



COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

# **Gender Bias Quiz**

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## Gender Bias Quiz

At the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), we are committed to supporting an environment in which our staff, our consultants and the staff of our partner institutions and organisations can freely engage in dialogue about gender-related issues. This quiz was developed as a tool for identifying gender biases in order to raise awareness of them. We invite you to use this quiz to explore gender biases and initiate discussions.

Please check the relevant boxes below. Please do not include the name of the organisation where you work.

Female  Male

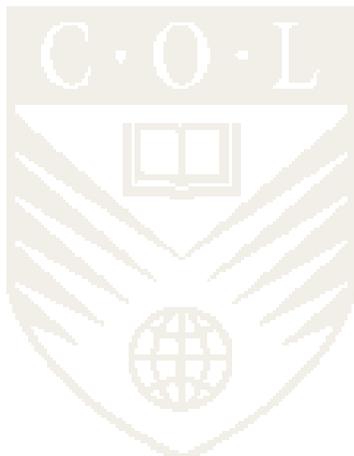
Age: 21-30  31-40  41-50

51-60  61-70  71+

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### QUIZ

The following table includes 20 statements about gender roles and responsibilities. Please mark an X in the box that most closely reflects *your own opinion* (and not what you believe that society thinks), marking only one box per question. Please read the order of options offered carefully. And remember, there are no right or wrong answers. This is all about what you believe.



	COMPLETELY DISAGREE (1)	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE (2)	SOMEWHAT AGREE (3)	COMPLETELY AGREE (4)
1. The birth of a boy is more important than that of a girl.				
2. Sex and gender are the same thing.				
3. A girl's appearance matters more than a boy's.				
4. It is women's responsibility to care for children.				
5. Boys are often better in mathematics and science than girls are.				
6. It is probably a more worthwhile investment to spend money on sending boys to school than girls.				
7. Men and boys attain higher literacy levels than women and girls.				
8. Girls are less able than boys to withstand the physical demands of contact sports such as football, rugby or martial arts.				
9. Men are more competent owners of property and land than women.				
10. Men tend to be more reliable than women about paying back borrowed money.				
11. If women take maternity leave, they should not complain if their careers stall.				
12. These days, women and men with similar qualifications earn equal pay.				
13. As women's rights have increased, men seem to have increasingly less status and position in society.				
14. Women cannot work and take care of their families at the same time.				
15. Men tend to have greater responsibilities than women.				
16. A woman should not put her career before her husband's.				
17. Women cannot succeed in male-dominated professions such as engineering.				
18. When making decisions, men tend to be more rational than women.				
19. Women are too emotional to be effective leaders.				
20. Women and men running executive boards together causes problems.				

## Score Chart

Once you have marked your responses, add up all the points to find your total score. Find your score in each of the categories below. The purpose of this score chart is to give you a sense of your level of gender awareness. The recommendations provide some suggestions about what you can do to address any gender bias.

### 66 – 80 POINTS

Your answers reflect attitudes and beliefs shaped by traditional norms. You are comfortable with how women and men currently fulfil their expected roles, even though women and girls might be negatively affected by discriminatory and unfair policies and practices. You may not yet be open to the idea of change in gender roles.

### Recommendation

You may find it useful to take introductory courses on gender equality to explore the concept of equality between men and women, division of labour, power distribution, human rights, and equal access to and control over resources, for example. A basic grounding in gender equality principles can help you begin to reflect on gender equitable ethics and practices.

### 51 – 65 POINTS

You have mixed feelings about the type of changes that gender equality would bring to your life and the world. You are unsure about the impact of gender equality on traditional roles, including on men's status and position in society.

### Recommendation

You may have already taken basic gender equality courses/training, but there may be areas or principles that still conflict with your views. You could consider attending advanced courses/training in order to better reflect on how gender equality can help improve the quality of life of families and society as a whole.

