

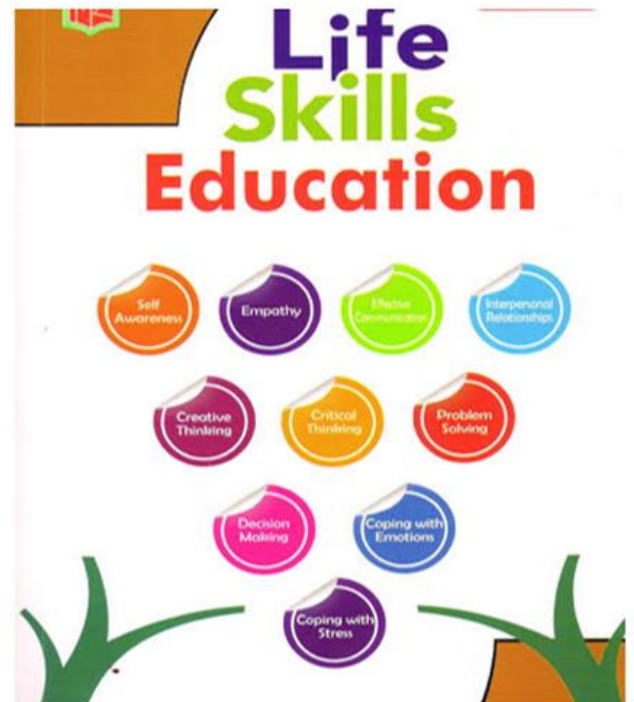


Education & Literacy Department, Government of School Sindh

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# CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR LIFE SKILLS BASED EDUCATION - ADAPTED FROM 'IT'S ALL ONE CURRICULUM'

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Material for Authors,  
Reviewers and Instructors

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## INTRODUCTION

The School Education and Literacy Department has undertaken an initiative to ensure the provision of age appropriate Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) to adolescents and youth on a mass scale. To oversee this process, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been set up for integration of LSBE into the provincial curriculum and to develop an action plan to take the integration process forward.

The Department seeks to formalize the process and develop a set of guidelines that can serve as the foundation for various purposes. This document serves that purpose and provides concrete guidelines on a variety of topics that can be adapted into the textbooks for students from Class VI-XII. Additionally, these guidelines can also be used by the reviewers and trainers to ensure a comprehensive and all-rounded intervention.

**Due to the nature of the topic at hand, this is meant to be an evolving document. LSBE has an extremely broad scope; therefore, these guidelines will need to be added to, and edited, periodically to remain effective.**

These guidelines are an adaptation of 'It's All One Curriculum' i.e.

[https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY\\_ItsAllOneGuidelines\\_en.pdf](https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY_ItsAllOneGuidelines_en.pdf) which was developed by an international working group and published by the Population Council, New York. The original document has been reviewed and adapted for the local use, keeping the social and cultural as well as religious sensitivities in mind.

The SE&LD in collaboration with UNFPA organized a team of subject specialists and curriculum reviewers from public and private sectors to develop socially acceptable and contextually relevant activities that could be inserted in students' textbooks of Languages Science and Social studies from grades VI-XII. These activities are compiled in two separate booklets (1. Languages and Science, 2. Social Studies and Pakistan Studies). A comprehensive list of topics and activities subject wise and grade wise have been given in volume 2. document.

The objective of It's All One Curriculum is to provide a practical resource for curriculum development, particularly in the areas of gender, health, and human rights. It takes an integrated approach to these topics since research shows that young people's social context, individual factors, and health outcomes are profoundly interconnected. Hence, this resource helps to think about and teach about a range of related topics — as one curriculum.

**The ultimate goal of It's All One Curriculum is to develop the capacity of young people to enjoy — and advocate for their rights to — dignity, equality, and responsible, satisfying, and healthy lives.**

These curriculum guidelines are prepared keeping in view that these would support the Textbook Authors, Curriculum Reviewers and Teachers to gain more insights on human rights, human health and gender.

**In addition, the curriculum has maintained a format of providing content on each unit, fact sheets pertaining to the unit and a glossary to explain different concepts and terminologies as being used in the curriculum.**

#### **KEY FEATURES OF IT'S ALL ONE CURRICULUM**

1. Evidence-based, that is, it builds on curricular standards articulated by global researchers, while also integrating important findings about the links between gender dynamics and health outcomes;
2. Comprehensive, including accurate information about all the psychosocial and health topics needed for a thorough curriculum covering human rights, HIV prevention, and family life education.
3. Based on core values and human rights, that is, it promotes principles of fairness, human dignity, equal treatment, opportunities for participation, and human rights for all as the basis for achieving health and well-being;
4. Gender-sensitive, emphasizing the importance of gender equality and the social environment in general for achieving health and overall well-being for both boys and girls;
5. Promotes academic growth and critical thinking, fostering habits of mind necessary for understanding relationships between self, others, and society and how these relationships affect all of our lives. Thus, it provides a basis for extending education into social studies, and language, classrooms;
6. Fosters civic engagement by championing the idea that each person matters and can make a positive difference in his or her world. It helps build advocacy skills that are crucial to creating a more just and compassionate society; and
7. Culturally appropriate, reflecting the diverse circumstances and realities of young people around the world.

## **SUMMARY OF THE ADAPTED UNITS**

There are seven units in 'IT'S ALL ONE CURRICULUM' which provide insightful information on the issues of gender, human rights and project-based learning in the area of advocacy and social change. With reference to the context of Sindh, Pakistan, we have chosen related concepts and activities to integrate in textbooks and adapted them as per our learners' contemporary learning needs.

### **UNIT ONE: HUMAN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING REQUIRE HUMAN RIGHTS**

Why should HIV-prevention education include content about human rights? This unit explains how people's health and emotional well-being are connected to their ability to exercise their human rights (for example, their rights to education and freedom of expression). These rights extend to protecting one's body and health. This unit stresses the importance of being able to exercise one's rights with confidence. It describes actions young people can take to promote respect. It shows how they can protect their own and their partners' health and rights.

### **UNIT TWO: GENDER**

Achieving gender equality is a moral imperative and a key Millennium Development Goal. This unit enables educators to address gender issues effectively, supporting both boys and girls. It provides information about how gender norms function in society — in family relations, in schooling, in people's experience of violence, in the media, and elsewhere. It helps boys and girls to think critically and to reflect upon their own attitudes about gender in a meaningful way.

### **UNIT THREE: MY RELATIONSHIPS**

Well-being and health depend on individual or personal factors as well as broader social influences. This unit aims to help adolescents gain a measure of understanding and confidence in their relationships. Specifically, it provides resources to help them reflect and strengthen their communication in all kinds of relationships.

### **UNITFOUR: COMMUNICATION AND DECISIONMAKING SKILLS**

Young people would like to learn ways of having conversations about intimate topics in which they can feel at ease and self-assured. Yet, they rarely have an opportunity to learn how to handle these sensitive conversations. This unit focuses on strengthening communication skills. It also includes a section on making and acting on decisions.

### **UNIT FIVE: THE HUMAN BODY DURING ADOLESCENCE**

Knowing about their bodies empowers young people to protect their health. The material is presented, however, with an eye to social context and human rights, rather than within a narrow "clinical" framework. Some selected topics are suggested for grades 9-12 in the Biology textbooks.

## **UNIT SIX: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

One key step to improving people’s reproductive well-being is ensuring that they have access to information and services. Another step is to create more just social conditions — including gender equality and respect for people’s rights — that enable all people to control the circumstances under which they ensure family health. Some relevant activities of this unit have been tailored and placed in other sections that provide contextually acceptable vital information to help young people keep their bodies safe and well.

As School curriculum offers Biology as a subject for Science students we have identified topics from It’s All One Curriculum that can be included as a part of the book with modifications where felt necessary.

## **UNIT SEVEN: ADVOCATING FOR HUMAN HEALTH, RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

Many young people can, and want to, help promote the social changes that will lead to better health and well-being, changes that will also work toward greater justice and equality for all. This unit guides educators, including social studies teachers, in ways to use learner-centered methods to promote young people’s involvement in their communities. Such hands-on experiences can complement and deepen the knowledge gained in the preceding units. It can offer young people the satisfaction of seeing how they can make a positive difference in the world.

### **FACT SHEETS**

At the end of the guidelines book, you will find fact sheets that serve as further technical reference sources on certain topics. Each fact sheet supports, and is linked to, specific subtopics of the guidelines.

### **ACTIVITIES**

Around the world, education programs have often led the way in using participatory teaching methods that go beyond the usual lectures or readings. Engaging young people more actively in their own learning, such methods involve personal reflection, critical thinking, and discussion. These processes can foster more egalitarian attitudes as well as behaviour change, including in the areas of gender and human rights. More broadly, they also help equip young people to address their changing world with imagination and confidence.

**In addition to the Guidelines Volume 1, another set of activities for each unit was also developed as Volume 2 i.e.**

[https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY\\_ItsAllOneActivities\\_en.pdf](https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2011PGY_ItsAllOneActivities_en.pdf)

This contains the details about the activities. These learner-centered activities have been tested and are easy to adapt across cultures. They can help young people to see links between what they have learned and their own experiences and feelings. The sample activities are creative and engaging for young people.

Teachers and trainers can use the activities as they are presented, or they can adapt them. They can also model new activities on them. Many of the activities involve reading or writing, but the great majority is adaptable for non-literate learners.

## **UNIT ONE: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING REQUIRE HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Unit Standard:**

Knowing about human rights allows young people to gain a sense that they matter in the world. This unit provides a basic overview of human rights with regards to health, safety and well-being and explores their link to an all rounded healthy experiences.

### **Unit Overview**

Everyone has a right to dignity, bodily safety, and access to health information and services. Knowing about human rights allows young people to gain a sense that they matter in the world.

### **KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Identify five basic rights of every human being.
- Discuss, for at least two rights, what responsibilities the state has for protecting, respecting, and fulfilling these rights, and what responsibilities individuals have.

#### **Affective**

- Understand the importance of respect in human interaction,
- Discuss their own feelings about whether treating people unequally is fair.
- Describe what they consider to be a full and satisfying life for themselves.

#### **Skill-based**

- Speak effectively about their ideas related to equality, discrimination, and other aspects of human rights.

### **How We Treat Each Other: Values and Society**

We can pose many questions about how we treat each other in society. These questions apply regardless of what region of the world we live in. Some of these questions are listed below.

1. What do most people, including young people, want?
  - a. Most young people want a good quality of life. This is sometimes called “well-being.”
  - b. For most of us, well-being means having a chance to be healthy and happy. We want to be safe and respected. We want to have opportunities to grow up and to learn. We want to matter in the world and to pursue our dreams. And we want to live together in peace. We want these things for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

2. How do we need to live together — in our families, communities, and societies — to ensure that all people have a chance for a good quality of life and well-being?
3. Where do we learn our ideas about how we should behave and treat each other? Where do we learn what responsibilities we have toward each other?
  - a. Each of us has our beliefs about what is right or wrong.
  - b. We often tend to think of our own values and beliefs as “natural.” However, they are deeply influenced by our families, communities, and society.
  - c. The attitudes of our families, communities, and society are called “social norms”
  - d. Societies enact laws that reflect norms and specify which behaviours are permitted and which are not. Those individuals or groups who have the most power often have the greatest influence in determining both social norms and laws.
  - e. Social norms change over time. They also vary across and within cultures.
  - f. Although we are all influenced by social norms, each of us can also develop her or his independent ideas about the fairest way to behave and treat others. We may gather ideas from many sources, including role models, books, and personal reflection.
4. Some ethical principles about how people should treat each other are widely viewed as universal. These principles are called human rights.

### **What Are “Human Rights”?**

Every single human being is entitled to basic rights and protections. These rights include, but are not limited to:

- equal treatment under the law;
- food, water, shelter, and clothing;
- being treated with respect and dignity;
- freedom from torture;
- freedom of expression;
- freedom of thought, conscience, and religion;
- the right to assemble and to participate in society;
- the right to education; and
- the right to health, including access to health information and services.

These human rights are universal. This means they apply to all of us, regardless of age, marital status, gender identity, race, ethnicity, national or social origin, political beliefs, citizenship, religious beliefs, social or economic status, where we live, our physical and mental ability, or our health status. These rights are not conditional and cannot be taken away.

- Many people have heard about human rights in discussions concerning torture.
- Human rights also extend to economic rights and social rights. These include the right to education and to health care.

Basic human rights have been agreed upon by the global community of states (through the United Nations). They are formalized in international agreements and formally ratified by most governments.

[See fact sheet on United Nations Agreements.]

Children have human rights. Children's rights have been established in international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The rights in the CRC apply to all people under the age of 18.

Although all of us should be able to enjoy our human rights, we cannot always do so.

Part of the responsibility for protecting, respecting, and fulfilling human rights rests on governments. In reality, however, countries vary in the degree to which they fulfill this responsibility.

For example, some governments have passed laws that restrict the rights of certain people, for example, by:

- outlawing political protest;
- prohibiting labor-union organizing; and
- pardoning or treating lightly the murder of a woman by her husband or family member when he perceives his action as a matter of "honour."

Important, legally binding, human rights documents include:

- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989).

Another important, but nonbinding, human rights document is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Individuals' social and economic status also may limit their ability to enjoy their rights.

