Module on

**Gender Sensitising: Putting Gender and a Gender Perspective on the ESD Agenda**

for

**UNESCO’s Regional Workshop on the Thematic Issues in ESD under the Mobile Training Team (MTT) Project**

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Gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. On the contrary, education that is gender sensitive benefits members of both sexes. It helps them determine which assumptions in matters of gender are valid and which are stereotyped generalisations. Gender awareness requires not only intellectual understanding and effort but also sensitivity and open-mindedness to change one’s views and limited perspectives and values. It opens up the widest possible range of life options for both women and men and build their capacities to be more wholesome and humane.

Introduction

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is the educational process of achieving human and humane development in an inclusive, equitable and secure manner. It therefore includes education for gender awareness, gender equality, poverty alleviation, human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural and international understanding, peace and many more. The vision for ESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behavior, lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. The critical role of education, particularly formal education in attaining sustainable development cannot be underscored.

The concern for gender equality in and through education, especially in classroom spaces is critical because of the negative and far reaching implications that gender disparities and inequities (reflected through biases, stereotypes and discriminatory practices) have for educational interventions. Education is a major force that will help trigger change but this will occur only when teachers and learners are assisted in adopting classroom level initiatives that reflect new images based on a positive gender equity ideology. Gender equality as a strategy has great potential to create desired change because it has the capacity to address both the practical and strategic needs of boys and girls, of nations and the world at large.

In this regard, teachers are strategically positioned to act as agents of change in order to achieve gender equality especially through what they teach, how they teach and how they role model their own attitudes, beliefs and practices in the classroom and beyond. Indeed teachers do not come into classrooms as gender-neutral persons. They are likely to have internalized a patriarchal gender ideology through their upbringing and years of socialization in both formal and informal settings. Teachers’ patriarchal world views impact on the hidden curriculum that is often as influential in classrooms as the official curriculum. Frequently it is the hidden curriculum which ensures that gender differentiated practices, procedures and processes occur at
classroom spaces and school structures even where gender friendly policies and curricula already exist.

**Objectives**

This module is designed to sensitise teachers to the meaning and classroom practice implications of gender consciousness so that teachers can imbibe a gender perspective in their everyday lives and in their teaching functions. Specifically, the objectives of this module are:

1. to clarify the meaning of gender
2. to foster gender awareness and gender sensitivity in our everyday lives and classroom practices
3. to create gender literacy among teachers
4. to unravel the interplay of gender relations and gender issues in classroom spaces
5. to underscore the importance of a gender perspective among teachers
6. to delineate some guidelines for “gender-sensitive educational practice”

**Methodology**

The methodology used in this module is experiential, interactive, participatory and reflective. It follows the principles of popular education which engages the “head, hearts and hands” of participants to reflect on their lived experiences in a fun, learningful manner before interrogating new ideas and knowledge, including experiences of fellow participants. It is largely based on group work and discussion that acknowledges and respects the knowledge and experience of participants, while additional inputs, conceptual tools and analysis are presented and synthesized to develop a set of guidelines for ‘a gender-sensitive educational practice’

**Overview of Module**

The designed module takes more than 7 hours to conduct but certain sessions have been trimmed for a seven hours program. Essentially there are 2 parts to the program. The first part focuses on building a conducive unthreatening environment for experiential learning and spontaneous, candid participation; and to explore participants’ perceptions and understandings pertaining to gender and to collectively clarify the meaning of gender, our stereotypes, biases and misperceptions pertaining to gender. The various sessions include (a) unpacking the meaning of gender vs sex, (b) our perceptions of men and women, including their gender roles and needs; and (c) sharing our own lived experiences of gender, especially in the context of our work situations. Because of time constraints the last session was incorporated into an energizing activity but I have elaborated on the session here so that it can be adapted for use if and when applicable or needed.

