

Extending the Practice of Gender through intercultural learning

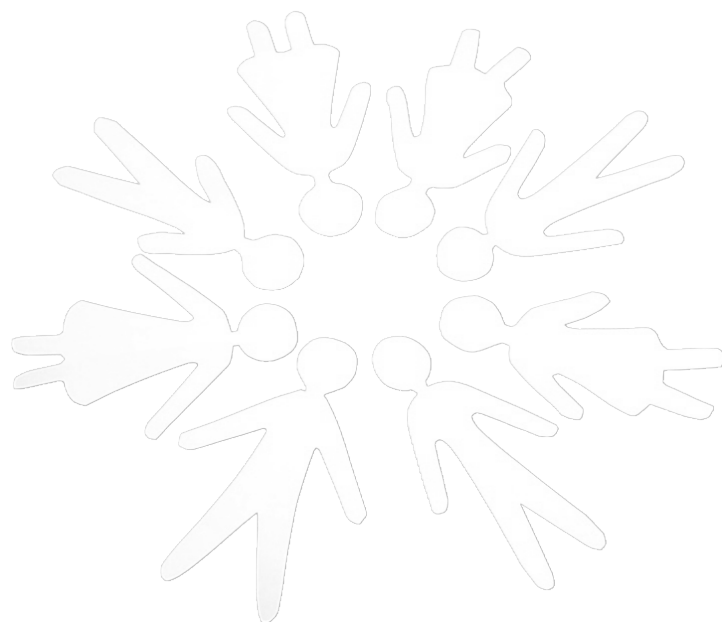
Gender sensitivity at (voluntary) work

**A Publication of the
Coordinating Committee
for International Voluntary
Service, (CCIVS)**

*Written and Edited
by Rubaica Jaliwala*



‘Youth in Action’ Programme



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I. INTRODUCTION

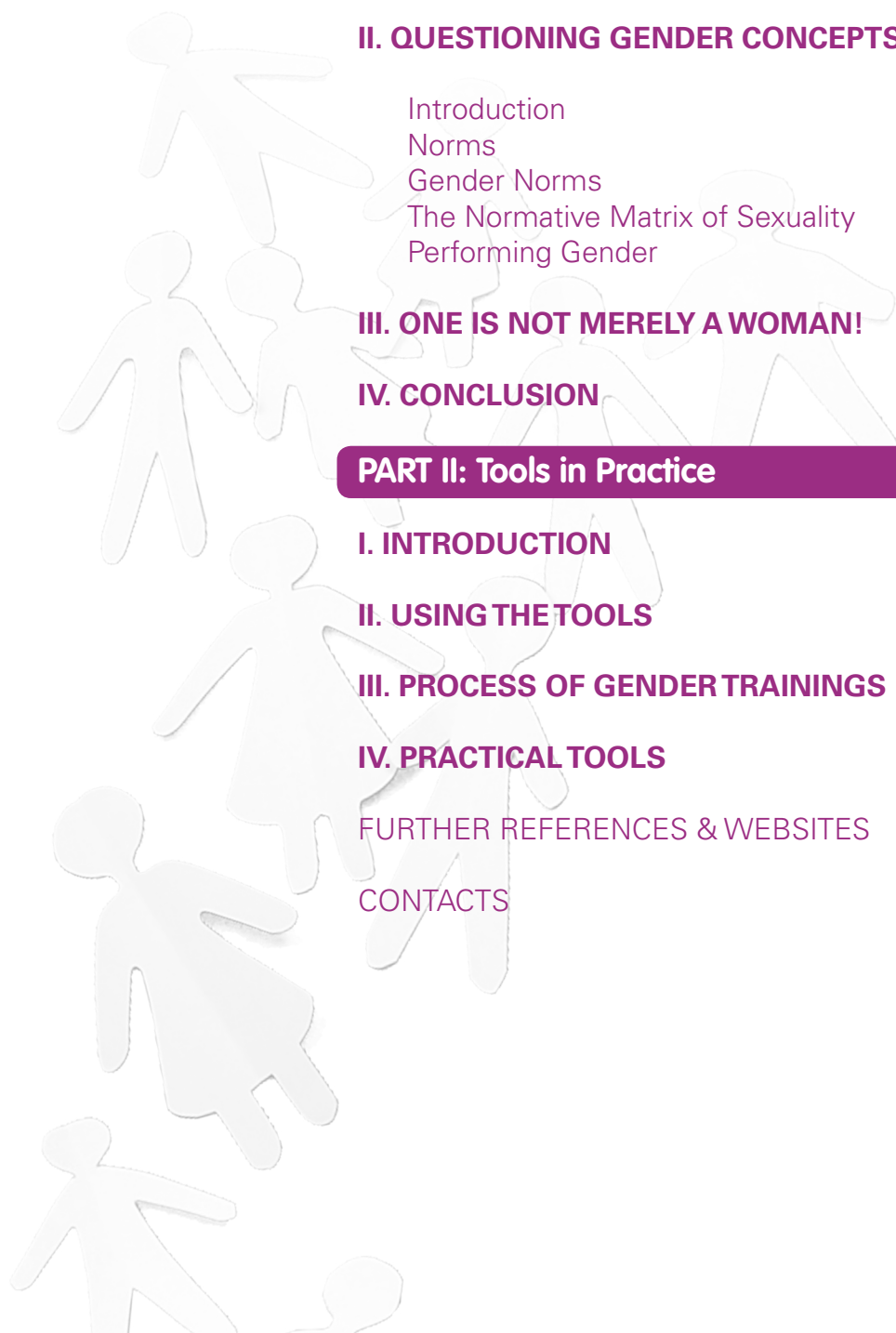
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The year 2011 will see the centenary celebrations of the 1st International Women's Day in 1911. But that isn't all; 2011 is also the European Year of Volunteering and the UN International year of Volunteer +10. The Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS) has taken these intersecting occasions to bring the two fields of work together –thematising gender sensitivity in international voluntary service– toward its goal of social justice and equality.

International Voluntary Service (IVS) projects have been consistently and actively involved in empowering young women, with little or no experience and from different countries and backgrounds, by offering them the opportunity to participate in the life and work of local and international communities, discover and share experiences and expertise, work in teams, play leadership roles and gain recognition for their work. Nevertheless, the full potential of their contribution (women comprise almost 70 percent of the volunteer exchanges in many countries) is yet to be realised. Despite their strong presence in IVS projects, there is a tendency to reproduce gender inequality within existing organisational and community structures. Furthermore, differing perceptions of gender roles in the diverse cultural contexts where IVS projects are held leads to conflicts between volunteers, leaders and hosting communities. The potential for change lies in the development of a gender sensitive approach that takes into account intercultural learning processes of international youth projects in order to enable a crucial shift in gender-stereotypical perceptions which ultimately positively influence the management and impact of the IVS projects. This involves initiating a sustainable dialogue between volunteers, organisations and local communities by locating gender equality within the sphere of intercultural learning and social justice.

The manual 'Extending the Practice of Gender through Intercultural Learning: Gender Sensitivity at (Voluntary) Work' aims at providing voluntary service organisations with appropriate tools and methods to address gender issues in the multitude of international voluntary service projects taking place in different national and social contexts every year. The publication takes into account the specific and diverse intercultural contexts of IVS projects, seeking thus to support voluntary service organisations in their preparation of volunteers and local communities and to improve their capacity to deal with complex cultural interactions based on particular notions of gender roles which become important determinants of people's choices and capabilities, and are, at the same time, a potential source of discrimination and exclusion.

The manual provides a framework for exploring gender roles in different societies and linking the general reflections on gender to the participation of youth, in particular young women, in IVS projects and their interaction in diverse cultural contexts.



Specifically developed for application in international voluntary service, this manual serves to assist volunteers and practitioners interested in introducing a gender sensitive approach to their work by providing them with interactive interdisciplinary tools that combine theory and practice. As such, the manual is divided into two main parts: Part I provides a theoretical background on gender and Part II lays out tools for practice in IVS. The theoretical background seeks to examine what constitutes gender; it analyses the differences between sex and gender and questions prevailing gender concepts in society. It also describes, through the narrations of experts, the relevance of gender sensitivity in the field of international voluntary service. The final chapter of the theoretical section investigates how experiences of discriminations overlap – i.e. people are often discriminated against not just on grounds of their gender, but also as a result of their skin colour, social class, ethnicity etc. It argues that gender discrimination cannot be considered in isolation, rather as one which constantly overlaps with other identity categories when discrimination occurs.

The second part of this manual, 'Tools in Practice', presents an interactive methodology aligned with the theoretical framework introduced in Part I. It gives insights to using the methods provided, outlines a standard flow of a gender training and lists exercises that match the process and flow presented.

And of course, there is a lot more material available on gender than we can provide in this manual. In the very last section, we present a list of references and websites that will assist you not just in your search for new and different methods for gender or intercultural learning, but also for further reading on gender concepts, prejudice and discrimination, and previously conducted research and trainings on gender in different countries.

We hope this manual provides fresh inputs and new ways of looking at gender concepts and is effective in serving the multipliers of gender equality around the world.



PART I : Theoretical Background



I. Sex/Gender – An Introduction

In most societies there exists an almost neat division of roles and status of men and women. Boys and girls learn from the very beginning what and who they are, how to behave in different ways and how to dress differently. The traditional belief that differences between the behaviour of men and women is biologically and genetically determined, has in the meantime, been proved otherwise. Research has revealed that these differences are socially constructed or based on the concept of gender.

« Catherine Vidal, neurobiologist and the member of Comité Scientifique «Science et Citoyen» of CNRS, posits that there is no concrete biological evidence, which proves the myth of feminine and masculine qualities among humans such as women being able to do two things at the same time or men being better mathematicians. She admits that hormonal difference exists between women and men, which can lead to the difference in brain development. However her research concluded that « individual variability is much more important than the variability among different sexes, which, as a consequence, becomes an exception »

Ref: Vidal, Catherine, « Cerveau, sexe et idéologie », Diogène, Presses Universitaires de France, N. 208, Paris, 2004.

Whereas the term “sex” has biological connotations, “gender” is seen to have social, cultural and psychological connotations. In this sense, sex is described in terms of ‘male’ and ‘female’, and gender in terms of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. In a social and cultural context, this implies that the male is ascribed ‘masculine’ qualities and characteristics and the female is attributed ‘feminine’ qualities and characteristics. Being a ‘normal’ male or female requires a preponderance of masculinity and femininity respectively, denoting a universal appeal to fit the sexes neatly into two small gender identities.

The term ‘gender’ was introduced in socio-scientific linguistic usage in the 1970s to dissociate it from “biological sex” (Frey, 2002:79), and to undermine the notion of ‘biology as destiny’. Women activists argued that “femininity, the female sex, and female gender needs to be considered from a different point of view, or, more specifically, from a female point of view” (Bruining, 2001:6). In other words, women and the feminine can no longer be expressed by making use of existing patriarchal terms, and should no longer be analysed in relation to men. Similarly, the French feminist from the mid-1980s, Luce Irigaray, argued that a “woman ought to be able to find herself, among other things, through the images of herself already deposited in history and the conditions of production of the work of man, and not on the basis of his work, his genealogy” (Irigaray, 1993: 10). She propagated that it is essential that women strive towards equality in comparison to themselves.

For feminists, the term 'gender' (in contrast to 'women') had a dual advantage: it "put 'women' into a context, focusing on the socially constructed relation between women and men, and by doing so it made visible the aspect of power in gender relations" (Arnfred, 2004: 74-75). Feminists asserted that highlighting the power inherent in gender relations was bound to challenge such structures in the north and the south as well as "epistemological aspects of male dominance, calling for a deconstruction of apparently gender neutral terms such as 'farmer', 'household', 'community', carrying implicit male bias, hiding gender disparities as well as gender hierarchies, struggles and conflicts" (ibid). However, the opposite seemed to have happened: instead of focusing on women's marginalisation and oppression, the term has become neutralised, referring to both men and women. This mainstreaming of gender has also been criticised by Baden and Goetz (1998: 25) who assert that "a problem with the concept of 'gender' is that it can be used in a very descriptive way and the question of power can easily be removed".

As a social construct, gender therefore holds within itself guidelines for what men and women do, what is expected of them, and that includes being and feeling "masculine" or "feminine". Thus, from a social institution there seems to emerge a natural fact, which defines for its part, how the relevant gender identity should be. Society subscribes you certain roles and features – and you behave in that particular way. You should be "feminine" or "masculine". In a system of heterosexuality, this can only mean to be one or the other. Accordingly, a man or a woman is one's own gender identity to the extent that he/she is not the other (Villa, 2003: 68). Being 'man' is finally only identical with 'not-being-woman' (and vice-versa), and can be compared to pairs of terms such as day/night, black/white, ugly/beautiful. Who is a man or woman therefore gets determined through a negative definition, by determining who or what a gender is not. choice, difference or resistance.

By doing so, men and women are presented as binary opposites, and as Simone de Beauvoir (1973) postulates, the woman becomes "the Other" of man in society's hegemonic structures.

What becomes evident is the futility of examining gender identity without examining gender relations formulated under conditions of a binary conception ("man" and "woman") of gender and forced or coercive heterosexuality, which seems to promotes, above all, a relationship between women and men. This doesn't just mean that woman are positioned as "the Other" of man, but that such a binary conception also sets the limits and appropriateness of gender and confines the concept of gender to notions of masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1990).

Gender, at the same time, is a dynamic concept. Socially and culturally constituted, gender roles for men and women vary greatly from one cultural context to another and from one social group to another as factors such as ethnicity, class, economic circumstances, age, etc. influence what is considered appropriate for men and women (UNESCO Zambia, 2005: 6). Even within a particular ethnic group, the kind of clothing, for example, a young woman in her mid-twenties wears may well differ from her grandmothers' garments. Similarly, not just generational but also socio-economic factors influence gender roles and behaviour. Just as the concepts of individual identity and 'culture' are dynamic and changing, so do socio-economic conditions change over time, and thus gender patterns change with them.

So, we can say that sex is fixed and based in nature, and gender is fluid and based in culture (Goldstein, 2003:2), then this distinction is a definite progress compared with the 'biology is destiny' formulation.

However, gender theorist Judith Butler notes that although feminists rejected the idea that biology is destiny, they then developed an account of patriarchal culture which assumed that masculine and feminine genders would unavoidably be constructed by culture upon “male” and “female” bodies, making the same destiny just as inescapable (Butler, 1990). It is then, for example, culture that assigns men and women their individual roles, behaviour and even dress code: roles such as fishing, farming, etc. for men; cooking, child raising etc. for women, or for example, in terms of dress code – usage of cosmetics for women but not for men. This ensures the preservation of the status quo, as the replacement of ‘biology’ by ‘culture’ allows no room for choice, difference or resistance.

In fact, it ignores the existence of persons who do not fit neatly into the biological or social categories of women and men, such as intersex, transgender, transsexual people and Hijras¹.

And if, someone crosses this binary line or blurs the edges, society has a way of casting them away or sometimes even creating a specific space for them which is either revered or feared, or both. The latter is the case of the Hijras of India: although marginalised, they are incorporated into Hindu society as they are seen to have the powers of the religious ascetic; a measure of power requires (or at least accepts) their presence on auspicious occasions. Indian society and Hindu mythology thus provides some positive, or at least conciliatory, roles for the Hijras (Nanda, 1998). So even though the sex categories of female and male are,

¹ *Intersex people are born with some combination of male and female characteristics. Transsexual people are born with the body of one sex, but feel they belong to the ‘opposite’ sex. Transgender are those who feel they are neither male nor female, but somewhere in between. Hijras are an Indian transgender population, where they are regarded as an institutionalised third sex which always existed.*

In Indonesian Bugis Culture, there is no indigenous word for gender. But there are five terms to describe ‘individuals’ gender identities : makkunrai (feminine women), oroané (masculine men), calalai (masculine female), calabai (feminine male), and bissu (transgender shaman). In Bugis language, siblings are referred to by their age, «older sibling» or «younger sibling» and not by their sex such as «brother» and «sisters».

Ref : Graham Davies, Sharyn, Challenging Gender Norms : five genders among bugis in Indonesia, Case studies in Cultural Anthropology series, George Spindler and Janice Stockard series editors., 2007.

for many people, neither fixed nor universal and vary over time, context and relationship, a multitude of societies are not able to accept people outside these lines.

Is it then possible to talk about a “given” sex or a “given” gender without first asking how sex and/or gender are given? And is “sex” natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal? (Butler, 1999:10) If we can’t really say, the fixed notion of “sex” can be disrupted and challenged, and then possibly “sex” is just as culturally constructed as gender.

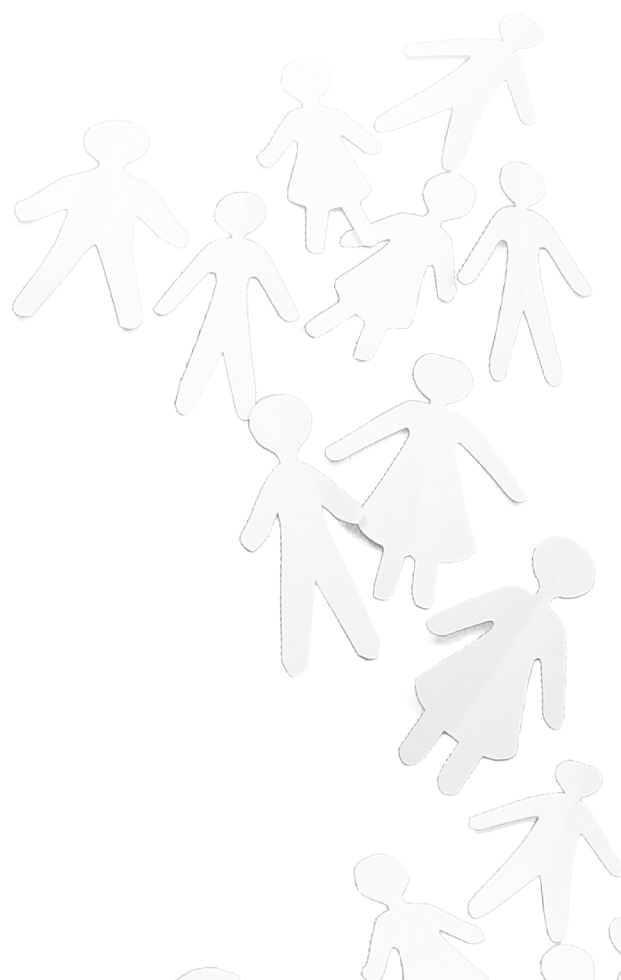
Indeed, the very distinction between “sex” and “gender” has been strongly challenged. Feminist theorists like Donna Haraway and Judith Butler criticise the sex-gender differentiation and reveal that “biological sex” is likewise a notion, which is used in order to establish socially influential norms (Frey: 2002:79). Accordingly, sex, like gender, is seen as a social and cultural construct (Esplen & Jolly, 2006). This means that we are left with no other choice apart from being either man or woman, as “there is no ‘I’ before we take on a gender” (Villa, 2003:68). Butler (1999) therefore asserts that “sex” is itself a “gendered category”.

That gender even today very often continues to be thought of on the basis of a biological heterosexuality is clearly evident through formulations such as “both genders” or “two genders”. The error in reasoning becomes obvious when we consider that actually there cannot possibly be two “gender-groups”, when in fact gender identity criss-crosses other categories in multiple ways. Moreover, if gender is consistently taken as a social category, it is absurd to assume that there are only two genders.

The fact that the concept of gender continues to be taken as self-evident even today makes it imperative to reflect on the extent to which men or women form a common social group, a “gender category” and how useful this homogenising of the category “women” or “men” is, and whom or what purpose it serves? This question sparked off a discussion in the course of the 80s: Primarily, Afro-American women began to protest that white bourgeois women were speaking in the name of a feminism for (all) women and thereby making women part of one seemingly identical group. This causes one to lose sight of the fact that women who do not belong to the (“white”) dominant group are subordinate/subgroups/inferior everywhere – to men and women of the respective dominant group (Frey, 2002: 77). Similarly, oppressive relations should also be seen as specific and contextual: ethnic and social background, education, age, sexual orientation, and gender are all power constellations which individuals are subjected to and through which their identities are constructed.

There is a justifiable critique of a simplifying categorisation “the women”, as such stereotyping is a prerequisite for exclusion. If we consider that discrimination functions through stereotypical images, then it is certainly used to devalue (supposedly homogenous) groups. Likewise, if men and women are positioned in binary opposition – i.e. they are so different, how then can we fight for gender equality?

Thus if gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or gender is culturally constructed, does this “construction” suggest that some (unspoken) laws generate gender differences along universal axes of sexual difference? In the following chapter we seek to understand how gender is constituted through these (unspoken) laws or norms that regulate gender. We examine and question gender norms which are often restrictive and form the basis for exclusion and the discrimination of many in society.