For example, their nationality, gender identity, race, religion, age, class/caste, political view, HIV status, or physical or mental ability typically influences their opportunity to:

- obtain an education and earn a good living;
- receive equal and just treatment under the law;
- live free from violence;
- feel respected and be treated with dignity; and
- feel that they can pursue and achieve their dreams.

Every single person has a responsibility to respect the rights of every other person. When we grow up learning to respect every human being equally, we come to respect human rights.

Often, when we grow up learning to hold negative attitudes toward certain groups of people, we may treat them unfairly and deny them their rights.

Sometimes, people attach a set of characteristics to a certain group of human beings. This is called “stereotyping.” Common examples of stereotyping include the attitudes that boys are naturally better than girls at math and that certain groups are lazy or unclean. Stereotypes are typically inaccurate or highly distorted. Stereotyping makes us less able to see others as fully human. It makes us more likely to condone unfair treatment of others.

Some people may be subject to severe social disapproval because of their personal characteristics. This disapproval is called stigma. For example, in some places people may be subject to stigma because of their weight, their religion, their health status, or even their lack of ability in sports.

When people are treated unfairly because of their presumed (or known) identity, such treatment is called “discrimination.” People have a right to live free of discrimination. Discrimination is not only an individual matter. Discrimination occurs in families, at school, at work, in the community, and in society at large. Regardless of our personal attitudes, we all have a responsibility to respect people’s human rights.

“Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant.” (ICESCR, 1966; ICCPR, 1966).

Unfortunately, such economic and social barriers and violations are so common that they are typically excused, overlooked, or seen as culturally “normal.” These barriers and violations take different forms around the world.

To control and protect our own bodies, we all need to be treated with dignity and respect. This is everyone’s right as a human being.

Everyone deserves the chance to learn about the issues that affect his or her feelings, experiences, and health. Young people, especially, benefit from having the chance to think about and discuss these issues in depth. They deserve to develop the ability to make informed choices. Everyone deserves to play a role in his or her own well-being.

These issues include:

- gender norms and roles;
- human rights,;
- responsibilities of the state, and of every person, to honour these rights;
- developing greater comfort with our own bodies and with our own evolving values; and
- strengthening our ability to act on behalf of ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Learning about our rights and being able to exercise them can have a profound effect on our health.

### **Promoting Human Rights**

Many people care about fairness and about the basic rights of human beings.

We can promote fairness and human rights in everyday life

- We can stand up for a friend or classmate who is being treated unfairly. We can defend a classmate who is ridiculed.
- We can help others realize that they have opportunities or choices in life other than the ones being presented to them. We can support a classmate who feels pressured to do unwanted work.
- We can identify trusted individuals (or organizations) who can help respond to incidents of discrimination.

We can also promote fairness and human rights in our communities. Sometimes we can do this on our own; other times we can do this within an organization.

- We can accompany a friend on a visit to a school official, the police, a health clinic, or another service.
- We can talk to people we know in the community about human rights and about the issues we care about.
- We can ask a local leader to speak out on an issue such as domestic violence.
- We can make sure that everyone in the community (including ourselves) knows about human rights and understands that everyone in the community matters.

We can join organizations or groups that struggle for human rights using various tactics. Examples include:

- marching against hate crimes;
- adolescents' theater projects;
- community-awareness campaigns; and
- community "watch groups" that monitor and intervene on such issues as domestic violence.

Organizations also advocate for laws to protect human rights, — especially for the most marginalized or vulnerable members of society. In virtually every country, people have formed groups that are working for such laws.

Examples of such laws (which in some settings also come under religious jurisdiction) include:

- ensuring every citizen's right to vote;
- outlawing child labour and protecting workers' safety;
- protecting community members against brutality;
- criminalizing "hate crimes" (threats and violence based upon a person's identity);

- ensuring physical access to public space, including for people with disabilities;
- outlawing violence against women (outside and within marriage);
- ensuring women’s rights within marriage;
- guaranteeing widows’ inheritance rights;
- outlawing child marriage;
- criminalizing human trafficking; and
- protecting the rights of everyone to form a, marriage, or family,

Some organizations work to have an impact on human rights at the global level.

For example:

- They seek to expand the list of human rights recognized by the United Nations.
- They use the Internet for global petitions against human rights abuses.

Adolescents can, and do, help create change — including change in their own lives.

Young people around the world can respond to issues they care about in many ways. For example:

- They are educating others in their families and communities.
- They are helping promote the policies and practices that they believe are just.
- They are helping plan and implement programs.
- They are encouraging their friends to join campaigns.

## **Glossary – Basic Concepts about Human Rights**

The following brief explanations aim to help users clarify important terms regarding society and human rights. These terms are used throughout this document. Around the world, educators bring creativity and sensitivity to the task of adapting these concepts in their own cultural and political context.

**Communities:** groups of people who may share certain characteristics. These include beliefs, needs, living or work environment, and identity. Various kinds of communities exist. As members of a community, people have both rights and responsibilities for how they treat each other.

**Discrimination:** unfair or unequal treatment of people based on their appearance, behaviour, or (presumed or real) identity.

**Gender:** differences in the social roles that societies and families expect from males and females. Gender is not the same as biological differences by sex. People often experience differences in power in their families and societies by virtue of their gender.

**Human rights:** the basic protections and entitlements due to every human being. These rights are inalienable. That is, they cannot be taken away from anyone. A partial list includes the

rights to: food and shelter; education; health care; civic participation and expression; equal treatment before the law; and treatment with respect and dignity. People's ability to fully exercise their human rights affects virtually every aspect of their lives. Governments have responsibilities to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights. Most governments have endorsed international agreements to that effect. People, in turn, have the right to demand that governments uphold these obligations and responsibilities. People also have the right to make sure that governments fulfill these obligations.

**Identity:** the way people think of themselves, or describe themselves to others. The way that others perceive someone's appearance or behaviour does not necessarily match that person's own sense of his or her identity. People typically have more than one aspect to their identity. For example, a person can identify as a boy, a Hindu, and also as a student. Identity can come from belonging to a community. The way people identify themselves may change over time. ("Identity" may also refer to formal recognition of a person by the state, such as having a name, birth registration, and nationality.)

**Social norms:** expectations for how people in a community should act or think. Growing up, people come to think of the prevailing norms as "natural" or "normal." In fact, norms vary from place to place and over time. Prevailing norms often pressure people to meet social expectations. They influence people's attitudes and behaviour. People who act or think in ways that are different from the norm may be viewed as inferior rather than independent.

**Stereotypes:** generalizations and assumptions about individuals and communities based on their identity or behaviour. For example, the idea that girls are weak at math is a stereotype. Such generalizations are often highly inaccurate, or may be completely invented. Stereotypes can lead to stigma, discrimination, and other harmful outcomes.

**Stigma:** severe social disapproval based on an individual's personal characteristics. It may also arise when a person's beliefs or actions do not comply with social norms. For example, in some places people face stigma because of their weight, religion, or health status.

**Values:** the set of beliefs that govern what people view as right and wrong. Values vary across individuals, families, and cultures. Some values, however, are accepted virtually universally as characteristic of ethical human behaviour.

## **TIPS FOR TEACHERS**

1. The concepts of human rights and wellbeing are internationally recognized. They apply to all regions of the world. Many people do not know what these concepts mean, or how they affect their own lives. You can familiarize yourself with these topics by reading through this short unit.
2. Be aware of your own biases. Constantly ask yourself what forms the basis of your opinions about other people.

3. Remember that human rights apply to all people. Hence they cannot be taken away from any person. Not everyone is able to experience these rights fully.
4. Emphasize that human beings also have responsibilities, including respecting other people and the rights of all.
5. Be prepared to be honest about the ways that social institutions, such as social clubs, religious organizations, and other groups may undermine people's rights or allow discrimination.
6. Conduct some background research to identify human rights violations that are related to forced marriage, violence, or the situation of people living with HIV and AIDS.
7. Draw on concrete examples of human rights issues — either from the activities presented in the ACTIVITIES book or from your own environment. Emphasizing real situations can help ensure that students understand that human rights are more than an abstract idea.
8. As part of teaching human rights, help students appreciate that they are powerful and that they matter in the world!
9. A number of the fact sheets at the end of this book provide additional details on these topics.

## **UNIT TWO: GENDER**

### **Unit Standard:**

Defining Gender and exploring how gender norms affect the lives and health of both boys and girls. It suggests ways to enable adolescents to imagine the kind of people they want to be, the kinds of relationships they hope to form, and the type of society they view as fair and happy.

### **Unit Overview**

Gender norms affect everyone's well-being. Most countries have identified the achievement of gender equality as a moral imperative and as key to fighting AIDS and to strengthening families and societies. Around the world, gender norms and roles are changing rapidly. Raising adolescents' awareness about gender issues is vital, because interventions during this formative period can alter later life outcomes dramatically.

### **KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Distinguish between sex and gender.
- Give an example of how male and female gender roles are changing. Describe steps people take to promote positive changes in gender roles.
- Discuss how gender inequality affects opportunities, including access to education, public space, health services, civic participation, and employment.
- Give three examples of how children learn their gender roles from families and communities. Discuss how institutions (marriage, family, media, religion, schools) reinforce gender norms.
- Discuss how gender norms perpetuate child marriage, and violence .

#### **Affective**

- Understand that gender norms can undermine the well-being of both boys and girls. Discuss gender roles they have challenged or would like to challenge.
- Describe how gender socialization can affect feelings of security and self-esteem.
- Demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills in explaining their ideas.

#### **Defining gender**

In every society, gender norms and gender roles influence people's lives. Gender roles are learned. They are not innate or "natural." In fact, almost everything that males can do, females can also do. And almost everything that females can do, males can also do.

Within any culture or society, people have varying attitudes about gender roles and gender equality. Beliefs about gender also vary from one culture (or society) to another. Gender roles change over time, and in many settings people — especially young people — are embracing greater gender equality. Greater equality and more flexible gender roles give everyone more opportunities to develop to his or her full capacity as a human being. In contrast, restrictive gender roles can limit opportunities.

Despite gender inequality (or similar barriers), every day millions of individuals seek to fulfill their dreams. Although everyone does not automatically enjoy the same opportunities, many individuals achieve their dreams by fighting for a fair chance and working hard to take advantage of the opportunities they obtain.

The achievement of gender equality is a key goal around the world. Equality between males and females is a matter of human rights. Gender equality fosters the growth of healthy and prosperous communities and societies. The United Nations has identified gender equality as one of eight key development goals for nations to pursue. Millions of people are actively promoting gender equality — in families, schools, workplaces, communities, and countries.

## **Gender Identity**

At birth, newborns are identified as male or female based on their sex organs. In many settings, people indicate a baby's sex through the use of specific names, jewelry, clothing, and so forth. Some babies whose genitals are not clearly male or female are termed intersex. Some children (regardless of whether or not they are intersex) come to feel ambiguous about their gender identity, or clearly identify with the gender other than the one with which they were reared.

Almost all children behave in ways that do not match the stereotypes associated with their gender. Two examples are:

- Many girls enjoy sports, excel at math, and have dreams of leading their country — and still feel like girls.
- Many, if not most, boys enjoy developing close interpersonal relationships, creating art, and feeling free from constant pressures to achieve and be brave — but still feel like boys.

## **Gender Norms and Roles Solidify During Childhood and Adolescence**

Expected gender roles are apparent in many aspects of family life. For example:

- Family members model gender norms in their own roles and behaviours. Depending on the culture and the family, male and female roles might be similar or they might be distinct.
- Males and females typically have different responsibilities and roles regarding infant and child care. Thus, as infants, children begin to observe and absorb gender norms.

Some families treat boys and girls equally. For example, both sons and daughters are encouraged and permitted to:

- seek success in the public sphere;
- express feelings of vulnerability; and
- share equally in household chores.

However, many families do not treat girls and boys equally. For example, even in early childhood:

- In settings with food shortages, infant girls may not be fed as well as their brothers.
- Girls are often dressed differently from boys and given different toys.
- Particularly where resources are scarce, families may work harder to make sure that their sons are educated.
- In some societies, females are viewed as the property of their husbands. In these places, families may be less likely to invest precious resources in feeding and educating girls, whom they assume will grow up and leave the family.
- Although many boys have household chores, girls tend to be given more domestic responsibilities and have less free time than their brothers.
- Boys may be discouraged from crying or from expressing feelings of vulnerability.
- Girls may be discouraged from asserting themselves or from playing “rough” sports.

People — including parents — often reinforce expectations about gender through language. As young people approach adolescence, they feel more pressure to conform to culturally determined gender roles.

Despite cultural variation, many adolescent boys share similar experiences. Around the world, boys enjoy more independence and freedom outside the home than do girls, and have more opportunities to participate in public life. Boys also often suffer pressure to prove their manhood, for example, to:

- be brave and assertive;
- have money and prepare to become providers;
- suppress certain emotions (for example, vulnerability and tenderness) or behaviour that may appear “feminine”;
- engage in physical violence (against people they know or do not know);
- perform as an athlete and have a muscular body;
- avoid seeking health care, or even admitting that they are sick or have been harmed.

Boys may face harassment or brutality. This is especially true for boys from minority or marginalized groups or from low-income neighborhoods. Some boys face severe beatings for relatively minor misbehaviour.