The second part of the module hone in on examining gender relations in the classroom and beyond. The various sessions planned include (a) mapping gender issues in the classroom, (b) how do teachers/educators perpetuate gender disparity/inequity? (c) what teachers/educators can do to make education, especially co-education more equal? (d) what are girls and boys being
taught about who they are? Again the time factor made it possible only to deliberate on three aspects; namely, mapping gender issues in classroom and schools, what does gender sensitivity mean for our educational practice with a final wrap-up on guidelines delineated from participants’ experiences and suggestions with a final input cum synthesis from the resource person.

Various articles were supplemented for further reading on related topics like gender bias in education, gender and silence, gender equitable curricula, etc. Two internet videos (“Sex and Gender” and “Gender Equality”) were also shown during the tea-breaks as examples of resources to generate further discussion from issues arising from discussion in the first day. Relevant handouts especially from UNESCO’s resource were made available as handouts.

Outline of Module

Part One: Building Community and Understanding Gender
Introductions and expectations
1 Welcome and warm up
(a) Making music together and centering with a collective hum
(b) Group profiling
   Procedure (give creative fun instructions .. to indicate)
   • teach women and men, only women, only men
   • attended a gender training workshop before? .. what .. for whom
   • have been ridiculed
   • have been ridiculed by opposite sex .. how did you feel
   • know students who have been sexually harassed
   • know someone personally who was raped?
   • know someone personally who experienced domestic violence?
   • have researched on gender and education – what about?
   • teaching in a classroom, and administrator, only administrator?
(c) A round on: quality/strength that you see in yourself
   (recorder to jot down on big sheet according to men ’s/women ’s responses)
(d) An activity on listening if there is time – admiring the opposite sex

2 Building Bonds, Building a Learning Community
in small groups of three:
a storytelling-sharing or river of my life/life story – particularly when they first became aware of themselves as girl/boy, man/woman
Objectives
• enable participants to know each other more deeply
• foster mutual understanding and a learning community
• start thinking about gender issues

Procedure
• forms small group of 3-4 with those whom you do not know well
• individually draw the trajectory of your life, particularly focusing on how you realise that you are a boy/girl. What is the key exp/insight fr/around this
• in large grp, ask each person to say 1 pt that he/she found important

b  what do you hope to get out of this module
c  what are your fears/worries fr this module

3  Overview of Module: Part one and Part two (what, why and how)
  Procedure
  • Buzz in pairs: Why take a gender conscious approach to ESD?
  • Why is it IMPORTANT to be gender conscious
    ✓  in ESD
    ✓  in all our educational practice
    ✓  in our personal and professional life
  • Synthesis Input: Inter-relationship of Gender (Equality) and ESD
  • Overview of program agenda

4  Sex vs Gender: What is the difference?
(Commonalities, Differences, Stereotypes and Social Cultural Constructions)
  Objectives
  • understand the different meanings of the English words “sex” an “gender”
  • explore social and cultural expectations for males and females, and
  • illustrate the difference between those based on sex and those based on gender
  • clarify and reinforce the meaning of gender

  Procedure: gender skip/race
  1  in pairs, blind folded feet together list characteristic, roles, traits of men and women
  2  whole group discussion
    • examine characteristics to see whether apply to men and women and vice versa in the listing
    • discussion: is there a difference between men and women. What then is common to man and woman, different?
    • mindmap meaning of sex and gender. On the flip chart, write the word “sex” on the left side and “gender” on the right side. Ask participants to explain the meaning of these two words. Write their responses under the appropriate heading
    • ask what the two words mean in their mother tongue (in groups that include people who speak English as a second language). Are there separate words that specifically mean sex and gender in the local language?

