term is often used in the context of sexual objectification where, most commonly, a woman is treated as an object for the sexual enjoyment of men.



**2** Find an example where a young woman, or a girl, is sexualised in an advertisement. Then respond to each of the following:

- What message does this image send to young girls about sex?
- What message does this image send to young boys about sex?
- What do you think it says about the product being advertised? Does it relate?



**3** Make an advertisement to encourage people to join your group which celebrates young women and young men and the diversity they can reflect. Focus on positive aspects of your group without objectifying or stereotyping.

- How easy/hard was it to find a way to 'sell' your group without objectifying yourselves?
- Do you think that big companies could use these methods instead?
- What reasons might advertising companies give for objectifying women to sell products?

## Discussing Relationship Abuse

In this section, we will explore issues in relationships which may be identified as sexual bullying, harassment or control.

Teenage relationship abuse consists of the same patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour as domestic abuse. These patterns might include some or all of the following: sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, emotional abuse and psychological abuse.

Women's Aid in 2011 reported that technology was being used by abusive partners to monitor and control women, and particularly young women. Mobile phones, texts, social media of various types and other technologies were reported to have been used for stalking and control.<sup>36</sup>

**In a national survey on domestic violence, almost 60% of those who had experienced severe abuse in an intimate relationship first experienced it when they were under the age of 25.**

<sup>36</sup> Perry, Jennifer. 2012. Digital stalking: A guide to technology risks for victims

## 1. True or False

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

a photocopy of the indicators of  
relationship abuse, scissors, a bowl

## Objectives

- ◆ To discuss the indicators of relationship abuse
- ◆ To explore relationship abuse in the media
- ◆ To foster confidence in exploring and discussing these issues

## Relationship Abuse factors:

These issues may be very sensitive and may refer to family members or personal experiences. You may wish to do a special group contract for this discussion.

- You cannot promise to keep confidential something that contravenes mandatory reporting and you must be completely transparent about this.
- Ensure that the group members know the correct reporting structures in your organisation and ensure that they are aware that any form of sexual discrimination or harassment will be taken very seriously.
- Invite the group to engage in active listening. Engage: listen and try to understand, Suspend: listen and hold back on your reply, and Respond: be brave and give your honest opinion in reply!

Photocopy the list of factors and cut them out. Fold them up and place them in a bowl. Ask a participant to take a folded piece of paper out of the bowl and read aloud. With the group, facilitate a conversation around the statement.

Questions to consider are:

- Do they believe this to be true?
- What do they think makes it true or false?
- Have they ever seen this on television, in a song, or in a movie?
- Do they know who to go to for advice around this?

See our list of Useful Organisations and Resources at the end of this booklet.



Teenage relationship abuse happens when one young person hurts or bullies another young person who they are going out with or in a relationship with.

Often (but not always), it is the male partner who is the abuser and the female who gets hurt.

It can happen between young people of any nationality, race or family background.

It can happen in same-sex relationships as well as heterosexual relationships.

Teenage relationship abuse can also happen after a relationship has finished.

Abuse within relationships is often a repeated pattern of behaviour.

It often includes several different types of abusive behaviour, including physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse.

People use abusive behaviour to control other people they have a relationship with.



## 2. He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not

LEVEL 3: ANALYSIS OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

video, internet



Watch this awareness advertisement on teen relationship abuse and discuss: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzDr18UYO18>

This activity works well if you can source a current television show which is depicting different types of relationships, particularly ones which show a relationship abuse scenario (this doesn't have to be physical abuse only, emotional and mental abuses are also indicators of an abusive relationship). As same-sex relationships experience the same characteristics of abuse depictions, these relationships can add to the level of discussion around gender norms. You can use a current plot from a soap opera or reality television show (for example, *Geordie Shore*).

Speak about whether the relationship seems healthy or not? Allow the discussion to become anonymised by discussing 'her' and 'his' relationship. Do they think that it is relationship abuse? Do they think that television programmes glorify 'jealous' or controlling relationships. Consider:

- What might the young woman/man experiencing abuse be feeling?
- What might the abuser be feeling?

## Objectives

- ◆ To explore how love is represented in popular culture
- ◆ To identify possible abusive traits in an on-screen relationship

Explore the scenario while paying particular attention to potential aspects that might be upsetting for some.

- Where might a person experiencing abuse in a relationship get help?
- How could we work to support young people experiencing relationship abuse?



Introduce the young people to campaigns that work to raise awareness of abuse in young relationships such as;

- '2in2U' is a Women's Aid campaign which outlines possible controlling aspects to relationships. There is a useful relationship test here: <http://www.2in2u.ie/>
- 'This is Not Happily Ever After' is a Women's Aid campaign raising awareness of abuse within young relationships. You can read more here: <http://nothappilyeverafter.ie/>





## Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying includes a range of behaviours such as sexualised name calling, ridiculing physical appearance, criticising sexual behaviour, spreading rumours about someone's sexuality or sexual experiences they have or have not had, unwanted touching, and physical assault. It is a behaviour that is repeated over time and intends to hurt someone by using that person's gender, sexuality or sexual (in)experience to hurt them.

We define sexual bullying as:

- Using words that refer to someone's sexuality as a general put-down ('That's so gay')
- Using sexual words to put someone down (calling someone a 'slut')
- Making threats or jokes about serious and frightening things like rape
- Gossiping and spreading rumours about someone's sexuality or sex life (incl. graffiti)
- Touching someone in a way that makes them uncomfortable
- Forcing someone to act in a sexual way of any kind.

## It's Just a Joke

LEVEL 2: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING  
OF THEME/ISSUE



### Resources:

flipchart, coloured markers,

People have different ideas about bullying, especially sexual bullying. You may hear young people say that 'it's just a joke'.

Consider the following and as a group discuss whether it is **always**, **sometimes** or **never** a form of sexual bullying. (This could form part of a consultation in devising a sexual bullying position statement in your project).

1. Commenting on someone's body
2. Commenting on the way someone dresses/their personal appearance
3. Making jokes about sex
4. Making remarks about someone's sexual behaviour
5. Calling someone a 'slut'
6. Calling someone gay
7. Looking at page 3 of The Sun in shared spaces
8. Trying to look up/take a photo up a girl's skirt
9. Graffiti about other young people in toilets
10. Spreading round pornographic pictures of someone
11. Making fun of a boy who takes Home Economics at school.