Despite cultural variation, many adolescent girls share similar experiences. Around the world, girls tend to enjoy greater opportunity than boys to develop and practice one-to-one

interpersonal skills. Girls also suffer pressures to comply with norms of femininity, for example, to:

- be caregivers;
- be docile and submissive to males, underplay their intelligence, undervalue or withhold their opinions and ideas;
- accept having their rights limited;
- accept close monitoring of their dress, friendships, and their comings and goings;
- be careful not to hurt people's feelings;

Rigid gender roles also affect how people treat each other and contribute to suicide, violence, and many other social problems. People who do not conform to dominant gender norms may be teased, isolated, or threatened. People who may be particularly subject to such stigma include: boys who are perceived as having feminine traits, or people who adopt a gender identity different from the one with which they were reared (transgender people).

Despite social norms, millions of young people are determined to “be themselves” and to realize more of their potential as human beings. They believe in greater gender equality and in diversity.

- Many young people are able to resist pressures to conform to an idealized body image.
- Many girls have confidence in themselves and their own power. They know that they can fight for opportunities to work hard, achieve, and pursue their dreams.
- Many boys feel confident to resist conventional pressures to prove their manhood.
- Many boys feel free to express a range of emotions, including vulnerability and tenderness. Later in life, this freedom may also enhance their capacity and satisfaction as fathers.
- Many young people celebrate diversity and difference.

Around the world, gender norms are changing. Young people who work for equality and justice are helping to bring about that change.

## **Gender and Education**

Everyone — without distinction of any kind, such as race, sex, language, religion, social origin, or other status — has the right to education (Article 26.1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR], 1948; Article 13.1, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [ICESCR], 1966; Article 10, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [CEDAW], 1979; Article 8.1, Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC], 1989).

Education is a universal right. Yet, in many countries, boys are more likely than their sisters to attend school (at all grades), and to go to schools of better quality. Obstacles to girls' schooling may include:

- the lower value placed on developing girls' capacities;
- economic priorities of the family;

- fears that travel to school will endanger girls' safety (and reputation);
- concerns about harassment or violence toward girls from teachers or male students;
- expectations that girls should help with domestic work;
- inadequate resources for girls to manage menstruation;
- local norms about early marriage and childbearing; and
- lack of equal opportunity in the workforce for educated females.

Access to education is critical for achieving gender equality. Yet, in many places, school environments tend to reinforce unequal gender roles and choices. For example:

- Boys typically demand more of the teacher's time and attention than do girls. They are also more likely to assume leadership roles.
- School staff may tolerate degrading language and "jokes" about females or minorities.
- Students, especially girls, may be harassed (by male students and/or teachers).
- Students who do not conform to prevailing gender norms may be socially marginalized.
- Girls may be discouraged from pursuing traditionally masculine subjects (in some settings, science and math).
- Boys may be directed away from activities perceived to be more feminine (such as certain sports and the arts).
- Many boys are pressured to succeed in athletics or to demonstrate their masculinity by using derogatory language and showing off in the classroom.

Some school environments are actually unsafe.

- Young people often face violence and bullying.
- groups may present a risk to all young people, particularly boys.
- Teachers may face these risks as well.

Educational materials also often reinforce unequal gender roles and choices. Around the world, people are working to promote gender equality in education and to expand access to schooling for all. Young people are insisting on girls' right to stay in school for as many terms as their brothers do. Some governments provide stipends to families in exchange for keeping their daughters in school. Educators are revising textbooks and curricula to make them more gender-equitable. Some communities sponsor programs to keep boys from joining gangs, using drugs, and engaging in other behaviours that often lead them to drop out of school.

More young people around the world are going to school and staying in school longer than ever before. Throughout history, learning has been one of humankind's great pleasures. Education is crucial to providing the skills young people need to find meaningful work and to face the challenges of a changing and globalizing world. All young people have the right to education.

### **Gender Stereotypes in the Media**

Both children's stories and the media exert a powerful and wide-ranging influence on the gender norms and expectations of young people. Such media include radio, television, movies,

newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and advertising. Media images and messages can promote and expose people to values of equality, respect, and dignity — or to those of disrespect and inequality.

Children’s stories and the media often reinforce gender inequality and disrespect. Some of the ways they do this include:

- portraying stereotypical male and female roles (for example, depicting men as heroes and women as victims) and stereotypes of racial and ethnic groups, , and others;
- depicting and glorifying idealized body types;
- representing women and girls in highly sexualized ways; and
- reserving for men the more senior and more visible positions in news programs and in film and television.

Around the world, young people are creating their own media and telling their own stories about their lives. Many groups promote public awareness about messages in the mainstream media.

### **How Gender Affects Mobility, Social Connection, and Safe Public Spaces**

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (Article 13.1, UDHR, 1948). Everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (Article 27.1, UDHR, 1948; Article 15.1, ICESCR, 1966).

Being able to move freely and safely around a community is important. It helps people to gain access to information, services, and jobs, as well as to form social support networks. Being able to connect socially outside the home is enjoyable and helps people expand their horizons. Being isolated at home leads some people to feel depressed.

In many settings, gender norms restrict females’ ability to move about freely in their communities. For example:

- Adolescent girls are generally allowed much less freedom than boys to leave home and move about in their communities. As a result, girls often cannot play sports, visit friends, access services, or prepare to participate fully in society.
- In some settings, females who go outside their homes by themselves risk being labeled as “bad” or “loose.” They may encounter harassment or violence.
- In some settings, adult women are forcibly secluded in their homes. They must be accompanied by a male relative to destinations such as a friend’s house, health clinic, or store.

In some contexts, public spaces are unsafe and carry significant danger. For example:

- In many low-income and minority communities, boys face violence and harassment or brutality, and incarceration.

- Some communities have high levels of gang activity and lack options for decent jobs or advanced education. In such places, boys may be drawn to gang membership or to dealing in drugs.
- Boys are disproportionately drawn into warfare or other forms of combat.
- Women and girls living in camps for refugees or internally displaced persons, new migrant-labor zones, or other unstable communities, typically face a high risk of violence.
- In many places, individuals suffer physical assaults that may be life-threatening.

Despite social taboos, many young people refuse to be isolated. Where they can, they create safe spaces to meet each other. Just a few examples of people who have formed such safe spaces include married girls; female domestic workers; transgender youth; girls who want an opportunity to play sports;

### **How Gender Affects Civic and Political Participation**

Everyone has the right to participate in the political and public life of one's country, including the right to vote, to be eligible for election, and to have equal access to public service (Article 21, UDHR, 1948; Article 25, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR], 1966; Article 7, CEDAW, 1979).

Although everyone has the right to participate in public life, everyone is not equally able to exercise this right. Members of some groups often face obstacles to participating in society. This may include women and girls, poor people, people with disabilities, elderly people, and ethnic and racial minorities. For example:

- In some places, women cannot vote and rarely hold positions of public leadership. They may have less access to government programs and be less able to participate in society.
- Even in settings where women hold high office, most women may still suffer serious gender inequality and limited opportunity to participate in society.

Although a significant gender gap is still widespread in civic and political life, in some places women are breaking such barriers. Women serve as leaders at the local, state, and national levels. In some countries, political parties must name women to at least 30 to 50 percent of their electoral slate. Women also lead nongovernmental organizations of all sizes.

Despite the challenges they face, strong female leaders are visible in community and public life in every region of the world. Women have organized into effective and vibrant groups. These groups foster discussion and promote women's empowerment, equality, and human rights. Many men are working actively to increase women's equal access to civic and political life. Dream big and work hard. You can scale mountaintops and make important differences in the world!

## **Gender, Work, and Economic Resources: Inside and Outside the Home**

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment; and everyone — without discrimination — has the right to equal pay for equal work (Article 23, UDHR, 1948; Articles 6, 7, ICESCR, 1966; Article 11, CEDAW, 1979).

Everyone — both male and female — is capable of nurturing and caring for children, carrying out domestic chores, and working in paid jobs outside the home. Nevertheless, in most settings, economic pressures — and opportunities (including access to cash) — vary accordingly.

Around the world, women — and many men — are seeking to expand women's and girls' access to and control over resources. They are doing this, for example, through:

- policies that enable women to own property or that promote hiring and promotion of females and other under-represented groups in the workplace;
- microfinance and savings programs that provide women with cash to participate in the informal economy, especially in places where such resources go mainly to men;
- programs that reach women who must remain in their home or compound;
- education and vocational training that can expand women's options in the formal and informal job markets; and
- affordable childcare that allows parents to seek potentially higher-paying jobs.

All of us benefit when everyone can develop and apply her or his talents and caring in families, at work, and in the community. For example:

- Being an engaged and loving father or mother can provide great emotional rewards to parents and their children.
- As women enter the workforce, men often become more involved fathers.
- Equal access to education and employment allows young people more job options.

## **Gender and Marriage**

At the age of majority, men and women have the right to marry and found a family; they are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution (Article 16.1, UDHR, 1948; Article 16.1, CEDAW, 1979).

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of intending spouses (Article 16.2, UDHR, 1948; Article 16.1, CEDAW, 1979). The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect . . . (Article 16.2, CEDAW, 1979).

Many people form long-term (even lifelong) relationships in which they live together. These are called domestic relationships or domestic partnerships. People have various reasons for forming such relationships. For example:

- they love each other, and being together makes them happy;
- they desire companionship;
- they need economic security;
- they want to have children; and
- their communities or families expect them to have children.

Some people in long-term committed domestic relationships marry formally under the laws of their state or religion. People have various reasons for marrying. For example:

- They want to honor or legitimize an intimate relationship in the context of the values of either or both partners or of their families, community, or society.
- They want to honor or legitimize childbearing in the context of the values of the individual or of his or her family, community, religion, or society.
- They need benefits that may not be granted to people who are not married or not allowed to marry, such as health and survivor benefits and social approval.
- They comply with their parents' wishes and plans. (In some settings, parents typically arrange marriages for their children. They do this to ensure good matches for their children. They may have concerns for a child's reputation. They may also marry off a daughter in order to relieve economic pressures on the family.) Child marriage (marriage before the age of 18) is a serious violation of human rights but remains common in some parts of the world.

Some people in long-term committed domestic relationships do not marry formally. People have various reasons for not marrying. For example:

- Personal choice: A couple may feel comfortable foregoing formal approval by the state or by a religious institution.
- They are denied the right to marry. A family or society may prohibit marriage between people of different races, religions, or social castes.
- The couple may lack economic resources (income, dowry, or bride price) needed to marry.

Marriage is a complex and deep-rooted social institution. Marriage may provide many mutual benefits and supports. In many marriages, both partners work to support each other and to support the rights of the other. Marriage may also reinforce gender norms, including in ways that are unfair and harmful.

Certain social movements promote greater equality and dignity within marriage. These include: campaigns against dowry and child marriage; and legal reforms that ensure a just inheritance, allow both parties to initiate divorce, and criminalize marital violence.

### **Gender and Religion**

Governments should take steps so that tradition and religion and their expressions are not a basis for discrimination against girls (Paragraphs 24 and 276.d, FWCW Platform for Action, 1995).

Religions hold a wide range of perspectives about gender. These perspectives may change over time. Attitudes also vary within any religion. Many people find that they do not always agree with their religious leader on issues related to gender. Nevertheless, religious perspectives influence the beliefs and behaviour of many people.

Religion or religious leaders may influence gender norms in various ways. Some religious traditions are more egalitarian (equal-minded) with regard to gender. Others are more patriarchal (based on a system of male power). Religions vary in the degree to which they influence or seek to influence gender norms, and fertility. Religious texts may also be interpreted selectively to justify or oppose certain practices.

Some religions support equal rights for all people; (this includes permission to be ordained as a religious leader.) Some religions and religious leaders support gender equality in divorce, inheritance, and community life. In other settings, religious laws or practices may restrict women's movement, or forbid them equal (or any) rights in terms of divorce, inheritance, or other family matters. Religious laws sometimes conflict with civil law.

Women are often denied the opportunity to participate equally with men in religious life. Women typically assume many of the community-support activities for religious institutions, but have limited opportunities for leadership within those institutions. In some religious institutions, women are not allowed to pray together with men.

Around the world, people, including many religious leaders, are working to promote values of human rights and gender equality within their communities.

### **Gender and Bodily Autonomy**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of person (Article 3, UDHR, 1948; Articles 6.1 and 9.1, ICCPR, 1966). No one shall be subjected to . . . cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 5, UDHR, 1948; Article 7, ICCPR, 1966; Article 37.a, CRC, 1989). States shall take measures to abolish traditional practices harmful to the health of children (Article 24.3, CRC, 1989).

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of intending spouses (Article 16.2, UDHR, 1948; Article 16.1, CEDAW, 1979). The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect . . . (Article 16.2, CEDAW, 1979).

We all deserve to have basic control over our own bodies. This includes being free from violence and abuse and from pressure to engage in violence toward others. Such control promotes confidence, safety, health, pleasure, and the opportunity to explore one's identity. Unfortunately, both boys and girls may feel that other people are exercising power and control over them. Feeling you have lost control over your body can be deeply disturbing, even traumatic.

Our control of our bodies is influenced by our family values, by our social and religious institutions and norms, and by formal laws. Almost everywhere, females experience stricter regulation and control over their bodies than do males. For example, girls are more likely to:

- be reared to expect to have little control over their own bodies;
- experience limits on their expression;
- be limited in their movements (such as not being able to walk around the community) or their dress and have fewer opportunities to play sports;
- early or forced marriages.