II. Questioning Gender Concepts

Introduction

As elaborated above, gender is not an innate essence waiting to be discovered by the subject it inhabits but is, in fact, a reification of cultural significations¹. Nevertheless, the term gender is understood as natural in its existence, thereby producing certain norms and regulations. Normative heterosexuality, and understandings thereof, confirms this binary thinking that leads to an ethnocentric notion of sexuality, which, in a manner that often disregards specific cultural and historical contingencies, imposes itself on subjects as well as constitutes them (Bruining, 2001:16). The natural transforms itself into the self-evident, and any disruption of this self-evidence, such as homosexuality, bisexuality, transgender, intersex, and other “queer” sexualities, is interpreted as a deviation from the norm. The latter is understood as a notion of sexuality in which subjects are only intelligible when they comply with categories of fixed identities that sustain the hegemony of heterosexuality. Butler insists that nothing is natural, and that gender identities are partly constructed through an understanding of sex and sexuality based on a cognitive regime of normative heterosexuality (ibid).

Butler theorises the formation of the subject as a relation to the social – a community of others and their norms – which is beyond the control of the subject it forms and precisely the very condition of that subject’s formation, the resources by which the subject becomes recognisably human, an «I», in the first place. In other words, the subject is constituted by norms which pre-exist the subject.

¹ The latter refers to a process by which an essentialised and fixed cultural meaning is given to something which is abstract.

Through this process, I become myself only in relation to others and therefore cannot own myself completely. Her theory becomes clearer when one considers the noun “woman”; and what that means in relation to feminism that, for a long time, has taken for granted that there is a unified subject in need of political representation, i.e. women.

“The domain of political and linguistic ‘representation’ set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject. In other words, the qualifications for being a subject must first be met before representation can be extended” (Butler, 2007: 2).

The subsequent sections seek to examine these qualifications for being a subject, for qualifying as a gendered subject. This chapter studies norms and the purposes they serve, and then narrows the focus to gender norms and raises questions about the validity of prevailing gender norms in society. The questioning of gender, as we will see, leads to an understanding of heterosexuality as an epistemic regime that discursively conceals its constitutive practices with reference to the categories of gender, sex and sexuality. We also investigate Butler’s notion of performativity which theorises the constructed nature of identity, and, at the same time, demonstrates that identities have a way of moving beyond predetermined norms.

This chapter is predominantly based on Judith Butler’s reflections on gender and sexuality and her theory of performativity.

It seeks to provoke a critical examination of and reflection on heterosexual norms in society in order to open up the boundaries of gender to include precarious lives - insecure, uncertain lives - the lives of women, transgender people, the underprivileged, and the stateless.

Norms

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, an influential French philosopher of the 18th century, once wrote in his novel «L'empire de la femme est un empire de douceur, d'adresse et de complaisance ; ses ordres sont des caresses, ses menaces sont des pleurs...»

Ref : Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Emile ou De l'éducation*, 1762.

A norm is not the same as a rule or a law. In simple terms, a norm is that which is considered as appropriate behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes for males and females, as directed by a particular society. Within social practice, a norm operates as an unspoken standard of normalisation, that is, a standard for what is considered "normal". Norms impose guidelines of legibility on the social and define parameters of what will and will not appear within the domain of the social. In this sense, norms normalise a particular field for us. However, when norms function to normalise, they are not identifiable as "norms"; yet, they are recognisable through the effects they produce on their subjects (Butler, 2004). Norms also have a status and effects that are independent of the actions of the subject that they govern (ibid). This implies that even if we are outside the norms set out by a particular society, we are still defined in relation to the norm. As Butler (2004: 42) clarifies,

"To be not quite masculine or not quite feminine is still to be understood exclusively in terms of one's relationship to the "quite masculine" and the "quite feminine"

Norms can thus be understood as a measurement and a way of producing a common standard. In the words of Ewald (cited in Butler, 2004: 52): "What is a norm? A principle of comparison, of comparability, a common measure, which is instituted in the pure reference of one group to itself [...]" Moreover, not only does it produce its field of application, the norm produces itself in the production of that field (ibid). So, the norm, in fact, is only produced and persists as a norm to the extent that it is acted out in social practice and reidealized and reinstituted in and through the daily social rituals of life.

People desire a stable identity, and as Butler (2004:8) posits, a liveable life requires some stability. Then we need norms in order to live, to receive direction in our complex social world. Norms bind individuals together, and in turn, we rely on them for our social existence. On the other hand, we are also constrained by norm. In this sense, discourses¹, from which norms emerge, serve a regulating function: they decide who can be on the inside or on the outside or on the fringes of society, they decide what is right or wrong, what is normal or not, what is beautiful or not.

In this sense, then, "sex" not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce – demarcate, circulate, differentiate – the bodies it controls (Butler, 1993:1).

Thus the "norm" that binds us is also the "norm" that creates unity only through a strategy of exclusion.

1 Following Hall (1997: 6), I understand discourses as "ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practices: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society".

This exclusionary process through which subjects are shaped and formed requires the “simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet “subjects,” but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of subjects” (Butler, 1993:3). These abject beings comprise the domain of a large number of people who do not receive the status of “subject” (ibid). They are the ones who are excluded and marginalised: the unprivileged, people of colour, transsexuals and homosexuals, women, ethnic minorities etc. It is through the strategy of exclusion that norms serve to maintain hegemonic structures in society, which privilege certain groups of people and disprivilege others.

The maintenance of power structures produces unliveable and unviable lives (Butler, 2004). For a viable life, some normative conditions need to be fulfilled. Viable lives are those that conform to norms and receive a certain acceptance in society, and unviable lives are those that do not or cannot comply with societal norms and are therefore not fully accepted in society, not considered fully human. We confer humanness on some people and not on others, and this becomes the basis for the continued experience of discrimination and oppression of those “others”.

Gender norms

From the beginning of our lives, our individuality as males and females arises from gender norms in our society. Butler believes that our anticipation of these norms gives them power. If someone in society breaks or moves beyond one or more of these gender norms, then we treat them as if they had broken the law. Thus, if gender is a norm, it is a form of social power that produces the intelligible field of subjects, and an apparatus by which the gender binary is established. Part of the reason that society struggles with homosexuals is that we don't think that their actions or feelings are normal.

The action of homosexuality goes against gender norms in our society. When we treat people differently because they break a gender norm, we give those norms power.

In her seminal book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler argues that gender is not an innate expression of an internal essence, but is instead a social construct, which serves specific power institutions and fits into regulatory frames (Bruining, 2001:16). Gender serves to regulate its subjects. Regulation is that which makes regular, but it is also, according to Foucault, a mode of discipline and surveillance within late modern forms of power¹. When regulations function by way of norms, they become key moments in which the ideality of the norm is constituted afresh, and its historicity and vulnerability are temporarily put aside (Butler, 2004: 55). Since regulation relies on categories that render individuals socially interchangeable with one another, regulation is connected to the process of normalisation. For example, regulations that decide who should receive asylum are actively engaged in producing the norm of the asylum seeker. Another such example is that of state regulations on lesbian and gay adoption as well as single-parent adoptions which not only restrict that activity but also support an ideal of what parents should be, and what counts as legitimate partners. Therefore, “regulations that serve to curtail specific activities (sexual harassment, welfare fraud, sexual speech) produce the parameters of personhood, that is, making persons according to abstract norms that at once condition and exceed the lives they make – and break” (Butler, 2004: 56).

All gender is based on the continuous presentation of social norms which serve to uphold heterosexuality (Butler, 1993:2).

1 *It is important to remember that power is not just negative or restrictive, it is also productive.*

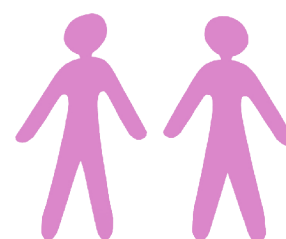
Homosexuality was a criminal offence in Canada before the Criminal Law Amendment Act was passed in 1969 and it still is the case in many other countries. Today Argentina, Belgium, Iceland, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, South Africa and Sweden have granted marriage rights to same-sex couples. Yet many other countries, as well as most American states, have laws restricting access to same-sex marriage.

Ref: <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/05/26/f-same-sex-timeline.html>

This repetitive enactment of traditional binary perceptions of gender makes it appear natural, and not socially constructed (Butler 1993:2). Accordingly, we can say that the domain of reality produced by gender norms forms the backdrop for what appears to be gender in its idealised form. To the extent that gender norms are reproduced through the actions of its subjects, they also contain the capacity to alter norms in the course of their actions. Butler (ibid) posits that gender is the process through which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalised, but that it is also the means through which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalised. Terms such as transgender or cross-gender suggest that gender has a way of moving beyond the binary of masculine and feminine. David Halperin (1995:62) cites the example of queer: "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence." This does not necessarily refer to a view on sexuality or gender, but suggests that any identity can potentially be reinvented by its owner.

But then what shapes the domain of appearance for gender? We could make a distinction, prescribed by Butler (1999:11), between a descriptive and normative account of gender. A descriptive account of gender considers that what makes gender intelligible, it enquires into its conditions of possibility. A normative account, on the other hand, attempts to answer the question of which expressions of gender are acceptable, and which are not, providing compelling reasons to make a distinction between such expressions in a particular way. If, for example, one asks: What qualifies as "gender"? This question professes a normative operation of power, a definitive question that requires an either-or answer with exclusions ready at hand. Contrarily, we should ask how presumptions about normative gender and sexuality determine in advance what will qualify as the "human" and the "liveable"? (Butler, 1999:12) In other words, how do normative gender presumptions work to define the limits of the very field of description that we have for the human? And couldn't we ask the same question about race? (Butler, 2004: 38) What is the history of the category 'race'? Which populations have qualified as human and which have not?

In the following section, we examine how a matrix of normative sexuality works to draw the boundaries for those who qualify as having a gender, and enquires, at the same time, about those lives that exist on the peripheries of the matrix.



The Normative Matrix of Sexuality

"The category of sex is the political category that found society as heterosexual"
-Monique Wittig (1980)

Although we may accept that gender is a cultural construction, this assumption is not enough to explain the rules that govern gender. It only establishes a change from rules set out by biology to rules set out by culture. "In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny" (Butler, 2007:11). In other words, if a particular "culture" constructs gender, which can be understood as norms or rules, then even under culture, gender is just as fixed and final as the 'biology is destiny' line, it is still a limiting and defining concept.

Before we proceed to examine how culture constructs and defines gender, we need to understand what is meant by culture? According to Stuart Hall (1997:1) culture is about 'shared meanings'. He explains that it isn't that much about tangible things like books, paintings, folk dances etc. but is rather a process or a set of practices.

"Culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings – the 'giving and taking of meaning' – between the members of a society or group. [...] Members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways" (ibid: 2, 4).

It is these meanings that define what 'normal' is, who belongs, and therefore, who is excluded (ibid: 10). Meanings are deeply inscribed in relations of power and often organised into sharply opposed binaries or opposites such as man/woman, gay/straight, rich/poor, black/white. As Hall (ibid: 10) explicates, "Our material interests and our bodies can be called to account, and differently implicated, depending on how meaning is given and taken, constructed and interpreted in different situations"

So if culture is shared meaning which requires an exchange among its member and is constantly interacting, there can be no final or fixed culture; every culture is continually evolving. For example, the lifestyles people have today are not the same as those of our parents and indeed very different from those of our grandparents. Notions of relationship and marriage, child rearing, career, etc. not only change over time, but even differing notions of these exist within a given culture at any given point in time, influenced by factors such as age, social class, gender, religion, etc.

Similarly, each relevant culture has a different way of interpreting gender and thereby a different set of regulations and guidelines that govern gender. However, in order to maintain power relations in society, it is the dominating interpretation of gender that gets enforced on all in a particular culture. For example, there is no single model of gender norms in Africa.

Among Aka pygmy in south western Central African Republic and northern Democratic Republic of the Congo, fathers spend 47 per cent of their day holding or within arms' reach of their infants. While holding their infants they are more likely than the mothers to hug and kiss the child. Fathers "who abandon the child" are regarded as the worst type of father by 40 per cent of female members of the society. Fathers who « do not provide enough food » were regarded as the bad quality as a father by only 11 per cent of female members.

Ref : Barry S. Hewlett, Intimate Fathers : The Nature and Context of Aka Pygmy Paternal Infant Care, University of Michigan Press, 1993.

The continent's diverse cultures have many different notions about the role of men and women, although the subordination of women takes place in most places. In European countries, for example, although women are by and large accepted as having careers and being experts in a multitude of fields, advertising continues to portray women within a household context, as a home maker and nurturer. So it is about preserving power relations between the majority and minorities, which a patriarchal culture ensures through the imposition of dominant gender norms in society.

Which gender categories become intelligible depends on cultural and historical contingencies. Thus, if "woman" is seen as a universal category and as the "other" of man, this possibly obscures differences within the category woman - differences based on race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexuality. To address this, Butler tackles the problems she sees with the sex-gender-desire link, which she terms the heterosexual matrix. The matrix "characterises a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality" (Butler 2007: 208). Therefore, the practices that have as their common denominator gender and create that stability are sex and desire. In other words, our sex (male, female) produces our gender (masculine, feminine) which is seen to cause our desire towards the opposite sex. This is seen as a kind of continuum. Sexuality is thus implanted onto the body, and, as a result, heterosexuality becomes a bodily practice.

"The heterosexualisation of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between 'feminine' and 'masculine,' where these are understood as expressive attributes of 'male' and 'female'" (Butler 2007: 24).

The binary opposition between the two sexes is important for maintaining this heterosexualisation, and also heterosexualisation expresses the so-called "expressive attributes". Identity requires a stable framework, which is provided by a categorical understanding of heterosexuality in which sex and gender are an oppositional synecdoche¹, to the extent that both can be cited separately, and still be used to circumscribe heterosexual practices, because, the use of one implies the other.

It should be noted that "gender can denote a unity of experience, of sex, of gender and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender – where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self – and desire – where desire is heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires" (Butler 2007, 31). This reveals how gender works, namely, by underscoring a causal effect between sex, gender, and desire. Men, following this theory, will desire their opposite, that is women; furthermore, a man will be masculine and a woman will be feminine. The heterosexual matrix is preserved by loyally sustaining fictitious effects of this naturalised binary framework. In other words, for heterosexuality to have power over sex and sexuality, gender identities are constantly performing a falsity, which becomes painfully clear when gender no longer appears to fit into the heterosexual matrix.

So what about those who do not fit into this heterosexual matrix? What about those who desire someone from the same sex (gay or lesbian), or identify with the other gender and desire the same sex (transvestites). What about drags or Hijras?

1 A figure of speech in which a part represents the whole, as in the expression "hired hands" for workmen or, less commonly, the whole represents a part, as in the use of the word "society" to mean high society. Closely related to metonymy—the replacement of a word by one closely related to the original. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/578435/synecdoche>

In *Undoing Gender* (2004), Butler offers a more recent reflection on the matrix. She clarifies that the matrix is more than just the opposition between masculine and feminine: “to assume that gender always and exclusively means the matrix of the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’ is precisely to miss the critical point that the production of that coherent binary is contingent, that it comes at a cost, and that those permutations of gender which do not fit the binary are as much a part of gender as its most normative instance” (Butler 2004: 42, my emphasis). Take the example of the Hijras in India. Hijras are usually biologically male, and not intersexed. Yet they undergo a castration procedure in order to become physically «non-sexed». Hijras determine their own castration and are assumed to experience physical alterations to their body. So, how are Hijras and other identities that do not fit the binary a part of gender? The subsequent section illustrates that the origins of gender lie in an incessant repetition of naturalised heterosexuality that places sex and gender in a binary opposition, and it is from within that binary opposition that we can see that gender is a performative action.

Performing Gender

“There is no ‘being’ behind doing, acting, becoming; the ‘doer’ is merely a fiction imposed on the doing – the doing itself is everything” –Friedrich Nietzsche (1887)

When Simone de Beauvoir poses her most famous question in *The Second Sex*, “What is a woman?”, she puts the categories of woman and man on the stand, and responds: “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (1973:301). So, to be is to become to being. For De Beauvoir, gender is constructed, “but implied in her formulation is an agent, a cogito, who somehow takes on or appropriates that gender and could, in principle, take on some other gender” (Butler, 1998:280).

Can “construction” thus be taken as a form of choice? De Beauvoir is clear that there is always a cultural compulsion to “become” a woman. And clearly, this compulsion does not come from “sex.” There is nothing in her account that guarantees that the “one” who becomes a woman is necessarily female (ibid). Butler explains that:

If one becomes one gender, one does it within a network of gender rules and relations. From the moment of birth, the body is culturally signified by a language and a set of institutions that immediately classify the infant as either male or female before even the bestowal of a proper name. Hence, the question to consider is what it might mean to become one’s gender within a cultural context in which one is not, really, free to become much of anything else? (Butler 1989, 257)

The Native American Illiniwek tribe in, Illinois, decided the gender of their members based on their childhood behaviour. If a child used a bow, it is a boy and if a child used a spade or axe, it is a girl. If a boy used “female” tools such as a spade or axe instead of a bow, then the child was considered “berdache”. ‘Berdache’ is a term used by Western anthropologist, today considered offensive, to call people who partially or completely take on the culturally defined role of the other sex and who are classified neither as men nor women, but as genders of their own in their respective cultures.

Ref :

- Delliette, Pierre, *Memoir of Pierre Liette on the Illinois Country [1702]. In The western country in the 17th century: the memoirs of Lamothe Cadillac and Pierre Liette*, edited by Milo Milton Quaife. Lakeside Press, Chicago, 1947.

- Lang, Sabin, *Mens as women, womens as men / changing gender in Native American Cultures*, University of Texas Press, 1998.

Allow me to briefly narrate part of a recent conversation with a female colleague to clarify this “compulsion to become,” and the corresponding lack of choice. During a recent training project, a colleague and I were talking about our childhood and realised that we were, as kids, both ‘tomboys’, climbing trees and getting into all kinds of trouble. She told me that, later, as a teenager, it was quite difficult for her to become feminine (a woman in her mid-thirties, today, one would hardly believe her to have been anything other than feminine even in her pre-teen years). If the compulsion to be feminine had come from “sex,” wouldn’t it then be something innate, come naturally to her as someone of the female sex? Her statement illustrates that, as she grew up, they appeared to be a need to conform to gender norms (being female equals femininity), a subtle pressure to become a woman, and that to do, she had to transform herself, and that as she clearly stated, was by no means an easy process.

Butler’s (1990: 25) theory of performativity posits that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results. Her notion of performativity postulates that your identity does not make you “do” or “perform”; it is your performance that makes up your identity. This means that my colleague’s identity as a woman was constituted through her repeated expressions of femininity. Gender is performative because it is constituted by repeated acts that have been going on before one arrived on the scene, acts that both precede the subject and constitute the very being of the subject (Butler, 1990). What heteronormativity needs in order to maintain power is the constant repetition of gender acts in the most mundane of daily activities (the way we walk, talk, gesticulate, etc.). The performativity of gender revolves around the notion that the “acts” of gender create the idea of gender while, in fact, the very anticipation of a gender transforms these acts into cultural significations that proclaim themselves to be an internal essence.

Take the classic example, the “I pronounce you man and wife” of the marriage ceremony. In making that statement, a person of authority changes the status of a couple within a community; those words actively change the existence of that couple by establishing a new marital reality: the words do what they say. As Butler (1993) explains, “Within speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names.” A speech act can produce that which it names, however, only by reference to the law (or the accepted norm, code or contract), which is cited or repeated (and thus performed) in the pronouncement. By performing norms through this repetitive citation, we make those norms, which are a product of discourse, appear to be natural and necessary. We make these discursive norms “real” to a certain extent, which, undeniably, has “real” implications for people. In Africa, for example, homosexuality is illegal for gay men in 29 countries and for lesbian women in 20 countries¹ - this reflects the widespread homophobia on the continent. South Africa, on the other hand, stands apart in this, and not only is homosexuality legal and visible in the country, there is also a national legislation banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It is, as such, not unheard of to find gay and lesbian office bearers in the country. So laws prohibiting homosexuality or discrimination based on sexual orientation are both products of two very different discourses, and it is our actions (that marginalise and oppress or accept and show respect) that make these discursive norms and laws to some extent “real.” Butler goes so far as to question the very distinction between the personal and the political or between the private and the public, and contends that it is itself a fiction designed to support an oppressive status quo: our most personal acts are, in fact, continually being scripted by and to maintain hegemonic social conventions and ideologies.

