

## MODULE THREE

# What are Gender and Gender Equality?



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## A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform Training Curriculum



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## DCAF

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## Inclusive Security

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# MODULE OVERVIEW:

## What are Gender and Gender Equality?

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### Learning Objectives

- Participants are able to differentiate between “sex” and “gender” using practical examples.
  - Participants are able to define gender equality and understand its aims.
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### Background Resources for Trainers

- Bastick, Megan and Tobie Whitman, *A Women's Guide to Security Sector Reform*. Washington: Inclusive Security and DCAF, 2013. [www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform](http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/A-Women-s-Guide-to-Security-Sector-Reform)
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- Inclusive Security and International Alert, *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*. Washington: Inclusive Security, November 2004. [www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/](http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/training-resources/)
- Williams, Suzanne. *The Oxfam Gender Training Manual*, Oxford: Oxfam Publishing, 1994. [policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-oxfam-gender-training-manual-141359](http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-oxfam-gender-training-manual-141359)

## Time

## Description

**5 minutes**

### **3.1 Introduction to the Module**

3.1.1 Facilitator Talking Points

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**50 minutes**

### **3.2 What do “Gender” and “Sex” Mean?**

3.2.1 Activity: Gender and Gender Stereotypes

3.2.2 Facilitator Talking Points: Definitions of “Gender” and “Sex”

3.2.3 Activity: “Gender” vs. “Sex”

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**20 minutes**

### **3.3 What is “Gender Equality”?**

3.3.1 Activity: Gender Equality

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**5 minutes**

### **3.4 Wrap Up**

3.4.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Points to Take Away

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### **Adapting the Module**

### **Assessment Questions**

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**Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes**

## 3.1 Introduction to the Module



### 3.1.1 Facilitator Talking Points

#### Background for Facilitator

This section introduces the purpose and learning objectives of the module.

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- In this module, we examine the concepts of gender and gender equality and distinguish gender from sex.
- After completing this module, you will be able to:
  - Define “sex” and “gender” and make a distinction between the two.
  - Define gender equality and understand its aims.

#### Materials Needed

None

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify the purpose and learning objectives of this module.

**Time** 5 minutes

## 3.2 What Do “Gender” and “Sex” Mean?



### 3.2.1 Activity: Gender and Gender Stereotypes

#### Background for Facilitator

This activity gets participants thinking about the behaviors and traits that are stereotypically associated with men and women and helps them see that they might be just that—stereotypical. This leads into the next section, in which we distinguish between sex and gender.

The video is optional.

#### Instructions: Option 1– Video

Put on the video clip “Male vs Female” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlwWS2atEmc> (5:14 Minutes) and while watching, have participants write:

- 1-2 ways in which their behavior conforms to how their gender is depicted on screen.
- 1-2 ways in which their behavior does not conform to how their gender is depicted on screen.

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart; video (optional)

#### Learning objectives

Participants are able to understand that there are behaviors stereotypically associated with men and women and identify which apply to them personally.

**Time** 15 minutes

Following the video, have participants raise their hands if they identified with at least one “typical” example of behavior associated with their gender (all or most hands should go up).

Then ask participants to raise their hands if they identified with at least one behavior that was **not** “typical” of their gender (all or most hands should be raised).

Point out to participants that while certain behaviors tend to be associated with men or women, not all men and women display them; men also often display behaviors associated with women, and vice versa.

Ask participants if the video should be called “Men vs Women” instead of “Male vs Female.” Is it about the biological differences between the male and female sexes, or is it about the behaviors that tend to be associated with men and women—that is, “gender stereotypes”? This is the distinction between “sex” and “gender” that we are considering in this module.

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## Instructions: Option 2 – No Video

Prepare a flipchart with two columns, “Men” and “Women.”

Have participants brainstorm activities, abilities, or skills usually associated with men, and those usually associated with women. Record their responses.

Then, ask each person to write down three ways in which they personally conform to stereotypical gender roles, and three ways in which they don’t. If they need further clarification, ask them to choose three words from each column—their gender and the other one—that apply to them. If time allows, share in pairs.

Have participants identify traits in both columns that are based on sex, not gender, and circle them in red.

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## Debrief

### Facilitator Talking Points

- While certain behaviors tend to be associated with men or women, not all men and women display them; men also display behaviors stereotypically associated with women, and vice versa.
- It is not about any innate differences between male and female, but rather about the behaviors that tend to be associated with men and women. These associations are what we call “gender stereotypes,” and it is this difference—between biological differences and learned behaviors—that we are exploring in this module.