Males are also pressured to engage in potentially harmful practices. For example:

- Some young men consume dangerous drugs to increase their muscle size.
- In some settings, boys undergo traditional, often dangerous, rites to earn adult status. They may undergo such rites as wilderness survival rituals,

Families, communities, religions, and governments often regulate and punish behaviour that does not conform to expectations regarding gender roles. Around the world, many parents and children defend the right of young people to bodily autonomy and dignity. Many organizations are also working toward this goal by educating communities and advocating legal changes. Each person's body belongs to him or her. No one has the right to abuse, injure, or violate someone else's body in any way.

## **Gender and Violence**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of person (Article 3, UDHR, 1948; Articles 6.1 and 9.1, ICCPR, 1966). No one shall be subjected to . . . cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 5, UDHR, 1948; Article 7, ICCPR, 1966; Article 37.a, CRC, 1989).

Everyone wants to feel safe from violence. Most of us also feel better about ourselves if we are not perpetrating violence against others. The incidence of violence varies dramatically by place and over time. People commit many kinds of violence, including physical force, threats, intimidation, and psychological abuse. Such violence may be carried out by — or in the name of — individuals, groups, institutions, or the state.

Males are more likely than females to commit violence and to be victims of violence.

- Many young men are socialized (or pressured) to act violently.
- Young men are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of violence outside the home — in war and civil conflict, in prisons, and in gangs.
- Women are often subject to interpersonal violence, frequently in the home.
- People who are perceived as not conforming to conventional gender norms may be subject to interpersonal violence.

Violence against women and girls, or against individuals who do not conform to dominant gender norms, is called gender-based violence.

- Females are particularly vulnerable to violence perpetrated by people they know, including their intimate male partners.
- Such violence ranges in severity and may include beatings, burning, or murder.
- Some people face violence because they are perceived (correctly or not) as transgender. Violence based on a person's identity is sometimes referred to as "hate crime."

All gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. Gender-based violence reflects and reinforces cultural norms about masculinity and male control and dominance. Examples include:

- Girls are often reared to expect to have little control over their own bodies.
- Boys are often brought up to believe that males are superior to females and that men should dominate women.
- Many females are brought up to accept that men are entitled to be violent or that violence is an expression of a man's love. Some people even blame the victim rather than holding a man responsible for being violent.
- When communities tolerate violence against individuals who do not conform to expected gender roles (such as transgender people, and openly feminist women in conservative settings), "hate crimes" can become a common aspect of the culture.

In addition to being a violation of human rights, violence against women is also a public health problem of epidemic proportion. The incidence of gender-based violence varies dramatically in response to different historical circumstances and social contexts. Violence against women is also often associated with men's consumption of alcohol or certain drugs. Such violence may also lead to short- or long-term physical health problems. It may also lead to mental health problems such as depression and isolation.

Men, women, and young people are working locally, nationally, and internationally to reduce interpersonal violence, including all forms of gender-based violence. Such activities include: legal reforms, community watch groups, education campaigns, and efforts to change norms.

### **Responding to Gender-Based Violence**

In some cases, men may stop being physically abusive to their partners. In other cases, women may leave a violent partner. However, many people remain in violent relationships. Much can be done to reduce the incidence of gender-based violence, such as ensuring that people know that they have the right to live free of violence.

All people can strengthen their own commitment to and skills for communicating with their friends, family members, and partners about problems related to gender-based violence. They can encourage their friends to do the same. More and more people (males as well as females),

organizations, communities, and country governments are working to reduce violence. They do this by:

- teaching people ways to resolve conflicts without violence, including ways of expressing their feelings respectfully and effectively;
- supporting survivors of gender-based violence, including providing a safe haven where they can seek help and safety;
- working to change attitudes that tolerate or excuse violence or blame it on the victim;
- promoting norms that honor diversity and difference and that support boys and young men who choose not to adopt aggressive male roles;
- educating people about violence, including the gender norms that foster violence, the wide range of contexts in which violence takes place, the rights of all people to live free of violence, and the importance of shared responsibility for reducing violence; and
- advocating for the passage and enforcement of effective laws against violence.

### **Gender Norms and Roles Change Over Time**

Societies and cultures are constantly evolving. The conditions of human beings change, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Gender roles are also changing. Around the world, millions of people are working actively in their families, schools, and communities to change gender norms.

Girls' roles are changing in most parts of the world, rapidly in some places. In many places, girls are slowly gaining access to their rights. In a few, however, girls are finding their lives more and more restricted.

Boys' roles are also evolving, but more slowly. Boys' opportunities to discuss and modify their identities and roles continue to be limited. Many boys feel conflicting pressure to act like "real men," as traditionally defined. Yet, they are also expected to become more respectful and caring in their relationships with women. Organizations of men are working globally to eliminate violence against women. They are also redefining masculinity in ways that allow boys and men to lead fuller lives as individuals, partners, fathers, and members of a just society.

Attitudes toward transgender individuals are changing rapidly in some settings. Awareness of violence is increasing rapidly in some places, but more efforts are needed to reduce the prevalence of such violence.

### **Gender: Our Own Decisions and Actions**

States shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices and customary and other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority of women (Article 5, CEDAW, 1979).

Most of us want to develop our full potential as human beings. Our ability to develop and interact fully is limited, however, by the norms and stereotypes we have absorbed. In order to

challenge stereotypes in our own lives, we must identify how they have affected our identity, personal development, and life choices. In order to reduce gender-based discrimination, people must be able to recognize it and act upon it.

Recognizing gender-based discrimination is sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. It may be obvious: for example, giving key leadership positions or other privileges to boys. Or it can be more subtle and difficult to notice: for example, ignoring someone's opinion because of her or his gender.

### **Changing the World around Us**

Around the world, millions of people, including adolescents, are working to achieve gender and social equality. They do this to help create greater happiness in their own relationships and lives, in their communities, and in the broader society.

Young people can help to promote gender and social equality by:

- taking care not to use degrading language or tell demeaning jokes;
- speaking out against discrimination and gender-based violence;
- reaching out to a person who is being marginalized — this can help a person significantly;
- helping to ensure that people living with HIV or AIDS are treated fairly in the community;
- working to reform laws that punish people based on their identity; and
- joining organizations such as the White Ribbon Campaign (a global movement of men working to end violence against women).

### **Glossary – Basic Concepts about Gender**

The following brief explanations aim to help users clarify important terms regarding gender. These terms are used throughout this document. Around the world, educators bring creativity and sensitivity to the task of adapting these concepts in their own cultural and political context.

**Gender:** socially or culturally defined ideas about masculinity (male roles, attributes, and behaviours) and femininity (female roles, attributes, and behaviours). Gender is not the same as sex.

**Gender equality/inequality:** equal (or unequal) opportunities, burdens, and social, political, and economic power of males and females. (The term gender equity has a similar meaning.)

**Gender norms:** the widely held expectations or beliefs within a community about how people should act or think as males or females. Gender norms also refer to views on how strictly or consistently people should comply with one gender role or another.

Gender roles: the social roles assigned to males or females by the society or family in which they live. Such roles include, for example, how they should behave or what jobs they should have.

Patriarchy: a system of male domination across society, based on belief in the superiority of males.

Sex: Sex is the difference in biological characteristics of males and females, determined by a person's genes. For example, only males produce sperm. Only females produce eggs and can become pregnant. Sex is not the same as gender.

### **TIPS FOR TEACHERS**

1. Emphasize that the term “gender” refers to boys as well as to girls.
2. Use concrete examples of gender issues — from the ACTIVITIES book or from your own setting. Recognizable examples help students understand that gender is more than an abstract idea.
3. Keep emphasizing that boys, as well as girls, can benefit from less rigid gender norms and arrangements. Remember that many students have already chosen less conventional gender roles and feel good about themselves.
4. Within a given culture, as well as between cultures, gender dynamics take different forms. Be sensitive to the nature (and variability) of gender dynamics in your local cultural setting.
5. Start with examples of inequality and discrimination that students recognize (like racism or discrimination based on socio-economic factors). Such examples help students understand inequality and discrimination as they relate to gender.
6. The topic of gender roles may generate defensiveness or hostility. Plan ways to diffuse potential arguments and maintain open and respectful discussion.
7. Recall that many learners have experienced violence. Discussing the topic calls for sensitivity and planning. Establish a safe learning environment. Provide appropriate support and referral as needed.
8. Support learners' efforts to process their feelings. Challenging our own attitudes, or the norms of people around us, can be difficult or confusing. But it is possible and can be empowering.
9. Foster a safe environment for open discussion. Consider separating girls and boys for some activities. Later you can bring them together for shared discussion.
10. For definitions of basic terms, see the glossary at the end of Unit 2.

## **UNIT THREE: MY RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Unit Standard:**

Exploring different kinds of relationships that people have. It encourages young people to think about the qualities they seek in personal relationships in their own lives.

### **Unit Overview**

In thinking about our interpersonal relationships, most of us think about individual personality or experience. Our relationships, however, are also influenced by society. For example, power differences between people, media portrayals of relationships, and other factors strongly influence our ideas about personal relationships. During adolescence, young people may experience different, often intense, feelings as aspects of their relationships undergo dramatic change.

### **Key Learning Outcomes**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Describe the basic right to form relationships and the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Describe different types of relationships and family structures.
- Describe two personal and two societal or cultural factors that may contribute to, or block, satisfying and mutually respectful relationships.
- Discuss the kinds of issues that people need to be able to talk about with comfort and maturity to ensure safe, respectful relationships.

#### **Affective**

- Reflect upon the difference between love and infatuation, with examples from their own lives.
- Reflect upon the nature of their relationships and the kind of relationships that they want to have in their own lives.
- Appreciate the importance of knowing one's rights and responsibilities; having communication skills; and having personal or professional support to address or end a troubled relationship.
- Identify what they believe to be their sources of power and powerlessness and how they bring these perceptions into their interpersonal relationships.

### **Introduction to Interpersonal Relationships**

Interpersonal relationships are social associations, connections, or affiliations between two or more people. For most people, having interpersonal relationships is an important part of being happy. Human relationships can fulfill various emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and

economic needs. Our culture shapes the way we see our world and the relationships in it. People's relationships change as their culture changes.

Every person, in every society, has many different kinds of relationships. These include links with family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, acquaintances, teachers, fellow students, and others. Interpersonal relationships also vary in their quality. For example, different relationships may be characterized by more or less openness, trust, communication, intimacy, sharing, power, respect, affection, and feeling.

Relationships may or may not be centered on something(s) shared in common. For example, people in relationships may be neighbors; classmates; coworkers; members of the same club; congregants at the same church, mosque, or temple; members of a support group; or users on the same social networking website.

People express their feelings for each other in many different ways. People may start new relationships throughout life. They may also end relationships. Sometimes, a relationship can be harmful to one or both people's well-being. People are not obligated to remain in a relationship.

### **Relationships in Our Lives**

People have various personal relationships, including loving relationships, throughout their lives. For most people, important early relationships are formed with members of their family. Young children look to their parents or to other trusted adults or older family members for unconditional love.

Families take many forms. Family members may, or may not, be biologically related. An extended family typically includes relatives other than those of the immediate family, and may include individuals who are not biologically related. Many families include one or more adopted children. Family members may live together in the same home or may be separated, either by choice or by circumstances. Some common circumstances that separate families include: work, migration, military service, and imprisonment. These situations can separate members of a family for extended periods or permanently. In families with children, the children may live with two parents, with one parent, with extended family members, or with adult guardians. Some children grow up without reliable adult protection, but may be nurtured by older children.

Like all relationships, family relationships are changing. For example:

- In many parts of the world, more women are heads of households than has been the case in the past.
- In many places, social attitudes about fatherhood are changing. Increasingly, as a result, more fathers are building close relationships with their children and sharing responsibility for child care. This is especially true where women are entering the formal workforce.

- In places where large numbers of people have died as a result of, war, or other reasons, many orphaned children live with other relatives or in orphanages.

Friendship is one of the most important kinds of interpersonal relationships.

### **Points for Reflection**

- Why do we form friendships?
- What qualities define friendship? Trust? Affection? What else?
- In some cultures, young people often form comfortable friendships with people of the other sex. In other cultures, they do so less often. How can we explain this variation?
- What can we gain from becoming friends with someone from a different background or group?

### **How Can Our Relationships Be More Satisfying And Respectful?**

All of us want relationships that are satisfying and mutually respectful. Certain personal qualities help build satisfying and mutually respectful relationships:

- respect for oneself and an awareness of and comfort with one's own feelings and values;
- sensitivity to other people's feelings and respect for their dignity and rights;
- shared expectations;
- honesty and authenticity;
- good communication skills;
- "give and take" (reciprocity); and
- caring for, spending time with, and paying attention to each other.

Support from the broader society can also promote positive relationships. However, societal inequality can undermine mutual respect and comfort in people's relationships. Parents, religious leaders, and the media can teach young people to respect each other as equals — regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, economic status, physical ability, or other categories.

Schools and community organizations can bring young people from different backgrounds together so that they do not grow up isolated and unfamiliar with people from other walks of life. Schools and families can teach young people to notice when things are not equal and to understand how power differences between people can undermine a satisfying and mutually respectful relationship.

### **What is True Love?**

What is "true love"? What about jealousy? Ideas about love vary in different settings. Typically, "falling in love" involves feelings of passion, and excitement.