1 http://www.afrol.com/html/Categories/Gay/backgr_legalstatus.htm

Gender identity can thus be described as a stylised set of gestures performed on the body, incessantly repeated, and produced by a set of shared cultural values, which have no specific origin (Butler, 2007: 45). The gendered stylisation of the body does not express an essence, but a fabrication instead, as Butler says, “gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions” (Butler, 2007: 190). Her critique aims to overturn a normative understanding of gender in which anatomical differences are linked to specific desires and sexes. She tries to show the way in which the categories of sex and gender are intertwined and are effects of institutions and discourses.

Identity itself, according to Butler (1990), is an illusion retroactively created by our performance. Belief in stable identities and gender difference is compelled by “social sanction and taboo” so that our belief in “natural” behaviour is really the result of subtle and blatant pressure. One is thus a woman or a man to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame and if one contests this frame, one perhaps loses something of one’s sense of place in gender. This, for example, explains the anxiety suffered by some people in “becoming gay”, the fear of losing one’s place in gender or of not knowing who one will be if one sleeps with someone of the supposedly “same” gender. This becomes more acute in the light of transgenderism and transsexuality, lesbian and gay parenting, and butch and femme identities. When and why, for instance, do some butch lesbians who become parents become “dads” and others “mums”?

Butler argues that we all put on a gender performance, whether traditional/normative or not, so it is about what form that gender performance will take. If gender is performative, then “the transvestite’s gender is as fully real as anyone whose performance complies with social expectations” (Butler, 1990).

By choosing to be different about it, we might work to change gender norms and the binary understanding of masculinity and femininity.

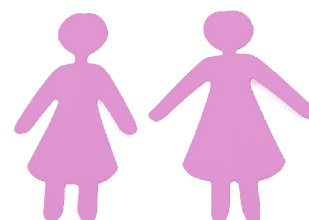
Although heterosexuality establishes itself as the original, it is in fact a copy of an imitation, which is itself a copy, for there is no origin. This does not mean, however, that subjects can take on every gender identity imaginable when they wake up in the morning. Gender is a performance but not one we actively do, in fact, it “is not a performance from which I can take radical distance, for this is deep-seated play, psychically entrenched play, and this ‘I’ does not play its lesbianism as a role. Rather, it is through the repeated play of this sexuality that the ‘I’ is insistently reconstituted as a lesbian ‘I’ (Butler, 1991: 18).

In particular, Butler (1990) concerns herself with those “gender acts” that similarly lead to material changes in one’s existence and even in one’s bodily self: “One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one’s body and, indeed, one does one’s body differently from one’s contemporaries and from one’s embodied predecessors and successors as well”. Her approach is therefore to break down supposed links of the heterosexual matrix, so that gender and desire (like other aspects of one’s identity) are flexible, free-floating and not ‘caused’ by other stable factors.

Our task is therefore to question and contest the very definition of gender and the conventional notions of gender identity in order to fight for the rights of the marginalised and to build a more respectful society for those identifying themselves outside of the heterosexual norm. We must question the norm that a person is male or female, masculine or feminine. If we accept, as Butler maintains, that gender is not a given and a set of performances, how do we account for the term homosexual? Take the definition of the term: "Of, relating to, or characterised by a tendency to direct sexual desire toward another of the same sex."¹ Is sex purely the biological or could it be the behavioural or cultural aspects of the person? The Merriam Webster Dictionary describes gender as "the feminine gender" and "the behavioural, cultural or psychological traits typically associated with one sex". So then if we are defining a homosexual as someone who is attracted to a person of the same gender, or even if the lines between gender and sex are slightly blurred, and gender is destabilised, we need to give up categorisation of sexualities, or at least to re-evaluate those categorisations. Heterosexual and homosexual lose meaning as two distinct categorisations when we question the binary opposites -male/female, masculine/feminine. Instead, if we look at sexuality as a continuum, it may not solve all problems connected to non-normative sexualities in society (e.g. homophobic bullying), but possibly the promotion of a more open view of sexuality and sexual identity through varied means could help loosen strict definitions and thus assist those living on the sexual margins.

As Butler (2004: 226) argues, "To live is to live a life politically, in relation to power, in relation to others, in the act of assuming responsibility for a collective future". We must thus question our own politics? How do we conceptualise the possibility of a livable life? How do we arrange institutional support to ensure that this is possible? And ultimately, we are left with more questions than we started out. Indeed, this is the first step to challenging the status quo of societal power relations, to contesting the subversion of gendered roles and to being more inclusive to the marginalised.

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/homosexual>



III. One is not merely a woman!



In June 2010, the internationally renowned philosopher and gender-theorist, Judith Butler, refused the Civil Courage Prize at the Christopher Street Day (CSD) in Berlin and criticised the organisers for losing sight of double discrimination, and not distancing themselves from racist statements. She said

[T]he CSD is linked with several groups and individuals who engage in a very strong anti-immigrant discourse, referring to people from north Africa, Turkey, and various Arab countries as less modern or more primitive. Although we can find homophobia in many places, including those of religious and racial minorities, we would be making a very serious error if we tried to fight homophobia by propagating stereotypical and debasing constructions of other minorities. My view is that the struggle against homophobia must be linked with the struggle against racism, and that subjugated minorities have to find ways of working in coalition. (AVIVA email interview with Butler 09.07.2010)¹

By rejecting the Civil Courage Prize, Butler brings to our attention that we cannot fight one type of discrimination and disregard other kinds of discrimination. She argues that:

[I]f we fight for the rights of gay people to walk the street freely, we have to realize first that some significant number of those people are also in jeopardy because of anti-immigrant violence - this is what we call «double jeopardy» in English. Secondly, we have to consider that if we object to the illegitimate and subjugating use of violence against one community, we cannot condone it in relation to another! In this way, the queer movement has to be committed to social equality, and to pursuing freedom under conditions of social equality. (ibid)

What Butler refers to as “double jeopardy” is the concept of intersectionality (as it is called in Germany), according to which, people are simultaneously positioned within social categories such as gender, social class, sexuality and ‘race’¹ (Crenshaw, 1989, 139-167)

In 2004, the Chiang Mai Technology School in Thailand allocated a separate restroom for kathoey, with an intertwined male and female symbol on the door. Pakistan has granted legal status for Hijra to acknowledge their distinct identity and gender. Iftikhar Chaudhry, chief justice of Pakistan, also ordered the government to take measures to ensure their rights are protected.

Ref :

«Transvestites Get Their Own School Bathroom», Associated Press, June 22, 2004.

<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINTRE5-BM2BX20091223>.

Thereby, an Asian Muslim lesbian from a working class background, for example, is exposed to discrimination on grounds of her religion, class, gender and ethnicity. These social categories are intersecting spheres in which domination occurs, and therefore any one category cannot alone be seen or addressed as the reason for her discrimination.

¹ For the entire interview, see http://www.aviva-berlin.de/aviva/content_Interviews.php?id=1427323

¹ When I refer to ‘race’, I mean, just like gender, a social construct without any genetic or biological fundament.

So if one “is” a woman, then that is surely not all one is, for gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.

Intersectionality serves to analyse the production of power and processes between categories such as gender, race, ethnicity etc. It allows us to question “unmarked” positions such as “whiteness” and “masculinity” as well as of “marked” positions such as “blackness” and “femininity” (Phoenix, 2008:19), making it possible for us to “trace how some people or groups of people get positioned as not only different but also troublesome and are, in some instances, marginalised” (Staunæs, 2003a, 101). As Lawrence Grossberg (1996: 90) points out, quoting Michele Wallace, “the thing that needed to be said – women are not to be trusted just because they’re women, anymore than blacks are to be trusted because they’re black, or gays because they’re gay and so on.”

For a comprehensive understanding of any social category, an analysis of differences as well as commonalities within groups is necessary. Feminist researchers have depicted how the opportunities available to women and their experiences differ on the basis of their race, ethnicity, sexuality and social class – i.e. gender and sexuality are class-based and racialised social relations. (cf. Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Brah, 1996; Lewis, 2000). Race, gender and class are not distinct and isolated realms of experience (Anne McClintock, 1995), they come into existence in and through contradictory and conflicting relations to each other. The intersection of race, gender and class is subjectively lived; it is part of social structure and involves differential (and sometimes discriminatory) treatment (Lewis, 2000 & Dill, 1993).

As we have already seen, gender refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women ascribed to them on the basis of their sex. Gender roles depend therefore on a particular socio-economic, political and cultural context [...] (cf. Charlesworth & Chinkin, 2000:3-4). The practices and representations around gender are not the product of difference by themselves; they arise in social relations that include those of class and race/ethnicity (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1996). Thus “black” women realise already as children that they are different from boys and that they are treated differently – “for example, when we are told in the same breath to be quiet for the sake of being “ladylike” and to make us less objectionable in the eyes of white people” (Hall et al, 1982: 15). Thus a combined antiracist and antisexist position first drew black feminist together, and as they developed politically, they addressed the issues of heterosexuality and economic oppression under capitalism.

It is therefore also the recognition that race, social class and sexuality result in different experiences for women which, in fact, disrupted the notion of a unified category ‘woman’ and its assumptions of universality which served to maintain the status quo in relation to race, social class and sexuality, while challenging gendered assumptions (Brah & Phoenix, 2004). Black women have to struggle together with black men against racism and struggle against black men on sexism (Hall et al, 1982: 16). Liberation from oppression requires for them the destruction of the political-economic system of capitalism and imperialism, as well as patriarchy. Through the intersectionality approach, it becomes clear that all categories are linked to power relations and therefore cannot be neutral (Brah and Phoenix, 2004).

Class relations describe exclusions and subordination with the objective of economic exploitation. Class relations are legitimised through seeing the people or groups of people involved as incapable of seizing opportunities due to low intelligence, more lassitude, incompetence or deprivation (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1996). These assigned characteristics display the simultaneous positioning of the people involved in the identity categories of class, race/ethnicity and gender. Differing access to jobs and housing, the very act of discrimination - is thus reproduced through their race and gender identity. Once in a lower economic class, their experiences of poverty are constantly shaped by race and gender structures.

In the case of racialised or ethnic groups, there is an assumption about the natural boundaries of collectivities or the naturalness of culture (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1996:18).

When trying to dissuade Republican Party to push for the rights of Black men, detrimental of these of White women at the political situation of the time, Susan B. Anthony, a key person among the women who fought for the women's suffrage in the 19th century once said, "While the dominant party [Republican Party] have with one hand lifted up two million black men and crowned them with the honor and dignity of citizenship...with the other they have dethroned fifteen million white women...and cast them under the heel of the lowest orders of manhood". It is difficult to image that she could have spoken from the same perspective as that of black women.

Ref : Sterling, Dorothy, We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19th century, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1984, p.66.

The same 'natural' relation applies to gender, whereby for gender, necessary social effects are posited to sexual difference and biological reproduction. This alleged 'natural' difference in abilities and needs, based on gender or ethnicity, serves to legitimise inequality in class processes which come to the forefront in economic relations. In this way, class also plays a role in the racialisation of particular social or ethnic groups as well as in the specific content of ideological discourses of sexual difference. The increasing racialisation of so-called "Third World" migrant labour in recent international labour migration is one such example. The ease and rapidity of the process of racialisation is also evident through the experience of guest workers in Europe and the new forms of migration from East Europe (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1996:18).

Whilst the intersection of race, gender, and class comprise the foremost structural elements of the experience of many, there are other sites where structures of power intersect. The status of immigrants, for example, renders them vulnerable in ways that are similarly coercive but at the same time not reducible to just economic class. Intersectionality does not simply mean a further segmentation of the master categories race, class and gender, meaning it is not about locating "several identities under one" (Yuval-Davis 2006: 201/205), rather it is about theorising more than one difference at once (Grossberg, 1996: 90) and postulating the possibility of questioning the homogeneity of any group, with, as backdrop, a basic scepticism vis-à-vis any form of categorisation which is considered to depict reality only in a reductionist form.

A large number of intergroup experiments carried out since the early 1970s shows the ease with which discrimination against the outgroup results by the simple act of categorising people into groups (see Tajfel, 1970).

Tajfel and Turner (1979:40) asserted that not only do social categorisations systematise the social world, they also provide a system of orientation for self-reference: they create and define the individual's place in society. They define categories as "cognitive tools that segment, classify and order the social environment" (ibid), and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action. And, although important information regarding individual differences within a category may be lost (Tajfel, 1982), the complex social environment must be reduced to manageable units. Hall (1997:3) calls them "cultural meanings" which "organise and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects". As previously discussed, culture can be understood as "shared meanings" (Hall, 1997:1) and thus also gender, as a social and cultural category, comprises "cultural meanings" that govern our behaviour and actions.

The loss of individual difference and the inescapability of demarcations and the exclusions these results in are the main criticisms against categorisations. Important for anti-discrimination work is that those experiences of discrimination which are not foremost in the focus of master categories, can be articulated (Crenshaw 1994, 1997), and respectively that they do not just reinforce antinomies, but also point out mutually conflicting effects of inequality. As such, the "structural characteristics" of patriarchal culture, national constitution and capitalist economic situation should not be conceived as singular, rather in their "structural context" (Knapp 2005:77). It is, as Dietze et al (2007:10) rightly formulate about "disadvantaged categories", which describe less the complex mechanisms of social organisation than the ascribed "real" or imagined characteristics and their associated prejudices. Prejudicial knowledge, racist or sexist, does not pertain to the ethical or logical reflectiveness and is as Bernard Williams (1985: 116) describes it, "a belief guarded against reflection". Studying

the complexities that arise through the interlocking of different axes of differentiation allows a more complex and dynamic understanding of the functioning of discrimination. It simultaneously demonstrates the importance of examining the structures and systems of society which produce, reproduce and reify ascribed characteristics of certain people or groups of people.

The concept of intersectionality thus seeks to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy and economic disadvantage and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structure the relative positions of women and men, ethnic and other groups.



IV. Conclusion

"Strictly speaking, 'women' cannot be said to exist."

-Julia Kristeva (1981)

In her essay "First Things First. Problems of A feminist Approach to African Literature," Kirsten Holst Peterson (2003:251) describes her experience at a conference on 'The Role of Women in Africa' in Mainz, Germany, in 1981. On the last day of the conference, a group of young German feminists who were invited to participate dismissed the professor who had until then chaired the session, installed a very articulate student as chairwoman, and proceeded to turn the meeting into a series of personal statements and comment in the tradition of feminist movement meetings. Among other things, the discussions centred on their relationship to their mothers, in terms of whether they should raise their mothers' consciousness and teach them to object to their fathers or whether they should best leave them alone. The African women who listened at first told their German sisters how inexplicably close they felt to their mothers/daughters, and how neither group would dream of making a decision of importance without first consulting the other group. They were basically talking at cross-purposes. There were two very different voices shouting out their opinions. The example effectively displays that universal sisterhood is neither a given biological condition nor is it perhaps a goal to strive for. As Peterson (ibid: 251-252) explicates, there was an important area of difference in the discussion: whereas Western feminists focused on the relative importance of feminist versus class emancipation,

the Africans were concerned with feminist emancipation and the fight against neo-colonialism, particularly in its cultural aspect. Such feminist theorising has been strongly criticised for "its efforts to colonise and appropriate non-western cultures to support highly western notions of oppression, but also because they tend to construct a 'Third World' or even an 'Orient' in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-western barbarism" (Butler, 1999:6). Even though the claim of universal patriarchy is no longer considered credible, the notion of a unified and universal concept of "women" has been more difficult to displace.

Much feminine discourse is characterised by the assumption that women are characterised as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression. This means that, essentially, what binds women is a socially constructed notion of the "sameness" of their oppression. By doing so, one overlooks the fact of historically specific reality experienced by groups of women, and leaves behind the assumption of women as an always-already constituted group, one which has been labelled powerless, exploited, sexually harassed etc. by feminist scientific, economic, legal and sociological discourses (Mohanty, 2003: 262). The attempt should rather be on discovering the material and ideological specificities that constitute a particular group of women as "powerless" in a particular context. Furthermore, if there is no commonality among "women" that pre-exists their oppression and "women" have a bond by virtue of their oppression alone, then their being or performing "women" is a political act or representation.

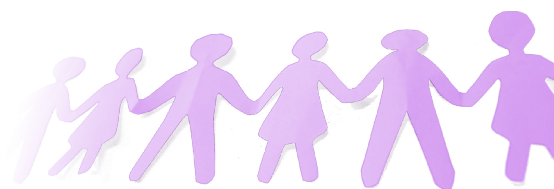
Male violence must therefore also be interpreted within specific societies in order to understand it and to make effective change possible. Likewise, sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender and should be formed in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis.

Unless this is done, women will continue to be constituted as a group dependent on men, who are implicitly held responsible for these relationships. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003: 262) explains, “when ‘women in Africa’ are seen as a group (versus ‘men in Africa’) precisely because they are generally dependent and oppressed, the analysis of specific historical differences becomes impossible, because reality is always apparently structured by divisions — two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive groups, the victims and the oppressors. Here the sociological is substituted for the biological in order, however, to create the same—a unity of women.” As a consequence, one also overlooks the fact that discrimination of women may be based on a variety of socially constructed identity characteristics which include class, race/ethnicity, religion, age, etc. and does not solely depend on her gender. Butler argues that categorising all women into a unified group separate from men has actually been detrimental to calls for equality, for if men and women are seen as fundamentally different and separate then true equality is impossible. If, however, we subscribe to the intersectionality approach, we will be able look at the “effects” of kinship structures, colonialism, organisation of labour, etc. on women who have already been defined as a group apparently because of shared dependencies, but ultimately because of their gender.

The question we need to ask is whether “unity” is necessary for political action or change? In *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004:227) cites Gloria Anzaldua who posits that for social transformation one must get beyond a “unitary” subject, for without

the compulsory expectation of unity, individuals or small groups might be able to make progress and achieve things on a smaller scale. Similarly, Butler claims that the way we perceive gender roles lies at the very root of inequality of the sexes. If we deconstruct the way society views gender roles, according to her, this might lead to changes in political culture and thus improve a lot for women. In other words, if there were no longer conventional roles for either gender, it would not be unusual for a woman to be in a position of power at work or for a man to stay at home and look after children. Gradually, the patriarchal society which exists would change to become an equal one. This means, as Butler (2004: 216) reminds us, that “it is important not only to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalised and established as presuppositional but to trace the moment where the binary system of gender is disputed and challenged, where the coherence between the categories are questioned, and where the very social life of gender turns out to be malleable and transformable”.

How does this relate to gender sensitivity in international voluntary work? Through this manual, we seek to provide you as readers, multipliers and promoters of gender sensitivity the possibility of reflecting on the complexity and problematic of gender and other social categorisations in order to open up the field of possibility to all who have so far been marginalised. In order to assist all members of society – whether women, the physically challenged, gays and lesbians, the underprivileged etc. – to reach their full potential, it is important for each one of us to examine gender norms within their relevant cultural context, and seek to understand how these norms shape the expectations, choices, ambitions and capacities of people.



To do so, it is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how discrimination functions, which can only be achieved by taking into account other identity categories that intersect with gender when discrimination occurs. Most importantly, as active players in international voluntary service, it is imperative that the general reflection on gender norms is linked to a reflection on the (extent of) participation (and/or exclusion) of young people in IVS. Likewise, a critical reflection and analysis of one's interaction with members of the respective local community is of tremendous importance. This should lead one to understand one's positioning vis-à-vis dominant norms in one's own society. As Butler states, it is only when we understand the extent to which the assumed naturalness of binary gender is actually an effect of powerful discourse, do we realise that we cannot extricate ourselves from the very gender relations that we criticise. But what one can do, as part of a critical practice, is to analyse our motives and our politics and be committed to assisting others in this process.



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PART II : Tools in Practise



I. Introduction

What significance does the theoretical deliberations presented in Part I of this manual have for gender training practice? How can trainings be designed such that they move beyond bifurcations and ascriptions, and achieve a more flexible, descriptive notion of gender which is more inclusive of those who have so far been marginalised?

This manual and the methods provided seek to address not just the category of gender, but also the diverse relationships and intersections of oppression. Such an integrative approach, which presents an overview of the different forms of discrimination, also allies with new gender theories (Frey, 2002:76). Although there are a number of Gender-Trainings in the “market” for specialised training programmes, they rarely take into account the intersecting of other categories such as background, class, religion or age with gender when discrimination happens (ibid). An integrative approach which grasps diverse forms of discrimination does not merely justify a debate which has, since a long time, discussed and analysed feminist gender theory, it also concerns itself with the meaning and the significance of the category gender, since the term gender still continues to be taken as self-evident today.