## Objectives

- ◆ To identify a group consensus around acceptable behaviours
- ◆ To examine the sexual aspect of bullying
- ◆ To question language use
- ◆ To devise a sexual bullying statement for use in the project

Divide the room into three areas: 'Always', 'Sometimes', 'Never'.



Read out each of the behaviours listed on the sheet, one at a time, and ask the young people to move to the part of the room which best matches their view. You will probably find that most congregate on the 'Sometimes' area so you should get them to discuss why this is and suggest additional details which might make them move to other parts of the room. You may invite those in 'Always' and 'Never' to convince the 'Sometimes' people to join them with a convincing argument.

After the exercise, ask the group to define sexual bullying. Write this up and keep it as an agreed-upon statement by the young people as to their understanding of, and commitment to preventing, sexual bullying in the group.



# Activism It's a Girl Thing

**This is a speech about young women and activism by Aoife Campbell, a member of The Y Factor steering group. This speech was part of the Countess Markievicz School 2014.**



You can watch it on our website here <http://www.yfactor.ie/index.php/blog/article/watch-aoife-campbells-amazing-speech>.

Alternatively, you can photocopy and share an abridged version of this speech (below) and discuss some of the points brought up within.

## Start:



The Y Factor is a youth initiative of the National Women's Council of Ireland. The idea behind the project is to build a sustainable movement for equality among young women and men between the ages of 16 and 25.

Embodying several different pieces of action, the project works with 2nd level students and youth group participants throughout Ireland with the aim of increasing understanding of gender discrimination and to enhance young people's capacity to challenge and address discrimination.

The Y Factor is also a platform which allows young people to contribute to public debate around the issues of gender inequality, aiming to encourage and support leadership amongst young women.

Often, when young women are considered in the media, within online platforms, in social policy and by figures of authority, the rhetoric which surrounds us is

inaccurate, unhelpful and ultimately disempowering. Despite the rights for women won by brave and progressive groups, it is still increasingly difficult to be a young person in Irish society.

- We are simultaneously encouraged to resent and police our bodies within a deeply misogynist culture and are unable to establish any ownership over that same body under restrictive State policy which refuses to effectively legislate for reproductive choices.
- We still face stigma and significant financial cost when we attempt to access reproductive health care which is legislated for under Irish law.
- We are expected to emigrate from an economy that prioritised bond holders and bankers over the security of decent work and conditions for the next generation; failing this, we are expected to live on less than €100 a week and to take up exploitative work schemes

which devalue our labour.

- Thousands of young women are living in especially vulnerable situations, such as direct provision, many are living in inadequate and inhumane housing situations and many are homeless.

## Poverty is a girl thing, sexual violence is a girl thing, and lack of reproductive rights is a girl thing.

Alongside the basic human rights being eroded here, these young women don't have a voice on any of the issues that affect them.

We cannot talk about women without talking about the gender norms which police what it means to be a woman and equally what it means to be a man.

Young men in our society are restricted by the demands of their own gender, which is not supportive of seeking help in times of distress or prioritising emotional needs over the demands of a limiting and often unhealthy masculine role.

We have to **empower** young people to be critical of the ways in which they experience gender and to challenge areas where they experience inequality. Politics should not be relegated only to the Dáil and the Seanad, politics is everywhere. The informal sector of care, reproductive rights and poverty which is uniquely feminised are especially political - the

voices of young women here need to be heard. We need to make these areas public, debate about them and demand changes to the policies, laws and norms which inform them, in our families, schools, in our communities and beyond.

This form of politics and activism is happening, for example, in youth and community groups which campaign tirelessly to retain their already limited funding; in campaigns like 'DON'T BE THAT GUY' which, spreading over colleges in Ireland makes a stand against the myth that sexual violence is ever the fault of the victim. Activism is happening every time we are media critical and when we encourage others to reject harmful and disrespectful advertising. For example the EU Commission's attempt at highlighting the lack of women in science with their highly offensive 'science is a girl thing' video, fostering a culture where it's normal, logical and empowering to inform such institutions that sexualising the women you apparently want in science is embarrassing and wrong when actually as it stands:

To end, young people need feminism, we need to have a voice and to foster the confidence and bravery required to speak even when nobody asked, to criticise and advocate alternatives to, the roles, policies and institutions which restrict us, to work together in solidarity to demand the services and supports we need.

”

## Anger, organisation, activism and advocacy - its a girl thing.

# Taking Action

Young people can be political and active in their local area; this section shows them how.

‘Lobbying’ is trying to influence the actions of decision-makers to benefit certain groups.

Begin by identifying the issue or problem that you want to see changed and what you want to do about it.

- What change do you want to see?
- What is in place now that needs to change to achieve this?
- What actually has to be done to make that change happen?

## WHO HOLDS THE POWER?

- Who has the power to make decisions about your issue?
- Who has the power to influence the decision makers?
- Have you included those directly affected by the issue? Their lived experiences are powerful evidence.

## BE PREPARED

- Research your issue. Find out how much support there is for your issue and who is against your argument
- Look at how similar situations have been dealt with in the past.