Falling in love can be a one-sided experience; the object of the love may not feel the same. Everyone can fall in love. Adults, as well as adolescents, fall in love. People may fall in love only once, more than once, or many times in their lives. Children grow up absorbing many messages about love.

What is “true love”? Loving someone is caring deeply for that person and being committed to his or her well-being and happiness. Loving and being loved can be the source of deep joy and meaning in life. Love is one of the most powerful emotions that people experience. It has inspired great works of art, literature, and music.

There are many different ways to love somebody. People may feel love for members of their immediate or extended family, for close friends, and for their partners or spouse. The terms “true love” or “real love” often refer to an intimate partner bond that has moved beyond the “falling in love”. Sorting out feelings of affection, love, and “true love” is often difficult and confusing. Everyone receives messages from her or his culture about what love is, whom we should (or should not) love, and how we should express (or not express) our love.

When people feel that a valued relationship is threatened, they may become jealous. Jealousy refers to feelings of envy, possessiveness, vulnerability, anger, and resentment. Most people have feelings of jealousy at one time or another.

However, a person may also feel that a relationship is threatened by a partner’s commitments to family, friends, or work. Some people express jealousy with threats, violence, or controlling or manipulative behaviour. Such behaviours are not love and are never an expression of love.

Violence and coercion are demonstrations of power over another person. They always violate the human rights of the person they are used against, regardless of whether they express jealousy or other feelings. Both the person who feels jealous and his or her partner can benefit from talking honestly and respectfully about their feelings with each other. Each of them may also benefit from speaking with a trusted friend, adult, or counselor.

### **Long-Term Intimate Relationships**

People form different kinds of long-term, committed, loving relationships. Most people are brought up to expect that they will form a relationship with a partner, marry that person, have children, and remain in that marriage for the rest of their lives. The reality for many millions of people, however, is more complex. People may form many different kinds of long-term, committed relationships. They may have more than one fulfilling long-term relationship in their lives. Or they may remain single, either by circumstance or by choice. Either as a matter of choice or because of circumstances beyond their control, people may: live together some or all of the time; rear children alone or with other family members; marry; and/or make a lifelong commitment to each other.

A long-term and committed intimate relationship may develop as a result of different circumstances.

The nature of marriage and long-term intimate relationships varies from place to place and over time. In many societies, people find their own intimate partners or spouse. In other places, families choose a spouse for their child — someone they feel will be a suitable partner, or who will strengthen social kinship structures, or both.

Most societies prohibit being married to more than one wife at a time. Where polygamy exists, it virtually always involves one man with multiple wives. Although rates of child marriage are declining, this custom continues to affect millions of girls around the world. In some societies, women are choosing to marry later or not at all. In some settings, men are marrying at later ages than they did in the past because they cannot afford to support a family.

Around the world, some couples are creating marriages based on gender equality and human rights. They are doing this even where the decision challenges local norms. In many settings, openness is increasing in attitudes toward marriage between people from different backgrounds (for example, from different religions, races, or castes).

### **Difficulties in Relationships**

All relationships — even stable, happy ones — have periods of difficulty or moments of frustration. Some relationships are more deeply or chronically troubled than others, however. Some signs of a troubled relationship may include:

- a serious imbalance in respect for each other's dignity and rights;
- feelings of inauthenticity about oneself ("not being able to be yourself" in a relationship);
- ongoing feelings of loneliness and isolation;
- absence of shared values or common interests;
- ongoing feeling of contempt for one's partner;
- episodes involving physical or psychological violence, or the threat of such violence; and

Resolving problems in a productive and nonviolent way requires effort and skill.

### **Ending a Relationship**

No one should be forced to enter a relationship, to marry, or to remain in a relationship. The end of a relationship is not always mutual. Even for marriage, most countries recognize the right of one partner to end a relationship. People should have the right to seek a divorce. People may seek divorce for many reasons. For example, they may be in a marriage in which their rights are being violated. They may have tried hard over a long period of time to clear up serious incompatibilities, but failed.

The end of a relationship may be associated with strong feelings of sadness, hurt, loneliness, anger, and failure. It may also bring feelings of relief or happiness.

## **Norms about Relationships Are Changing**

Attitudes and norms about interpersonal relationships are constantly changing. We make choices every day about how we relate to other people. Those choices create and recreate the meaning of relationships in our lives. Today, people talk with their friends and family members about what a respectful and safe relationship means to them. For example:

- Many people talk to family members and friends about nontraditional relationships, such as relationships across religion, caste, or race.
- A respectful and honest conversation can also help people to think about their own biases.

Many people take public action to promote safer and more respectful relationships across society.

For example many thousands of men have joined campaigns to end violence against women and to build more peaceful and harmonious interpersonal relationships.

### **Tips for Teachers**

1. Although personal interaction involves the best and the worst of human experience, caring relationships give many people's lives meaning and represent much of what life is about.
2. Focus first on the different kinds of relationships people have.
3. The connection between teachers and students is also one kind of interpersonal relationship. Although teachers hold authority, basic principles of respect and dignity still apply to the teacher– student interaction.
4. Validate your students' knowledge: Every person has experience of human relationships.  
Allow students to share their experiences or to keep them private.
5. Invite your students to think about the need for respect, compassion, and human rights in relationships. These relationships can be at school, in the community, in the extended family, or elsewhere.
6. This unit touches on topics about which young people typically have many questions and feelings. Budget enough time to allow for exercises and ample discussion.

## **UNIT FOUR: COMMUNICATION AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS**

### **Unit Standard:**

Exploring about the difficulties that young people often experience in communicating and making decisions. It teaches related skills and provides opportunities for strengthening such skills.

### **Unit Overview**

Knowing how to express yourself so that you are understood, and being able to understand what other people are trying to say, are important and empowering skills. These skills can help you develop relationships that are based on mutual understanding and satisfaction. They can help people resolve conflicts respectfully and without violence.

Some people find that their status in a community influences their ability to express their needs, desires, and feelings to another person. It may also affect their ability to put their decisions into action. Everyone can learn to communicate more effectively.

### **Key Learning Outcomes**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Identify a common decision-making situation that might be uncomfortable for someone who lacks adequate communication or decision-making skills.

#### **Affective**

- Appreciate the importance of good communication skills for interpersonal relationships.

#### **Skill-based**

- Demonstrate the use of at least three basic communication skills and at least three behaviours that can impede clear communication.
- Demonstrate increased ability to communicate clearly in a conversation.
- Demonstrate understanding of basic steps in decision-making.

### **Factors Affecting Communication**

Knowing how to express yourself so that you are understood, and being able to understand what other people are trying to say, are important and empowering skills. These skills can help you develop relationships that are based on mutual understanding and satisfaction. They can help people resolve conflicts respectfully and without violence. These skills can help you feel good about yourself and about your relationships.

People have different styles and skills in communicating. Different cultures vary in terms of their oral and expressive tradition. Communication styles also depend on a person's individual temperament and the communication style that he or she learned as a child.

Gender norms often affect a person's ability and style of communicating. Men and women may communicate in different ways. Strengthening personal communication skills can help people to convey their opinions, needs, and feelings clearly. People can develop the ability to communicate effectively and comfortably across cultural and other divides.

If one person is perceived as having less "social power" or social status than another, this perception may profoundly affect his or her ability and style in communicating. Most people can learn effective communication skills. With practice everyone can communicate more effectively.

### **Tips for Effective Communication**

Clear communication occurs when the message the sender intends to convey is the same as the message that the receiver understands. People communicate both verbally and nonverbally. It is important to check that your message was understood correctly, especially if it involves a difficult or emotional topic.

In every situation, one of the most important behaviours for good communication is listening well and with respect. However, cultural norms influence what kind of communication is considered appropriate. Active and nonjudgmental listening can enhance communication. When you are listening it is helpful to:

- try to understand the other person(s);
- say things that validate the other person, such as "I can understand how you feel," or "Good point";
- make eye contact;
- give positive nonverbal cues, such as a smile, nod, or pat on the back; and
- ask for clarification.

Specific behaviours can enhance communication when you speak. Common constructive behaviours include:

- stating one's feelings and starting sentences with "I" rather than with "You";
- acknowledging that all people have a right to their feelings and opinions;
- avoiding being too directive, judgmental, or controlling;
- stating as clearly as you can what you want or what you do not want; and
- helping identify possible solutions to problems.

### **Direct Versus Indirect Communication Styles**

Some people tend to communicate in a way that is direct and firm. Others tend to communicate in ways that are indirect. Direct and firm communication may be verbal or nonverbal, but generally sends a clear message. For example:

- A person who communicates assertively expresses his or her feelings or thoughts in a straightforward way.
- A person may use “I statements” that express his or her feelings and thoughts (for example, “I feel bad when you speak that way to me” or “I’m glad that you came with me to the health clinic”).
- A person may make eye contact or use other nonverbal messages to communicate directly.

Indirect communication may also be verbal or nonverbal, but often sends a less specific or less defined message. For example:

- A person may avoid specific expressions of their own opinion or feelings.
- A person may avoid finishing a sentence or making eye contact.

Sometimes knowing the best way to express oneself — directly or indirectly — is difficult. A person who communicates indirectly may be following cultural norms about politeness, social status, or expectations about gender roles. Understanding how to assert oneself effectively in one’s own culture is important.

Indirect communication may not always be clear to the listener or receiver. Sometimes people are in situations in which they do not feel that they are being heard. They may need to practice expressing themselves more clearly, directly, and repeatedly than they are used to doing. Communicating directly and firmly is not the same as being aggressive. A person can communicate clearly and directly while still respecting the feelings and thoughts of others.

Communication can also increase mutual trust. Communication is important for clarifying expectations and limits. Such expectations and limits may relate to:

- feelings;
- the exchange of money or material goods; or
- other factors.

Gender norms often affect the way people communicate — or do not communicate. Everyone can learn to communicate comfortably and effectively. Practicing helps!

## **Making Decisions**

An important part of growing up is learning to bring good judgment to making decisions. Certain steps generally help people to make decisions with which they are more satisfied. These steps include:

Step 1: Consider all of the options.

- For many decisions there are options we have not thought of.
- Other people may be able to help identify more options.

Step 2: Identify the benefits and disadvantages of each option carefully.

- Include every option's potential harm to oneself or another.
- Write down a list of the potential consequences of each option.

Step 3: Where appropriate, seek information or advice from people you trust.

Step 4: Make a tentative decision. Consider whether your decision is one that will be easy or hard to change later.

Step 5: Reconsider the decision if necessary.

Try to take as much time as you need to go through all the steps of decision-making. We often feel happier with decisions that we have made thoughtfully.

### **Acting on Our Decisions**

After a decision is made, make a plan for carrying out the decision. Clarify all the steps necessary for acting on the decision. These steps include:

Step 1: Consider what will make the decision easiest to carry out. For example:

- talking to your parents when they are not under pressure;
- finding out about peers who have made and carried out similar decisions (for example, girls who took a stand to continue their schooling,); and
- finding ways to gather the money or other resources necessary for carrying out the decision.

Step 2: Think about likely barriers to carrying out a decision. This step is important, because some decisions are very difficult to put into action. Examples of potential barriers include:

- not having enough money (for example, for bus fare to a clinic or for schoolbooks);
- not having access to services (for example, hard-to-reach schools and clinics);
- legal limits (such as laws restricting products and services);
- fears about social consequences (for example, resisting early marriage, or working at a job that is usually performed by the other sex); and
- worries about personal costs (for example, facing a possible life-changing diagnosis).

Step 3: Rehearse your decision safely or privately. For example:

- write down or practice telling a trusted adult;
- practice with a friend (if you have a friend whose judgment you trust and who you know will respect your privacy); and

- consider whether and how to communicate your decision respectfully to anyone else whom it will affect.

Step 4: Discuss the decision and plan with a supportive person. For example, you could talk with a counselor.

Step 5: Figure out how to carry out your decision in the safest way. For example, you could:

- bring someone with you to confront a violent partner; or
- find an ally in the community leadership before starting a campaign.

Step 6: Where appropriate, seek information or advice from people you trust.

Step 7: If barriers arise in carrying out a decision, develop a different plan of action or rethink the decision.

Step 8: Be aware that even when people do not encounter a barrier, they have the right to re-evaluate decisions and change their minds.

### **Tips For Teachers**

1. Pair students off to learn and practice communication skills; role-playing is also useful and fun.
2. When teaching communication and decision-making skills, be sure to have a number of concrete examples that relate to your students' lives.
3. Most students need extra skills, practice, and support in learning to communicate their feelings
4. Modeling communication skills, such as active listening and nonjudgmental responses, is an important part of teaching those skills.
5. Remember the importance of nonverbal communication. Be aware of your own body language. A person's body can send a message that conflicts with what that person is saying.
6. Create a safe environment in which all students can communicate openly, including those students who typically hold back in front of others. However, avoid pressuring anyone to communicate about a personal or sensitive topic.

## **UNIT FIVE: THE HUMAN BODY DURING ADOLESCENCE**

### **Unit Standard:**

Explaining what a healthy body is and what good health is for young people and some barriers they may face in taking care of their bodies.

### **Unit Overview**

The human body is beautiful in all its forms. Young people deserve to grow up with a sense of familiarity and confidence about their own bodies. Such familiarity and confidence also enable them to take better care of their own health. In addition, young people need good nutrition, exercise, information, and health services to keep their bodies well.

### **Key Learning Outcomes**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Discuss at least two physical changes, and two cultural or social changes that young people experience at puberty and how these vary for girls and for boys.
- List at least two ways that knowing about their bodies can promote health and well-being.