A gender sensitising approach is one that (re)examines gender in order to critically reflect on and challenge gender concepts and gender relationships as a product of societal power relations. The examination of power and hierarchies is a crucial starting point for questioning gender hierarchies, as it serves to clarify how we ourselves are implicated in these very power relations (either as oppressed or oppressor, and sometimes, depending on the context, both)

that we question. The training methods suggested in this section foster an analysis of one’s own behaviour, feelings and personal strategies, so that gender-specific, stereotypical-role behaviour can be recognised and critically reflected upon. A reflection of “internal” and “external” barriers that prevent one from changing one’s outlook on life should lead to questions such as: what do these limits have to do with gender identity, with “being a woman”? Reflection on these will inevitably lead to a discussion on how societal structures and socially and culturally conditioned expectations shape individual behaviour and attitudes. The awareness of internalised gender norms is possible through an examination of gender norms in one’s environment and one’s positioning vis-à-vis these norms. Role plays or other exercises could unleash feelings of anger or aggression. A deeper reflection could, for example, often demonstrate that women have internalised the fact that they should have no negative feelings. They, therefore, do not direct their aggression and anger onto the outside, the external, but rather to the inside, to themselves. Unspoken norms must also be challenged by questioning social and cultural constructions, by alluding to inherent valuations and devaluations, and by creating a space for learning that encourages participants to first evaluate their own position before they reflect on that of others.

How do I behave as a woman or man? What does it do to me? Who ascribes these roles to me? How do I adopt these roles? What do we do with women or men who do not conform to these roles? These are some vital issues that should be focused on in a gender sensitising approach and which will lead to challenging restrictive norms and existing power structures in society.

II. Using the tools

This manual is conceptualised for volunteers, staff members, youth workers – basically all those active in international voluntary service and interested in introducing a gender sensitive approach to their projects or work environments. The manual is meant to provide an impetus and ideas for exploring the theme of gender, and at the same time, addressing other types of discrimination in order to promote a just and equal society for all. The exercises provided in the subsequent section draw on interactive group processes to address the issues of individual and group identity, stereotypes and prejudices, gender and norms, as well as gender-based and other discriminations.

The training process developed here is based on an Anti-Bias Approach. Certain exercises have been adapted from the Anti-Bias toolkit put together by the Anti-Bias Werkstatt¹ in Berlin and the handbook “Shifting Paradigms. Using an anti-bias strategy to challenge oppression and assist transformation in the South African context” (Early Learning Resource Unit, South Africa, 1997). Anti-Bias is seen today as one of the most extensive and innovative approaches within the anti-discriminatory field of education. The concept was developed in the beginning of the 1980s by Louise Derman-Sparks and Carol Brunson-Philips in the USA, where it was mainly used in the field of elementary and primary education. It underwent intensive development after the end of the Apartheid system in South Africa, where it was adapted for youth and adult education. In 1989, the approach reached Germany via an exchange of South African and German experts organised by INKOTA e. V., Berlin.

Today, Anti-Bias is used in Germany in elementary education and in schools as well as in the field of adult education. “Bias” means prejudice and as such it is the aim of Anti-Bias to address inequalities and gradually reduce discrimination in society. The approach assumes that everyone has prejudices. This is because prejudices and discriminations are not seen as individual misjudgements, but institutionalised in society as discourses and ideologies, which are learned by individuals. Correspondingly, behaviour based on those prejudices can be un-learned, and institutionalised oppressive ideologies can be discovered, questioned, and analysed. Anti-Bias is seen not as a self-contained approach with only specific anti-bias methods, but as a fundamental attitude and a life-long process. As such, relevant methods from the Compass – A Manual on Human Rights Education with Youth People (Council of Europe, 3rd Edition, 2007)², and other methodologies and approaches have also been included in this manual.

In order to achieve a more comprehensive view of the gender issues at stake, the exercises suggested in the following section should be supplemented with theoretical input as and when required. Thorough debriefing sessions following every exercise are, of course, vital to critical reflection and to understanding gender norms and related biases, inherent discriminations and exclusions, but are not wholly sufficient by themselves. The facilitator should be well-versed with Part I of this manual which provides a theoretical background of the various aspects related to gender, discrimination and exclusion.

¹ See *Anti-Bias-Werkstatt*. See <http://www.anti-bias-werkstatt.de/index.html>

² For online publication see <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/>

III. Process of the Gender Trainings

Described below is a standard format of a gender sensitising training. The duration and focus of the training, as well as the make up of participants will determine which topics are addressed more prominently than others. Nevertheless, it is importance to follow this general process to ensure an enriching experience and valuable learning process for participants and facilitators. An explanation of the steps involved in each phase and their significance has also been provided below.

Phase I: Introduction

Greetings and introductions
Expectations
Programme presentation /
Aims of the training
Agreement on rules
Background Information about
methods and approach
Group Building

Phase IV: Gender Discrimination

Exercise: Experiencing Gender
Discrimination
Exercise: The Cards Are Reshuffled /
Power flower / Take A Step Forward
Input: Model of Discrimination
Exercise: Front Page – Gender Newspaper /
Let's talk about sex!
Final theoretical input

Phase II: Identity

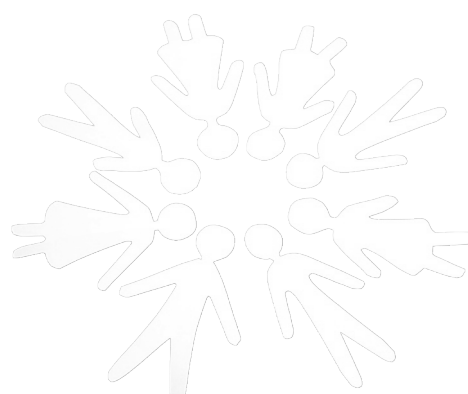
Exercise: Talking Wheel
Exercise: Identity Molecules
Exercise: Heroines and Heroes
Agreement on rules
Interactive presentation:
Iceberg of Diversity

Phase V: Closing the seminar

Clarify open themes
Refer to expectations
Go through the programme and
its step-by-step process
Final Feedback round
Evaluation

Phase III: Gender Norms

Plenary session: What is a woman?
Exercise: How do we become men
or women?
Input: Clarification of the terms
gender and sex
Exercise: Norms & Me
Method: Norms in my Environment
Input: Norms and Gender Norms



An in-depth look at the process

Phase I:

The introduction session is the first building block of the training and essential for initiating an icebreaking and group building process, which, in turn, will result in a confiding and trusting atmosphere that fosters exchange and sharing of experiences among participants. This session entails not just a welcome and introduction of facilitators, participants and host organisation(s) but is also meant to gather general expectations of participants, which will influence the general process of the training and/or individual sessions that have been previously prepared. In order to cross-check whether expectations match the programme presented, it is important to present a 'draft' programme of the training. The programme remains a 'draft' until the end, as it may need to be modified based on issues that (may) crop up during any phase of the training. This session is also meant to set the basic requirements for a mutually viable learning experience for all. This means that a joint agreement on ground rules (e.g. punctuality, not judging others' opinions, active listening, respectful interaction, etc.) should precede the commencement of the thematic phases of the training. Information about the aims of the programme, and if relevant, background information about a particular approach or methodology that will be used should be provided during this phase (e.g. depending on the context and make up of participants, it may be necessary to start by explaining what is training?). Methods for Phase I have not been provided in this manual. In particular, the two sessions, *Group building* and *Expectations* require simple exercises, which can be found, for example, on the Salto Youth website. <http://www.salto-youth.net/>

Phase II:

The second phase initiates a process of "re-discovering ourselves" before we proceed to learn about others. It is only when we understand how our perceptions are influenced by our respective cultural and social backgrounds that can we begin to understand others and our own behaviour vis-à-vis others. The session on identity allows one to learn more about one's own social identity, one's social and cultural background and that of others; it enables one to experience identity not as a static, fixed fact, but rather as a dynamic, evolving mosaic. The linking of identity to group memberships allows us to recognise inherent demarcations and inter-group barriers and experience how ascriptions connected with group belongings can induce prejudices and discrimination. More specifically, Talking Wheel is an exercise that works as an introduction to the main themes of gender, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, and is at the same time, a group building exercise that allows participants to experience different opinions and attitudes as well as similarities within the group. Identity molecules clarifies how identity is socially and culturally constituted through group belongings, the strength and unity that groups provide and how belonging to certain groups is devalued and becomes the grounds for prejudice and discrimination. Heroines and Heroes allows us to focus on stereotypical images of men and women in society and how gender stereotypes are learnt over time, through culture, history and in daily life. The Iceberg Model of Diversity can be used as an interactive presentation which helps understand that we often make judgements about people based on that what we can see (physical attributes, skin colour, age, clothing, etc.), but all those attributes that are hidden actually form the core of any human being (at the same time, a reference to identity molecules will clarify that even this 'core' of a person is constantly changing in respect of his/her life experiences). The Iceberg brings Phase II to a close, by clarifying that, in contrast to the stereotypes that are readily available and which we easily learn, it is on a deeper exploration and understanding of any individual that we should base our interaction.

Phase III:

This phase focuses on gender norms and exploring prevailing gender concepts in society. To start off this session, it is necessary first to gain participants' insights on who is a woman, who is a man or what is gender. These inputs should be written down (by the facilitator) in keywords on a flipchart. Based on the points collected, the facilitator should subsequently address contradictions and ambiguous statements by posing questions, ideas, notions and positioning toward gender. The idea behind this session is to already disturb socially constituted gender norms. The flipcharts should be preserved until the end of the training and can be referred to in the final part of the session on gender discrimination. How do we become men or women? serves to demonstrate how gender is socially and culturally constructed and is a reflection on how we are taught or learn through our environment (even though we may or may not be expressly told to do so) to dress, walk, sit, talk, use makeup or not, shave certain body parts or not, etc. Bringing these unvoiced norms to the forefront serves to highlight the (problematic) relation between gender and physicality. This exercise should be followed by a brief presentation of the terms "gender" and "sex". Please see "Gender/Sex – An Introduction" in Part I of this booklet (pages 8 – 9) in order to prepare and explain the problems related to these terms. Norms & Me! allows us to explore norms that shape one and to reflect on one's own positioning vis-à-vis norms. In Norms in my Environment, participants reflect upon the gender norms in their immediate environment. The last two exercises focusing specifically on norms take on an added dimension in a intercultural setting: they clarify that, contrary to our stereotypical knowledge, when we examine the most basic possibilities and norms that shape each us, despite minor differences, most of us are positioned more or less similarly in relation to gender norms. This phase should end with a clarification of what are norms and gender norms, what purposes they serve and how they serve to curtail the freedom and basic right of many people. The section on Norms and Gender Norms (pages 13-14) in the Chapter II on Questioning Gender Concept should be used to prepare this input.

Phase IV:

Here we start with a reflection on one's very first experience of gender discrimination in order to reflect concretely on how gender norms, sometimes specifically stated, often unspoken, hinder you from doing certain things and achieving certain tasks or even goals. It is also about brainstorming on how such obstacles could be surmounted. The subsequent exercise (three options have been provided: *The Cards are Reshuffled*, *Power Flower* or *Take A Step Forward*) thematises the subject of power and privileges in society and how the maintenance of these requires exclusions and discriminations. These exercises refer to discrimination and exclusion based not just on gender but other societal categorisations as well. Including one of these exercises in the process of your gender-training is just as significant as doing an exercise focused on gender discrimination. A reading of the chapter "One is not merely a Woman!" (pages 22 - 23) will not only serve to assist the debriefing session by making it possible to link each of these exercises to gender but also aid the preparation of the input on discrimination. The model of discrimination highlights how discrimination functions at a societal and global level, and also makes it possible to explain the intersecting of social categories when discrimination occurs. It will allow participants to recognise the discriminatory consequences of prejudices and the effect of (unjust) prevailing systems and structures in society. The presentation of the model could be interactive and this will provide fresh input for the facilitator and ensure the attention and active involvement of the participants.

For the subsequent step, two options have once again been provided: *Front Page – Gender Newspaper* or *Let's Talk About Sex!* The latter exercise, which explores attitudes to sexuality including homophobia, should only be attempted if one is confident and knowledgeable about issues related to homosexuality. The description of the exercise, provided in the following section, lists further references that should be read before it is used. Furthermore, it is most important that it is used only when one is certain that participants are receptive to the aims and objectives of the exercise.

If, for example, you are in a country which has legally banned homosexuality, it may be prudent to avoid this exercise. Front Page offers participants the opportunity to envision a gender equitable representation.

They are asked to prepare the front page of a gender newspaper after carefully considering all the various gender related issues in their country or the countries represented in the group. From all the stories and issues discussed in their groups, their task is to carefully select a few that will feature on the Front Page. This exercise can be seen as a first step towards taking individual responsibility and the development of possibilities to change dominant systems and structures in society. The presentation of the various front pages will make it possible for the facilitator to understand the extent of sensitisation the participants have achieved so far.

The Final Input is vital in putting the final pieces of the puzzle together. A presentation of Butler's heterosexual matrix will serve to depict how "man" and "woman," "feminine" and "masculine" are restricting concepts and do not comply with the needs and desires of a multitude of individuals. However, it is not just The Normative Matrix of Heterosexuality (pages 16 - 17) that you should be familiar with, the entire chapter Questioning Gender Concepts (pages 12 - 21) is relevant and should be read to prepare the final input. During the presentation, go back and refer to the participants' inputs (e.g. what is a woman, what is a man and what is gender) and reintroduce them to the current discussion. Finally, to ensure that participants are clear about concepts and understand the interlinking of sexuality and gender and its relevance to their own work, the closing questions given above should be put to the participants. These questions can and should be amended based on the make up of the group, the context and setting, and the overall focus of the training.

Phase V:

Just as the opening phase is extremely relevant to any training, so is the closing, which entails an explanation of those issues that may yet be unclear or "open" for participants; it means going through the expectations initially voiced by the participants and having them consider whether these have, in the meantime, been fulfilled. It also requires going through and describing each phase of the programme as experienced by participants in order bring together the different aspects of the training and for them to understand the process underlining the training. Sufficient time should be planned for the final feedback round as it is the participants' final (official) opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions about the training and the group, simultaneously allowing them to reflect upon their individual learning process. A written evaluation can be undertaken by way of a structured, open-ended questionnaires or one that requires participants to write concrete feedback (constructive criticism) on flipcharts which are put up around the room (each flipchart specifies one topic dealt with at the training). Participants work individually and silently writing their comments and feedback but can communicate with each other via their comments on the flipcharts. It is recommended that a written evaluation be followed or preceded by a symbolic evaluation exercise which has the entire group work together again.

The step-by-step and detailed explanation of the various phrases of the training provided above serve to emphasise the absolute importance of following such a training process so as to ensure a smooth and valuable learning experience for participants and facilitators alike.

IV. Practical Tools

1. The Talking Wheel - Keywords: Group building & introduction to the topic

Introduction:

The Talking Wheel is a well-known exercise also referred to as concentric circles or carousel. It comprises participants standing into two circles that face each other and has participants move with every question they are asked to discuss (thereby switching partners each time). This allows them to acquaint themselves with the various opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the other participants and also to reflect on their own opinion. One is often surprised to find that two people from very different cultures or countries have more in common with each other than two people from the same country. This is may be due to similarities and difference in relation to backgrounds, social class, interests, political beliefs, profession, etc. It is therefore important to recognize and see the influences that create a personal culture at a very individual level.

Aims:

1. Learning to listen
2. Introduction to the theme
3. Getting acquainted with different social and cultural identities and beliefs
4. Group building
5. Becoming aware of your own prejudices
6. Confronted with opinions that are different from your own
7. A chance to reflect on your own position and opinion

Time: 45 minutes – 1 hour (depending on the number of questions asked)

Material: List of questions, stop watch

Group size: 8 - 26

Instructions:

- Introduce the exercise to the participants as one about finding out about each other. Ask the participants to form two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle.
- Explain that the trainer will read out questions or statements about which they should talk to their partner. They have one minute per question per person.
- When the one-minute is over, the other partner will have the chance to talk on the same subject for one minute. Only one person and circle talks at one time. If participants of the inner circle talks first, then with the next question, those in the outer circle that will begin first. The alternating of people and the circle that speaks first continues until all the questions have been asked and answered.
- After every question, the outer circle will move one step to the right, resulting in a change of partners. The exercise comes to an end when all the questions have been read out by the trainer and each participant has spoken for one minute or when the first two partners stand before each other again, i.e. the round is complete.
- The participants should be informed that they are not speak, question or interrupt their partner during his/her one-minute-talking time. They will have their one-minute immediately after.
- The participants should also be told that they could decide not to answer a particular question.

1. The Talking Wheel - Keywords: Group building & introduction to the topic

Questions to be read out during the exercise:

These are some questions that can be used. You can add your own depending on the participants and the theme of the training. If you have 16 participants, then select at least 8 questions so that the wheel does one entire round. Based on the specific theme of the training, add further relevant questions for example on gender, interculturality, international voluntary service, prejudices, discrimination etc..

1. What is your name? First and last. What does it mean? Do you like it? Why? Why not?
2. Talk about your positive characteristics. What do you like about yourself?
3. What qualities do you dislike in other people?
4. Describe a situation in which a person's words hurt you deeply.
5. Mention a prejudice you have? Why do you have it? Where does it come from? When do you think you learnt this prejudice?
6. Tell your partner about an ethnic, cultural or religious group (other than your own) which you admire, respect or like. Why?
7. Tell your partner about an ethnic, cultural or religious group (other than your own) which you dislike. Why?
8. What do you understand by intercultural learning?
9. What do you find exciting about working in a multicultural setting?
10. What motivates you to work in the field of international voluntary service?
11. What do you understand by the term 'gender'?
12. Describe a situation in which you witnessed discrimination. How did you react?
13. How many languages do you speak and how much do you understand?
14. Men should also get parental leave.
15. Describe a wonderful experience you recently had?

Debriefing:

1. How did it feel to exchange such personal information each time with a new partner?
2. What did your partners do to give you the feeling that they were listening to you?
3. Was anything said that was new or surprised you?
4. Were some questions more difficult than others? Which ones? Why?
5. What questions were you happy to answer?
6. Did you learn anything new about yourself?
7. How was it to listen for an entire minute without interrupting? Did you wish to interrupt?
8. How was it to speak without interruption from your partner?
9. Did you notice the similarities or things you have in common (in this group) although you do not come from the same country?
10. How was it to talk about your prejudices? How often do we think about our prejudices? Do we even know that we have them?
11. Why did we do this exercise? / What is the purpose of this exercise?

Tips for facilitators:

The evaluation of this exercise should focus on the information that was conveyed, the feelings and experience of discussing such information, and the personal qualities and methods used during the short monologues. Talking Wheel allows participants to get to know one another, become acquainted with different social and cultural identities and beliefs, think about and possibly reflect on one's own opinions, and learn to listen effectively and actively. The reflection session and the debriefing questions asked should cover some of these issues.

Source: *Eine Welt der Vielfalt Berlin e.V.* www.ewdv-berlin.de

Introduction:

Identity is created from several interacting categories, forces and social factors. These are fluid and what people identify with can change over time, space and circumstances. It is therefore important to recognise the fluidity of identity and realise that the intensity of one's identification with certain categories will change possibly over a shorter but most definitely over a longer period of time. Identity Molecules aims also to bring out the similarities and differences that exist within a group and also among people in general (irrespective of where they come from). It allows them to understand that everyone is unique and their identity is a result of their experiences, feelings and many other variables.

Aims:

1. Reflection on what constitutes one's identity
2. Perception of similarities and differences with the group
3. Recognising that one belongs to multiple groups, and perceiving the diversity of such group memberships.
4. Recognising the unifying effect that belonging to a group brings but also its exclusionary function
5. Recognising how certain parts or categories that make up one's identity are often ascribed features, and it is on account of these ascribed features that discrimination results

Time: 1 hour

Material: molecules sheet, slips of A4 size coloured paper (at least 2 per participant)

Group size: 8 - 20

Instructions:

Part I:

- Distribute the molecule sheet.
- Draw molecules (as in the worksheet) on a flipchart and write your name in the central molecule. Give your own examples of identity parts or group belongings and write them on the flipchart so that participants have a clear idea what they are meant to do.
- Each participant should then fill out his/her molecule sheet with his/her name in centre and 4 or 5 groups to which he/she belongs and feels strongly about. They should not think too long and hard about it; the answers should be spontaneous: what they feel here and now. They are given 5 to 7 minutes to do this.
- Once they are done, they are requested to write the two most relevant molecules on slips of coloured paper, one molecule per sheet.

Part II:

- Divide participants into pairs.
- In pairs, they are asked to discuss any two molecules with their partner on the basis of the following two questions (they are given 20 minutes for their discussion):
 - How is it to my advantage to be a member of these two groups?
 - What makes it easier or more difficult to be part of these groups?
- Meanwhile, the facilitator collects the coloured sheet with participants' molecules and pins them onto the soft board.

