

MODULE **1**

SEX AND GENDER



MODULE 1

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OVERVIEW: MODULE ONE

Objective	To understand the basic concepts underlying the definitions of sex and gender and examine the characteristics of the concept of gender.
Core Message	The characteristics that define what is masculine and feminine are largely culturally determined.
Expected Outcome	The understanding that gender is a social construction that defines the roles and relations of men and women, giving rise to different experiences, skills and needs.
Method	Brainstorming session Group Discussions/Lecturette Report back Lecturette
Materials	Flipchart No. 4: Women/Men Flipchart No. 5: Characteristics of Gender OHT No. 1.a: Sex/Gender OHT No. 1.b: Social/Biological OHT No. 1.c: Gender and Health Handout No. 3: Definitions of Sex/Gender (Copy of OHT No. 1.a)
Components	1.1: To be a Man or a Woman. What Defines Us? 1.2: Definitions of Sex and Gender
Time	1.1: 10 minutes 1.2: 20 minutes <u>Total: 30 minutes</u>
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Photocopy sufficient copies of Handout No. 3 ■ Prepare Flipchart No. 4: Women/Men ■ Prepare Flipchart No. 5: Characteristics of Gender

TO BE A MAN OR A WOMAN. WHAT DEFINE US?

Method: Brainstorming/Group Discussion
Materials: Flipchart No. 4: Women/Men
Time: 10 minutes
Preparation: Prepare Flipchart No. 4

PROCESS

- Facilitator draws a vertical line down the middle of the flipchart, and heads the one side "women", the other "Men," and poses the question: **"What are the characteristics of women and men?"**¹ to be answered in sequence. The facilitator encourages participants to randomly call out their answers without reflection, for a fast and dynamic interaction. Facilitator or co-facilitator fills in the flipchart, until it is full, without comment—unless childbirth and lactation are omitted, in which case, poses a question to ensure the inclusion of these biological functions.

Text of Flipchart No. 4:

MEN	WOMEN

- After contributions have concluded, facilitator then crosses out the headings, and replaces "men" with women, and "women" with men, (in order to reverse the assumptions) and poses the questions: **"Which characteristics could not be possible in any society?"** The facilitator will only need to underline "childbearing" and "breast-feeding" (or equivalent terms). These are the only characteristics which are biologically determined. All the rest are socially constructed.
- The facilitator then asks:

What do these characteristics that you have identified as socially constructed have in common?
- Look for: change over time; differences between cultures; differences within cultures; learned behavior; historical. Point out that these are the key characteristics of gender. (See page 29 for further details of the key characteristics of gender).

¹ If participants ask "In what society?" or "Should we say what is real or ideal?," facilitator can respond that the characteristics can be from any society, during any historical period, and can be either real or ideal.

DEFINITIONS OF SEX AND GENDER

- Method:** Lecturette
 - Materials:**
 - Flipchart No. 5:* Characteristics of Gender
 - OHT No. 1.a: Sex/Gender
 - OHT No. 1.b: Social/Biological
 - OHT No. 1.c: Gender and Health
 - Handout No. 3: Definitions of Sex/Gender (Copy of OHT No. 1.a)
 - Time:** 20 minutes
 - Preparation:** Photocopy Handout No. 3
Prepare Flipchart No. 5
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PROCESS

- Facilitator displays OHT No. 1.a with the following definition:

*Text of OHT No. 1.a /
Handout No. 3*

DEFINITIONS
" Sex " refers to the biological differences between men and women " Gender " refers to roles that men and women play and the relations that arise out of these roles. They are socially constructed, not physically determined.

Flipchart No. 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER	
● Relational:	Socially Constructed
● Hierarchical:	Power Relations
● Changes:	Changes over time
● Context:	Varies with ethnicity, class, culture, etc.
● Institutional:	Systemic

- The facilitator points to Flipchart No. 5, and says that what the participants have defined in the previous exercise is the difference between sex and gender. This emphasizes that there are very few characteristics that are biologically determined; most are socially constructed. The analytical category of gender has the following characteristics:
 - **RELATIONAL:** It is relational because it refers not to women or men in isolation, but to the relationships between them and how these relationships are socially constructed.
 - **HIERARCHICAL:** It is hierarchical because the differences established between women and men, far from being neutral, tend to attribute greater importance and value to the characteristics and activities associated with what is masculine and to produce unequal power relationships.
 - **CHANGES OVER TIME:** Even though gender is historical, the roles and relations do change over time and, therefore, have definite potential for modification through development interventions.
 - **CONTEXT SPECIFIC:** There are variations in gender roles and gender relations depending on the context: ethnic group, socio-economic group, culture etc., underlining the need to incorporate a perspective of diversity in gender analysis.
 - **INSTITUTIONAL:** It is institutionally structured because it refers not only to the relations between women and men at the personal and private level, but to a social system that is supported by values, legislation, religion, etc.
- **NOTE:** In presenting these gender characteristics, ideally the facilitator would ask participants to contribute their own examples. If time is short, facilitators can offer their own examples. The facilitator would want to provide examples that are relevant to the context/country of the workshop.

- Facilitator shows Overhead Transparency No. 1.b:

Text of OHT No. 1.b

SOCIAL/BIOLOGICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Emphasizing the social, does not exclude the role of biology● Recognition of social factors is crucial to an analysis of this interrelationship in order to identify the differential disadvantages and/or advantages for men and women's health

- And points out:

- The emphasis on social factors within the gender approach does not imply the exclusion of the profound influence of the biological element. On the contrary, this perspective provides for the examination of interactions between biological factors and factors in the social environment that lead to situations of relative disadvantage or advantage for one of the two sexes.

- Facilitator shows OHT No. 1.c:

Text of OHT No. 1.c:

GENDER AND HEALTH
<p>In HEALTH, advantage and disadvantage can be measured by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Probability of maintaining health, or becoming ill or dying from preventable causes2. Equity of access to and control of resources, responsibilities and rewards in health work