



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Sustainable
Development
Goals

Bangkok Office
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau
for Education

TOOL
25

Organizing gender-responsive trainings and meetings



Gettyimages ©978296066

Table of Contents

- Objectives 1**
- Key information: Setting the scene 1**
 - Self-study activity: Reflect on your experience of events..... 1
- Key issues to consider when planning a gender-responsive event..... 2**
 - Self-study and/or group activity 4
 - Optional extension activity for self-study and/or group work..... 4
- Further reading..... 5**
- Handout 1: Personal account of a training session 6**



Objectives

The objectives of this tool are to:

- encourage critical reflection on events, from the perspective of gender responsiveness;
- provide suggestions for how to improve the gender-responsiveness of all events, whether or not gender is a specific topic focus.

Key information



Setting the scene

Every event we organize needs to be gender responsive. This applies to events that have gender issues as a main focus (such as an event that discusses girls' education), and to events that focus on other topics (such as curriculum development or funding education).

One of our key aims is to ensure that gender is considered across all aspects of the education sector, and other sectors. We want gender to be 'mainstreamed'. We can help to achieve this by setting a good example. We can ensure every meeting or training explicitly considers gender issues, both in the content being discussed and in the way we organize the logistics and facilitation.



Self-study activity

Reflect on your experience of events

- Work on your own or in a group. Think of an event you attended recently. It could be a work or social event.
- Brainstorm the ways in which you felt the event was gender responsive, and the ways in which it was not.
- Think about or discuss any positive impact that the gender responsiveness had for you.
- Think about or discuss any negative impacts that resulted from the lack of gender responsiveness.
- If you feel there was no impact on you personally, did you see impacts on other women or men? If so, what was the impact?
- Try to group your thoughts under the following headings:
 - venue, logistics, timing;
 - management of the event, including pre-event communication;
 - participants;
 - trainers, facilitators, chairs, speakers, note-takers;
 - content, topics being discussed;
 - evaluation and reporting.

Key issues to consider when planning a gender-responsive event

Organizing an event that responds well to the needs of women and men requires careful consideration, but not necessarily extra work or resources. The following table summarizes key points to consider:

Venue, logistics and timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the chosen venue a place that will feel accessible and comfortable for both women and men? For example, is the meeting being held in a sports club hall predominantly used by men? Is it in a location that women feel safe travelling to? • Does the venue have facilities for women and men, such as separate, private, toilets and washing facilities, or prayer spaces? • Are there disability-accessible toilet facilities? Are these separate or sufficiently private for men and women to use? • Are there safe facilities for child care at the venue or nearby? • Does the timing of the event enable women and men to attend? Could the timing be adjusted to help more men or women participants to attend, for example, starting slightly later so that parents can take children to school before coming to the event? • Is it a free event? If there is a cost involved, can both women and men afford to attend? If not, is there a way to support those who cannot afford it?
Management and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a team of people organizing the event, are women and men represented? • Is there someone in the team with experience of organizing gender-responsive events? • Has someone been given the responsibility of monitoring gender responsiveness in the preparation and delivery stages? • If there is only one person organizing the event, is that person sufficiently aware of gender issues? Do they have experience of organizing a gender-responsive event? Do they know who to ask for help or advice? • Do the event plans draw on experience from previous events, to ensure gender responsiveness is improved? • Do the objectives for the event promote gender equality and responsiveness? • Do invitations make it clear that women and men are welcome? • Is the language used in invitations gender neutral? For example, do invitations refer to participants as 'you' or 'they' or 's/he', or do they refer only to 'he', which might imply male participants are expected to attend?
Participant profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be a balance of women and men invited? Is it important that you achieve a balance for this particular event? How could the gender balance be improved?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be a balance of women and men actually attending? If not, can you find out why more men or more women have declined to attend? How could attendance be improved? • Will participants be from different levels of the organization? For example, will you have senior women as well as senior men? If not, how could this be improved?
Trainers, facilitators, chairs, speakers, note-takers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the most appropriate trainer, facilitator, chair, or speaker for the event, or for each session in the event? • What are the pros and cons of a woman or man in each role or session? • If there will be a team of trainers, speakers, or others, is it important to ensure a balance of men and women in these roles? Do you have a balance? How could this be improved? • Is your chair for the event a woman or man? Or is the chair role rotated during the day, between women and men? • Who is taking notes or fulfilling the rapporteur role? Is this role being done by men and women, or rotated during the event? • Are the key people – trainers, facilitators, chair, speakers, note-takers – gender aware and responsive? If not, how can you prepare them to behave in a gender-responsive way (for instance, to ensure that the chair gives women and men equal chances to ask questions, or to ensure the facilitator challenges gender stereotypes or prejudice if this arises during discussions).
Content, topics for discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the title of the event convey that this is an event for women and men? • Have the topics for discussion been identified by women and men? • Has the content (presentations, training activities, reading materials,) been reviewed with the following in mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – relevance to the lives of women and men; – non-sexist language; – illustrations and photos that reflect and value the experiences of women/girls and men/boys.
Evaluation and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a mechanism for women and men to express gender-related concerns or worries during the event (e.g. if facilities are not suitable, or if they are concerned by the content of discussions)? • Does the end-of-event evaluation enable you to record whether respondents are male or female, to help identify whether women and men’s needs and expectations were met? • Do questions give opportunities for gender-responsiveness issues to be raised?