### 36 – 50 POINTS

You have a good awareness of gender issues and recognise that women and girls should have equal access to all the resources and benefits available to men and boys. While you support gender equality, there may be certain aspects of traditional gender roles that you would prefer to remain unchanged.

### Recommendation

You may have already completed basic and advanced levels of gender equality courses/training, but may find certain gender concepts difficult to accept. If so, consider seeking out a gender equality expert to discuss the issues that concern you.

### 20 – 35 POINTS

You are a champion of gender equality and women's rights. You believe that gender-based discrimination is unfair and holds women and girls back. You understand that when women and girls are empowered, everyone wins.

### Recommendation

Your awareness of gender equality is advanced, and you may even find yourself championing women's and girls' rights. Your score suggests you are highly likely to put your gender equality knowledge into practice. You are ready to share your perspectives on gender equality with your colleagues, family and friends.

**T**hese trainer's notes have been developed to provide guidance for the facilitator administering the gender quiz. They are designed primarily to clarify some of the key issues and concepts raised in the quiz and give a little more information about them. They may be used to spark discussion and help to strengthen participants' awareness of gender bias and its roots. These notes also include gender analysis conceptual tools to help participants recognise and address gender bias in projects and programmes.

## Trainer's Notes

### HOW TO USE THE QUIZ

When administering the quiz to participants, facilitators should distribute the quiz portion without the scoring chart. Once participants have completed the quiz, the scoring chart can be handed out to them so they can find out into which category they fall. There are four score categories, and each category has a score range of 15–16 points. The score chart includes a brief explanation for each category along with recommendations on how participants can address their gender bias. Facilitators can discuss these recommendations with participants. The lower the score, the higher the participant's gender issue awareness.

The quiz can be used as a pre-workshop quiz or as a discussion piece on gender issues in small or large group settings. Participants can work through all the questions, or can focus on the ones that most resonate with them or with which they struggle the most, and initiate a discussion either in groups or in plenary to examine each question in greater depth.

The following sections (A, B and C) cover basic gender concepts and conceptual gender analysis tools with explanations.

### KEY DEFINITIONS

**SEX** Biological differences determined by nature.  
Universal, not easily changeable.

**GENDER** Socially and culturally constructed male and female roles and responsibilities.  
Roles and responsibilities change over time and vary between communities.

## Introduction to Gender Equality Concepts

*Gender bias occurs when views and attitudes assign a greater importance to one sex over the other.*

## **SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER**

Society values women and men differently, and allocates roles and responsibilities specific to their gender. This results in gender division of labour and significantly influences who has access to resources, benefits and decision-making powers. Men often experience better access to, more control over and more use of productive resources than women do. Differential valuing of gender roles places power in the hands of men and perpetuates discriminatory gender roles throughout various levels, including the household, the community and public spheres.

## **GENDER AND CULTURE**

Culture plays an important role in any society. It defines how women, men, girls and boys should behave and act at the individual, family and community level. It determines the status of and power relations between women, men, girls and boys. Culture has a direct influence on gender and on how roles and responsibilities are assigned to women and men.

## **GENDER BIAS AND STEREOTYPING**

To understand gender bias, it would be useful to first explore how it relates to stereotypes, because both “bias” and “stereotype” are often mentioned together. According to Oxford Dictionaries,<sup>1</sup> a stereotype is “a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.” It can be based on an individual’s physical attributes (e.g. age, sex or race) or on intangible aspects such as religion and culture. The process of stereotyping often involves forming opinions about the characteristics of a group and then attributing them to an individual.<sup>2</sup> Given that stereotypes arise from information that is not factual, the majority of stereotypes tend to be negative.

Psychologists suggest that stereotyping is actually critical to our survival. As humans, we are naturally predisposed to making quick judgments about new people and situations.<sup>3</sup> Stereotyping helps our brains sort out our world and categorise people, places or things. Often, we evaluate these based on “additional associations, usually negative.”<sup>4</sup> Stereotyping defines our social interactions and permeates our learning and decision-making processes. This introduces bias, which essentially means we start viewing the stereotype as true and definitive, without pausing to consider if we are making a fair judgment.