#### **Affective**

- Discuss (or write about) how gender norms affect body image.
- Identify something about their own bodies that they feel positive about.

### **Body Image**

People's bodies differ in appearance. There is no "perfect" or "normal" body type or appearance, despite cultural and media messages to the contrary. Learning to be comfortable with one's own body — having a positive body image — is an important element of self-esteem. Experimenting with one's appearance can be fun and creative; it can be one way to explore one's identity.

People's body image affects their degree of comfort with social life and with physical activity. Developing this comfort can be a particular challenge for those living in communities that stigmatize physical disabilities.

Social and individual factors affect people's confidence about their bodies. Such factors include:

- knowing about one's own body;
- internalizing social norms that celebrate or stigmatize bodies' different appearances and abilities;
- understanding that "ideal" appearances vary across cultures and time;

- receiving positive or negative feedback about one’s body, regardless of how closely it resembles or diverges from the cultural ideal;
- being physically active and maintaining good health; and
- having laws and support systems in place that enable people with disabilities to live full lives, whether independently or aided by respectful assistance.

Girls and women often feel intense social pressure related to their physical appearance. Girls’ and women’s social status often depends significantly on their appearance. Cultural practices reinforce the pressure on young women to achieve cultural ideals of beauty.

Girls and women are often subject to comments and harassment that can be upsetting, uncomfortable, and threatening. Women, and especially girls, are more vulnerable than boys to negative feelings about their bodies; such feelings can lead to eating disorders.

Men and boys also may feel anxious about their appearance. They may feel pressure to be physically strong or athletic in order to be seen as masculine. Boys and men are also subject to comments and harassment. Some boys develop eating disorders. Boys often find that acknowledging or seeking support for these concerns is less acceptable socially for them than it is for girls.

Nearly all people with a physical disability or chronic illness can still experience all aspects of their life. Oftentimes, however, they suffer discrimination and physical and social isolation because of their physical or health status. This stigma undermines people’s confidence in their bodies and their ability to have full social lives. Such discrimination or stigma also affects people’s ability to obtain housing, work, and access to public spaces.

Around the world, people with disabilities have organized to eliminate such stigma and discrimination, and to expand their ability to attain satisfying lives and participate fully in society. With encouragement, all young people can be comfortable with their physical appearance. They can also develop other sources of self-esteem and self-worth. For example, they can focus on academic achievement, creative talents, and other traits.

### **Learning About One’s Body: A Global Movement**

Around the world, people, particularly women and girls, have taken steps to teach themselves and each other about their bodies and health. In virtually every country, formal or informal groups have formed that offer self- help workshops, theater and radio programs, and informational materials about the body.

Many groups that begin with a focus on helping people learn about their bodies also advocate for broader social changes. For example, they work for:

- better education in schools and communities;
- an end to cultural practices that are harmful;

- more accessible and more respectful health services;
- laws protecting rights; and
- new community norms that foster men's and women's joint responsibility for health.

### **Tips for Teachers**

1. Many teachers are more accustomed to presenting information about human body. However, resources such as fact sheets can convey such information efficiently.
2. Allowing teachers to use their limited time to focus on topics that require thinking and dialogue.

## **UNIT SIX: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

### **Unit Standard:**

Provide vital information to help young people keep their bodies safe and healthy.

### **Unit Overview:**

Reproductive health can be sources of deep satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfillment in people's lives. Some unwanted practices may also lead to health problems, however, if both husband and wife do not ensure that they protect themselves, and each other, from unintended pregnancy and infection, including HIV. One key step to improving people's reproductive well-being is ensuring that they have access to information and services. Another step is to create more just social conditions — including gender equality and respect for people's rights — that enable all people to control the circumstances under which they have relationship for reproduction.

### **Key Learning Outcomes**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Discuss key issues regarding access to reproductive health services (including for pregnancy and childbirth) in their setting. Discuss the rights of all people to protect themselves against STIs and HIV.
- Name key facts about transmission, diagnosis, consequences, and treatment for HIV and AIDS.
- Discuss consequences of HIV and AIDS for families, communities, and countries, and the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS.

#### **Affective**

- Recognize the role of gender inequality in transmission of STIs and HIV
- Reflect on their feelings about people's hesitations, and their responsibility, to disclose their STI and HIV status to their spouses.

## **THE RIGHT TO HEALTH SERVICES**

All people have the right to health care and necessary social services (Article 25, UDHR, 1948; Article 12, CEDAW, 1979; Article 12, ICESCR, 1966; Article 24, CRC, 1989). Information and

services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their reproductive health and wellbeing

1. Every young person needs access to health services as part of having a safe, responsible, and healthy life.
2. All people have the right to health services that are accessible, affordable, and of good quality. People have a right to be treated respectfully and to maintain their privacy. Unfortunately, many barriers may keep people from obtaining the health services they need and deserve. Sometimes these barriers reflect discrimination and informal stigma. Sometimes these barriers become formal policies.
3. Governments may not provide free or affordable health services in all areas. Governments, providers, or pharmacies may withhold access to certain health services and medications. Their actions may be influenced by political or religious beliefs. Pharmaceutical companies may charge unaffordable prices for drugs and supplies. Some health programs may require young people, particularly girls, to obtain parental consent before receiving contraceptive services.
4. Poor quality of care may discourage people from going to available health services. For example, clients may have to endure a long wait for services or may not receive the supplies or services they need. Some clients (especially if they are unmarried, poor, of a racial/ethnic minority, transgender, or living with HIV or AIDS) experience judgmental treatment from health providers. Adolescents often have real or perceived fears that family or friends will find out about their health issues.
5. Gender norms influence use of services, especially where such services focus mainly on women. Many women especially young wives lack the decision making power or the money that they need to get to services. Some girls and women are prohibited from leaving their homes or villages unaccompanied, even to a health clinic.
6. Despite obstacles, millions of people, including young people, use health services and interact well with their providers.
7. People around the world are organizing successfully to improve the health of their communities. For example, they:
  - establish community health education activities to teach each other about health issues;
  - establish reproductive health services that are especially welcoming to young people, and include counseling, informed consent, and respect for confidentiality;
  - educate the community about obstetric fistula and advocate for services to provide surgical repair for women with this debilitating condition;
  - establish community projects to improve health, such as gardens, water wells, and exercise programs;

- advocate for better health services (including increasing availability of medications); and
- advocate for better health policies and for increased funding for health care and about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV and AIDS

### **Consequences of sexual activity**

1. People can experience both positive and negative consequences as a result of sexual activity.
  - Positive outcomes include pleasure, intimacy, and desired pregnancy.
  - Negative consequences may include emotional and physical harm; sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; or unintended pregnancy.
2. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections spread through sexual activity. STIs are preventable. [See fact sheet on Sexually Transmitted Infections.]
  - Some STIs cause symptoms or discomfort. Others do not always have symptoms (especially among females).
  - Even when an infection does not produce symptoms; it can have serious health consequences, including endangering fertility or even life.
  - Among the STIs that can have serious consequences are: HIV, HPV (genital warts), syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, trichomonas, and herpes.
3. People who are adult can take steps to reduce their risk of acquiring an STI.
4. One of the most serious infections that people can acquire through sex is HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS is a major cause of illness and death in many parts of the world.
5. Some (but not all) STIs are curable. A person who completes proper treatment will no longer have the infection. Taking proper preventive measures can prevent re-infection.
6. Proper treatment can often reduce symptoms and/or dramatically slow the progress of those STIs that cannot be cured (for example, herpes, HIV infection, and HPV).
  - a) All STIs, including HIV infection, are preventable.
  - b) Every person has the right to protect himself or herself against STIs. There are various ways to protect oneself and one's partners against STIs.
  - c) A common STI is human papilloma virus (HPV). Many strains of HPV exist; some cause genital warts and others lead to cancer — most commonly, cervical cancer. HPV vaccines can protect both males and females against many of these strains of the virus.
  - d) Male circumcision offers some protection against HIV for males. Having a foreskin on the male reproductive organ seems to make it easier for various viruses and bacteria

including HIV to establish an infection in men. Even if they are circumcised, men can still get infected by HIV and can still infect their wives.

7. New protective technologies are likely to become available in the future. As they do, people have a right to learn about, and to access, such technologies. In real life, many people do not use protection against STIs. Some people do not use protection because they lack information, skills, or basic access to services. For example:

- They do not have accurate information regarding transmission and prevention of STIs.
- They believe that their spouse could not be infected.
- They believe that they are not infected.

### **Tips for Teachers**

- Explain about reproductive health and wellbeing's or the outcomes often as a result of social and personal factors addressed in the previous units
- Educators can rely on the material, scientific knowledge and information on the accompanying fact sheets in this resource.
- Seeking updated and locally relevant information from reliable sources is essential.
- Teaching about HIV and AIDS requires great sensitivity, particularly in settings with a high prevalence of the infection.

## **UNIT SEVEN: ADVOCATING FOR HUMAN HEALTH, RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

### **Unit Standard:**

Preparing students to be proactive and as responsible citizens take actions and wherever possible advocate for change to make a better society

### **Unit Overview**

This unit enables educators to support students with hands-on learning experiences in their own lives, schools, and communities. These experiences focus on achieving change in the areas of health, human rights, and gender equality. Learners may reflect on their own behaviours. They may discern what they deem fair or unfair. And they may take steps — whether large or small — to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. This kind of personal and civic engagement helps empower individuals as responsible citizens and helps promote democratic culture.

### **Key Learning Outcomes**

The material in this unit prepares learners to:

#### **Cognitive**

- Name at least one way that people can challenge discrimination or injustice in their own lives. Name at least one way that people can challenge discrimination or injustice in their communities.
- Name at least one way that people can challenge discrimination or injustice at the national or global level.

#### **Affective**

- Reflect on their biases and prejudices and motivations to change.
- Become sensitized to situation characterized by injustice, discrimination, marginalization, or inequality.
- Reflect on their experiences and feelings in trying to promote health, human rights, or gender equality.

#### **Skill-based**

- Research a concern that learners have about health, human rights, or gender equality. Develop an action plan to undertake an activity that contributes to a more just world.
- Implement the steps of this action plan.

## **Reflecting On Our Own Attitudes**

We all hope to develop our full potential as human beings. Our ability to do so may be affected, however, by established social norms and stereotypes. These norms and stereotypes often relate to people's gender, race, age, class, religion, and physical abilities or disabilities.

To some degree, everyone absorbs and passes on widely accepted stereotypes. Absorbing discrimination (or oppression) means that we come to believe that the stereotypes and norms are true, even when we are the victims of them. Sometimes people recognize that certain norms and stereotypes are harmful, but doubt that they can change them.

You can challenge stereotypes related to gender and other aspects of your own life. To do this, you must have the ability and confidence to identify how these stereotypes have affected your identity, personal development, and choices.

All of us can engage in self-reflection and critical thinking about our personal opinions, values, and ideas. Following are some difficult, but important, questions each of us can consider in reflecting about community standards and fairness in the areas of gender and human rights:

- What adjectives would I use to describe my personal traits? Are these words typically used to describe boys and men or girls and women?
- Do I feel that certain emotions such as anger or gentleness are not appropriate for girls or for boys? What are some examples?
- Do I tend to assume that I should develop (or not develop) certain skills and talents?
- Do I tend to assume that boys and girls naturally have different intellectual capacities?
- Do I tend to listen more carefully to someone's ideas if the speaker is a boy or a girl?
- Do I think girls don't really need to play sports as much as boys do? Why?
- How do I feel about girls having more chores at home than boys do?
- How acceptable is it for a man to be paid more than a woman for the same job?
- As an adult, would I vote for a female president? Why? Why not?
- Would I hire a man to take care of young children? Why? Why not?
- On what basis did I develop these views? Where did I learn to form these attitudes?

Every day, we make decisions about the way we react to and treat other people. Many times, we make decisions without stopping to think about what is fair or ethical, or about other decisions we could make. Being fair means treating people with equal respect; as a matter of personal ethics and human rights.

## **Recognizing Whether Something is Fair or Unfair**

In order to stand up to discrimination, people first must be able to recognize it both within themselves and in the world around them. Recognizing discrimination is not always easy. In some cases, it can be obvious (for example, in a highly derogatory remark or in instances of

domestic violence). In other cases, it may be more subtle and harder to notice (for example, ignoring someone's opinion because of her or his gender).

One question people can ask themselves when they sense that they may be responding based on stereotypes or prejudice is, "Why am I making this judgment?" Answering this question honestly can provoke useful reflection and can help a person to recognize when discrimination may be at the root of his or her behaviour.

### **Changing the World around Us**

We all feel some cultural pressure to conform to the "way things are." Some people accept things the way they are, even when they are unfair. They may not care. They may not know how to change the situation. Or they may feel that trying to make a change would be too uncomfortable or risky. Other people speak out against unjust conditions in their own relationships and families, in their schools, in their communities, and in their society. Some people speak out or act even when their actions might put them at emotional, economic, legal, social, or physical risk.

People who believe in social equality can take a number of actions. It is rarely effective to challenge the entire social fabric. Rather, people can contribute toward small but important changes even in highly conservative settings. Making a difference can be exciting and empowering and can build new relationships with other people. For example everyone can:

- express attitudes, values, and opinions that are consistent with their beliefs;
- respect the human rights of all people;
- act against discrimination; and
- through steps small and large, help change lives every day.