## 3.2.2 Facilitator Talking Points: Definitions of “Gender” and “Sex”

### Background for Facilitator

Several gender definitions from various sources are included in the [Gender Definitions](#) handout (see annex). For this exercise, you can either use one from the handout that matches the particular regional or institutional context of your training, or you can use the definitions of sex and gender (derived from a number of sources) provided below.

Concepts such as intersex and transgender may be new to some participants. If this is the case, you might want to build more time into the training for additional research and discussion time, so that participants can make sure their advocacy supports the rights of not only women, but also intersex and transgender people.

#### Materials Needed

Presentation slides;  
[Gender Definitions](#) handout

#### Learning objectives

Participants are able to differentiate between gender and sex.

**Time** 20 minutes

### Facilitator Talking Points

- In practical terms, **males** are those who have male sexual reproductive organs, and **females** are those who have female reproductive organs. For example, females get pregnant and breastfeed, and males do not. These differences between the sexes are innate and fixed (at least in the absence of hormone therapy and/or surgery).
- However, it is important to recognize that some people are “intersex”: a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t fit the typical definitions of female or male. Depending on the definition used, it is estimated that 1-2% of the world’s population is intersex; in some cases, the individuals may not even realize it.
- In contrast to “sex,” “gender” and gender roles are **socially constructed** and learned through experience. Gender roles include assumptions—stereotypes—about women’s and men’s behavior, from communication, shopping, travel, and romance, to diet (as illustrated by the video).
- These expectations include assumptions about men and women’s abilities (e.g., women are good at cooking, men are good at fixing cars) that therefore impact the roles or work available for men and women, depending on the context. For example, in many cultures, women are almost always the

#### Sex

The biological differences between males and females are defined as “sex.” For instance, women can give birth because of their biology and men cannot.

#### Gender

Boys and girls are encouraged by their families, schools, religious organizations, and communities to be different. These socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men are known as “gender.” Boys are socialized to have “masculine” gender characteristics. Girls are socialized to have “feminine” characteristics.

#### Gender Roles

The different behaviors, activities, and beliefs a group considers appropriate for men and women.

family care providers—having and caring for children, a husband and elderly parents, keeping the home, preparing meals, etc. As a result, in many societies, these behaviors are considered “feminine.” Men, on the other hand, are more often considered the primary financial providers, the “heads of the household.” This “masculine” association often confers both economic and social/political authority onto the man (husband, father). This highlights an important aspect of gender roles and identities—they are linked to power in society. The socially and culturally constructed differences between men, women, boys, and girls give them unequal opportunities and life chances. Gender roles are changeable, however, and sometimes flexible. In many societies, men are increasingly responsible for family care while women support their families economically.

- In many ways, gender roles are not innate or biologically informed; they are rather shaped by social expectations, attitudes, and behaviors. At the same time, many people have a strong, internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or of being outside this binary). This feeling is a person’s “gender identity.” Sometimes a person’s gender identity does not match the sex (“male” or “female”) on their birth certificate, and they identify as transgender.
- There can be confusion between sex, gender, and “sexual orientation.” Sexual orientation is about neither biology (sex) or socialization (gender), but rather refers to whom you tend to be attracted to.

## SEX GENDER

- **Sex** is biological. Sex refers to the biological, physiological, and anatomical features with which people are born. Sex is defined by reproductive organs (e.g., testes and ovaries), male and female chromosomes (e.g., XY and XX), male and female hormones (e.g., testosterone and oestrogen) and secondary sexual characteristics (e.g., muscle mass and facial hair).
- **Sex** is unchangeable and fixed in the absence of medical intervention (surgery or hormone therapy).
- The terms “male,” “female” and “intersex” refer to the **sex** of an individual.
- **Gender** is learned. Girls and boys are taught and assigned different social characteristics, roles, behaviors, and activities within a particular socio-cultural context on the basis of their sex.
- **Gender** roles, like society and culture, are changeable over time and vary within and across contexts. This means gender roles are not the same in all socio-cultural contexts, and within one socio-cultural context they will change and develop in relation to the changes experienced by that society.
- The terms “masculine,” “feminine,” and “transgender” refer to the **gender** of an individual.