## BUILD SOLIDARITY

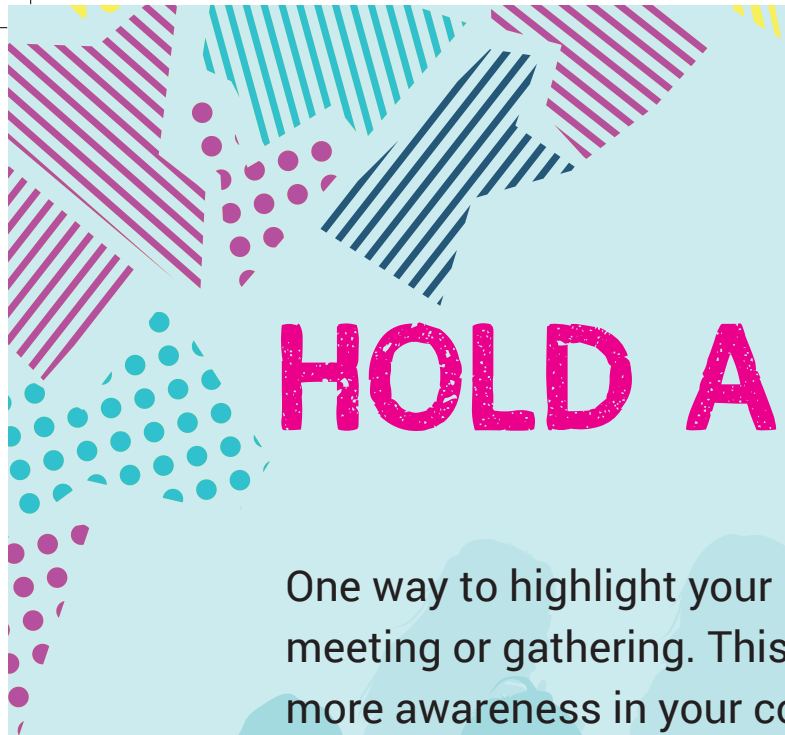
- Contact other organisations working on the same or similar issues
- Are there organisations/projects who do not work on that issue but who would support it.



## Some actions you can take to build your lobbying campaign are:

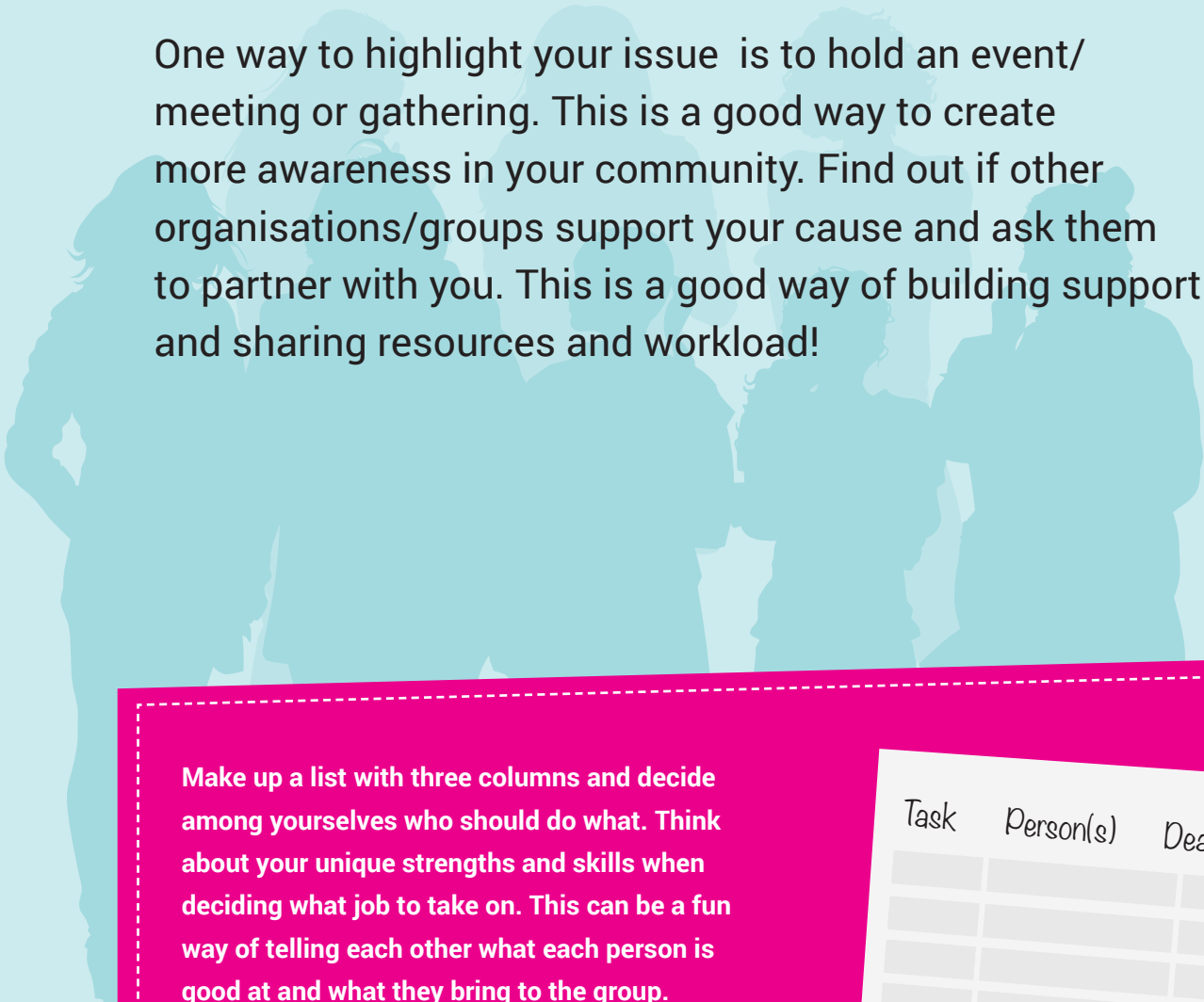
- Organise a workshop/seminar to raise awareness of the issue and invite local groups and decision-makers
- Organise a protest march to highlight the issue
- Use press releases or photo opportunities to get media attention
- Organise a letter-writing or emailing campaign
- Organise a meeting with your TDs or Councillors
- Use online tools, petitions e.g. Change.org, Facebook and Twitter





# HOLD A

One way to highlight your meeting or gathering. This more awareness in your co



One way to highlight your issue is to hold an event/meeting or gathering. This is a good way to create more awareness in your community. Find out if other organisations/groups support your cause and ask them to partner with you. This is a good way of building support and sharing resources and workload!

**Make up a list with three columns and decide among yourselves who should do what. Think about your unique strengths and skills when deciding what job to take on. This can be a fun way of telling each other what each person is good at and what they bring to the group.**

Task	Person(s)	Deadline

After your event, it is helpful to evaluate it. This means you record how you felt it went and what you think could have been done differently. Doing this every time will help you to plan and hold better and better events which include everyone in the group's strengths.