5  Gender roles, activities and needs
  Objectives
- help participants clarify their personal beliefs about the roles and needs of women and men
- question societal views regarding the roles of men and women in society
- examine and compare the lives of men and women

**Procedures**

- Divide into 6 groupings:
  - Group a: recall certain experiences of childhood and act out individually what you did as a child because you were a girl/boy
  - Group b: act out an activity you have to do because you are a woman/man
  - Group c: think of an activity you dream of and want to do because you are a woman/man
  - Group d: things that you like to do that is considered typical of your gender
  - Group e: act out an activity you hate doing that is typical for your gender
  - Group f: identify an activity you like doing that is considered non-traditional for your gender
  - Group g: share an activity that you really wish you could do that is non-traditional (while performing the activity, think of the dialogue that goes with it .. what were you thinking/saying while doing it?)
- Discuss ‘what dictate the above roles
- On a blank flipchart, write “Social/cultural expectations” and divide the sheet into two columns: one for Men/Boys and one for Women/Girls.
- Ask participants to tell some social/cultural expectations for men and boys in their society:
- Repeat for women and girls: tell some social/cultural expectations for men and boys in their society.
- For each expectation noted, discuss with participants if this expectation is based on sex or gender. For example, the expectation for women to have children is based on sex but the expectation for women to do the cooking for a family is based on gender.
- Introduce stereotypes: who reinforce the stereotypes and myths, and where do they come from?; how do these stereotypes and myths affect our views of ourselves, other women and men
- Has this discussion brought to light any of your assumptions, stereotypes about men, women

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6  **Sharing our Experiences of Gender, Sharing Our Work Experience** (adapted from ‘The Oxfam Gender Training Manual’)

**Objectives**

- explore gender relations in participants’ own lives and workplaces
- give participants an opportunity to talk about themselves and how they feel
- expose participants to gender issues to other people’s work
- know the contexts/ kinds of groups and activities people work in and with

**Procedure**
(1) in small single-sex groups, discuss
   - what issues pertaining to gender are found in your work spaces/situation
   - how does my being a woman/man/transsexual/bisexual/gay/lesbian affect my life and work?
   - what changes would help me make use of my full potential?
   - what are your frustrations working with men, women in general?

(2) in mixed-sex groups, ask the men and women to share with each other the experiences and comment from the first discussion groups

7 Explain the definitions of sex and gender, including the ppt in ppt input - use answers of participants to illustrate

8 To verify clarity of gender refer to exercise on Statements about Men and Women (see attachment/handout A4)

9 Synthesis: Gender Sensitivity, Gedner and Education, and Gender Perspective (refer to ppt input A1 and attachments/handouts A3, A6, A7)

Part Two: Gender Relations in the Classroom and Beyond

1 Warm up and Overview of Part two
   a sculpture activity
   b comments, questions/ issues fr Part one
   c overview of Part two

2 Mapping genders issues in the classrooms, schools
   Objectives
   - to familiarize participants on the diverse range of gender related issues in schools and classroom spaces
   - to start a discussion and analysis of why such issues exist and how they can be addressed
   - to sensitise participants to their own potential gender biases/discrimination as educators
   - to initiate a conscious process of engendering gender equality among participants

   Procedure
   In small groups of three (fr different countries, if possible), Identify with concrete egs and discuss the
   - common gender related issues that exist in class and/or in schools
   - what are other gender issues that may not be so visible?
   - why do these issues exist. what causes them?
   - how do teachers/educators perpetuate gender disparity/inequality?
   - what can teachers do to make co-education, formal schooling more equal?
3 Examining our own educational practice

Objectives
- To delineate appropriate guidelines for teachers to be gender sensitive.

Procedure
In small groups of threes, discuss:
- What does gender sensitivity mean in the context of your educational practice?
- How can teachers be gender sensitive?

4 Taking this back to our contexts
Synthesis on how we can be gender sensitive and address gender inequality in our classrooms with ref to handout on checklist on ‘examining my own educational practice’ (see attachment)

ATTACHEMENTS
1 Powerpoint for the Module with the respective inputs (A1)
2 Handouts
   - Pre-session Questionaire (A2)
   - Glossary of related terms (A3)
   - Statements about Men and Women (A4)
   - Checklist on “examining my own educational practice” (A5)
   - Gender and Education (A6)
   - UNESCO’s Gender Lens (A7)

3 Supplementary Readings

4 Videos

5 References