



Social Issues

Gender Discrimination



Definition:

Gender discrimination is when people of either gender are treated unfairly within society because of their gender.

Examples:

- Lack of human rights for females in poverty
- Prejudice with regard to male roles within the home and in childcare
- Stereotypes of men and women within the workplace

Why the situation occurs?

Throughout the world gender discrimination and stereotyping limit the full development and participation of girls and young women as well as boys and young men. Until all girls receive the same opportunities as their male counterparts, their fundamental human rights are denied and the conditions for sustainable development are unfulfilled. It is vital for the future that girls and young women grow up to become leaders in their families and communities, and increasingly in the workplace and in society.

Very often women are treated poorly and unjustly by society and have little opportunity or lack the political voice to change the situation. Similarly, men often feel pressure from society to be the breadwinners and are often not given the opportunity to help with bringing up children and lose self-confidence and self-esteem if they are out of work.

However it is recognised that in most societies, the opportunities for boys and girls are not equal. Here are some areas of empowerment that are needed for women and girls to make sure that they can take responsibility for all matters affecting their lives, and can work with men on an equal basis.

1) Cultural empowerment – enables young women and girls to make their own choices with regard to traditional beliefs and cultural practices.

2) Social empowerment – provides the skills and opportunities for women and girls to organise and use their collective power to advocate for justice, fairness and equity on behalf of themselves and others.

3)Economic empowerment – will give them the ability to generate income, own and control assets, access and use credit. They will realise greater choices in jobs and occupations and demand access to essential services for themselves, their families and their communities.

4)Political empowerment – will enable women and girls to successfully influence decision-makers, including men, through their advocacy of fairer, appropriate allocation of resources.

5)Educational empowerment – will provide numerous tangible benefits for the girls and women themselves and their families, which will be passed onto future generations.

Gender discrimination limits the potential for development. Economies that narrow the gender gap and improve the status of women grow faster, according to a report from the World Bank.

How you can make a difference:

Tackle the issue – help young people to learn about gender discrimination and find out about the situation in their own country. Look at the laws relating to men and women, read stories in the newspapers, talk to people of different ages. Is the discrimination in the laws and customs of the country or is it in the culture and traditions?

Are there different views in different cultural groups in the country? Are there different views from men and women? Are there different views in the different generations?

Consider the practices and opportunities in Scouting? How can the young people and adults make sure that there is no gender discrimination in Scouting?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identify the problem
2. Develop Awareness and empathy
3. Take action
4. Measure the change

Resources and links:

The document: "Girls and Young Women in the 21st Century: A call to action: presented by the CEOs of the Big Seven": <http://www.scout.org/wsrc/ll/docs/girls.pdf>

One World Action is an organization working for a world free from poverty and oppression. Its website contains information on marginalization and how to tackle this:
www.oneworldaction.org

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Voices of Youth website contains interesting information on this subject:
http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/education/explore_education.php

The United Nations CyberSchoolBus website:
www.un.org/cyberschoolbus