[illegible]



# PLANNING IS CRUCIAL!

## Before you start, consider the 5 Ws: Why? What? Who? Where? When?

**Why are you organising this event?** What do you hope to achieve? How do the goals of the event fit in with the group's goals and aims?

**What is it going to be about?** Don't try to cover too much in one event. What kind of event will you hold? Will there be guest speakers? Information stands? Workshops? Drama or musical pieces?

**Who is the event for?** Who is your audience? Local community? Other groups in your project? Politicians, decision-makers and media?

**Where is it going to be held?** Where will be the best space for the audience you expect to come? Is it wheelchair accessible?

**When is the right time?** When is the right time to get as many of the people you want to come there? Evening or daytime? Are there particular dates or times of the year most suited to highlighting your issue?

In organising your event, you should make sure that specific people in your group take responsibility for different jobs so that they are not forgotten. Some things to consider are:

**Running Order:** You will have to draw up a running order of the day so that you know what time things are expected to happen. This will give structure to the event and make sure you DO NOT PANIC! You will also need to let guest speakers know what time you expect them to speak and for how long.

**Speakers:** If you have guest speakers, you must check with them if they need to use a computer for presenting on a big screen. Do you have internet or should they bring their presentations with them?

**Publicity:** How will you advertise this event? You might do posters or email out invites to the event. You will know your audience and how to communicate with them. Be sure to leave enough time for people to make arrangements to be there.

**Budget:** How much will the event cost? Do you have to pay for a venue? Will you provide tea and coffee? Will the posters/fliers cost?

**Accessibility:** Is your venue accessible by wheelchair? If not, do you have a ramp?

## WHY NOT CONSIDER?

MARCH  
08

INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY

OCTOBER  
11

INTERNATIONAL  
DAY OF THE GIRL

# Organise a Protest

Many groups wish to make their cause more visible. Protests or rallies are a great way to do this. In one way, these show that people are dissatisfied with the status quo (the ways things are) and in another, it helps people feel supported and energises the cause.

It also allows people who are not affected directly by the issue to become involved and become allies (supporters) of the cause. These relationships can be very valuable in creating movements.

## → BE CLEAR ABOUT THE AIMS OF YOUR PROTEST

Decide together what you hope to achieve by holding a protest. Is your main aim to show support, raise awareness or to influence decision-makers? You must agree this so that after the protest when you are evaluating, you can see the impact. A protest which has a specific 'ask' around something topical will get more public attention.

## → WHO ELSE CARES ABOUT THIS?

Think about the groups in your community or other groups who are active on this subject. Do a search through Google or Facebook to see who can be of help to you. Contact them and tell them of your intentions. Maybe you could work together and many hands

make light work. This will also mean that all of their supporters will be invited also. Don't forget to contact NWCI for support!

## → SEND OUT NOTICE OF THE PROTEST TO ALL YOUR SUPPORTERS

You can advertise this publicly and by email. You should consider setting up a Facebook page as this has wide reach and your supporters can engage with you and share the information with their friends, family and allies. Tell people what the protest is about; the time, location and speakers. Remember, you don't need a huge crowd to make an impact!

## → WHO SHOULD SPEAK?

Invite interested politicians and key supporters, musicians/poets and give each of them 5 minutes maximum to speak about the cause you are promoting. Consider asking key community leaders from your own community to speak. Make sure someone from your group says a few words too! You should explain why your group felt this was a relevant issue to campaign on.

## → RUNNING ORDER

The group in general will have to be available to take questions and steer people in the right direction; however, you should appoint someone to introduce the issue and give a brief background as to what you are protesting about, introduce the speakers, keep speakers on time and motivate the crowd.

### → WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HOLD YOUR PROTEST?

This depends on who you want to attend and who you are aiming the protest at. If you want to attract TDs in the Dáil, lunchtime is probably the best time. If you want to attract local councillors then at the start or finish of their council meeting would be a good time. If it is a local solidarity protest you must look to the needs of your community to find the best fit.

### → WHERE TO HOLD YOUR PROTEST?

Many protests are held outside the Dáil and this is the best place if your message is aimed at politicians. If you are aiming it at local councillors, then outside the

offices of the local council is appropriate. In general, choosing the place where the people you are trying to influence will be and where supporters can come but also where you can catch of by passers also. In this regards similar to choosing the appropriate time, the place will be decided by your aims.

### → MAKE CONTACT WITH THE GARDAÍ

You must let the Gardaí know when and where you plan to organise a protest. If it is a march, you need to tell them the route and they can re-direct the traffic to make it safe for you pass through.

## How to Get Attention for Your Protest

Put simply; make sure your protest is colourful, well-advertised and makes lots of noise!

No matter how serious the issue you are marching for, be creative and fun in your approach. Keep an upbeat atmosphere going and you will attract a lot more people and raise greater awareness.

- **Decide on a colour or theme for the protest which will be very visible.** One which is funny or a play on words will communicate easily what the protest is about for people passing by. They may want to join in!
- **Make large banners or posters with your key messages on them.** Short catchy slogans or striking statistics are good as they are easy to read and the media can pick up on them.
- **Prepare a few chants and have a few people ready to sing them with you to get the crowd going.** Can you get a megaphone? Contact other organisations who have held protests before and they may lend theirs to you.
- **Organise some drummers to make some noise which is essential to draw and keep attention on your protest.** The more noise the better. A drum can be sticks and buckets and need not involve a cost.
- **If there is a community arts group in your area see if you can get them on board.**
- **Identify key people in your group to look out for safety issues and to direct media and others to appropriate people.** (Use the running order template to assign roles to specific people). These people should wear luminous or hi-visibility jackets to be identified easily.

## Some Considerations

- It is vital that before your protest you agree on a code of conduct and communicate this at the start of the event. Ensure that all parties there agree that the use of violence, threats or insulting language will not be tolerated.
- It is also important to know your rights such as whether you have the right to hand out leaflets. You do!
- Picking a time and place which disturbs a large amount of people may not garner sympathy for your cause. Try to avoid times such as school ending and peak hour traffic etc.
- Always clean up after the event. Remember that people have to use the space after you. The idea is to raise awareness and win people over to the issue at the same time.