### 3.2.3 Activity: “Gender” vs. “Sex”

#### Background for Facilitator

This activity builds on the previous presentation and uses practical examples to help participants further differentiate between “sex” and “gender.” Tailor the list of words and phrases below to participants’ level of prior knowledge and the cultural context of the training.

Prepare two flipcharts, one labelled “Men” with a sticky note, and the other labelled “Women.”

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart; sticky notes

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify the difference between gender and sex using practical examples.

**Time** 15 minutes

#### Instructions

One by one, read the words and phrases in your list and ask participants whether each one is generally associated with men or with women.

- Sewing
- Cooking
- Breastfeeding
- Driving trucks
- Resolving conflicts
- Farming
- Caring for children
- Giving birth
- Two “x” chromosomes
- “X” and “y” chromosomes
- Wearing skirts
- Growing a beard
- Construction work
- Community leader
- Religious leader

Write the words on the designated flipchart. Participants must choose “Men” or “Women.” Try to avoid in-depth discussions over disagreements, telling participants that there will be time afterwards to discuss.

After you run through the whole list, switch the “Men” and “Women” labels, so that the words now appear on the “wrong” flipchart. Review the words again, this time asking participants whether these new associations could make sense. For example, even though women are probably associated with “sewing,” men can still sew. In cases like these, circle the word. On the other hand, “giving birth” is impossible for men. In these cases, cross the word out.

Propose that all the crossed-out words belong in the realm of “sex,” i.e., they are biologically determined. On the other hand, the circled words belong in the realm of “gender,” i.e., they are socially determined. Discuss any disagreements.

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#### Debrief

#### Facilitator Instructions

Close with a quick summary of the difference between “gender” and “sex” to reinforce the concepts.

## 3.3 What is “Gender Equality”?



### 3.3.1 Activity: Gender Equality

#### Background for Facilitator

This activity includes a short quiz on gender that participants will take at the beginning and then return to after the presentation.

Decide whether you are going to use the given definition of “gender equality” or one drawn from the local context.

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- There are many different gender-related terms, such as gender-responsive, gender-sensitive, gender mainstreaming, and gender-balanced. In this training, we will focus on “gender equality” as a central goal. In our work, we strive for gender equality in security and justice, as well as within the security sector.
- *Distribute [Quiz on Gender Equality](#) handout (see annex).*  
We’re going to take a short quiz to test your knowledge about what gender equality entails. This quiz is just for your information; you will have a chance to assess and change your answers later.
- How do we define “gender equality”?
- Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards. Or, one can say, gender inequality refers to unequal treatment and access to resources, opportunities, and autonomy based on gender. Gender inequality is present in every country in the world.
- Gender inequality exists because the gender roles assigned to women and girls are associated with less power and resources than those assigned to men and boys. It is generally women who are excluded from decision-making and limited in their access to economic and social resources.
- Critical to promoting gender equality is empowering women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy.
- Yet while women and girls are most often disadvantaged and/or harmed by gender inequality, men and boys also suffer as a result of gender roles. For example, though domestic and sexual violence disproportionately affect women and girls, if men and boys do fall victim to violence, they may find it difficult to seek or access support due to socio-cultural expectations that they can defend themselves—or cannot be victims of certain types of violence.

#### Materials Needed

Flipchart; presentation slides;  
[Quiz on Gender Equality](#) handout

#### Learning Objectives

Participants are able to identify the difference between gender and sex.

**Time** 20 minutes

#### Gender equality

A situation where women and men have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and potential and are able to contribute to and benefit equally from political, economic, social, and cultural development.

- Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same; it means that their access to opportunities and life changes is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their gender. Achieving gender equality requires ensuring women’s full participation in decision-making and that access to resources no longer favors men, so that women and men can fully participate as equal partners in all aspects of society and life.
  - “Equity” and “equality” are often mixed up. If this is not an issue in the language of the training, you may choose to skip this explanation.
    - **Equality:** This is the end goal: equal rights, responsibilities, and conditions. Outcome focused.
    - **Equity:** This is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be taken to compensate for women’s historical and social disadvantages. Equity leads to equality.
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## Instructions

Have participants return to their quizzes and make any changes based on what they've learned. Then ask the group to volunteer answers, seeking agreement and clarifying as necessary.