2. Identity Molecules - Keywords: Exploring Identity

Part III:

The group is now back in plenary. Before you start the last part of this exercise, commence a brief debriefing of the first two phases. Focus on the following questions:

1. How was the discussion in pairs?
2. Was it easy or difficult to come up with five identity molecules? Or was it easier or more difficult to decide which five molecules to select and write down?
3. How did the partner discussions go? How was it to answer the two questions? Painful? Interesting?
4. Would you choose the same molecules tomorrow or in a month?

Part IV:

Now begin the last part of this exercise:

- Sit in a closed circle. There should be no talking among the participants and should observe each other.
- The facilitator clarifies how this part of the activity will work: The facilitator will call out one molecule/group after another from those write down by the participants (and pinned onto a soft-board); the participants are required stand up if they feel they belong to or identify with the group. They are free to stand even if they did not write the molecule themselves, but feel that they belong or identify with the group. The stronger and more intense one's sense of belonging to a certain group, the longer one may stand. One could also stand up very briefly if one feels one identifies only symbolically to the group. Only when all are seated again, will the facilitator call out the next molecule/category.
- Go through all or at least 60% of the molecules/groups written pinned onto the participants.

Debriefing:

1. How was it? (General feeling about this part of the exercise)
2. How did you feel when you stood alone or almost alone?
3. How did it feel to be part of a bigger group?
4. Did you realise/learn something new or surprising about yourself?
5. Did anyone notice interesting group behaviour, for example when a gender category is called out, only women stand. What does that mean?
6. Can belonging to certain groups be problematic or painful? Which ones? Why?

Tips for facilitators:

The exercise is a complex one. If the trainer has never led or personally experienced the exercise before, he/she should try it out beforehand with a group of colleagues, family or friends.

Depending on the size of the group, you can draw either 4 or 5 circles (molecules) on the molecule sheet (see below). If it is a larger group, go with 4 molecules, if smaller go with 5.

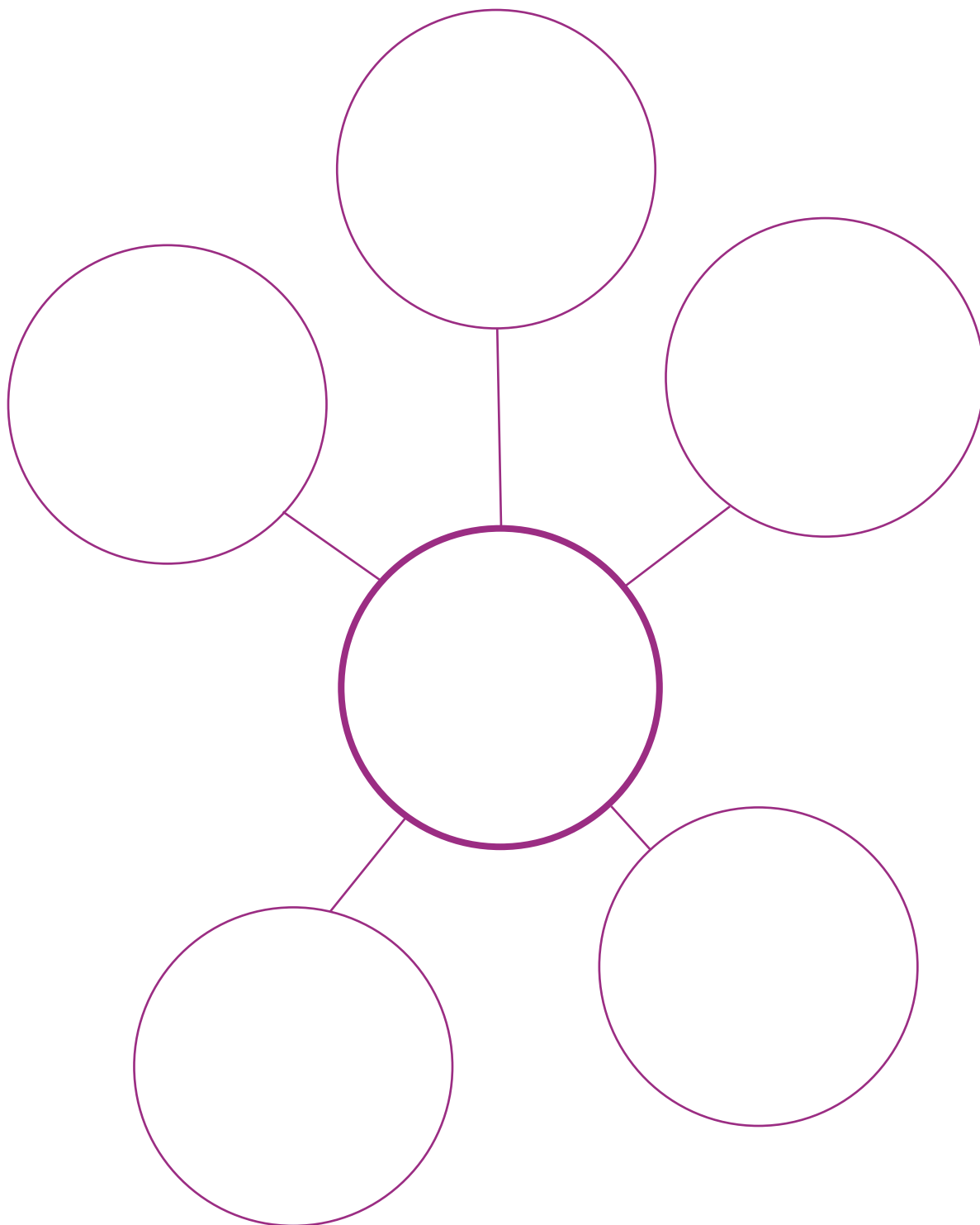
The debriefing should allow for the reflection of both the participants personal identity and the identities of others, and the understanding that these identities are fluid and that differing factors and forces interact to create a particular identity. In addition participants should be given the opportunity to reflect on their feelings of belonging to some groups and not others, and any pressures they may have felt during the exercise.

Source: *Anti-Bias Werkstatt. Methodenbox: Demokratie lernen und Anti-Bias Arbeit. www.languages.anti-bias-werkstatt.de*

2. Identity Molecules - Keywords: Exploring Identity

Please write your name in the central molecule.

In the outer molecules write groups to which you belong
and which make up your identity



If lions could talk, hunters would never be heroes

Introduction:

Heroines and Heroes is an exercise that makes one more aware of stereotyping in daily life, especially that which leads to prejudice, both by others and (inadvertently!) by oneself. Ultimately, it is about developing strategies to move beyond stereotypes and undo the chains of gender-specific and other societal norms.

Aims:

1. This activity involves individual, small and whole group work, brainstorming and discussion about:
2. To reflect on heroines and heroes as symbols of socialisation and culture
3. To reflect on stereotyped images of heroines and heroes
4. To reflect on history teaching and to appreciate different perspectives on shared historical events and the heroes and heroines associated with them
5. To critically analyse the significance of heroes and heroines as role models and how gender stereotypes take their roots in our history, culture and everyday life.

Time: 60 minutes

Material: paper, pens (one blue and one red pen per participants; optional but preferable), flipchart paper and markers

Group size: any

Instructions:

Give people five minutes to think about which national heroines and heroes (historical or living) they particularly admire.

Hand out the paper and pens and ask each person to draw two columns. In the first column they should (using the red pen) write the names of three or four heroines plus a brief description of who they are and what they did for their country. At the bottom of the paper they should write key words to describe the heroines' personal characteristics.

Repeat the process (using the blue pen) for three or four heroes. Write this information in the second column.

Now ask the participants to get into small groups of between five and seven people to share their choices of heroines and heroes. Ask the groups to come to a consensus on the four most worthy heroines and four most worthy heroes.

Now come into plenary and write the names of each group's heroines and heroes in two columns on the flipchart. Add key words that describe their personal characteristics.

Discuss the list of characteristics and the use of heroines and heroes as role models and the extent to which they are gender stereotypes. Then move on to the debriefing.

3. Heroines and Heroes - Keywords: Stereotypes and gender

Debriefing:

Start by reviewing the activity and what people learnt about heroes and heroines and then go on to talk about stereotypes in general and how they influence people's perceptions and actions.

1. What kinds of people are heroines and heroes? (Ordinary men and women? Kings?) What did they do? (Fight? Write poems?) How did the participants learn about them?
2. What were the differences and similarities between the two lists of characteristics?
3. What values do the heroines and heroes stand for? Are these values the same for both, or are there differences?
4. What do people understand by the word, «stereotype»? How true are stereotypes? Are stereotypes always negative?
5. Do you personally, and people in your society in general, have general stereotypes and expectations of men and women?
6. Do participants feel limited by these expectations? How?
7. Does the list of characteristics produced in this activity reflect traits that some might describe as national characteristics?
8. To what extent are social and cultural barriers in general the result of stereotyped thinking?
9. In what ways does gender stereotyping deny people their human rights?
10. Stereotyped expectations often act as barriers to both men and women limiting life choices and options. What gender-related barriers have participants experienced? In the home, school, club or work place?
11. What can participants do about these barriers? Can they identify strategies to break away from cultural norms and values related to masculinity and femininity?

Tips for facilitators:

This is a very good activity to do in a multi-cultural setting because the cultural element may become more apparent.

At point 5 in the instructions you should accept all contributions from the small groups and write everything onto the flip chart. If someone suggests terms like «feminine» or «masculine» you should accept them at this stage and return to them in the debriefing when you should discuss the meanings of these words.

Variations:

When working in youth groups it is likely that you will want to work with other types of heroines and heroes, for example, characters in comic books and films, pop, film and sports stars. You could start the session reading comics and then brainstorm the characteristics of the characters. Alternatively, you could put up posters of pop or sports stars and ask people to write speech bubbles or add drawings. If you leave the question, «who are your heroines and heroes?» completely open, you may find some interesting surprises that make for fruitful discussion.

Further information:

A stereotype is a generalisation in which characteristics possessed by a part of the group are extended to the group as a whole. For example, Italians love opera, Russians love ballet, young people who wear black leather gear and ride motor bikes are dangerous and people from Africa can dance really well.

Source: *United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Gender in development programme, learning and Information pack, gender mainstreaming programme and project entry points. January, 2001*

Introduction:

The iceberg model of diversity demonstrates that people generally have a tendency to make judgements about others based on what they see or believe they see, i.e. skin colour, age, ethnicity, nationality, clothing, physical abilities etc. For example, if a person arrives in dirty clothes, one often draws the conclusion that he/she is underprivileged or unhygienic without realising that he has fallen into a ditch. It is thus that which is below the surface, the invisible that actually gives you essential information about a person. For example, if you meet a person who looks (physical features) like she is from Asia, maybe from Japan, and talk/treat her based on this assumption, you may inadvertently offend her as she may in reality be French or German or British. Skin colour or physical features are not necessarily related to nationality. This is just one example; there are many more characteristics that we believe we see or read into but which do not correspond to reality.

Aims:

1. How people are labelled through descriptions
2. How we use culture-based expressions/features on a daily basis to describe a person
3. "Open yourself to others" to build trust

Time: 20 minutes

Material: flipchart (if interactive) or laptop and projector

Group size: any

Instructions:

Guidelines to present the Iceberg Model of Identity:

- Ask participants if they know what an iceberg is and/or whether they are familiar with the Iceberg Model of Culture! (Some participants may be aware of the Iceberg Model of Culture, please note that the model of culture and that of diversity are quite different although the underlying

principle is the same). If someone raises their hand, ask them to explain what they understand by it!

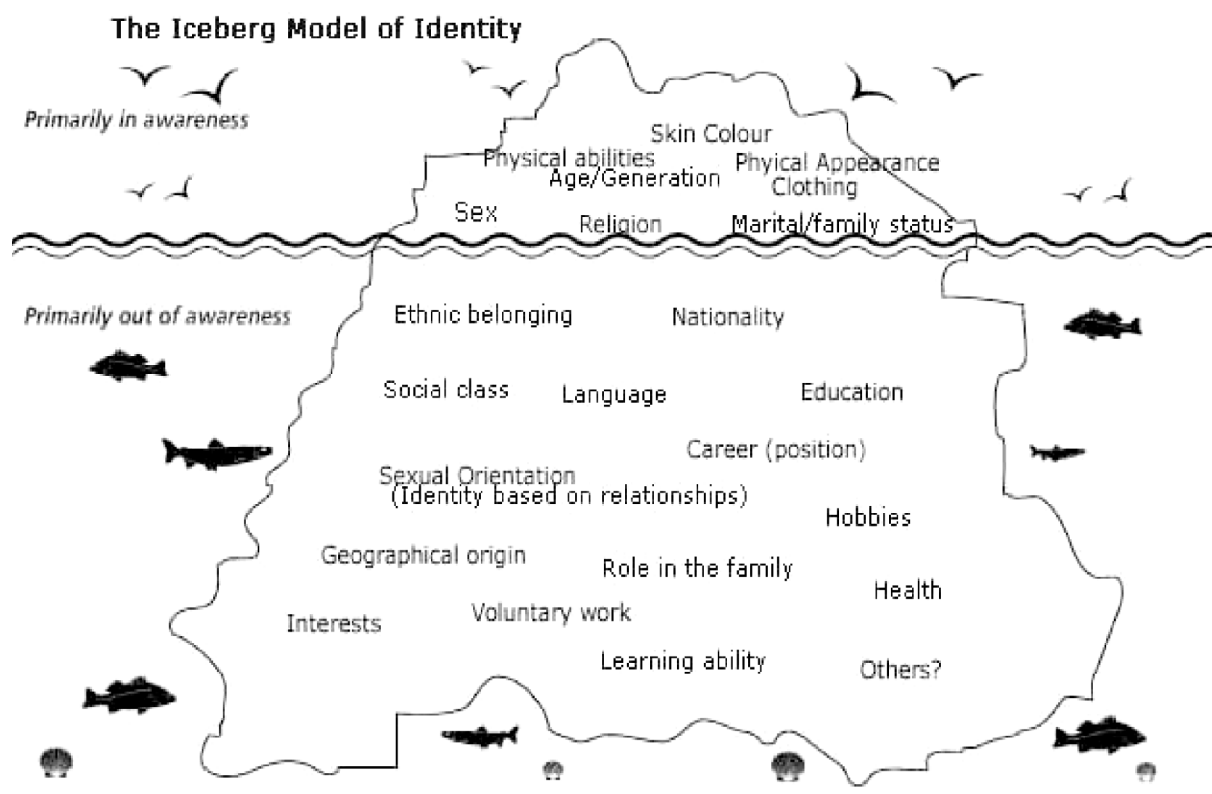
- Draw the tip of the iceberg on a flipchart. Explain that the features that form the tip of the iceberg and are above the water level are those that are visible – we can see them when we become acquainted with someone.
- The construction of the iceberg is such that only 15% of its entire size is above water level. With people, the same concept applies. We have just as limited or narrow a perception about others when we do not go beyond the visible features such as gender, ethnic belonging, age, etc.
- Go to the 2nd area at the water level; these are sometimes visible, sometimes not and comprise family status and religion. Explain: these characteristics are sometimes visible as a result of the visible symbols people carry/wear: cross, hijab, a pregnant woman, etc.
- Point to the next field, below the water level: these descriptions or features often serve the purpose of communication, of understanding the "real" person. Explain that it is not easy to show or talk about these features at the workplace or even during a first meeting, as these things depend on the level of trust between people and on general conditions such as private space, security, etc. It may take years for someone to reveal certain aspects and influences of his/her life or there are things you will never know.
- If one wants real, authentic knowledge about a person, one will have to go below the water level to discover characteristics and qualities that make up the identity of a person. We only reveal certain things about ourselves when we are ready to do so and want to build trust.

4. Iceberg Model of Diversity - Keywords: Identity and Diversity

Tips for facilitators:

You can make this an interactive session by asking participants to give their own views and inputs on the features that are visible and those that aren't, before explaining how we use this initial image of people in our interactions.

Source: Eine Welt der Vielfalt Berlin e.V. www.ewdv-berlin.de



Introduction:

This is not so much an exercise as it is an introduction to the specific theme of examining gender and contesting norms by gaining participants' opinions, attitudes and belief on what being a woman or man means to them or what they understand by gender. These inputs will not only inform the facilitator of the participants' standpoint, it can and should be referred to various relevant stages of the training, particularly during the final input.

Aims:

1. Reflection on one's notion of what is a woman or a man?
2. Reflection on the notion of gender
3. Displacing norms, provoking reflection on one's positioning towards gender

Time: 30 – 45 minutes

Material: flipchart, markers

Group size: 5 to 25

Instructions:

- Prepare three flipcharts, each with one question on it: "What is a woman?" "What is a man?" and "What is gender?"
- Ask participants to spontaneously express themselves on each one of these questions/flipcharts. They should explain how they understand the three terms or questions above. Start with one flipchart "What is a woman?" and when the facilitator feels that no more input is forthcoming from the participants, move to "What is a man?," and similarly to the third, "What is gender?"
- As participants call out their points, the facilitator should write each one down (in the form of a keyword) on the respective flipchart. Very often participants themselves question each other's ideas and concepts about gender, about what it is to be a woman or a man. Write down these contradictory phrases as well.

- The facilitator then examines some of the relevant (and/or contradictory) statements by posing questions that disturb norms and notions presented by participants. Present ideas; provoke reflection and positioning towards gender (e.g. If a participant states that a woman is one who can bear children, question this statement by asking, "What about those who cannot have children? What about those who don't want to have children? Aren't they women?" Or If some attributes qualities to women such as "Women are nurturers? Women can multitask?" Question whether these qualities do not depend on the individual and whether they solely belong to the woman, as a feature? One could also take this further by asking: If only women are considered to be the nurturers, is it any wonder that men leave childrearing to women?
- In the end, the points written down on the three flipcharts will more or less present themselves as opposites. Ask participants to reflect on the fact that if men and women are so different and if we continue to think and function in accordance with stereotypical labels, how can we ask for equality?
- This is just an introduction to questioning gender norms. Put up these flipcharts in the room, you will need to refer to them again during and more importantly towards the end of the training.

Tips for Facilitators:

We recommend that you read the theoretical background presented in this booklet in order to be able to respond appropriately to the issues and points raised by the participants. If you have an all-woman group at the training (which might often be the case) or women constitute the majority participants in the group, you could leave out the question "What is a man?" and work with the other two questions. The inputs you receive for "What is a woman?" could be further probed by asking questions such as "Can't men do this task?" "Does this mean that men aren't this or that?" A similar result will thus be achieved.

Source: Dr. Urmila Goel. <http://www.urmila.de>

Introduction:

As a reflection on the constructed nature of "men" and "women," "masculinity" and "femininity," this exercise is not only simple to implement, but also very effective. Participants should think back as far as they possibly can to gather as many various ways in which they have learnt since childhood (and may continue to do so) to transform their bodies to become "men" and "women."

Aims:

1. Understanding how we learn specific gender behaviour and roles
2. Reflecting on the (problematic) relation between socially constructed gender and physicality
3. Emphasising the constructedness of gender

Time: 45 minutes

Material: large sheets or flipchart paper, pen, coloured pencils and/or crayons

Group size: 5 to 25

Instructions:

Participants are asked to think about the following question and write down their points (they are to work individually and are given 5 – 7 minutes) :

"What do people do with or to their bodies in order to become men or women?"

They are then divided into working groups of 3 to 4 persons, and are asked to discuss their own notes and try to recall together all the things we do to become girls or boys from the time we are born.

They are asked to write, doodle or draw their answers (as a group) on a sheet of flipchart paper. They have 20 minutes for the same.

When the working groups are done, they meet in plenary and present their respective flipcharts.

Debriefing:

It becomes evident rather quickly that people shape, morph or transform their bodies in the course of their lives, irrespective of their notions of what men or women are or should be. Specific physical characteristics, changes or ways of moving, for example an accentuated casual gait or a particular way to laugh or to sit receive such a gendered or sexualised history that we can trace and which makes us aware that gender is socially and culturally constructed.

- Did something surprise you during the exercise?
- What becomes evident through this exercise?

Through this exercise, participants will become aware that their bodies, believed to be 'natural' are subject to social construction. A critical reflection on (social and culturally conditioned) ideals of beauty depict its consequences and excesses (from Bulimia to cosmetic surgery) and "exposes" femininity and masculinity as culturally formed, highly ambivalent and a repressive social practice. You can pose the question:

- How 'natural' do you think we or our bodies really are?
- If we consider that gendered behaviour and roles are culturally and socially constructed, what about sex? Where does sex fit in? What is sex?