You should engage the media before the event to convince them to cover your protest. This will gain the most amount of attention and ensure engagement with your cause after the event. There are a number of ways of doing this, such as:

- Doing a press release
- Having a well-versed spokesperson briefed to speak with reporters
- Social media presence
- Writing blogs or articles prior to the protest promoting it.

# Media

Once you have identified the issue and established your goals, you may wish to engage with the wider media about your issue or to promote the actions you are taking. Once again, defining your target audience is key.

You will find that different media sources communicate more with different stakeholders; for example, young people may be easily reached through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter but you may have to go on local radio to access older people and print and a wide range of media to get the attention of politicians.

## Create Key Messages

Take your time and work out together what you want people to take away from your action. Use the K.I.S.S. method 'Keep It Simple Silly'. Always stick to the same messaging.

What are the 3 – 4 most important points you want to raise. Define your message in a way that connects with your target audience's values. Link your issue to your target audience's interests. Ask yourself:

- Why would this issue be important to them?
- Why should they care?
- If they act on this issue, how will it benefit them?

## Elevator Pitch

One way which is helpful to get everyone on message is to prepare your elevator pitch. This is a tool based on the idea that if you were to get into an elevator with someone you want to convert to your cause, how you would convince them in the two minutes it takes to get to the correct floor.

This can be a fun and interesting way to work out among you what is important for you in what you are doing. It also helps bring everyone onto the same page as you all agree an eventual pitch which will be your key message moving forward. Give it a try!

## Who is Listening?

Media consists of television, radio, newspapers, magazines and online media. These can be national or local and can be used in different ways for your different needs.

Some media outlets you could use are: school and campus newspapers/campus radio/community radio/community television/local radio and national radio/national television/local newspapers, national newspapers/community organisation websites and E-zines/social media platforms.

You have to ensure that your spokespersons are:

- Well informed on the subject and the key messages
- Can speak/write well and confidently
- Are good listeners

## A Press Release

Most news stories are generated by press releases. A newspaper receives thousands of press releases every day.

It is important to do all you can to make sure that your release is seen, read and used. The key questions, (the 5 Ws – What, When, Where, Who, Why) should appear in the press release in order of importance. If you can fit them all in in the first or second paragraph, it will increase your chances of your press release being read and understood early on.

A good press release has a good headline, uses active language and keeps it simple.

### The layout usually consists of

- Your project logo
- Heading
- 'For immediate release' or Embargo (if you want it to be held until a specific time)
- Dates
- Paragraphs
- Quotations
- Ends
- Editors' notes



Websites often upload their press releases to their website; see the press releases section on the NWCI website: [http://www.nwci.ie/?/news/press\\_releases/P270](http://www.nwci.ie/?/news/press_releases/P270)



# In Summary Communicating Your Issue

- Build links with local community groups around local issues. Make connections with community leaders to be ambassadors for your issue
- Use local media to spread awareness and understanding of what you are doing
- Create your own social media site to communicate all the parts of what you are doing. Ask for supporters/volunteers here
- Find creative ways to portray your action
- Present your issue in a way that makes it easy to understand and that explains why you need to take action
- Put out a press release
- Start a blog or spread the message using your social media platforms
- Avoid or explain jargon (words specific to the issue that others might not understand)
- Give photographers a caption that explains your action and who you are
- Create a code of conduct that everyone agrees which is around calm and respectful presentation
- Keep the speakers short and sweet. Try to line up a diverse group of speakers so that as many people as possible will feel involved

(Adapted from Be the Change Toolkit – Comhlámh and NWCI's A Handbook for Women's Groups Working Together for Equality)

# Getting Your Voice Heard

Ireland is a democracy, which means that we elect representatives to speak for us in a public forum. The Government is responsible for making sure that we are informed, free to publicly criticise them and able to present alternatives.

We have both a right and a duty to have a say in how our Government works and what it does. If we are not involved, our Government can make decisions without being aware of our needs or opinions. Our job as members of society is to raise issues of concern with them. There are many ways in which we can have our issues heard and try to effect change in society.

## Who's Who?

In Ireland, we have two houses of representatives

→ **Dáil Eireann**  
(House of Representatives)

→ **Seanad Eireann**  
(the Senate)

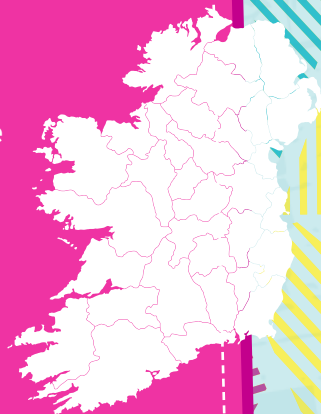
There are 166 Teachta Dálas (Irish for members of parliament more commonly referred to as TDs) representing 43 areas (constituencies) who are directly elected by the people.

Each area has 3-5 representatives and they are either members of a political party or they are independent representatives.

You must be over 18 years to vote. You must be over 21 to stand for election to Dáil Eireann.

You must be over 35 to be the President of Ireland

Current TDs are listed by areas at:  
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/default.asp?housetype=0&HouseNum=31&disp=mem>





## Departments

The Government is organised into Departments which deal with specific issues. It is very useful to check which TDs and civil servants are working on specific issues and whether these overlap with your cause. You can find a full list of the Departments and who is working in them here: <http://www.gov.ie/tag/departments/>

## Parliamentary Questions

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, TDs may ask members of the Government questions relating to Public Affairs connected with their Departments and official responsibilities. They reply on a 5-week rota basis, meaning that every Minister can be questioned regularly. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the Taoiseach answers questions that relate to his/her Department. Replies are published as part of the Debates. Asking your TD to pose a parliamentary question to the relevant minister is a great way of highlighting your issue and also ensuring that the relevant Department is doing work on that issue.

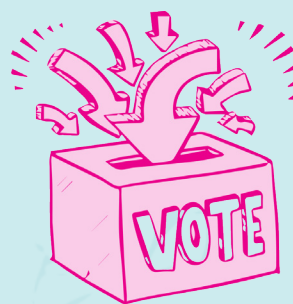


You can get further information and training on how to lobby at <http://www.activelink.ie> and Dochas Wednesday News [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie) for training courses and workshops.

You can also contact [www.nwci.ie](http://www.nwci.ie) for online resources and see how to become a member.