Similarly, gender bias occurs when views and attitudes assign a greater importance to one sex over the other. Gender bias is the unequal treatment of and expectations assigned to a person due to the person’s sex. It is couched in “attitudes, opinions, or roles applied to a particular gender, and which function as unjustifiably fixed assumptions.”<sup>5</sup> Often, such attitudes express the notion that men are superior to and more competent than women.<sup>6</sup> Gender bias is persistently found in cultures throughout the world, including in Western countries. It poses significant challenges for gender equality and women’s empowerment, because it facilitates the systematic exclusion of and discrimination against women and girls simply for being born female.

Gender bias perpetuates gender inequality because it often masquerades as a set of culturally or religiously accepted norms and practices that cannot, and in the opinion of those who support them should not, be altered. For example, in many countries,

1 [www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stereotype](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stereotype)

2 Hilton, J.L., & von Hippel, W. 1996. Stereotypes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47, 237-271.

3 [www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199805/where-bias-begins-the-truth-about-stereotypes](http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199805/where-bias-begins-the-truth-about-stereotypes)

4 Ibid.

5 [www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true](http://www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true), p. 3

6 Peebles, D. 2012. *Draft Gender Mainstreaming Manual*. United Nations. Unpublished.

one form of gender bias is a belief that girls are weak at or uninterested in mathematics and that boys perform technical tasks better than girls. These beliefs are not founded on evidence, but unfortunately they still contribute to maintaining gaps in access to learning opportunities between girls and boys and they influence the areas of study that girls and boys pursue. Such types of gender bias are also found outside of the education realm, and are in fact prevalent in all areas of life.

Additional examples of how gender bias can affect the design and delivery of learning opportunities are cited below:

- In many countries, teachers tend to call on boys more often than girls in a classroom setting, thus unintentionally encouraging male participation, male leadership and male assertiveness.<sup>7</sup> Such bias sends the wrong message to girls, conveying that their participation is unimportant or even discouraged. Aside from girls missing out on learning opportunities, such incidents may also contribute to girls becoming silent and invisible in the classroom. This has the potential to affect not only their school performance, but also their self-esteem and self-confidence. Gender bias in schools can have long-term negative effects on girls, potentially eroding any ambition to become future decision-makers and leaders.
- In some cases, courses are designed with only men in mind or with the assumption that they will be accessible to both women and men. The danger of such thinking is that it assumes women have the same access to professional development as men. In reality, women may face barriers such as time restrictions, transportation limitations, lower literacy levels and limited technology knowledge that may mean they cannot easily access such opportunities.
- In agriculture, extension courses are often offered to men. The assumption seems to be that farmers are men, which is traditional in many areas, and that they will share their acquired knowledge with their wives. However, this may not be reflected in reality. It is therefore critical that such training initiatives are planned in a way that women farmers can also have access to the information they need. In Ethiopia, for example, a donor-supported project ensured that male farmers attended training events with their wives, thereby creating equal access to vital information for both men and women.

*Gender bias can affect the design and delivery of learning opportunities.*

<sup>7</sup> Peebles, *Draft Gender Mainstreaming Manual*.

Women and men are treated differently from birth not only because of their physical differences — and such differences pose certain challenges at each stage of their lives — but also because of different socio-cultural values associated with gender. The latter leads them to be treated differently throughout their lives. They experience different forms of gender-based discrimination and bias at various times of their lives. Women and men often internalise expectations and beliefs about what are “acceptable” female and male behaviour and roles in society, and many conform to these expectations without realising it.

The following table presents a brief analysis of key gender issues at different stages of life. The gender issues in this table have been selected to mirror those included in the gender quiz, and are not a comprehensive representation of all gender issues that can occur in each stage of life/age group in various contexts.

