1. Sex and Gender Roles

Objectives

- Clearly differentiate between "sex" and "gender" as used in GAD

- Explore cultural conditioning regarding gender roles

- Prepare participants to explain the difference between "sex" and "gender" to colleagues and community members in GAD scenarios

- Examine development experiences in which gender roles are transformed

(Estimated Session Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes)

Session Flow and Description

Introduction - 10 minutes

- Share session objectives.
- Ask participants to share a specific gender role they were taught as a child.

Plenary Group Presentation - 15 minutes

Handout 3.1a, Sex and Gender Roles

Include

- The difference between "sex" and "gender"
- Typical gender roles in communities
- Socially conditioned roles vs. biological roles

Small Groups: Differentiating Between Gender and Sex Roles - 15 minutes

Small Group Discussion Questions

- How have gender roles in your family and community evolved over time?
- Are your gender roles the same as your mother's or father's?
- Do you see changes in gender roles for children under the age of 12?
- If so, what is causing these changes?
- What do you see as implications of changes in gender roles?

Plenary Group - 15 minutes

Ask the small groups to share insights from their discussions.

Plenary Group: Seeing the Difference Between Gender and Sex Roles - 20 minutes

Handout 3.1b and Activity 3.1a

- Present Handout 3.1b.
- Present Activity 3.1a and ask group members to respond.

Discussion Questions

- Why is this distinction important for GAD?
- How has confusion between these two concepts contributed to gender inequality?

Small Group Discussion – Handout 3.1c

Divide the group into three or four small groups. Have them take turns reading the stories presented in Handout 3.1c and discuss implications. Why did a specific focus on gender roles affect the outcome? How did it impact the outcome?

Post-Session Assignment: Becoming a Gender Equity Witness - 5 minutes

- Reflect on gender roles in your own life.
- Which things that you customarily do are linked to gender roles?
- What would happen – where would the dynamic shift – if you changed or stopped filling that role? What resistance would you encounter?
- How does an intentional focus on the roles of women and men, girls and boys lead to transformed gender relations?

Materials

Handouts and Activities

- Handout 3.1a, Sex and Gender Roles
- Handout 3.1b, Contrasting Sex and Gender Roles
- Handout 3.1c, Gender roles in Motion – 3 stories
- Activity 3.1a, Sex or Gender?

Facilitator Preparation

- Make copies of Handout 3.1a, Handout 3.1b, Handout 3.1c and Activity 3.1a.
- Reflect on discussion questions – particularly your own conditioning regarding gender roles during your childhood and how those roles have changed during the course of your life. What brought the changes?
- Create a presentation based on Handouts 3.1a and 3.1b.
- Prepare copies of discussion questions and assignments for small group work.
- If possible, have a flip chart available to record responses to the "role" question posed in the introduction to this session.

Sex and Gender Roles

Sex and Gender

GAD theory proposes to transform gender relations so that women and men benefit equally from development projects. The concept that gender roles are socially determined and can, therefore, be changed is central to this goal.

To avoid confusion, the term "*sex*" is defined to mean the biological differences between men and women. "*Gender*" refers to the social relationships between men and women that vary from one society to another and at different points in history. Gender roles, therefore, are learned from the time of birth and are reinforced by parents, teachers, peers and society. These gender roles are based on the way a society is organised and also vary by age, class, and ethnic group.

Gender Roles

Division of labour in societies illustrates both biological and gender differences. Men are often responsible for activities that require their physical strength, such as house building. Because only women can bear children, many societies use this biological role as the basis on which to allocate other roles. Such related roles often include caring for children and domestic chores.

According to current development theory, most communities recognise three distinct types of work: reproduction, production and community management. A survey of this widely used theory and the part gender roles play in each type of work is included in Session 3.4. In brief, this theory identifies reproductive roles as all tasks related to the household. Production includes tasks or work done for pay, in cash or in kind. Community management roles include activities such as organising a religious festival or participating in community groups and politics.

In differentiating between "sex" and "gender", it is useful to explore different cultural perspectives on gender roles to see how these are socially conditioned. "*Socially conditioned*" need not imply that no natural differences exist between men and women. There are differences, and these are open for discussion. Nevertheless in many societies, roles considered innate and natural to one gender or the other often are actually culturally determined.