Tips for facilitators:

This exercise is particularly interesting in an intercultural setting, as people from different cultural contexts demonstrate the most diverse stylization and practices, which represent masculinity and femininity. If such points or diverse practices of gender behaviour and styles are seen, highlight this in the debriefing by asking "What difference did you notice in the expression of masculinity and femininity in the group?" or "Where they any difference in the expression of masculinity and femininity?" This point may already have been voiced by one or the other participant at the very first question of the debriefing "Did something surprise you?"

Source: Frey, Regina, "Von Gender und anderen Ausgrenzungskategorien" in Vom Süden Lernen. Erfahrungen mit einem Antidiskriminierungsprojekt und Anti-Bias-Arbeit. INKOTA, Berlin, 2002, pg. 80

6. How do we become girls or boys? - Keywords: social construction of gender, identity

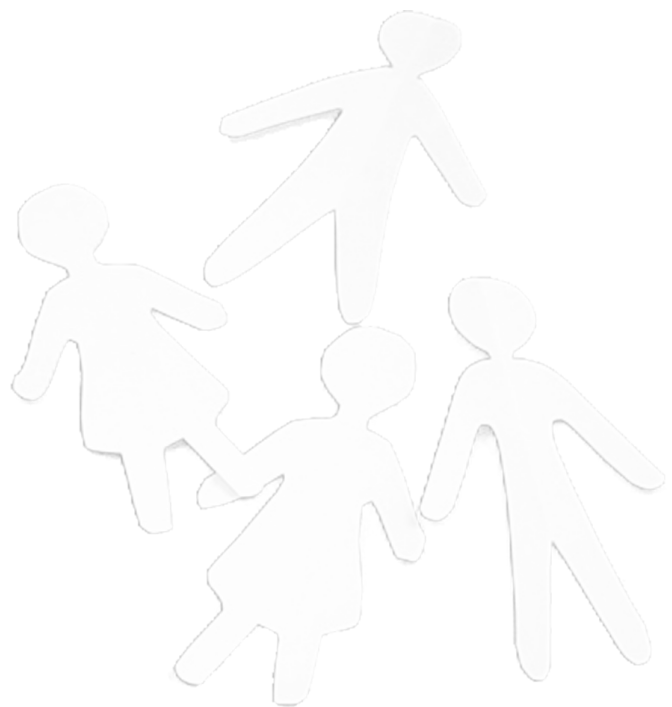
This exercise should be followed by an elaboration of the terms “sex” and “gender” (see pages 8 – 9) for a more comprehensive understanding of the terms. Some brief points have been provided below:

“Sex” / “Gender”

The term ‘sex’ has biological connotations, whereas ‘gender’ is seen to have social, cultural and psychological connotations. Traditionally, differences between the behaviour of men and women was seen to be biologically and genetically determined; research has, in the meantime, proved that these differences are socially constructed.

Thus, sex is described in terms of ‘male’ and ‘female’, and gender in terms of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’. This implies that the male is ascribed ‘masculine’ qualities and characteristics and the female is attributed ‘feminine’ qualities and characteristics. The attempt thereby is to fit the sexes into two small gender identities. This also means that there are gender guidelines about what is expected of men and women and how they conduct themselves, which also means that they are positioned as opposites, i.e. in terms of behaviour and characteristics, a woman is everything a man is not; she is the opposite of man.

But gender is seen to be dynamic. Gender roles vary from one culture to another and from one social group to another as factors such as ethnicity, class, economic circumstances, age, etc. influence what is considered appropriate for men and women.



Introduction:

Having brought up the subject of guidelines, rules and gender norms in the earlier exercise and input, it is necessary to allow participants to experience where they stand in relation to societal norms. By and large, the majority of participants generally conform to dominant gender norms at least in their respective societies if not the world at large.

Aims:

1. Exploring gender norms that shape each person
2. Reflecting on one's position vis-à-vis norms

Time: 45 minutes

Material: none

Group size: 5 to 25

Instructions:

Ask participants to stand in a circle by holding the hand of the person to their right and their left. If the room is large enough, have them stand a straight line, holding the hand(s) of the person beside them.

They are informed that a series of questions will be read out one after another. After each question, they are to react to the questions spontaneously and as instructed by the facilitator each time, i.e. either by stepping forward or backward (see below). Participants should remain silent during this part of the exercise.

The facilitator should read out the questions slowly and clearly (repeat them if necessary) and allow sufficient time between questions for participants observe and reflect upon their own position vis-à-vis the positions of others in the group.

List of questions:

1. If you know what it means to be a woman, step forward.
2. If your sexual preferences conform to the norm, step forward.
3. If your body or dress is considered deviant, step backward.
4. If you consider yourself to have equal rights, step forward.
5. If people in other places believe that women in your area are oppressed, step backwards.
6. If you have female role models in the public life of your country, step forward.
7. If you have learnt about important women in school, step forward.
8. If you cannot expect to earn as much as men, step backward.
9. If you have learnt about people of your sexual orientation in school, step forward.
10. If you are restricted on the basis of your womanhood/sexuality in the field of work you can choose, step backwards.
11. If you know how to behave correctly, step forward.
12. If you are not able to conform to the way you are supposed to behave, step backwards.
13. If fighting for gender equality seems to you to conflict with fighting against other forms of discrimination, step backwards.
14. If people in other places claim to know better what is in your interest than yourself, step backwards.
15. If you feel fine with the way things are, step forward.

7. Norms and Me! - Keywords: gender, norms

Debriefing:

- How was it? How do you feel? What are your thoughts and emotions about this exercise?
- What do you notice now at the end of the exercise?
- What has surprised you and why?
- Where there questions for which you hesitated or couldn't decide whether to step forward or backward? Which question(s)? Why?
- Why do you think you are standing where you stand?
- What other questions could have influenced your position?
- Why did we do this exercise? /What is the purpose of this exercise?

Tips for Facilitators:

This exercise serves as an excellent self-reflection about one's position in relation to norms, bringing in at the same time, the concept of intersectionality (Read Chapter III: One is not merely a Woman, pg. 22 – 23). Intersectionality can be presented with the model of discrimination, but for the moment, it is important for the facilitator to note the position of participants with asked the relevant question.

In an intercultural setting, this exercise enables the each participant in the group to experience how gender norms existing in their country are perceived by others. This is another subject that can be broached in the debriefing with questions such as "How did it feel to step backward to question no. 5?" "How did the rest of the group feel, think?"

Source: Dr. Urmila Goel. <http://www.urmila.de>



Introduction:

In comparison to the above exercise, this scale or barometer allows participants to reflect on the dominant norms in their respective societies, which they may or may not conform with. A reflection on one's gender-relevant influential field is hereby achieved and at the same time, one's own position within that field becomes clear. Furthermore, the sociometric scale allows participants to experience prevailing norms in the environment of the other members of the group.

Aims:

1. Exploring gender norms in one's environment
2. Reflection on one's position vis-à-vis norms in one's society/environment
3. Experiencing the extent of influence norms exert on one's own environment and on that of the other members of the group

Time: 30 – 60 minutes

Material: A large room where participants can position along a scale

Group size: 5 to 25

Instructions:

- Introduce the exercise to the participants. A series of questions will be presented to them and as each one is read out they are to decide where to position themselves on a scale of 0% to 100%.
- Before starting the exercise, the facilitator should preferably draw/mark a scale on the floor in the centre of the room using masking tape: 0% at one end, 50% in the middle and 100% at the other end. This exercise should thus be presented to the participants as a sociometric scale.
- Participants should be informed that with each question they will be required to (re) position themselves on the scale of 0% to 100%; their response should correspond to the environment in which they live.

- With each question and after participants take up their positions on the scale, the facilitator should ask various different participants to elaborate further on their positioning. The facilitator should ensure that, by the end of the exercise, every participant has had an opportunity to verbally respond to at least one or two questions given below.

List of questions:

1. How much is distinguished between men and women?
2. How much is heterosexuality the norm?
3. When should you marry? (at what age?)
4. How many children should you have? (number)
5. How much time should you work?
6. How much of the domestic work are you expected to do?
7. How much do others determine what you should wear?
8. How much are women participating in politics?
9. How much is being done for the equality of women?

Debriefing:

1. What other questions are relevant?
2. What surprised you and why?
3. What does this tell you about the different norms in your countries?
4. What questions does this raise for you?

Tips for Facilitators:

Participants may argue that in different parts of their country (specific regions, towns or cities, urban-rural, etc.) the situation is different. Ask them to estimate an average in their respective countries. For example, for the question 'When should you marry?', they should be able to give an average predominant age for marrying in their respective countries. A variation, which is more time consuming, would be to ask them to position themselves first in accordance with their immediate environment (e.g. circle of family and friends) and then, for the same question, to estimate the average rate in their country. This will demonstrate how different norms prevail in one country.

Source: Dr. Urmila Goel. <http://www.urmila.de>

8. Norms in my environment - Keywords: gender norms

This session on Gender Norms should be concluded by an input on norms and gender norms, the purposes they serve, and how also the serve to exclude and marginalise many people. Chapter II: Questioning Gender Concepts (pg. 12-21), and in particular, the sections on Norms and Gender Norms (pages 13-14) could be used as a reference in putting together an input. Brief notes on Norms and Gender Norms have been provided below:

Norms and Gender Norms

What is a norm?

A norm is that which is considered as appropriate behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes for males and females, as directed by a particular society. Norms can also be understood as a measurement and a way of producing a common standard. Norms are often unspoken and not recognisable as 'norms' but their effects are visible in the enactment of roles and behaviours by people. In addition, norms are produced and continue to exist as a result of their being acted out in social practice, i.e. through our daily social rituals of life.

It should also be specified that norms have a unifying quality to them; they give us direction and stability in life. Simultaneously, the norm that binds us and creates unity does so by excluding others in order to maintain power structures within society. It is these norms which serve to restrict, delimit, devalue and disprivilege others that we must challenge.

Gender Norms

As we have already seen, we become 'men' or 'women' through the gender norms imposed on us. Through our constant repetition of gender roles and behaviour in society, we make gender norms appear to be 'normal', we thus also idealise these norms. In reproducing norms we give them power. For example, those who do not conform to gender norms or move beyond them (e.g. the act of homosexuality goes beyond gender norms), are excluded or treated differently. By excluding or treating people differently, we give these norms power.

Gender thus serves to regulate its subjects, and regulation is connected to the process of normalisation. For example, regulations that decide who should receive asylum are actively engaged in producing the norm of the asylum seeker. Another such example is that of state regulations on lesbian and gay adoption as well as single-parent adoptions which not only restrict that activity but also support an ideal of what parents should be, and what counts as legitimate partners. Still, gender has a way of moving beyond certified norms, beyond its binary conception. This is evident if you account for the existence of intersex, transgender, transsexual people, the Hijras, etc.

Inherent to normative gender is thus a question of power with an underpinning two-way answer, a definite either-or answer (you can either be 'man' or 'woman'), which is also inherently exclusionary. Normative gender sets the limits of what is considered acceptable, or normal; it qualifies lives of people as 'human' and 'legitimate'. If think about the notion of 'race', can we not ask the same question? Which populations have qualified in the past as 'human' and which have not?

Introduction:

This exercise is an introduction to the subject of discrimination and more particularly, gender discrimination. It comprises not just a reflection on one experience of gender discrimination and the associated feelings, but also a reflection and a first step in developing strategies to challenge and overcome gender discrimination.

Aims:

1. Reflection on the personal experience of gender discrimination
2. Developing strategies to challenge and counter gender discrimination at a micro-level.

Time: 45 minutes

Material: moderation cards, pen

Group size: 5 to 16

Instructions:

- Participants are asked to reflect on their personal experience of gender discrimination. More specifically, they should think about:
- One thing that they could not do in their lives or were not allowed to do because of being a man or a woman.
- They work individually and are given 10 minutes to think about and write down a description of their experience on the moderation card provided to them.
- Participants come together in plenary and present their respective experiences of gender discrimination.

Debriefing:

As participants narrate their experiences and examples, they should be asked to reflect upon and respond to the following questions:

- Why could you not do that specific thing?
- What did you need to be able to do or achieve that particular thing or action?

Tips for Facilitators:

If one or the other participant is unable to come up with what they needed to accomplish the thing that they couldn't do, the facilitator could ask the rest of the group if they have ideas and suggestions which they could offer. This will enable a brainstorming of possibilities which could be useful in the future (for oneself or on encountering others in similar situations).

Introduction:

After reflection on the personal experience of gender discrimination, this exercise moves to a reflection on the result of privileges and power in society and to raising awareness and empathy for the circumstances and living conditions of those whose lives are constrained to the fringes of society. This is a kind of simulation. Participants are asked to imagine a life with completely new identity characteristics or categories (age, country of origin, social and professional situation etc.). The categories are randomly drawn by participants.

Aims:

1. Reflecting on the living conditions of other people
2. Understanding the conditionality of our social situation
3. Generating empathy for people in other kinds of life situations
4. Reflecting on the prerequisites for good luck and bad luck

Time: 60 – 90 minutes

Material: role cards, worksheets, enough room for small groups to meet

Group size: 10 – 25

Dimensions of the exercise:

This exercise enables participants to undertake a vast change of perspective. At the same time, the challenges which they face, inherent in a diverse society, are investigated. Participants are asked to observe the world around them from a vantage point and frame of reference which most likely differs completely from their own. This exercise requires that participants use all their power of imagination and allows them to reconsider and reassess their many preconceived notions.

Instructions:

- Place the cards of one category hidden in a bowl and ask each participant to draw one. In case the card is similar to ones own situation, the participant should replace the card and draw another one. No one needs to explain why the card was replaced. Repeat this procedure with the cards of the other categories until every participant has received a new identity which is made up of at least four different categories.
- Distribute the questions for the exercise. Give participants about 20 minutes time to answer the questions. This part of the exercise should be conducted without interruption, talking or exchange of results.
- According to the size of the group, divide participants into pairs, groups of three or small groups. Allow participants to exchange their roles and responses to the questions with the members of their group, and give them 30 minutes for the same. Participants do not need to reveal every single characteristic.
- Once the time is up, ask the groups to come together in plenary for the debriefing.

10. The Cards Are Reshuffled - Keywords: discrimination, privileges, power

Debriefing:

1. How did you feel during the exercise?
2. Creative, non-verbal variant: Give participants A4 paper and ask them to design the paper in such a way that it represents the answers to the questions in the worksheet (e.g. tattered, constricted, relaxed, etc.)
3. Was it difficult to imagine a new "identity" on the basis of the categories drawn? If yes, how did you imagine your new identity? What was the source of your information/imagination of this identity?
4. Was it easy for all of you to answer the questions in the worksheet?
5. Were some of the cards more "impressive" than others? If yes, why?
6. Was it possible for you to have a certain idea about the life of another person even though you of course knew that this is just a simulation?
7. Did anyone feel that it was possible that they were recipients of unfair or unequal treatment?
8. What steps could we take to address inequalities in society?

Tips for facilitators:

Depending on the target group, further categories could be added to it. You could ask all participants to take on the role of the other sex. The exercise works to a certain extent through stereotyping. One's perception of the life situation of others could be affected by stereotypes. It is the task of the moderator to question possible stereotyping.

Examples for identity categories/cards (to be written on index cards):

Category 1 <i>Family Status</i>	Category 2 <i>Occupational Situation</i>	Category 3 <i>Social situation</i>	Category 4 <i>Other</i>
Widowed	Carpenter	Childless	Refugee
Single parent	IT technician	1 child	Wheelchair user
Married	Unemployed	2 young children	Gay/lesbian
Divorced	Teacher	4 children	Of African origin
Single	Farmer	2 adult children	Rich inheritance
Married rich	Housewife/house husband	2 foster children	Of Asian origin
	Artist	1 child, physically challenged	Very religious
	Taxi driver	1 child	Jewish
	Labourer	Pregnant	Muslim
	Student	3 children	27 years old
	Volunteer	5 children	Has HIV-Aids
	Street vendor	Childless	Person without documents (illegal immigrant)
	Doctor	Pregnant	Homeless
	Sex Worker	1 child	Transgender
	Retired	2 children	Blind
	Engineer	1 child, deaf and dumb	Buddhist
	Cook		Slum-dweller
	Cleaning lady/man		Old
	Sportsman/woman		18 years old
	Lawyer		Mentally challenged

Source: Managing Diversity. Moderationshandbuch für Multiplikatorinnen und Multiplikatoren aus Unternehmen und Non-Profit-Organisationen im Rahmen der Fortbildung "Diversity-Trainer / Diversity Trainerin von Eine Welt der Vielfalt e.V. Berlin. <http://www.ewdv-berlin.de>

10. The Cards Are Reshuffled - Worksheet

Imagine that you wake up in the morning and are someone completely different from yourself. What would your life be like? Take a few minutes feel your new identity. Think about how your views on a number of questions would change. Answer the questions below in as much detail as you can from the perspective of your new identity.

1. What advantages and disadvantages do you have in your new identity?

2. What power or influence would you have in society?

3. What can you offer society as this new person, what you couldn't have offered before?

4. What do you need or expect from others, what did not need or expect before?

5. With your new identity, you probably live in a new neighbourhood. Does living in the new neighbourhood mean more or less problems for you?

6. Do you think that you could be happy in your new life?

Introduction:

With a slightly different focus from the preceding exercise, Power Flower seeks to create an awareness of different types of oppression prevailing in society, and to clarify that, depending on the particular situation, a person could be the target of oppression in one case and the oppressors in another. Gaining insight into people's experiences, feelings and perceptions of oppression is a way of gaining empathy and questioning ourselves and our motives when we are in positions of power and discriminate against others.

Aims:

1. Heighten participants' awareness of different forms of oppression
2. Provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect on where they are targeted by oppression and where they are in a non-target position
3. Gain insight into other people's experience and perceptions of oppression
4. Challenge ourselves to be more aware of the ways in which we might unintentionally oppress others
5. Encourage ourselves to be more assertive.

Time: 60 minutes

Material: A Power flower worksheet for each participant, crayons or coloured pencils/pens

Group size: 12 to 20 (4 to 6 in each working group)

Instructions:

- Ask participants to divide into small groups.
- Give each participant a "power flower" worksheet and a crayon or coloured pencil.

- Ask participants to colour in the petals of the flower according to whether they are the target or non-target of each form of oppression. (See the "power flower" below for information on who the targets and non-targets of each form of oppression might be). Instruct them to colour the inside petal if they are in a non-target position for a particular form of oppression and to colour the outside petal if they are the target of a particular form of oppression. See below an example of how one workshop participant shaded in the power flower.

- Allow participants between 10 to 15 minutes for this part of the activity. (You may want to change some of the categories shown on the "power flower" in order to match the activity more closely with the goals of your workshop. You may also wish to change the way in which you define the target and non-target groups for some of the forms of oppression, in order to better reflect the experience of the participants of your workshop. For example, you may wish to change the cut-off point for the non-target group for "education" to high school if the majority of the participants at your workshop come from communities in which a high school certification is likely to be the highest form of education level reached by people.)

Debriefing:

- How was the exercise?
- Which classification was difficult, which not? Why?
- For which belongings/petals were you particularly uncertain? Why?
- How was the exchange in the working groups?
- How did it feel to be part of a target or non-target group?
- Do your feelings match the classification of the power flower into "privileged" and non-privileged or target and non-target group?
- Do you feel exactly so (not) privileged (not) targeted as the power flower demonstrates?

11. Power Flower - Keywords: forms of oppression, privilege, power

Introduction:

On the significance of belonging:

- Are there situations, contexts and group in which relations shift, in which a privilege leads to discrimination or vice versa?
- In every context, does the same category have the same meaning? (sense of belonging depends on the context)
- Do the belongings all have the same amount of importance; are you always aware of these? (differing subjective meaning of belonging)
- Do societal belongings all have the same weight? (different social meaning of belonging)

Here it is necessary to pinpoint that the importance given to differentiation categories, whether subjective or socially, depends on the extent to which this category possesses dominant attributes of society as a whole and is linked to institutional consequences. Some forms of discrimination have a long, violent history of oppression, due to which their effectiveness is strengthened (e.g. racism, colonialism: the historical roots of today's north-south relations should be seen in connection with the system of slavery and material exploitation).

On the characteristics of belonging:

- Is the belonging to the categories in the flower petals your own voluntary decision or were these belongings assigned to you from "outside"? What consequences does this have?
- Is it possible to change belongings of the flower petals?
- Could privileged/non-privileged belonging draw other belongings towards them?