## Gender Issues at Different Stages of the Life Cycle

**TABLE 1: GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE LIFE CYCLE<sup>8</sup>**

AGE	ISSUES – FEMALE	ISSUES – MALE
<p><b>0 – 5 years</b></p>	<p>New technologies have made it possible to determine a baby’s sex before it is born, and in some countries some families choose to abort female foetuses for various socio-cultural reasons while hoping that the next pregnancy will bring them a boy.</p>	<p>A higher proportion of male babies than female babies are born (51% compared to 49%). This ratio balances out by the time boys are five due to very young boys being more vulnerable to some illnesses and birth defects. In regions where there is significant gender discrimination against female children it does not balance out.</p>
	<p>Parents and relatives begin to distinguish between what is acceptable for boy and girl babies from the moment they are born. Girls’ appearance is seen as important, and they are often dressed in “feminine” colours and textures.</p>	<p>Boy babies are dressed in sturdier, plainer clothes. They may be left to cry longer or told not to cry when they fall as toddlers. This sets up a pattern of development that encourages boys and men to keep their emotions to themselves or to not admit when they are in pain.</p>
	<p>Girls are likely to walk, talk and be toilet-trained earlier than boys.</p>	<p>Boy babies’ physiological and speech development may be slower than that of girls.</p>
<p><b>6 – 12 years</b></p>	<p>Young girls are often expected to help out with household chores and take care of siblings or family members. This robs them of time for playing and participating in other activities that foster healthy child development and education.</p>	<p>From a fairly early age, boys are told not to cry when hurt, and to act tough and strong. Their chores are often strength-based. They may also be put at more risk by being asked to do errands or chores that take them out of the home.</p>
	<p>Parents may choose to invest fewer family resources in girl children in terms of their education. There is, however, a strong link between girls’ education and the number of children they will have in the future as well their future income.</p>	<p>Boys may be discouraged from participating in school activities that are considered more feminine, such as dance, art and music. However, there is a strong correlation between these activities and enhanced learning, particularly with regard to the relationship between mathematics and music.</p>
	<p>Girls tend to fit in more easily in school settings, their language and social skills are often more advanced than those of boys of a similar age and they often learn best in situations that call for cooperative learning, particularly the sciences and mathematics.</p>	<p>Boys often learn best in competitive situations, and where there are many very active, short activities. Boys are more likely to experience learning disabilities such as dyslexia and hyperactivity.</p>
<p><b>13 – 18 years</b></p>	<p>Teenage girls drop out from school due to parental fears about rape or pregnancy, increased domestic responsibilities or pregnancy. The expectation that they do not need much education if they are going to get married and have children is another factor.</p>	<p>Teenage boys tend to drop out of school due to frustrations about learning or more limited attention spans, involvement in drugs and crime or increased pressure on them to help support their families. Boys tend to be more severely disciplined in school than girls.</p>
	<p>Girls may face the possibility of child, early and forced marriage due to socio-economic pressures and “stereotypical views of sexuality and women’s role in society.”<sup>9</sup></p>	<p>There is considerable pressure on teenage boys to become sexually active, and they tend to be perceived positively by their peers if they are. Boys are also less likely to be victims of child, early and forced marriage.<sup>10</sup></p>