## Local Authorities

City or County Councils are run by local councillors who are elected in local elections every five years. You can contact them on issues that concern you. They can be a great resource on issues that concern the local community and a source of information about the system. Often, politicians spend some time as councillors before becoming TDs. A full list of the city and county councils and how to contact them is available at this address: <http://www.environ.ie/en/LocalGovernment/LocalGovernmentAdministration/LocalAuthorities/>



The main way to have your voice heard is by voting in local and general elections. Make sure that you are on the register of

electors and that your details are correct.

You can find out how to do this here:

<http://www.checktheregister.ie/PublicPages/Default.aspx?uiLang.>

If your details are not there, you can register here <http://www.checktheregister.ie/PublicPages/AppForms.aspx>. However, if you are under 18 years old or don't feel that your specific issue is represented properly in Government, you can 'lobby' decision-makers so that your voice is heard.

## Talking to Your Political Representatives/TDs

There are a number of ways to make contact with (lobby) your representatives/TDs

### Face-to-Face

You can speak to a TD directly by attending her or his 'clinic'. This is where they have specific hours to meet members of the public. At election times, representatives come door to door hoping to get votes. This is a great time to engage them on issues of concern to you. Contact details are usually on the TD's website and clinic times can be found by telephoning or emailing if they are not on the website.

### Letters and Emails

The personal touch is always well received and TDs usually take time to respond to your letters and emails, particularly if your return address shows that you live in their constituency.

### Phone call

This can be a quick and easy way of making contact with your TD. Have a list of the points you want to make ready, including the action you want them to take. Jot down relevant bits of their responses and send a follow-up email politely reminding them of their promises.

### SETTING UP A MEETING

Write to them explaining your concerns and request a meeting. You can make it a difficult invitation to turn down by having many signatures on the letter. After 3-4 days, follow up with a telephone call. Make it easy for them to meet with you by being flexible on the time and place.

- Invite a board member or community leader along to the meeting
- Prepare a fact sheet for the representative to take away with all the relevant details and background on the issue
- Anticipate questions and have answers prepared
- Agree who says what before going into the meeting. This will make it easier to get all the points across
- Be punctual, prepared and polite.
- Start with a short introduction; who you are, what you do, and what you need from them
- Try to keep it short and to the point
- Finish by listing what has been agreed at the meeting, who will do what, and laying the groundwork for further contact

Send a follow-up letter thanking them for their time, briefly summarising what was discussed and what they committed to do.

Adapted from Be the Change: A toolkit for taking action against poverty and injustice, Comhlamh)

# Policy and your Organisation

## Checking Gender in your Organisation

Gender-proofing is a process which takes into account differences between men and women in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and actions so that practices within the organisation have, not necessarily the same, but equally beneficial outcomes for women and men. It is a pro-active process designed to tackle inequalities in your project and/or organisation which can discriminate against either sex.

This process should take into consideration all the levels of interaction within the project from decision-making to staffing and to the young people themselves. It is not simply about increasing women's participation in programmes or activities but rather it is the nature and quality of this participation.

## How to Gender-Proof Aspects of your Project

The Five Step Gender-Proofing Process is essentially a set of questions which should be posed for any actions/objectives/policies within your organisation. The answers from these questions should then be integrated into your organisation's strategic plan, operational plan and policies, as appropriate.



## Gender-Proofing Process (Template)

Action/Objective to be proofed:

### STEP 1

What are the different experiences and roles of men and women which might have an effect on how they benefit from/ get involved in (objective/ action...)?

### STEP 2

What are the implications of the differences (outlined above) for this objective?

### STEP 3

Given these implications, what do we need to do when pursuing this objective to ensure equality of outcome for men and women?

### STEP 4

Who will assume responsibility for ensuring these actions are carried out?

### STEP 5

How will we measure success in this area (targets, indicators)?

Adapted from Sense and Sexuality: A Support Pack For Addressing The Issues of Sexual Health With Young People in Youth Work Settings.



# Policy and Gender Equality

A policy is a statement of intent on the part of the organisation. Policies set the boundaries in relation to practice at all levels of the organisation. The activities are therefore the central concern of policy development.

## Policies are necessary

- To support workers, management and the young people within the organisation
- To enable the organisation to reflect on, and communicate their ethos and values in the work that they do
- To provide consistency in how to respond to issues within your organisation's practice



Policy design should be done in consultation with all people in the organisation and be agreed by all stakeholders before it is implemented.



# Steps to Developing a Gender Equality Policy

## **STEP 1** Create a policy working group.

This group should include young people from your organisation. Roles and responsibilities within this group should be clearly defined and the young people given adequate chance to express their concerns. This group should include both men and women so that the policy can reflect the needs of both and be accepted by all.

## **STEP 2** Clarify the present position within the organisation.

Using the gender proofing model, clarify the present ethos and value base and review existing policies. Look to organisations which work on gender equality policy development. NWCI and The Y Factor can be a support in this.

## **STEP 3** Carry out a needs assessment

i.e. figure out what needs to be added, changed or stated with current policy and identify who will lead out on this. Engage as many levels of participation as possible at this juncture such as the young people, parents, workers, management, local service providers etc. This will result in a policy which is reflective of the larger context and can be implemented with little resistance.

## **STEP 4** Write the policy.

Make sure that the drafts of the policy are circulated for comment and that stakeholders have an opportunity to engage.

## **STEP 8** Monitor and evaluate the policy.

Measure the impact of the policy upon the workers' practice and ultimately on the young people. How often you review the policy will depend on your capacity but it should not exceed three years and should aim to be every year.

## **STEP 7** Implement the policy.

Identify who will be the specific person responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented by everyone in the organisation. Outline strategies and resources needed to send out and communicate the policy both within and outside the organisation, and provide training on the use of the policy with relevant personnel.

## **STEP 6** Ratify the policy.

The Board of Management should at this point officially sign off on the policy. You may wish to launch the policy publicly.

## **STEP 5** Pilot the policy:

When the final draft is agreed it can be presented in different media to all stakeholders including young people, staff and management to test its usefulness in action. To do this, you may try scenarios or vignettes.