- Will the final report from the event record gender-related issues that were raised during discussions and that arose during the organizing or running of the event?
- Is there a mechanism for following up female and male participants to see if the discussions or training has had an impact on behaviour or skills?
- Is there a mechanism to ensure that lessons learned in regard to gender responsiveness are used in planning and running future events?



Self-study and/or group activity

- Work on your own or in a group.
- Think about another work-related event you attended recently. It could be a very small meeting, like a departmental planning day, or a big event, like an international conference.
- Using the questions in the table above, write some feedback and advice for the event organizers.
- Make a note of the things they could improve in a future event (what needs to be done and why).
- Also make a note of things you want to praise them for.
- If working in a group, discuss your ideas with others.
- Can you think of any questions that you would add to the list in the table?



Optional extension activity for self-study and/or group work

This activity can be done as an extra activity. Or it may be useful if trainees have not attended any events they can reflect on.

- Read the account in **Handout 1** from a participant explaining about her experiences at a training event.
- Highlight the challenges that were faced.
- Brainstorm how these problems could have been avoided if the organizers had paid more attention to gender responsiveness.
- What advice would you give the organizers for the next time?



Further reading

European Institute for Gender Equality. 2016. *Gender Equality Training: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit*. Vinius: EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/genderequalitytrainingtoolkit.pdf>. (Accessed 10 July 2019).



Handout 1

Personal account of a training session

I went to a training course last week, about the new national curriculum and how we are supposed to implement it in our schools. It was the usual boring training – they mostly just talked at us for six hours and gave us very little chance to interact. Mind you, I felt quite shy about interacting anyway, as I was the only woman in my group.

There were only seven women at the training and thirty-eight men. We had mentioned this would happen when the invitations were sent out at the end of term, a week ago. We said the training is in school holiday time, so most of the female teachers will be at home looking after their children, who of course are not in school this week. We asked for the training date to change, or at least to give us more notice than one week. We were told that it is our responsibility to find alternative child care so we can attend the training. I was lucky, my mother has been able to take my children even though it was short notice.

Anyway, because there were so few women they split us up – one woman per table – so that each group could contain female perspectives. We did two group activities, when we were not being lectured to.

One activity asked us to look at some curriculum materials for the language curriculum. I was not happy with the materials as they seemed to portray women and men in stereotypical roles (you know, woman was cooking, man was working in the office). I raised this in my group, and suggested we needed to discuss a strategy for how to use these materials in a way that challenges rather than endorses stereotypes. But the guys in the group did not think it was a big issue. They preferred to focus the discussions on some technical language teaching issues that they disagreed with.

When we had to do feedback to the whole room, one other lady tried to raise this issue of stereotyping. Unfortunately, the facilitator was

quite strict. He just said “we have been given these materials, they are approved by the government, we have to use them. Even if you complain, they cannot be changed now.”

At lunch time, the seven women met up to discuss our ideas for how to overcome the stereotyping in the official curriculum materials. We developed some excellent ideas – shame no one else heard the discussions!

The logistics for the event were not great. All the women were late returning after lunch because there was no separate women’s toilet. We had to walk to the café along the road to use their toilet, and this made us late. Of course, we could have just used the toilet the men were using, but it was not very clean and they were all hanging around in a big queue. It made me nervous.

In the afternoon session, there was an ‘any other business’ slot. Myself and two other women asked to discuss gender stereotyping. The facilitator’s response was: “I asked for Any Other Business (AOB) ideas after lunch, but you were not here. I’m afraid it’s too late, we do not have enough time to add any more onto the agenda now.”

It was quite a frustrating training. The new curriculum is not perfect, but with some careful adaptations we could make it work well. I’m not sure what to do next with regard to the issue of gender stereotyping in the curriculum materials. I guess I can just make some adaptations in my own lessons. I do that a lot anyway. But really we need all the teachers to be making similar adaptations, even if the government does not want to listen to our requests to revise the materials formally.

Mina Joseph, primary school teacher



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Education Sector

UNESCO Bangkok Office Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education

Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoei
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Email: iqe.bgk@unesco.org
Website: bangkok.unesco.org
Tel: +66-2-3910577 Fax: +66-2-3910866