AGE	ISSUES – FEMALE	ISSUES – MALE
<b>19 – 40 years</b>	<p>Young women may marry young and have one to two children by age 20. The need to combine childcare, domestic work and income-generating or agricultural activities often compromises their ability to look after their children and themselves and prevents them from furthering their education or work opportunities.</p>	<p>Pressure on young men to provide financial support for their young families means that they are not able to take advantage of training opportunities that could ensure a better future for themselves and their families in the long term.</p>
	<p>Most women in this stage of life have little or no access to or control over education, training, assets such as land and property, credit and other resources that could help them improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Depending on their socio-economic status, by this age men may already own resources and assets that generate steady revenue for them. They also tend to have the right to buy and sell resources.</p>
	<p>Women may become more risk-averse than men since any decision they make reflects directly on their ability to care for their families. This has significant implications for small business development. Women may also need permission from their husbands to enrol in courses or pursue certain types of careers.</p>	<p>Men have more opportunities to grow their businesses or advance their careers without worrying about their family limiting their choices. More value is accorded to their work and decisions.</p>
<b>41 – 59 years</b>	<p>Middle-aged women are at increased risk of becoming widows and may be left dependent upon their husbands’ relatives or their sons and daughters-in-law for their daily needs. In some cultures widows may be perceived as having less status than married middle-aged women.</p>	<p>Middle-aged men are at increased risk of a wide variety of illnesses, but particularly those related to cardio-vascular health. They are also less likely to seek preventive health care. Although widowers in this age group do not suffer any loss of status, they may have a hard time adapting to life without their wives, especially if they do not have a strong family support system.</p>
<b>60+ years</b>	<p>Women who work outside the home still find that they have a significant workload when they retire because of their domestic responsibilities. If they are poor, they will not be in a position to retire and will need to continue working as long as their health holds out.</p>	<p>Many men find it hard to adjust to retirement as much of their status and social life has revolved entirely around a work setting. Studies show that a significant percentage of men die within a year of retirement.</p>

8 Adapted from: Kartini International. 2006. *Including Men in Life Cycle Discrimination Gender Analysis*. And Longwe, S. 1993. *Women’s Equality and Empowerment Framework*. New York: UNICEF.

9 OHCHR. 2014. *Preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage*. Ch.19, p.8.

10 OHCHR. 2014. *Preventing and eliminating child, early and forced marriage*. Ch.16, p.7.

# Gender Analysis Conceptual Tools

*Gender bias can often be unconscious, because it is an inherent, unquestioned part of cultural, religious and institutional norms and practices.*

This section presents selected gender analysis tools used to identify gender bias when working with communities. As explained in section A, gender bias can frequently be unconscious, often because it is an inherent, unquestioned part of cultural, religious and institutional norms and practices. The following gender analysis tools are some of the most commonly used analytical tools and are developed from an examination of specific gender concepts. They are useful in helping us uncover veiled gender discrimination by enabling us to ask the right questions. They allow us to think critically about who is doing what and why, who is represented and who is not, who is given the right to use their voice and who is not, who has access to which resources and who controls them, and which resources both men and women have access to and control over. Through these questions, the work of unravelling gender bias can begin. But what is gender analysis?

Gender analysis “involves the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in order to reveal any differential impact of an action on women and men, and the effects of gender roles and responsibilities. It also involves qualitative analyses that help to clarify how and why these differential roles, responsibilities and impacts have come about.”<sup>11</sup>

## 1. GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

This refers to how work is organised in a community, how it is divided among women and men through gender socialisation within the culture they live in.<sup>12</sup> Understanding how labour is organised by gender in a given community provides us with an insight into how a community assigns tasks, responsibilities and activities. Since our aim is to ensure equal opportunities for women and men, it is vital to pay attention to gendered labour division. Gender division of labour identifies three main gender roles assumed by women and men, to varying degrees. But what are gender roles?

*Gender roles:* Society ascribes activities to men and women based on perceived differences that are maintained through gender division of labour. These roles are assigned early in life “through identification with specific characteristics associated with being male or female.”<sup>13</sup>

The three types of labour or gender roles as broken down by gender based analysis are:

**PRODUCTIVE ROLE** related to the production of goods and services; can be paid or unpaid

**REPRODUCTIVE ROLE** housework, caring for household members and maintaining the home; unpaid

**COMMUNITY ROLE** participation in collective activities, ceremonies or feasts, political representation; often unpaid, but may be paid in certain cases for men involved in political events

11. [www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true](http://www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true), p. 1

12. Peebles. *Draft Gender Mainstreaming Manual*.

13 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. 2008. *Training Manual on Gender Mainstreaming*. MGCS Kenya, p. 31.