## Writing the Policy

Your policy should include but not be limited to the following:

### A cover page

This should include the name of your organisation, the title of the policy, when it comes into force, the person(s) responsible for sign off, and a date for review.

### Definitions

Ensure that all jargon is explained in 'easy to understand' language so that those complying with and implementing the policy know and understand what is expected of them.

### A policy statement

This is a statement of intent and vision about what your organisation believes gender equality should look like in your organisation. This can be short and does not need to go into implementation details.

### Reasons for the policy

This provides the evidence for why you think a gender equality policy is necessary and how it will improve practice.

### Who the policy is aimed at

In bullet points, outline everyone who is expected to comply with the policy. For example: specifying volunteers and students on placement so that the boundaries are clearly set.

### Implementation

This is the largest section and will set out the practical details of how you intend to put the policy into practice. It states who is responsible for what and how you intend the policy to be carried out.

### Links to other policy areas

This section should list the other policies of the organisation that link into your gender equality policy such as your diversity and equality policy.

## Sample Gender Equality Policy

A good example of a gender equality policy in an organisation that works with young women is Plan International's which can be downloaded here <http://plan-international.org/girls/pdfs/plan-gender-policy.pdf>

This sample policy is not a template for you to adopt, as your policy must be designed with the specific needs of your young people and community in mind; however, it can act as a guideline for the writing of your gender equality policy.



## Useful Organisations and Resources

**BeLonG To:** supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland.

🌐 [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

☎ 01-6706223 (Mon-Thurs)

**Aware:** provides support and assistance to people who are affected by depression, bipolar disorder, post-natal depression or suicidal thoughts.

🌐 [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)

☎ 1890 303 302

(Helpline open 10am-10pm, Mon-Sun)

**Bodywhys:** is the eating disorder association of Ireland.

🌐 [www.bodywhys.ie](http://www.bodywhys.ie)

☎ 1890 200 444

(Helpline open 7.30pm-9.30pm Mon,

Wed and Sun; 10.30am-12.30pm

Tues, Thurs and Fri)

**NYCI:** National Youth Council of Ireland represents and supports the interests of voluntary youth organisations and uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

🌐 [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

☎ 01 478 4122

**Citizens Information:** provides information about public services and entitlements in Ireland.

🌐 [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

☎ 0761 07 4000 (Mon-Fri)

**Childline:** is a 24 hour listening service for all children up to the age of 18.

🌐 [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

☎ 1800 66 66 66

(Helpline open 24 hours a day)

Text "Talk" to 50101 for TEENTEXT

Text "Bully" to 50101 for support if you are affected by bullying

**The Irish Family Planning Association:**

promotes the right of all people to sexual and reproductive health information. They provide pregnancy counselling to women and their partners and information on abortion, adoption and parenting at eleven centres nationwide.

🌐 [www.ifpa.ie](http://www.ifpa.ie)

☎ 1850 49 50 51 (Hotline)

**Rape Crisis Network Ireland:** presents all aspects of sexual violence with information for women, men, survivors, and supporters with contact details for all rape crisis centers in Ireland

🌐 [www.rcni.ie](http://www.rcni.ie)

☎ 091 563676

**SpunOut.ie:** is a not-for-profit website that gives access to relevant, reliable and objective advice to young people in order to help them make informed decisions.

🌐 [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

**TENI:** the Transgender Equality Network Ireland, seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans\* people and their families.

🌐 [www.teni.ie](http://www.teni.ie)

☎ 01 873 3575

# Glossary of Terms

**ADVOCATE:** A person who actively works to end intolerance, educates others, and supports social equality for a group.

**ALLY:** A person who is not a member of the group experiencing disadvantage but supports their fight for equality.

**BISEXUAL:** A person whose sexual attraction is more or less equally directed to a person of either sex.

**CARE WORK:** Care work is a term for care provided to children, the elderly, the sick and the disabled in care institutions or in the home. The fact that care work is not equally shared between women and men can have a direct negative impact on women's ability to take part in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life.

**CIVIL PARTNERSHIP:** A legally recognised union of a couple, with rights similar to those of marriage.

**DISCRIMINATION:** The act of showing prejudice. The unjust treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, gender, family status, marital status, religious belief, disability, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, class, social background, and many others.

Gender discrimination refers to any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of gender roles and norms, which prevents a person from enjoying full human rights.

**EMPOWERMENT:** Describes both the process and the outcome of people - women and men - taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having their own skills and knowledge recognised) increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance.<sup>1</sup>

**EQUALITY:** Equality means that each individual has access to the same opportunities and is given fair access to achieve to the best of their ability.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES:** The goal of giving all persons an equal chance to an education and employment, and to protect their civil rights, regardless of their race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, membership of the Traveller community, (dis)ability, family status or gender. Equality legislation protects people from minority groups from being discriminated against on the grounds of group membership.

**FEMINISM:** A movement for social, cultural, political and economic equality of women and men. It is a campaign against gender inequalities and it strives for equal rights for women. Feminism can be also defined as the right to enough information available to every single woman so that she can make a choice to live a life with equality and independence. Feminism is a global movement which addresses different issues in different societies and cultures but is tied together with the main goal of achieving gender equality in every sphere of life.

<sup>1</sup> "Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment" Kabeer, Nalia, in *Discussing Women's Empowerment: Theory and Practice*, Stockholm, Sida Studies No.3, 2001

**GENDER:** Gender describes the roles we learn in our lives which teach us the rights and responsibilities that communities and societies consider appropriate for men and women. We are born as males and females, but becoming boys and girls, women and men is something we learn from our families and societies.

Gender analysis provides context for understanding that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, is important in understanding the different patterns of behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures.

**GENDER EQUALITY:** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

**GENDER-SPECIFIC POLICIES:** This is policy which uses the knowledge of gender differences to respond to the practical gender needs of either women or men.

**GENDER ROLES:** Gender roles are learned behaviours in a given society/community, which decide which activities, tasks and responsibilities are seen to be male or female. Gender roles are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion and by the geographical, economic and political environment.

**HETEROSEXUAL:** Persons whose sexual orientation is mostly always directed to persons of the other sex.

**HOMOSEXUAL:** A person who is mostly always sexually attracted to persons of their own sex

**HUMAN RIGHTS:** Human rights are basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status. Human rights include the right to life, freedom of expression, the right to food, and the right to work and receive an education. Human rights are protected and upheld by international and national laws.