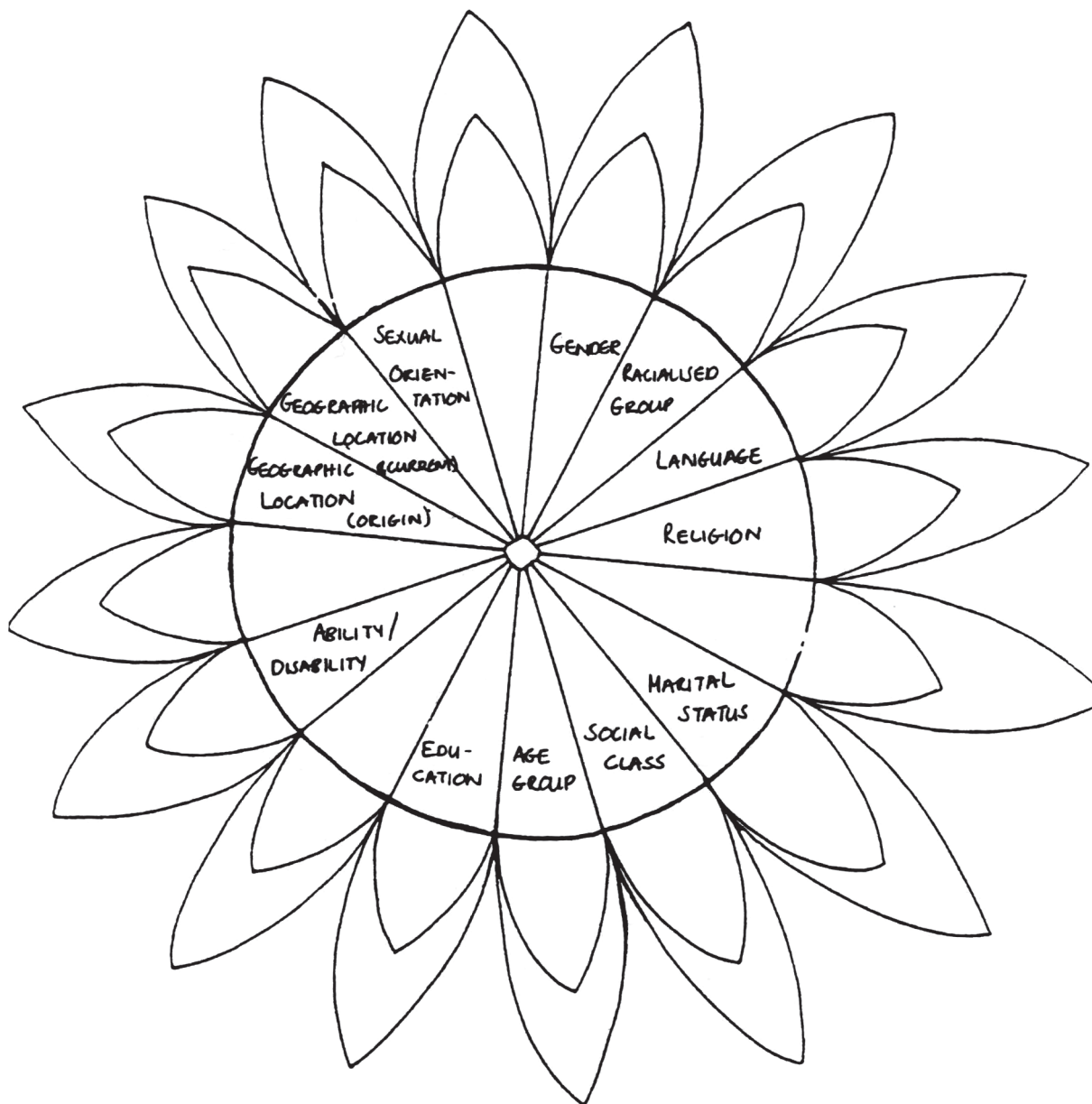
On behaviour in and with power relations:

- Now assess the number of areas in which you are targeted and the number in which you are relatively privileged. What are the implications of being predominantly in the target or non-target groups and which forms of oppression are the strongest in your society.
- Conclude the activity by pointing out that we can use our own positions in a target or privileged group to understand the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of others. You could follow this with a whole discussion on how to challenge oppression, or how different forms of oppression are reinforced in classrooms, (other parts of the education system, and other institutions in society) and what can be done to change this.
- How and when can we also have power in marginalised positions?
- How do you deal with your power or powerlessness and what can we do with this analysis?
- How can you use your power positively? How can you use it to change power relationships?

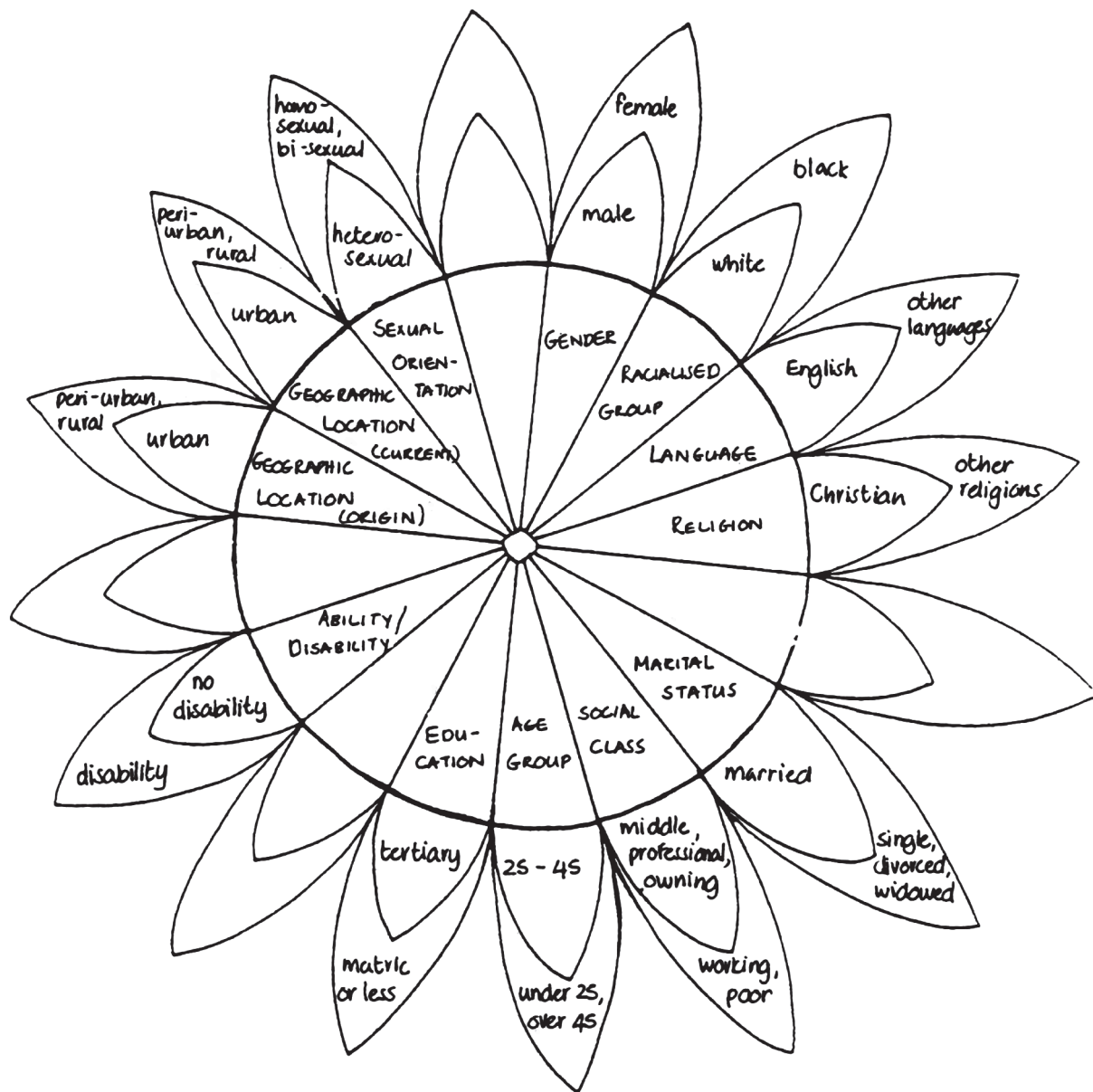
It is important to point out that power isn't just negative or vicious, but is also productive and comprises opportunities and resources. Here, the positive connotation of the term power in different languages can be referred to (in French 'Pouvoir', German 'Macht' etc.) Power can be used constructively, for example, by way of empowerment and power sharing.

Source: *Shifting Paradigms. Using an anti-bias strategy to challenge oppression and assist transformation in the South African context. A publication of the Anti-Bias Project. Early Learning Resource Unit, 1997, Also in Anti-Bias Werkstatt. Methodenbox: Demokratie Lernen und Anti-Bias Arbeit. www.anti-bias-werkstatt.de/index.htm.*

11. Power Flower - Keywords: forms of oppression, privilege, power



11. Power Flower - Keywords: forms of oppression, privilege, power



Introduction:

A stark difference of 'equality of opportunity' exists between many different persons and groups within any given society. These differences can be a result of manifold variables whether they are gender, sexuality, race, religion, education, income etc. Many powerful and influential positions in society are commanded by persons with certain privileges, backgrounds or those who are from specific sectors within the community. It is therefore important, when working in a multicultural setting and situation, that awareness is raised about certain individual privileges and the effect they have on opportunities. Moreover, specific circumstances should be considered and understood within the necessary context.

Aims:

1. Awareness of one's privileges in society
2. Empathising with the situation of others
3. Awareness of the extent of institutional discrimination in one's own society
4. Awareness about the inequality of opportunities in society
5. Fostering an understanding of possible personal consequences of belonging to certain social minorities or cultural groups

Time: 60 minutes

Material: role cards, list of questions, an open space (a corridor, large room or outdoors), tape or CD player and soft/ relaxing music.

Group size: 8 to 20

Instructions:

- Create a calm atmosphere with some soft background music. Alternatively, ask the participants for silence.
- Hand out the role cards at random, one to each participant. Tell them to keep it to themselves and not to show it to anyone else.

- Inform participants that if the role they hold resembles their real life situation in any way even in the slightest, they should inform the facilitator and randomly pick another role card. Invite them to sit down (preferably on the floor) and to read their role card.
- Now ask them to begin to get into role. To help, read out some of the following questions, pausing after each one, to give people time to reflect and build up a picture of themselves and their lives:
 1. What was your childhood like? What sort of house did you live in? What kind of games did you play? What sort of work did your parents do?
 2. What is your everyday life like now? Where do you socialise? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening?
 3. What sort of lifestyle do you have? Where do you live? How much money do you earn each month?
 4. What do you do in your leisure time?
 5. What do you do in your holidays?
 6. What excites you? What are you afraid of?
- Now ask people to remain absolutely silent as they line up beside each other (like on a starting line).
- Inform participants that you are going to read out a list of situations or events. They can answer «yes» to each statement by taking a step forward. If they cannot answer with a "yes", they should remain standing where they are and not move forward (or backward).
- Read out the situations one at a time. Pause for a while between each statement to allow people time to step forward and to look around them to take note of their positions relative to each other.
- At the end, invite everyone to take note of their final positions. Then give them a couple of minutes to come out of the role before debriefing in plenary.

12. Take a Step Forward - Keywords: privileges, power, opportunities

List of Questions:

Read the following situations out aloud. Allow time after reading out each question or situation for participants to step forward and also to look to see how far they have moved relative to each other.

1. Can you take a vacation in your home country?
2. Would you receive fair treatment from the police during their investigation of a robbery?
3. Would you receive a bank loan to renovate your rented apartment?
4. Can you plan a family?
5. Can you visit a dentist for treatment?
6. Would you feel safe in the streets after dark?
7. Can you expect to receive sympathy and support from your family?
8. Would you get a life insurance?
9. Can you become a member of the tennis club in your locality?
10. Can you vote in the local elections?
11. Can you request your landlord for help if your neighbour is creating a racket every night?
12. Can you register your children in a school?
13. Can you travel freely in the EU-Countries?
14. Can you move freely through the streets without some making passes at you or without being harassed?
15. Can you invite friends over for dinner at home?
16. Can you say that you have never encountered any serious financial difficulty?
17. Do you have decent housing with a telephone line and television?
18. Do you feel that your language, religion and culture are respected in the society where you live?
19. Do you feel that your opinion on social and political issues matters, and your views are listened to?
20. Do other people consult you about different issues?
21. Do you know where to turn for advice and help if you need it?
22. Can you say that you have never felt discriminated against because of your origin?
23. Do you have adequate social and medical protection for your needs?
24. Can you say that you have an interesting life and you are positive about your future?
25. Do you feel that you can study and follow the profession of your choice?
26. Can you celebrate the most important religious festivals with your relatives and close friends?
27. Can you go to the cinema or the theatre at least once a week?
28. Can you say that you are not afraid for the future of your children?
29. Can you buy new clothes at least once every three months?
30. Do you feel that your competence is appreciated and respected in the society where you live?
31. Can you use and benefit from the Internet?

NB. This is a wide selection of questions that could be read out. Please select around 15 for each session in accordance with the make up of the group and cultural context in which it is being used. You could also formulate your own questions to replace the samples provided above.

12. Take a Step Forward - Keywords: privileges, power, opportunities

Debriefing:

The evaluation of this exercise should focus on whether or not equality of opportunity in certain societies depends on variables such as race, gender, income etc. and the different privileges each person has. The discussion should highlight the final positioning of the participants, how the various privileges or lack of them are a result of money, influence and power, generally irrespective of the countries they live in.

Start by asking participants about what happened and how they feel about the activity and then go on to talk about the issues raised and what they learnt:

1. Please remain standing in your place and look around you.
2. How did people feel stepping forward - or not?
3. For those who stepped forward often, at what point did they begin to notice that others were not moving as fast as they were?
4. Did anyone feel that there were moments when his or her basic human rights were being ignored?
5. Can people guess each other's roles? (Let people reveal their roles during this part of the discussion)
6. How easy or difficult was it to play the different roles? How did they imagine what the person they were playing was like?
7. At which questions were you unable to take a step forward?
8. Who has it the easiest in life? What characteristics does he/she have?
9. Who has it the most difficult in life? Why? What characteristics does he/she have?
10. Does the exercise mirror society in some way? How?
11. Which human rights are at stake for each of the roles? Could anyone say that their human rights were not being respected or that they did not have access to them?
12. What first steps could be taken to address the inequalities in society?
13. Why did we conduct this exercise?

Tips for facilitators:

If you do this activity outdoors, make sure that the participants can hear you, especially if you are doing it with a large group! You may need to use your co-facilitators to relay the statements.

In the imagining phase at the beginning, it is possible that some participants may say that they know little about the life of the person they have to role-play. Tell them, this does not matter especially, and that they should use their imagination and to do it as best they can.

The power of this activity lies in the impact of actually seeing the distance increasing between the participants, especially at the end when there should be a big distance between those that stepped forward often and those who did not. To enhance the impact, it is important that you adjust the roles to reflect the realities of the participants' own lives. As you do so, be sure you adapt the roles so that only a minimum of people can take steps forward (i.e. can answer «yes»). This also applies if you have a large group and have to devise more roles.

During the debriefing and evaluation it is important to explore how participants knew about the character whose role they had to play. Was it through personal experience or through other sources of information (news, books, and jokes)? Are they sure the information and the images they have of the characters are reliable? In this way you can introduce how stereotypes and prejudice work.

This activity is particularly relevant to making links between the different generations of rights (civil/political and social/economic/cultural rights) and the access to them. The problems of poverty and social exclusion are not only a problem of formal rights - although the latter also exists for refugees and asylum-seekers for example. The problem is very often a matter of effective access to those rights.

12. Take a Step Forward - Keywords: privileges, power, opportunities

Role Cards:

1. You are the daughter of the local bank manager. You study economic at university.
2. You are a 17-year-old Roma (Gypsy) girl who never finished primary school.
3. You are an unemployed schoolteacher in a country whose new official language you are not fluent in.
4. You are an illegal immigrant from Mali.
5. You are the owner of a successful import export company.
6. You are fashion model of African origin.
7. You are a disabled young man who can only move around in a wheelchair.
8. You are a 24-year old refugee from Afghanistan.
9. You are an unemployed single mother.
10. You are a soldier in the army, doing compulsory military service.
11. You are an HIV positive, middle-aged prostitute.
12. You are the president of a party-political youth organisation, whose "mother" party is now in power.
13. You are the daughter of the American ambassador to the country where you are now living.
14. You are a retired worker from a factory that makes shoes.
15. You are the girlfriend of a young artist who is addicted to heroin.
16. You are a homeless young man, 27 years old.
17. You are the 19-year-old son of a farmer in a remote village in the mountains.
18. A graduate student who has been unemployed for four years.
19. A 50-year old who is being made redundant.
20. A transvestite working in a beauty salon.
21. You are the son of a Chinese immigrant who runs a successful fast food business.
22. You are an Arab Muslim girl living with your parents who are devoutly religious people.
23. You are a disabled young man who can only move in a wheelchair.
24. You are a 22-year-old lesbian.

NB. If you have a very large group of participants, you could repeat one or two role cards and evaluate (in the debriefing) their positions (i.e. whether they are all at more or less the same position or there is a vast distance between them).

Source: Anti-Bias Werkstatt. Methodenbox: Demokratie Lernen und Anti-Bias Arbeit. www.anti-bias-werkstatt.de/index.html. Also in Education Pack. All different all equal. eycb.coe.int/edupack/31.html

BEHAVIOUR

Assumptions
Prejudices
Stereotypes
Norms
Values
...

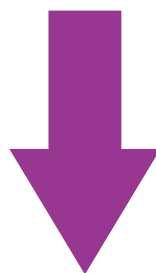
Normative power /
political, monopoly on
interpretation power



Historical, (current)
economic, legal
and social

POWER

Situational power &
Societal positioning



can lead to

DISCRIMINATION

Between people
At an institutional level
At a socio-cultural level

Source: Anti-BiasWerkstatt. Methodenbox: Demokratie Lernen und Anti-Bias Arbeit. www.anti-bias-werkstatt.de/index.html. Cf. Early Learning Resource Unit (1997): *Shifting Paradigms*. Cape Town, Lansdowne. S. 12 f.

13. An Experience-Oriented Model of Discrimination

Levels of Discrimination

Between people

It refers to one's direct behaviour with people or groups who are viewed as different (in relation to a particular -ascribed- characteristic or feature), from one's worldview which influences one's valuation or devaluation of them. This level comprises the field of direct discriminatory practice with "other" people or groups through interaction and communication between people. Here an individual's situational power to act and the power one possess as a result of one's societal position consciously or unconsciously sets in and is reflected in one's actions.

It corresponds to the manner in which we behave with people who are somehow "different", shaped by our personal attitude, thoughts and feelings.

Examples:

1. When visiting a hardware store, a female salesperson and a male salesperson are standing around but the customer approaches the man (as he judged to have a higher competence in this field).
2. Changing your path or moving across to the other side of the street when you spot a particular person or group of people approaching.

At an institutional level

It refers to established rights, traditions, customs and practices through which particular groups and people are constructed as different and are systematically disadvantaged. This level comprises all laws and structures, which are identified by a social, political and economic power. These laws and structures are not open to change; also it takes very long to change them. Nevertheless, those who profit from such situations continuously contribute, whether consciously or unconsciously, to the reproduction of unequal structures.

It applies to established rights, traditions, customs and practices that systematically lead to discrimination of particular groups of people.

Examples:

1. The school system selects certain pupils or runs parallel classes for children with a migration background.
2. The law of asylum forbids refugees to move around freely (they are obliged to remain within restricted area).
3. Slum dwellers are not offered a voice when it comes to demolition of their dwellings.
4. Homosexuality is prohibited by law.

At a socio-cultural level

It refers to all that which is seen as right, good and beautiful by the dominating culture and ideology and is applied as a benchmark to assess, judge and discriminate people or groups who could be constructed as "others" on the basis of particular features and characteristics. This level comprises unwritten laws, norms, values and ideals and also discourses of any kind, which are effective in a particular context, recognised of course by the dominating majority and conscious or unconsciously reproduced. The socio-cultural discrimination manifests itself on the basis of ideological power.

It deals with that which is seen by the dominating society/culture or world outlook as right, good and beautiful, as a benchmark for all things.

Examples:

1. The media produces (for example in advertisements) visuals of women who comply with a specific ideal of beauty and responsible for the household and children.
2. Statements such as "Men should be hard and should not cry".
3. Specific dress codes for men and women.
4. Eating with hands is unhygienic.