In many cultures across the world, women and girls assume all three roles, which puts a great strain on their time. Men are rarely if ever involved in reproductive roles. Women and girls are not paid for the work they do at the household and community levels. Their productive work is also valued less than men's, bringing them less income and visibility.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES AND BENEFITS

**RESOURCES** are economic, political and social assets; benefits relate to food, money, shelter, etc.

**ACCESS** refers to the right or opportunity<sup>15</sup> to use resources and to enjoy benefits.

**CONTROL** is the ability to decide how resources or benefits will be used.

Assessing access to and control over resources and benefits allows us to understand which resources and benefits are viewed as valuable by a community, and who can exercise the right to have access to and control over those resources. Often men have access to and control over the most valuable resources in a community. The more value a certain resource is perceived to have (e.g. title deeds, property), the more it is seen to belong to men. Women and girls are often excluded from controlling such resources, despite having access to said resources. This analytical tool can inform project planning by helping to point out the presence of gender bias in wealth and asset distribution.

## 3. PRACTICAL NEEDS AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS

Gender analysis helps us understand that there is a difference between practical needs and strategic interests. Understanding this difference helps us to identify positive measures that can be undertaken to rectify inequalities between women and men.

Practical needs are those that can be considered as immediate necessities for both women and men (basic needs such as water, food, income, shelter and health care). Initiatives that only aim to meet practical needs seek to respond to issues arising from inadequate living conditions.

Strategic interests pertain to the relative status of women and men within their society. These interests differ from one context to another, and relate to changing women's position or status through addressing gender roles and expectations, as well as gender division of labour, resources and power. Examples of initiatives to promote strategic interests include protection from domestic violence, closing wage gaps and increasing women's decision-making opportunities.<sup>16</sup>

*Often men have access to and control over the most valuable resources in a community.*

14 Peebles. *Draft Gender Mainstreaming Manual*.

15 Oxford Dictionaries. [www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/access](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/access)

16 Peebles. *Draft Gender Mainstreaming Manual*.

**TABLE 2: PRACTICAL NEEDS AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS<sup>17</sup>**

PRACTICAL NEEDS	STRATEGIC INTERESTS
Immediate and short-term needs that focus on basic needs (food, shelter, etc.).	Contribute to long-term structural changes that foster increased gender equality.
Specific to particular groups of women and men.	Common to all women and to specific groups of men.
Easily identifiable.	Not easy for women to identify, particularly in situations where gender inequalities are the norm.
Are addressed by providing material inputs such as food, hand-pumps, clinics, credit, skills training, etc.	Are addressed through discussions and analysis, the promotion and strengthening of civil society organisations that target the issues in question and by lobbying for legal and policy changes.
Tend to involve women and men more as beneficiaries than participants.	Involve women and men as key change agents and actively seek ways to enable them to be actors in development as opposed to being acted upon.
Use inputs to improve the condition of women's and men's lives.	Can improve the position and status of women and men.
Focus on improving living conditions, but do not actively work to alter traditional gender roles and relationships.	Can lead to a change in women's and men's positions relative to each other as well as in their respective gender roles.
Can enable women and men to improve their condition in life.	Can empower women and men to transform their relationships with each other.

<sup>17</sup> Adapted from: Canadian Council for International Cooperation. 1991. *Two Halves Make a Whole*. Ottawa.

## REFERENCES

- Canadian Council for International Cooperation. 1991. *Two Halves Make a Whole*. CCIC: Ottawa.
- Hilton, J.L., & von Hippel. W. 1996. Stereotypes. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47, 237-271.
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## ONLINE RESOURCES

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- [www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true](http://www.osce.org/gender/26397?download=true), p.3. Retrieved 13 April 2015.
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