An interesting example of the difference between particular European and African concepts of gender roles: colonial British culture considered women weaker than men, both physically and

intellectually. Women were thought to be fragile and, therefore, were not permitted strenuous activity, such as working in fields. When the British colonised the Port of Natal in South Africa, they were in need of men to work on their sugar cane farms. But Natal was made up of mostly Zulus, who had developed different gender roles. In Zulu culture, as in many African cultures, women do the agricultural work. The British colonialists could not persuade the Zulu men to work on their farms, and their cultural ideas about women engaging in strenuous physical activity would not permit them to have women work in the fields. So the British brought over men from India to work in the sugar cane fields, and now the population of the city of Durban in Natal is more than a quarter Indian. The British considered women too weak for agricultural work, and Zulu men considered themselves too "manly" to work in the fields. Different assumptions about women's "natural qualities" led to different gender roles.

In the mid-1800s, early in what is now called the "women's movement", American culture considered women to be "morally superior" to men. Just as men were thought to have greater physical capacity, women were thought to possess greater moral capacity. Because women were assumed to be morally upright (unless considered "corrupted"), the presence of women among men was thought to "civilise" otherwise unruly men. Arguments for granting women's rights were sometimes based on this moral superiority, to bring moderation and peace to politics and public discourse. These ideas no longer hold sway over most Americans, which illustrates how gender roles change over time even within the same culture.

Contrasting Sex and Gender Roles

SEX	GENDER
Biological	Socially constructed set of roles and responsibilities
Born with	Not born with
Natural	Learned
Universal	Cultural
Cannot be changed	Can be changed

No variation from culture to culture or time to time	Variation from culture to culture and time to time
No variation from culture to culture or time to time	Variation from culture to culture and time to time
Example: Only women can give birth	*Example:* Women prove able to do traditionally male jobs as well as men

Women Construction Site Workers:

The Power of Photographs in Empowerment

Karoline Davis

Historically, women have been employed as unskilled workers in construction sites in India. In New Delhi, during 1997, the following story illumined both the reality the women face and the potential for change.

At a resettlement colony, female migrant labourers and construction site workers were hired and paid as unskilled workers. Men hired as "skilled labourers" got free time during their working hours for smoking breaks, and the "unskilled" women were expected to take over the men's responsibilities while they were on break. Photos of women performing these skilled jobs were taken by a development worker in a local NGO and became the seed for a positive spiral of change.

This is how it happened. The female workers of a women's association approached an NGO for funds to build drainage for their community. As women's wages are always less than wages men receive, women frequently don't realise their full potential. In this case, the proposal they submitted included wages for men's skilled labour. The development worker who took the photos of the women doing skilled jobs was reviewing the proposal, recognised what was happening and asked them to revise the proposal and include a "women only" team to do the drainage job. The women lacked confidence and felt it would be impossible for them to construct the drainage without the skilled labour of men. This is where the photos came back into the story! The development worker showed the pictures of women doing the skilled labour and insisted again on a "women only" proposal.

She gave the women 15 days to decide what they were going to do. To her surprise, she heard nothing for 13 days. It took them a full 14 days to gain the confidence to submit a new proposal. Were they successful? Yes! Thirteen years later, the Indira Nagar resettlement colony still has the benefit of a drainage system built by this "women only" construction crew.

Changing roles in post-disaster scenarios

More recently, gender-focused programming significantly affected Muslim women's roles in Indonesia. Patricio Cuevas-Parra, World Vision's Humanitarian Protection, Peacebuilding and Advocacy Manager, reported, "In the months after the tsunami, you would find few women in training or community meetings. Most people, including community leaders and local NGO workers, said integrating women in these activities was a waste of time and money because they could not influence their own communities. They added that NGOs could not change the local culture of the male- dominated society. Some months later there has been noticeable change. Women are participating actively in different stages of the humanitarian response. In workshops there are equal numbers of men and women. In communities, women are taking active roles, and in many cases they are the first to express their opinions and discuss the problems that they face.

Sex or Gender?

Mark each of the following statements as true of SEX (S) or GENDER (G).

	Women can become pregnant; men can impregnate.
	Childcare is the responsibility of women; men should be concerned with other work.
	Women do the majority of agricultural work in African countries.
	Women usually are paid less than men for the same work.
	Women can breast-feed babies; men can bottle-feed babies.

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