Tool 7: Gender Stereotypes

Target audience: All

The following statements present strong gender bias. The aim of this tool is to strike people’s attention and make them reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes.

Would you say the following statements reflect stereotypes that should be changed?

“Women in the field damage the crop.” (Bangladesh)

“Men are the front legs, women are the hind legs of an elephant.” (Thailand)

“A woman has to live nine lives to be born a man.” (Bhutan)

“Behind a loser stands a woman.” (Philippines)

“Women are incapable. They can’t even circle a stove.” (Pakistan)

“Respect men, degrade women.” (Japan, Viet Nam)

“Without a man, the family is a house with no roof.” (Viet Nam)

“Married daughters are water thrown out of the house.” (India)

“A boy inherits my name. A girl has no name.” (Papua New Guinea)

“Parents of a son in monkhood gain merit.” (Myanmar)

“Find me a woman and I’ll give you a snake.” (Philippines)

“Daughters-in-law feel like ghosts in the house.” (Lao PDR)

“Having a baby boy brings more joy than having a horse.” (Bhutan)

“Daughters are temporary in the house. Sons are its honour.” (Pakistan)

“Daughters grow up for others, and sons for their family.” (China)

“A boy inherits my land. A girl becomes another man’s wife.” (Papua New Guinea)

“A hundred sons are not a burden, but one daughter bows our heads.” (Pakistan)

“Men are rice grains and women are cooked rice.” (Thailand)

“Don’t trust elephants, cobras, servants and your wife.” (Thailand)

“Women are vines – they cling to whatever they reach, are capricious and untrustworthy.” (Thailand)

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Some of these statements are taken from Gender Sensitivity, A Training Manual, UNESCO, 1997 and others have been collected from series of GENIA workshop participants.
“Sons open the doors of heaven. Daughters open the doors of trouble.” (Nepal)

“A stick controls a wife.” (Bangladesh)

“A daughter who looks like her father is rich, but a son who looks like his mother is unhappy.” (Viet Nam)

“Three steps out of the house the man is a bachelor.” (Myanmar)

“A son is a master; a husband, a God.” (Myanmar)

“Obey father when young, follow husband when married and do as son says when old.” (Japan)

“An ideal woman is a good wife and a wise mother.” (Japan)

“A barren woman is like a stone in a river.” (Philippines)

“A man is the master in the house.” (Japan)

“A woman’s place is in the kitchen.” (Papua New Guinea)

“Having daughters is like constructing toilets in front of one’s house.” (Thailand)

“Long hair, short mind.” (Russia)

“Women are weak furniture.” (Madagascar)

Would you like to add other statements to this list?

Finally, consider this statement: “Educate a woman, educate a nation.” Is it discriminatory?