**INTERSECTIONALITY:** Intersectional analysis aims to reveal that people experience multiple identities at the same time and the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that people experience because of a combination of certain identities. It looks to change the way in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other forms of discrimination create inequalities that structure the positions women hold in any given situation.<sup>2</sup>

**LESBIAN:** Female whose sexual preference is mostly or totally directed to a person of the same sex.

**PATRIARCHY:** Systems and social structures that give right to male physical, social and economic power over women.

**RAPE:** Rape is the sexual penetration of any part of the body of the victim with a sexual organ, any object or any other part of the body. The invasion is done by force, or by threat of force. Rape is any sexual act which is done under fear of violence, psychological control, abuse of power, or done to a person incapable of giving genuine consent.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> AWID Facts and Issues: Women's Rights and Economic Change No. 9, August 2004, Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice, [www.Awid.org/](http://www.Awid.org/)

<sup>3</sup> Committee on the Status of Women: Glossary on Violence against Women, [ngo.fawco.org](http://ngo.fawco.org)

**RAPE (DATE):** Sex that takes place against a person's will through the means of violence, coercion or intimidation, either physical or psychological, by an acquaintance, friend, date or partner. Date rape is a type of sexual assault, where the victim and the person doing the rape are, or have been, in some form of personal or social relationship. Date rape victims are almost entirely women.<sup>4</sup>

(Source: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, [www.medinstgenderstudies.org](http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org))

**RAPE (MARITAL):** Marital rape is any unwanted sexual acts by a spouse or ex-spouse, committed without consent and/or against a person's will, obtained by force, or threat of force, intimidation, or when a person is unable to consent.

(Source: Committee on the Status of Women: Glossary on Violence against Women, [www.ngo.fawco.org](http://www.ngo.fawco.org))

**REFUGEE:** A person with a well-founded fear of their personal freedoms being endangered for reasons of religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable, or afraid to stay in the protection of that country. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in any refugee population, approximately 50 percent of the uprooted people are women and girls. Stripped of the protection of their homes, their Government and often their family structure, females are often particularly vulnerable.

**REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS:** Rights which recognise the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to access the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.

**SEX:** Refer to the biological characteristics between men and women, which are the same all over the world and do not change. A male can often be described as having a penis and a female, a vagina.

**SEXISM:** Actions or attitudes that discriminate against people based solely on their gender. Sexism is linked to power in that those with power are typically treated with favour and those without power are typically discriminated against. Sexism is also related to stereotypes, since the discriminatory actions or attitudes are often based on false beliefs, or over generalisations, about gender.


**SEXUAL ASSAULT:** Sexual assault is any sexual contact for which consent was not given. Sexual assault is a deliberate act of gender-based violence and an expression of power, control and domination over another. It is not an act of uncontrolled desire, attraction or arousal. Sexual assault occurs in every level of society and in a variety of settings.<sup>5</sup>

(Source: Stop Violence against Women, A project by the Advocates for Human Rights. [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org))

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** Sexual harassment is a form of sexual violence. The term refers to unwanted behaviour where sexuality is used as a means to oppress and position people so as to make or keep them vulnerable. The forms of sexual harassment are usually divided into three different types: (1) verbal: e.g. remarks about figure/looks, sexual and sexist jokes, verbal sexual advances, comments that stereotype and discriminate; (2) non-verbal and/or visual: e.g. staring at someone and whistling; and (3) physical: acts, from unwanted or overbearing physical contact to assaults and rape.

<sup>4</sup> Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Geneva: United Nations, 1994, para 7.3 <http://www.unfpa.org>

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization (WHO) <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/glossary.html>



**SEXUALITY:** Sexuality is often seen to be the expression and experience of a person's desire/love. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. It is most usually used to refer to a person's set of sexual preferences.

**SEXUAL HEALTH:** A state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.<sup>6</sup>

**STEREOTYPES:** A generalised set of traits and characteristics given to a specific ethnic, national, cultural or racial group which gives false expectations that all/most individual members of the group will conform to these characteristics.<sup>7</sup>

**TRANSGENDER:** The term is often used as an umbrella term that embraces all gender variant individuals, including transsexuals (people who look for or have therapy or surgery to reassign their gender); people who alter their social gender through non-surgical means; cross-dressers; and others who do not conform to social norms for biological born men and women who identify as their birth gender.<sup>8</sup>

**TRANSVESTITE:** Refers to those who dress in the clothing of the other sex. Those who do so for entertainment are called Drag Queens or Drag Kings.

**VIOLENCE (DOMESTIC):** A pattern of abusive and threatening behaviours that may include physical, emotional, economic and sexual violence as well as intimidation, isolation and coercion. The purpose of domestic violence is to establish and exert power and control over another; men most often use it against their intimate partners, such as current or former spouses, girlfriends, or dating partners. Forms of domestic violence can include physical violence, sexual violence, economic control, and psychological assault. In many places throughout the world, marital rape is still not viewed as sexual assault because a husband is seen to have a right of sexual access to his wife. Stalking, as well, has only recently been recognised as a form of violence and a severe threat to the victim.<sup>9</sup>

**Sexism is linked to power in that those with power are typically treated with favour and those without power are typically discriminated against.**

<sup>6</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO) <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/gender/glossary.html>

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [www.portal.unesco.org](http://www.portal.unesco.org)

<sup>8</sup> Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Encyclopaedia, [www.glbtc.com](http://www.glbtc.com)

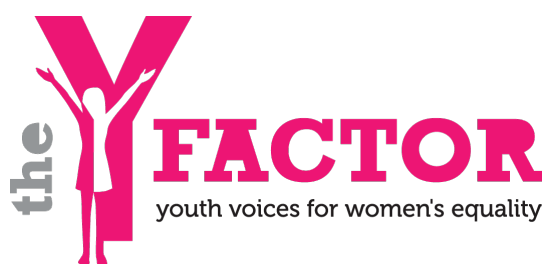
<sup>9</sup> Stop Violence against Women. A project by the Advocates for Human Rights, [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org)

## Notes

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