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## Debrief

### Facilitator Instructions

Invite reactions to the activity and answer any questions. Use this discussion to get a sense of whether participants can now define gender equality.

## 3.4 Wrap Up



### 3.4.1 Facilitator Talking Points: Points to Take Away

#### Background for Facilitator

This section highlights the main points of this module.

#### Facilitator Talking Points

- **Gender** refers to the social characteristics, behaviors, and attributes that shape our understanding of men and women in a given socio-cultural context. It is not determined biologically, like sex, but rather is learned. Gender is not static: it varies depending on age, class, religion, language, ethnicity, etc.
- **Gender equality** means that men and women have equal opportunities and rights. Gender equality is an important goal in every context, because gender inequality—unequal treatment and access to resources, opportunities, and autonomy based on gender—is present in all countries and cultures. In Module 4, we'll look more closely at the connections between gender and security.

#### Materials Needed

None

#### Learning Objectives

Participants understand the main points of this module.

**Time** 5 minutes

# Adapting the Module

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## Less Time

If participants have a good working knowledge of these concepts and you don't see the need for a whole module on gender/sex and gender equality but want to recap the core concepts, the "what is gender?" line exercise developed for DCAF's Gender and SSR Training Resource Package can be adapted to include a range of concepts: [www.gssrtraining.ch/index.php/en/training-exercises/security-sector-reform/4-exercises/security-sector-reform/207-security-sector-reform-exercise-2.html](http://www.gssrtraining.ch/index.php/en/training-exercises/security-sector-reform/4-exercises/security-sector-reform/207-security-sector-reform-exercise-2.html)

## Assessment Questions (Blank)

### Q.3.1 Indicate whether the characteristic is related to sex or gender:

- a. Ability to birth a child
- b. Muscle mass
- c. Dresses and skirts
- d. Nurturing and caring
- e. Facial hair
- f. Leadership and authority
- g. XX or XY chromosomes
- h. Shooting ability

### Q.3.2 Gender inequality is: (select one)

- a. When women are given special opportunities to access training, jobs, and promotions.
- b. The unequal treatment and access to resources, opportunities, and autonomy based on gender.
- c. When men and women are seen as having different physical capacities.

## Assessment Questions (Answer Key)

### Q.3.1 Indicate whether the characteristic is related to sex or gender:

- a. Ability to birth a child                      Sex
- b. Muscle mass                                      Sex
- c. Dresses and skirts                              Gender
- d. Nurturing and caring                              Gender
- e. Facial hair                                        Sex
- f. Leadership and authority                              Gender
- g. XX or XY chromosomes                              Sex
- h. Shooting ability                                      Gender

### Q.3.2 Gender inequality is: (select one)

- a. When women are given special opportunities to access training, jobs, and promotions.
- b. The unequal treatment and access to resources, opportunities, and autonomy based on gender.
- c. When men and women are seen as having different physical capacities.

# ANNEX

## Gender Definitions

*“Gender shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.”*

**Source: Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2011**

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*“Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women, girls, men and boys ... These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in women, girls, men and boys in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities ... Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.”*

**Source: UN Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women**

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*“The socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances (Kabeer, 2003). It also refers to typically masculine and feminine characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society. These characters are time bound and changeable.”*

**Source: African Union Gender Policy 2009**

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*“Gender is a term used to describe socially constructed definitions of roles for women and men. Gender does not mean “sex” and does not refer only to women. The term sex, describes the biological characteristics of male and of female human beings. Gender refers to the conception of tasks, roles, norms and functions attributed socially in a differentiated manner to women and men in society and in public and private life... This means that gender is an acquired identity that is central to both sexes, that is learned, that can change over time, and that varies widely within and across cultures.”*

**Source: OSCE, Gender Matters at the OSCE, 2010**



## Quiz on Gender Equality

Correct	Incorrect	Gender equality...
		... means treating men and women the same.
		... means providing equal opportunities, resources, and rewards for men and women.
		... aims to redress power imbalances between men and women.
		... is something only women can understand and work toward.
		... means that a person's access to opportunities and life chances is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex.

## Quiz on Gender Equality (Answer Key)

Correct	Incorrect	Gender equality...
	X	... means treating men and women the same.
X		... means providing equal opportunities, resources, and rewards for men and women.
X		... aims to redress power imbalances between men and women.
	X	... is something only women can understand and work toward.
X		... means that a person's access to opportunities and life chances is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex.

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