Individuals can challenge injustices (including gender inequality) that they see in their own relationships and lives. For example:

- All of us can stop using degrading language or telling demeaning jokes about people who are different from ourselves. We can also speak up when others do so. People can become more aware of disrespectful or degrading attitudes presented in the media (song lyrics, videos, television programs, comic books, and so forth).
- A girl can decide to make serious efforts to convince her parents not to marry her off at an early age. Her brother can help, and he can refuse to take dowry when he is about to be married.
- A man can ask his parents to stop harassing his wife (their daughter-in-law) and her family for more dowries.
- An adolescent can pressure his friends who are teasing or bullying someone to stop doing so.
- Everyone can become more sensitive to the feelings of people from other backgrounds and situations. Being open-minded and listening are crucial traits for developing respectful relationships.

People can also decide to help end injustice that they observe in their communities and in their society. For example, they can:

- be supportive of an individual who is being unfairly marginalized; and
- educate people one-on-one and raise their awareness of local injustices.

People can join local efforts to achieve fairness and equality related to gender. For example, they can:

- establish neighborhood watch groups to intervene in instances of domestic violence;
- create safe places where victims of domestic violence can go for help; and
- work to establish gender education in schools.

People can join national campaigns to achieve fairness and equality. Such campaigns may include those to:

- help girls stay in school; and
- ensure enforcement of laws that protect gender equality

People can support or join movements for social change at the global level. For example:

- the White Ribbon Campaign (a movement of men and boys around the world to end violence against women);
- arts and culture campaigns to raise awareness;
- movements to end trafficking in women and girls; and
- youth-led networks for human rights and services.

Some of the activities that people undertake to bring about social change include:

- Research;
- Educating others, both individually and in groups;
- Educating decision-makers;
- Contacting and educating journalists;
- Writing and signing petitions and letters;
- Working in electoral campaigns;
- Lobbying elected officials for better laws and enforcement;
- Defending in court the rights of people who have been discriminated against or abused;
- Attending parades and rallies;
- Writing proclamations and position statements;
- Attending protest demonstrations and strikes;
- Picketing and boycotting;
- Creating and performing theatrical and musical pieces to promote awareness;
- Setting up direct services to show what can be done; and
- Organizing training workshops to teach health care providers, police, and others in public life about how to better address a particular issue.

## **Obstacles Faced In Advocating For Social Change**

Working for justice can be difficult and hazardous. It often involves questioning public opinion or individuals and institutions with authority and power. In some cases it can carry risk of stigma, imprisonment, or physical danger. Because of these risks, questioning or protesting an instance of discrimination directly is not always possible.

If questioning or challenging a specific instance of discrimination is not possible, a person may look for a safer way to respond. However, it is important to remember that what is safe in one setting is not always safe in another setting. Some of the ways that people (including young people) have responded to discrimination include:

- figuring out a way to lessen its effect on themselves or on others;
- talking about it with a trustworthy and experienced person;
- setting up a Web page or blog; and
- finding a few supportive people and then going to speak to an authority.

## **The Meaning and Power of Advocacy in People’s Lives**

People are usually most effective in creating social change if it relates to an issue that they know and care about, often because it affects them directly. People can learn skills for changing the world around them. These skills can be used in many different situations. Whether we work for fairness in our daily personal choices or in organized social campaigns, promoting justice and human rights can give meaning to a person’s life and can be personally empowering.

## **Taking Action: Project-Based Learning**

People can learn skills for changing the world around them, even in the smallest of ways and in the most conservative of settings. These skills can be used in many situations. Young people can be powerful and effective advocates for change. The following are important steps for creating social change.

**Step 1:** Identify an issue or problem that you care about. Think about why you care about this problem. This can be a problem affecting you alone or another person. It can affect a few people, for example, in your family or classroom. It can be a problem that involves all or some members of your community, or even a large- scale problem affecting many people in your country or in the world.

**Step 2:** Gather and analyze information about the problem and who has taken steps to address it. For example:

- Gather information about who is already involved in addressing this problem locally or nationally. Figure out how to link yourself to such efforts.
- Talk to other people about how they see the problem.
- When possible, learn more by reading about the problem.

- Identify the underlying roots of the problem.
- Examine what institutions, policies, laws, rules, cultural norms, and resource allocations allow the problem to persist. (You can make a type of “political map” with this information.)

Step 3: Decide what changes you want to achieve. Think about short-term goals and long-term goals. Be imaginative, but also be realistic. Changes might include:

- changing your own attitudes or behaviour ;
- increasing knowledge and awareness among the people around you;
- encouraging people to change their behaviour and be more responsible about respecting other people’s rights;
- changing the rules within a community institution; and
- arranging for certain people to gain access to a program or receive a service they need.

Step 4: Think about who might be able to help you take steps toward the change you want to see — either by offering advice or by helping you more directly. For example:

- You might approach a parent, school principal, local community leader, or elected official.
- By talking with other people, you can motivate them to become more supportive or involved. You can benefit from their skills and advice, and you do not need to do everything yourself.
- Pay attention to people’s different perspectives.

Step 5: Join an organization or find partners. There is power in numbers! Collective efforts — including the voices of people who often go unheard — often receive more attention and are more effective than individual efforts. Typically, a person can work more easily for any change — even a small one — if he or she has cooperation and moral support from other people.

Step 6: Identify your key audience (whom you want to reach). As best you can, clarify the message you want to present about the changes you want to see.

Step 7: Brainstorm possible actions that might make the changes happen. Keep in mind the most appropriate way to reach the audience you have targeted. For example, consider:

- meeting with the school principal or a local community leader;
- writing an article for the school paper;
- hosting a concert to raise money for the change;
- providing educational sessions in the community or in your classroom; and
- getting involved or organizing political participation locally. For example, you can write and distribute leaflets, create and perform a street play, or volunteer for a political campaign that shares your concern and values.

Step 8: Carefully discuss, study, and compare all possible actions. Then choose those that seem the most achievable and effective. Develop your action plan.

Step 9: Consider the barriers you might face in undertaking these actions in your community. For example:

- You might be ignored.
- You might not be able to obtain all the resources you need.
- You might not have enough allies.

Step 10: Be sure that your actions do not cause harm to you or others. Be sure to ask trusted adult and other young leaders about risks you may not have considered. Some potential risks include:

- Social stigma or discipline, at home, at school, or in the community.
- Hostility or even physical harm from someone who is opposed to your actions.
- Financial or legal consequences.

Step 11: Revise your plan, if necessary, to be sure that no harm will come of it.

Step 12: Identify your opposition. Learn about their arguments and activities. Prepare counterarguments that are accurate and honest.

Step 13: Finalize your action plan.

Step 14: Identify and gather the human and material resources you will need to implement your plan. Some examples of human resources are:

- people who can help contact the local government;
- people who know how to write a press release;
- people who can help start a website; and
- people who can carry out other tasks involved in delivering your message.

Some examples of material resources are:

- money or donations of food to serve or sell;
- necessary equipment or supplies, which may be borrowed; and
- assistance with travel.

Step 15: Carry out your action plan.

Step 16: Assess the effectiveness of your work in terms of your short-term and long-term goals. Make adjustments. Seek advice and support from others if necessary.

Step 17: Keep working on the problem. Social change is usually a long-term goal.

Change is possible. You can always find something you can do, no matter how small. Do not be discouraged if the problems seem large and overwhelming. Finally, keep in mind that while you try to change the world around you, you must be fair, respectful, and just in your own everyday actions and interactions.

## **Tips for Teachers**

1. This unit helps you guide students undertaking “hands-on” action projects. Even if your students are not able to carry out an advocacy project themselves, you may use the first part of this unit to introduce the topics of advocacy and social change to your students.
2. Use the material in the preceding units of this book as a reference, so that you can help students think and learn about different issues.
3. Although this unit highlights particular issues (including gender equality and violence), it can be applied to a wider range of social action projects.
4. Familiarize yourself with at least one advocacy effort in your area. You can draw on this information for concrete examples about why and how people work for social change.
5. This module includes a number of “thinking questions” that your students may find complicated or personally challenging. Take care to select questions that are appropriate for them.
6. Seek both encouragement and counsel from others in guiding students through this module.

## **Tips For “Taking Action: Project-Based Learning”:**

1. Encourage your students to start small. Remind them that change at any level matters. Help them understand how their small acts can connect to larger movements.
2. Encourage students to work in teams, and ensure that the teams give everyone a chance to participate and feel involved.
3. Remember: Your first responsibility is to keep your students safe. Although change often requires bold steps, even small steps may feel threatening to others in the community. As your students design their projects, make your own inquiries among leaders in your institution or community about any potential resistance to your students’ plans, and seek backing of influential people for students’ efforts. Such outreach can help minimize any backlash. Work closely with your students to ensure that they do not take inappropriate risks, and help them select a new topic if appropriate. Consider compiling a list of resources where students can go for help and support.

## **FACT SHEETS**

### **Nutrition, Healthy Physical Activity, and Substance Abuse**

#### **Nutrition**

Why is nutrition particularly important during adolescence?

Adequate nutrition is particularly important during adolescence because it is a time of rapid growth.

What are the main causes and consequences of nutritional problems?

The lack of access to enough nourishing food is the main cause of nutritional problems. These problems are made worse when food is distributed unequally within families, for example, when sons receive more nourishing food than daughters, or when wives and daughters are fed last. Inadequate nutrition impairs learning capabilities. It lowers resistance to infections. It leads to maternal and infant health problems and, in many cases, to death. It may result in weak or brittle bones among those who are middle-aged or elderly.

Other nutritional problems are more common in developed countries. Eating too much of foods that are rich in fat and sugar leads to obesity and contributes to numerous health problems, including diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. Compulsive dieting is also a problem for many people, especially where the media create and promote unrealistic ideals of body size and appearance. Eating disorders such as anorexia (compulsive under-eating) and bulimia (usually vomiting, but also taking laxatives, after eating) may lead to serious illness and even death. These disorders are more common among girls.

What can be done to improve nutrition?

Ways to improve nutrition include:

- learning about the nutritional content of foods and making healthy choices;
- petitioning markets or fast-food outlets to provide affordable, healthy options;
- organizing farmers' markets to make local fresh food available to residents of inner cities;
- promoting fair distribution of food among all family members;
- supporting accurate and clear labeling of food products; and
- monitoring fast-food advertising practices.

#### **Physical Activity**

Why is physical activity important?

A healthy amount and type of physical activity helps protect against diseases such as obesity, diabetes, certain cancers, and high blood pressure, and improves psychological well-being. Sports are also a source of social interaction and fun. For girls, participation in sports or exercise programs can foster development of a positive body image and provide opportunities for

building friendships, spirited group activity, and public recognition of achievement. Adolescent girls who engage in sports may have better social and health outcomes — including better academic performance— than those who do not.

How do stereotypes affect participation in physical activity and sports?

Everyone deserves an equal opportunity to engage in sports or physical activity, regardless of skill level, sex, physical ability, or economic status. However, girls, people with disabilities, and people living in extreme poverty often lack opportunities to participate in sports. Gender bias has resulted in fewer exercise and sports opportunities for girls. Examples include school team sports offered only to boys; less access to, or inferior, facilities and equipment for girls; and less recognition and funding for girls' and women's sports.

Such discrimination is a violation of girls' rights. Fortunately, community advocacy and legal changes are starting to address these inequalities at the local, national, and international level, and biased attitudes and beliefs are starting to change.

What types of physical activity can have negative effects on health?

Work that includes long hours of strenuous activity, such as carrying heavy loads or engaging in tasks that require repetitive motions such as bending, can be harmful. Unsafe conditions may also make work-related physical activity more dangerous, for example, working where you have to breathe toxic substances or working in extreme heat. Many sports, particularly contact sports, also carry a risk of injury.

## **Substance Abuse**

What drugs do people use and why do they use them?

Apart from medications, drugs people use for recreation include alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, marijuana, inhalants (such as gasoline, glue, cleaning fluids), cocaine, and heroin. Drugs affect the mind and body, sometimes permanently. Some are more dangerous than others, and their effects differ by individual. Alcohol and tobacco are the most commonly used drugs worldwide. In recent years, girls' and women's use of tobacco has increased dramatically in some countries. People use recreational drugs for many purposes, including:

- to reduce anxiety in social situations;
- to appear mature and confident;
- to avoid feeling or dealing with problems, including boredom and loneliness;
- to fit in socially or have fun;
- to stimulate their minds or stay awake;
- to enhance sensory perceptions or feel “high”;
- to reduce appetite or avoid eating (to lose weight);
- to relax or sleep; and
- to cope with trauma.

### **What is addiction?**

When people use a drug regularly, they can become dependent on or addicted to it. Many drugs can be addictive, including some medications, such as painkillers, diet drugs, or sleeping aids, and people may become addicted without recognizing that they are. Many people find it difficult or impossible to stop using a drug once they are addicted to it. Overcoming an addiction requires belief in ALLAH, determination, strong willpower, belief in oneself, and a supportive environment, often including professional treatment or involvement in a treatment program.

What serious problems can result from using or abusing drugs?

Adolescents' substance abuse is a major public health problem in many countries. Drug use leads to numerous serious problems, including:

- causing accidents while driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs;
- behaving in ways that lead to regret as a result of poor judgment and lowered inhibitions from drug use;
- acquiring HIV or hepatitis from sharing needles while injecting drugs; and
- overdosing on a drug to the point of poisoning and death.