13. An Experience-Oriented Model of Discrimination

Tips for the facilitator:

This model can either be used as a direct or an interactive presentation whereby participants are encouraged, particularly when it comes to the levels of discrimination, to explain what they understand by each level and give examples for the same. Furthermore, a brief input on the concept of intersectionality can be introduced to this presentation. The model of discrimination lends itself quite well to introducing intersectionality. Read Chapter III: One is not merely a Woman! (pages 16-17) in order to prepare your presentation.

Intersectionality

The concept of intersectionality postulates that people are simultaneously positioned within social categories such as gender, social class, sexuality and 'race'. These social categories are intersecting spheres in which domination occurs, and therefore any one category cannot alone be seen or addressed as the reason for discrimination. This means that we cannot fight type of discrimination while disregarding other kinds of discrimination. For example, an Asian Muslim lesbian from a working class background is exposed to discrimination on grounds of her religion, class, gender and ethnicity. So if one "is" a woman, then that is surely not all one is, for gender intersects with the social categories of racial, class, ethnic, sexual, religions and regional modalities which shape one's identity. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. The concept of intersectionality seeks to demonstrate both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of oppression. It deal with the manner in which racism, patriarchy and economic disadvantage and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structures the relative positions of women and men, ethnic and other groups.

«To spread the news is to multiply it» (Tibetan proverb)

Introduction:

This exercise offers participants the opportunity to envision a gender equitable representation and can be taken as the first step towards taking on individual responsibility and developing possibilities to change dominant systems and structures in society. This is a simulation of a group of journalists working to get the front page of their paper ready to go to press. People work in small groups:

- To explore bias, stereotyping and objectivity in the media
- To examine images and the role of media in addressing gender issues

Aims:

1. Discussing and learning more about gender issues in the countries represented at the training
2. Stimulating interest in human rights issues through working with images
3. Reflecting on the media and their approach to human rights issues
4. Developing the skills to communicate and co-operate

Time: 180 minutes

Material: A large room with enough space for two or three small working groups and plenary, newspapers and magazine for a selection of photographs, paper and pens for making notes, sheets of paper (A3) size or flipchart paper and markers, scissors and glue for each small group, and tables with a working surface large enough for the working groups to spread all their papers out

Group size: 10 – 24

Instructions:

- Introduce the activity. Explain that this is a simulation of an evening in a newspaper office where a group of journalists are working on the front page of their paper. Although these are local papers serving the community, each has a policy to keep its readership informed about current gender issues.

- Divide the participants into small working groups of eight people. Each group is to imagine that it is an editorial group working on a different newspaper. Their task is to design and layout the front page of tomorrow morning's edition.
- Ask each group to choose a name for their newspaper.
- In plenary, briefly discuss the features and layout of a typical front page.
- Participants are asked to discuss in their groups the most pertinent "gender" issues (in their opinion) in their respective countries and together decide which ones to use on the front page. They could decide to carry one main story from each country represented in their group or take select certain stories.
- They can take photographs, use magazine photographs or draw images that go with the issues they will present in their paper. Explain that these are the images that they have to work with; they may use them and interpret them as they wish.
- Now set the editorial teams to work. Hand out the paper and pencils, glue and scissors to each group.
- Go over the instructions. They have one hour to select four or five news stories that they wish to present, to write the headlines, choose the photos and design the layout. Explain that they do not have to write long articles: the headlines and bi-lines are really sufficient. They should focus on the impact the front page makes, rather than actually telling the full stories. Suggest that they start by discussing the themes or issues that they want to include in their reports.
- When the teams have completed their front pages, they should lay them out for everyone to read. Then go on to the debriefing and evaluation.

14. Front page - Keywords: representation, first steps of action, gender

Debriefing:

Start with a review of the activity itself and then go on to discuss the media, human rights issues and commitment.

- How did the groups organise the work? How did they make decisions about how to do the work and about which stories to cover? Did everyone feel they could participate and contribute?
- How did people choose the themes or issues to work with? Which came first, the issue or the picture? That is, did they first identify an issue and then find a suitable picture to illustrate it or were they inspired by a certain picture and then create a story around it?
- What themes or issues were presented? Did any relate to human rights issues? Were there issues that anyone would have liked to have used, but which they had to drop?
- How do the different front pages of the different papers compare? Have the same themes or photographs been used?
- Have different groups used the same image, but in different ways?
- How do people follow the news? In newspapers, on the television, radio or the Internet? Why do - or don't - they follow the news?
- In this simulation did they try to imitate a real front page? Or did they want to do it differently? What were the differences?
- What sort of news dominates the media in real life?
- Is there generally good coverage of gender issues in the news?
- One of the major points of discussion regarding the media is its «objectivity». Do participants think it is possible to present news objectively?
- Which gender themes were included in their front pages?
- Are there important themes missing from the set of pictures?

Tips for facilitators:

When introducing the activity and discussing the features and layout of a typical front page you should draw the participants' attention to the way the headlines are written to be attention-grabbing and the way the stories are then presented; first there is usually a short summary of a couple of column centimetres and then the finer text with the fuller story. Discuss how pictures are used to support the story or to capture the reader's attention. Point out also what the pictures don't show! Talk about how they have been cropped to draw the viewers' eye to what the photographer - or the picture editor - wants to show. Also point out the way in which captions are written.

Variations:

An alternative way of presenting this activity is to present a radio or television news programme. If you choose to work on a television broadcast it is highly recommended that you use slides (dia-positives) in a blacked-out room to give the «feel» of watching the television. There is a set of slides which have been specially prepared for such an activity, available for loan from EFIL, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning.

Ideas for action:

Many local radio stations have opportunities for community groups to make their own broadcasts. Work on a group project to research and produce a radio broadcast about issues of concern to them, for example, under the headline: «think globally, act locally».

Source: *Compass, a manual of Human Rights Education for Young People.* <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/>

«Have you heard that Peter is gay?»

Introduction:

This activity uses the «fish-bowl» technique to explore attitudes to sexuality including homophobia. Please note that one should only use this exercise if one feels confident and knowledgeable enough to respond to the possible prejudicial statements that may arise. Furthermore, it is recommended not to conduct this exercise in a context which is not open or amiable to discussion on homosexuality (e.g. in a country where homosexuality is prohibited by law).

Aims:

1. Addressing issues and rights related to sexuality, including homosexuality
2. Developing self-confidence to express one's own opinion on these issues
3. Promoting tolerance and empathy

Time: 60 minutes

Material: 3 chairs, 2 facilitators, space for participants to move about, board or flipchart and markers, small slips of paper and pens, a hat

Group size: 10+

Preparation:

- Be aware that in many communities sexuality is a sensitive issue and be prepared to adapt either the methodology or the topic - or both!
- Identify a few people who have been out-spoken about their sexuality including heterosexual and homosexual, bisexual and transsexual men and women.

Instructions:

- Set the scene. Explain that, although most people view sexuality as a private matter, the right not to be discriminated against because of sexual orientation is a fundamental human right and protected by legislation in most European countries. This activity is an opportunity to explore attitudes to sexuality and in particular to homosexuality. Then warm up with a brainstorm of famous people who have been out-spoken about their sexuality.
- Hand out the slips of paper and pens and ask people to write down any questions they have about homosexuality or sexuality in general, and to put their papers in the hat. The questions should be anonymous.
- Explain that this activity is about exploring attitudes to sexuality and in particular to homosexuality. Everyone is free to express opinions that may be conventional or unconventional, controversial or which challenge the norms of their society. People may present points of view with which they agree, or with which they disagree with without fear of ridicule or contempt.
- Place the three chairs in a half-circle in front of the group. These are for the three conversationalists who are in the «fish-bowl». The rest of the group are observers.
- Explain that you will begin by inviting two volunteers to join you in a conversation in the «fish bowl». If at any point someone else would like to join you then they may do so, but as there is only room for three fish in the bowl at any one time, someone will have to swap out. Someone who wishes to join the conversation should come forward and gently tap one of the «conversationalists» on the shoulder. These two people exchange seats and the original «conversationalist» becomes an observer.

15. Let's talk about sex! - Keywords: gender, sexuality, homosexuality

- Encourage people to come forward to express their own opinions, but also to express other opinions, which are not necessarily their own. In this way points of view that are controversial, «politically incorrect», or unthinkable can be aired and the topic thoroughly discussed from many different perspectives.
- Offensive or hurtful comments, which are directed at individuals in the group, are not allowed.
- Ask a volunteer to pick up a question from the hat and start discussing it. Let the discussion run until people have exhausted the topic and points are being repeated.
- Then ask for three volunteers to discuss another question and start another round of conversations under the same rules as before.
- Discuss as many questions as adequate in function of the time you have and the interest of the group. Before you finally go on to the debriefing and evaluation, take a short break to allow time for people to come out of the «fish-bowl». This is especially important if the discussion has been heated and controversial.
- Where do people get their values about sexuality from?
- Do participants' attitudes about sexuality differ from those of their parents and grandparents? If so, in what ways do they differ? Why?
- In some countries, laws and social pressure appear to conflict with the human rights of the individual to respect and dignity, to fall in love with the person of his/her own choice, to marry freely etc. How can such conflicts be resolved?

Tips for facilitators:

Be aware of the social context in which you are working and adapt the activity accordingly. The aim of this activity is to allow participants to reflect on their own sexuality and the norms of their society and to encourage them to have the self-confidence to express their own point of view while being tolerant of people who hold different views. The aim is not to convince people of one point of view or another, nor to come to a consensus decision.

Before running the activity it is recommended that you prepare yourselves by reading the background information on gender and on discrimination and xenophobia. Think over what topics may come up. Some frequently asked questions and issues include:

Debriefing:

Start with a brief review of how people felt being both inside and outside the «fish-bowl». Then go on to talk about the different views that were expressed, and finally discuss what people learnt from the activity:

- Was anyone shocked or surprised by some points of view expressed? Which ones? Why?
- In your community, how open-minded are people generally about sexuality?
- Are some groups more open than others? Why?
- What forces mould how our sexuality develops?
- What is homosexuality?
- What are the differences between heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people?
- Is homosexuality an illness?
- How do people become gay or lesbian?
- What about the risk of AIDS?
- In some countries homosexuality is accepted and gay people can get married in others it is punishable by death.
- How do homosexuals make love?

15. Let's talk about sex! - Keywords: gender, sexuality, homosexuality

It is also important for you as facilitators to reflect on your own values and beliefs about what is right for yourselves, your families and for others and to remember that these values will be reflected in everything you do and say, and what you don't do or say. It is crucial that you acknowledge your own values and prejudice and understand the origins of those values in order that the participants may also develop insights into the origins of their own values.

The aim of the brainstorm of famous people who have been outspoken about their sexuality is to encourage the participants themselves to be open about discussing sexuality. It is also an opportunity to clarify terms such as gay and lesbian, homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual and transsexual.

Your role in the activity is crucial in setting the general tone. It is a good idea to start off with two facilitators as conversationalists. For example, one of you may start by saying, «Have you heard, Peter has announced that he is gay?» The other might reply, «No, I would never have thought it, I mean he doesn't look gay». In this way you imply that the conversation is about a mutual friend and therefore at a «local» level and not a theoretical debate. It also helps open up a discussion about what people know about homosexuality and their attitudes to it.

Hopefully one of the observers will quickly replace you, thus enabling you to leave the discussion to the participants. However, you should continue to participate as an observer so that you maintain the possibility of taking another turn as a conversationalist. This leaves open the possibility for you to discretely manipulate the discussion either to open up different avenues of debate or to tactfully remove a participant who is not keeping to the rules.

If you wish to, you can introduce a rule that any particular point of view can only be raised once. This prevents the discussion focusing on only a few aspects of the topic and helps to discourage repetition of popular prejudices.

Variations:

Other topics that could be used include:

- The age of consent (to marriage or to having sex): should it be different for homosexuals?
- Adoption and marriage: should gay and lesbian couples be allowed to marry? And to adopt children? Why /Why not?
- Aids: is it true that homosexuals are more exposed?

Further information:

«Human sexuality is an integral part of life. Our sexuality influences our personality and behavioural characteristics - social, personal, emotional, psychological - that are apparent in our relationships with others. Our sexuality is shaped by our sex and our gender characteristics and by a host of other complex influences, and is subject to life long dynamic change».

ASPA information technology project, www.aspa.asn.au

Sexual diversity and human rights:

At a common sense level, these two issues appear not to be related. It might be argued that the one is related to private and individual choice, the other to the public domain of legal and political structures, which operate in relation to citizenship. Yet, recent historical, anthropological and sociological studies show how sexual identity and modes of expression of sexual desire are seen, both over time and across cultures, to be potentially disruptive to the maintenance of social order. In some contexts, same or ambiguous sex desire challenges or ruptures traditional or religious beliefs, in others it may be regarded as a psychological illness.

There is a hegemonic force which lies at the centre of the connection between sexual diversity and human rights, and which arguably operates to consistently marginalize equal access to human rights. That force is the institutionalised assumption that heterosexuality as 'naturally ordained' and therefore the 'normal' mode of expression of sexual desire. A constant theme in this process marginalisation is the assumption that heterosexuality is «natural» and therefore morally acceptable while other forms of sexual expression are «unnatural» and therefore morally unacceptable.

Source: *Compass, a manual of Human Rights Education for Young People.* <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/>
Adapted from the Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. www.iglhr.org



Final Input

The final input should pull together all the various threads of the training. This requires that the facilitator is well-acquainted with the theoretical background presented in Part I of this manual. Furthermore, relevant points from the exchange between participants can be used as examples at this stage. This is, for example, where the flipchart consisting of inputs from participants on “What is a Woman? What is a man? What is gender?” can be reintroduced to the group.

More specifically, the final input should consist of an elaboration of normative heterosexuality in order to clarify its limiting and exclusionary strategy. Brief notes are presented below which should be adapted to the particular context of each training. A detailed understanding of the subject can be gained by reading ‘The Normative Matrix of Sexuality (pages 16 -17).

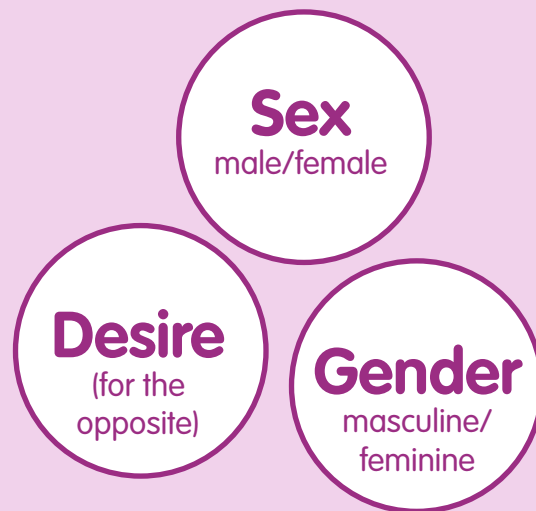
Judith Butler’s heterosexual Matrix

It should be clear by now that gender is a cultural construction. However, getting rid of the “biology is destiny” line of thought is not enough. Gender being a cultural construction implies that the biological rules we considered formerly to govern gender are now merely replaced by culture. Therefore, gender continues to remain a fixed, definite and limiting concept, just as it earlier was, as gender norms are now attributed to patriarchal culture.

So, how does a patriarchal culture impose gender norms?

Firstly, this is done by homogenising the categories of ‘men’ and ‘women’, which effectively obscures differences that arise on the basis of race, class, age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, etc. Then we ask: to what extent do men and women form a common social group, a “gender category”? Is it at all possible to have a “woman” and “man” category if women and men are so different amongst themselves? This question sparked off a discussion in the 80s when Afro-American women protested that white bourgeois women were speaking in the name of a feminism for (all) women and thereby making women part of one seemingly identical group. This causes one to lose sight of the fact that women who do not belong to the (“white”) dominant group are subordinate/sub groups/ inferior everywhere – to men and women of the respective dominant group (Frey, 2002: 77). For example, a poverty-stricken artisan in Ecuador is unlikely to feel she has much in common with a wealthy businesswoman from New York or Berlin. She would be more likely to feel empathy with a man in a similar position than with a supposed “sisterhood” of women around the world. As a result, the discussion remains that the talk of “the men” and “the women” is homogenising and thereby conceals power relations.

Secondly, this is done by instituting what Judith Butler terms the “heterosexual matrix.” Conventional theory states that our sex (male, female) produces our gender (masculine, feminine) which is seen to cause our desire towards the opposite sex. This is seen as a kind of continuum. It becomes a norm as it is repeated again and again in society.



It is assumed that for bodies to make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality. So the binary opposition between the two sexes is important for maintaining this heterosexualisation, which also heterosexualises the so-called “expressive attributes” (masculinity and femininity). According to this theory, men will desire their opposite, that is women; furthermore, a man will be masculine and a woman will be feminine.

The hegemony of heteronormative standards continues to maintain power through the constant repetition of such gendered acts in the most mundane day-to-day activities (the way we walk, talk, sit, gesticulate etc.). Our most personal acts are continuously being scripted by hegemonic social conventions and ideologies. The belief in stable identities and gender difference is brought about by “social sanction and taboo,” meaning that our belief in “natural” behaviour is really the result of subtle coercions. Thus, one is a woman or a man to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame and to call the frame into question is perhaps to lose something of one’s sense of place in gender.

But what about those who do not fit into this heterosexual matrix? What about those who desire someone from the same sex (gay or lesbian), or identify with the other gender and desire the same sex (transvestites). What about drags or Hijras in India?

*Butler (2004:42) explains that we wrongly assume that gender is always and exclusively the matrix of the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’, and that in so doing we miss the critical point, that the production of the stable binary **comes at a cost and that those forms of gender which do not fit the binary are just as much a part of gender as its most normative instance.***

Her approach is to smash the supposed links of this heterosexual matrix, so that gender and desire (like other aspects of one’s identity) are flexible, free-floating and not ‘caused’ by other stable factors.

What we need to reflect on is whether “unity” (the universal ‘man’ or ‘woman’) is necessary for political action or social transformation? Without a compulsory expectation for unity, individuals or small groups might be able to make progress and achieve things for women and other marginalised groups on a smaller scale. Butler argues that we need to accept gender as a complex concept whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. That doing so will open up possibilities for those who have been oppressed and sidelined.

(If time permits, the notion of performativity could also be elaborated upon. See pages 18-21).

In order to contextualise the final discussion and the entire training and make a direct link to the work and lives of the participants, the gender-thematic section should not come to a close before participants have had the chance to reflect on questions such as:

1. How do you understand sexuality to be related to promoting women's empowerment?
2. How are men related to gender equality? Is there interdependence in the lines of dependence?
3. How does all this relate too promoting women's empowerment?
4. What relevance does this training have to voluntary service (if applicable to the particular context)?

Further References & Websites

For a further reading on the subject of gender, discrimination and oppression, we recommend the following websites and publications:

Anti-Bias Werkstatt. <http://www.anti-bias-werkstatt.de/>

Canada Nepal Gender in Organisations (CNGO): <http://www.cngo.org.np>

Compass. A Manual on Human Rights Education for young people. <http://eycb.coe.int/compass/>

Gender Dynamics of HIV and Aids / UN Special Envoy for HIV and Aids in Africa:
<http://www.specialenvoyforaidsinafrica.org/node/81>

Gender Toolbox: <http://www.gendertoolbox.org>

Gender Training Network: www.gender-netzwerk.de

International labour Organisation (ILO) : http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Equality_and_Discrimination/GenderEquality/lang-en/index.htm

Practical Guide for ICYE/EVS Trainings in EU & Partner Countries.
http://www.icye.org/eng/news_pastseminars.html

UN INSTRAW: <http://www.un-instraw.org>

UNESCO Girls' and Women's Education in Africa. Gender Sensitivity: Module 5, Zambia: <http://www.unesco.org/education/mebam/modules.shtml>

UNICEF – Gender Quiz: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/quiz/index.html>

UNDP Gender mainstreaming learning manual, UNDP, January 2001. <http://www.undp.org/women/infopack.shtml>

UNDP Gender mainstreaming in practice: a handbook, UNDP, 2001. It can be found at the UNDP women's section, publications page, along with other resources: <http://www.undp.org/women/publications.shtml>

Salto Youth. <http://www.salto-youth.net/>

Shifting Paradigms. Using an anti-bias strategy to challenge oppression and assist transformation in the South African context," Early Learning Resource Unit, South Africa, 1997

Vom Süden Lernen. Erfahrungen mit einem Antidiskriminierungsprojekt und Anti-Bias-Arbeit. IN-KOTA, Berlin, 2002.

Discussing Women's Empowerment – Theory and Practice. Sida Studies No. 3, 2004.

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The publication was nourished by the activities and experiences of the Euro-Africa EVS project “Voluntary service at (voluntary) work,” supported by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission. Many thanks to the young volunteers and voluntary service organisations involved for their creative effort and precious feedback.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission and the Council of Europe. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission and the Council cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