Addicts may resort to desperate, degrading, or illegal measures to obtain the money to buy drugs. People who smoke cigarettes, chew tobacco, or spend a lot of time near those who smoke, may develop cancer or other life-threatening diseases.

### **United Nations Agreements**

#### **How are United Nations treaties and agreements reached?**

First, the United Nations (UN) calls for a global conference. The next step is a planning meeting involving senior country representatives, technical experts, and people from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They negotiate the content of a written document. NGOs have no official role or vote, but are often active in shaping the content of the documents. The UN holds the official conference where countries' representatives finalize and approve the negotiated documents. These documents may be in the form of treaties (which are legally binding) or of nonbinding declarations or action programs or platforms. In either case, countries can choose to sign the document, promising to comply with and implement it. When a country ratifies a treaty, that country becomes legally bound by it.

#### **How do United Nations treaties and agreements make a difference?**

Countries issue regular reports on how they are (or are not) complying with a human rights treaty. Violations of human rights treaties can often be addressed in national courts or, in some cases, by United Nations or regional human rights bodies. Many NGOs use international agreements as a basis to advocate for better laws, policies, and programs in their countries. They may also assume responsibility for monitoring their governments' compliance. International aid or trade agreements are also sometimes tied to a country's respect for certain human rights conventions.

### **What are some of the most important official human rights documents?**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, recognizes the principle that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and outlines the human rights guaranteed to all freedom, economic, social, and cultural freedom, education, and work, among others. Together with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it makes up the International Bill of Human Rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, aims to protect the individual rights of children — including the right to protection from violence, to the highest attainable standard of health, and to education, among others. The CRC outlines the rights and responsibilities of families and governments to ensure these guarantees.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, recognizes women’s rights and lays out an agenda to end discrimination against women in every sector of society. The rights addressed include political participation, health, education, employment, marriage, family, and equality before the law. The Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), held in Beijing in 1995, refocused efforts to achieve women’s equality and adopted a Platform for Action. Themes included the empowerment of women, poverty, the girl-child, and violence against women.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, adopted a Program of Action laying out priorities to address population and development issues, including health, education, human rights, the environment, migration, and HIV and AIDS. The goals of the ICPD include universal access to reproductive health care and education, especially for girls, and the reduction of infant, child, and maternal mortality. This document has been an important tool for advocates and governments that seek to protect

### **Violence against Women and Girls**

#### **How widespread is violence against women and girls?**

Sadly, violence against women and girls (sometimes called gender-based violence) is very widespread. It is a major public health and human rights issue. Worldwide, rates of such abuse vary widely. In most settings, however, between one-third and two-thirds of women are beaten, or otherwise abused by an intimate partner during their lifetime. Hundreds of thousands of women and girls are trafficked across borders annually. In the next decade, more than 100 million girls in developing countries will marry as children. In every war zone, violence against women has been reported during or after armed conflicts.

#### **What are the consequences of violence against women?**

The health consequences include serious pain and injuries, such as broken bones, burns, black eyes, cuts, bruises, headaches, and abdominal and muscle pain, sometimes enduring for years as well as mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Severe

injuries, intentional homicide, and suicide related to violence all contribute to female mortality rates. In a community, violence against women can perpetuate the false belief that men are better than women. Gender-based violence creates a climate of fear and insecurity in families, schools, communities, and workplaces.

### **What are some effective strategies for addressing violence against women?**

Changing attitudes and conducting other prevention efforts, including:

- engaging men in efforts to change cultural attitudes about masculinity and violent behaviour ;
- integrating gender education, including information about gender-based violence, into formal and informal education;
- introducing campaigns, such as the annual 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women;
- educating women and girls about their legal rights;
- other activities to empower women and girls; and
- ending child marriage, which puts many girls in relationships in which they are at risk of violence.

Providing services: Women who experience violence and their children need access to various services, ideally in one place. They may need hotlines, counseling, and support networks, shelters that meet safety standards, legal services, and health care, including emergency contraception for rape victims.

Providing training: Trained health care providers can help detect abuse and assist victims by offering medical, psychological, and legal support and referrals.

Changing laws, including:

- demonstrating political commitment through statements from high-level government officials, backed by action and the commitment of resources;
- enacting and implementing laws that address violence against women, and evaluating the application of these laws;
- developing guidelines and protocols and providing systematic, mandatory training for police, prosecutors, and judges;
- establishing specialized courts and police units; and
- enacting vigorous arrest and prosecution policies and appropriate sentencing.

Expanding knowledge: Research and documentation of violence against women and girls increase recognition of the problem and the commitment to address it.

## **EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS**

### **A Note to Educators and Curriculum Developers**

As important as what information is taught is how we teach it. The most effective methods for teaching about gender and rights are participatory, learner-centered educational methods. Indeed, such methods help prepare young people for living — and promote their health and happiness — in a complex and changing world.

To be able to apply participatory teaching methods with ease and skill, educators need preparation and support. This section provides an overview of the basic principles of learner-centered, interactive teaching. Finally, it includes important guidance about putting these curricula into practice, in both school and community settings.

### **The Rationale for Learner-Centered, Interactive Teaching Methods**

Education is not a process of passive absorption. Rather, people continually gather information and reinterpret what they learn based on their own knowledge and experience. To make this process work as well as possible, educators actively engage students in their own learning.

Indeed, many researchers conclude that interactive, learner-centered teaching methods produce better results than other educational methods. Such methods appeal to students and promote critical thinking. Particularly for topics that directly affect students' lives, these approaches help learners to personalize information and to practice new skills.

Over the years, participatory teaching approaches have become the mainstay of many education programs. More and more teachers are now applying these dynamic methods and adding “hands-on” projects in a variety of subject areas — including social studies, civics, science, and literature. They note that participation and free expression in the classroom also foster democratic attitudes. Indeed, according to a multi-country survey, students who learn in such open classroom environments report greater support for gender equality. Finally, educators report that they themselves are learning a lot by teaching in this way.

## **PRINCIPLES OF INTERACTIVE, LEARNER-CENTERED TEACHING**

1. Establish a learning environment based on equality, respect, and human rights.
  - Create a supportive learning environment. All learners should feel involved, listened to, comfortable, and safe from ridicule, especially when they take risks with new ideas. Encourage participation, particularly among those who feel alone or intimidated. (Various conditions and situations can trigger such feelings. For example, differences in social power associated with gender, social class, or age can be a factor. Learners with limited fluency in the language spoken at school may avoid joining discussions. Students living with a physical disability and those with other special needs may feel shy.) You can boost class involvement by using activities that promote respect and team building and by spreading leadership opportunities. Of course, it is also important to ensure the safety and privacy of the physical space.
  - During an early session, ask students to work together to devise a list of guidelines for their own respectful classroom.
  - Ask students to respect other people's privacy, and remind them not to disclose information to others that they feel should be kept private. Consider how some students might intimidate or even abuse others after leaving a classroom in which sensitive topics have been discussed. Assure your students that you, as their teacher, will keep all discussions confidential. In this way, you serve as a role model for respecting others' privacy.
  - Make certain that students understand that they have the right not to participate or share if doing so makes them uncomfortable.
  - Encourage all students to share their thoughts. Do not judge their ideas.
  
2. Foster a process that draws on learners' experiences, integrating new information and ideas into what they already know and think about a topic.
  - Remember that all participants have knowledge and experience. Listen and ask questions to draw them out.
  - Listen to students' concerns and pose hypothetical problems that reflect their real lives. Engage them in solving these problems, making their own choices and developing their ideas along the way.
  - Encourage learners to explore what meaning an issue has in their own lives.
  - Think of your role as facilitating discussion of students' ideas rather than as a lecturer or transmitter of information. Sometimes you may need to correct students' factual errors or help them recognize when a comment is disrespectful.
  - Occasionally, you may wish to share an example from your own experience that is relevant to the lesson. However, be extremely careful to maintain appropriate boundaries with your students.

3. Use a wide range of strategies to engage learners.
  - Develop a range of methods and approaches that you can adapt to your students' learning needs.
  - If you are using a lesson plan or activity that is new to you, first carefully review the activity and related content and the learning objectives you intend to address. Gather all materials in advance!
  - Have a backup plan for responding flexibly to unanticipated circumstances (for example, in timing, weather, or students' reactions).
  - Where possible, choose activities that make learning fun
  
4. Build on students' power to reflect, to study, to think critically about their own lives and about the world around them, and to solve problems.
  - Encourage students to question conventional wisdom. Ask them to think about their beliefs and their community's standards and norms. Invite them to explore opinions different from their own in a respectful manner.
  - Start talks with open-ended questions. Use the Socratic Method, asking "why" as a way to help students explore contradictions and seek deeper truths.
  - Encourage creativity.
  - Encourage students to take risks in their thinking and to be unafraid of making mistakes. Be willing to demonstrate such behaviour yourself.
  - Organize small groups to explore issues and to engage in collective activities.
  - Encourage various perspectives in analyzing problems and suggesting possible solutions.
  
5. Foster students' ability to apply what they learn to their lives and communities, that is, help them to become active citizens and forces for positive change.
  - Select content that is relevant and teaching methods that invite critical thinking. Repeatedly ask students to relate the content to their own lives and world. Encourage them to consider the material in light of principles of fairness and social justice.
  - Put together learning opportunities that involve service or community-based research and action. Be aware of the culture in which you work so that you can avoid putting students in harm's way.
  - Consider whether and how you will need to advocate within your institution (and perhaps in the community) for young people's ability and right to speak about and act upon their own ideas.
  - Keep in mind that young people often draw inspiration from their teachers and community leaders.

## **INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS TO ENRICH A CURRICULUM**

Using a diversity of methods enables you to reach a wider range of students and helps to keep students engaged. Students are thereby enabled to draw creative links between issues. The following are some commonly used methods to promote students' interest together with basic guidance about their use.

**Energizers** — these are brief group activities designed to promote positive feelings about the group. They focus the energy of the group and can be used to bring in new ideas. These activities support creative thinking. They are particularly helpful at the start of a session or to shift the direction of conversation. Some examples include: icebreakers, name games, songs, and physical exercises.

**Discussion triggers** — these activities raise issues and shape questions for students to explore further. They are generally most effective at the beginning of a lesson. Some examples include: brainstorming, case studies, questions or statements used to prompt written responses, agree/disagree exercises, problem-posing, and short films and readings.

**Creative play** — Creative activities keep students motivated. They stimulate new thought processes and ideas. Moreover, they allow students who learn and communicate best in these modes to take part in a way that is meaningful. Some examples include: games, art projects, role-playing and theater, poetry, and creative writing.

**Group discussions** — Students need the chance to express themselves, to be heard, and to hear others. This helps them to develop their verbal and listening skills. They can also refine their thinking skills and expand their ideas and knowledge. Moreover, you can use such activities to give everyone a chance to participate and foster democratic values and culture. Some examples include: informal dialogues, panel discussions, and debates.

**Participatory reflection and analysis** — divide your class to work in groups to solve problems and to foster group unity and critical thinking. Examples include: community mapping, "problem trees," research projects, and analyzing media messages.

**Personal reflection** — these activities help students gain insight into their own experiences. They foster maturity and judgment. They may open the door to new attitudes and behaviours. Some examples include: keeping a journal, guided memories, values clarification, and creative arts projects.

**Other tools for the participatory classroom** -Other engaging activities include group and individual goal-setting; assigning participation roles to help manage the classroom (reporter of the day, quote reader, timekeeper, leader-of-the-day); and reviewing the lesson and what was learned.

**THE END**



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH  
SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY DEPARTMENT

Karachi, dated, the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2020

**NOTIFICATION**

**NO.SELD/HCW/243/2019:** In compliance to Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act No. IX of 2015, School Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh is pleased to approve Curriculum Guidelines for Life Skill Based Education adapted from “It’s All One Curriculum” and reviewed by the Expert Committee of Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research, School Education & Literacy Department.

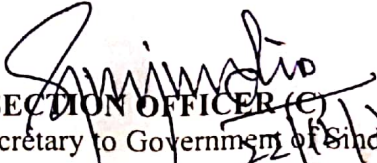
**-AHMED BAKHSH NAREJO-**  
**SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT OF SINDH**

**NO. SELD/HCW/243/2018:**

Karachi, dated, the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2020

*A copy is for information and necessary action to:*

1. The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Sindh, Karachi
2. The Special Secretary, School Education & Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh Karachi
3. The Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment & Research (DCAR), SE&LD, Jamshoro
4. The Executive Director, Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA)
5. The Chief Program Manager, Reform Support Unit (RSU), SE&LD, Govt. of Sindh, Karachi
6. The Director General PITE, Govt. of Sindh, Shaheed Benazirabad
7. The Chairman, Sindh Text Book Board, Govt. of Sindh, Jamshoro
8. The Chief Advisor, Curriculum Wing, Govt. of Sindh, Karachi
9. The Director General/Directors (all) School Education & Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh
10. The Deputy Secretary (Staff) to the Chief Secretary Sindh, Karachi
11. The P.S to Minister for Education & Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh, Karachi
12. The P.S to Secretary, School Education & Literacy Department, Govt. of Sindh Karachi
13. The P.A to Additional Secretary (all) School Education & Literacy Department, Karachi
14. The website
15. The office file

  
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For Secretary to Government of Sindh  
22/12/2020



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