

# 35. What I Like and What I Do

They are not always the same thing!

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Themes              | Discrimination, Family, Gender equality  |
| Level of complexity | Level 2  |
| Age                 | 8 – 13 years   |
| Duration            | 45 minutes   |
| Group size          | 8 – 20 children  |
| Type of activity    | Stating preferences, discussion  |
| Overview            | Children name things they like, do not like or might like to do that are considered 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' to their sex. They then discuss gender stereotypes and relate them to human rights. |
| Objectives          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To discover their own and others' abilities and knowledge</li> <li>• To recognize the effects of gender stereotypes</li> </ul>                                  |
| Preparation         | • Optional: print copies of the questionnaire.   |
| Materials           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper and pens</li> <li>Optional: printed copies of the questionnaire</li> </ul>  |



## Instructions

1. Introduce the topic of gender roles by asking, "Are there some behaviours and activities that are considered 'girls' activities' or 'boys' activities'?" and eliciting examples from the children.
2. Give the children slips of paper and pencils. Ask each child to write down the following:
  - a. At the top of the paper identify yourself as a boy or girl.
  - b. Name four things you do and like doing that are considered activities 'appropriate for your sex'.
  - c. Name four things you do but do not like doing that are considered 'appropriate for your sex'.
  - d. Name four things you do not do and would not like to do that are considered 'appropriate for the opposite sex'.
  - e. Name four things you do not do and but would really like to do that are considered 'appropriate for the opposite sex'.
3. Ask the children to share some of their responses to each question and record them on a chart such as the one below.

|       | I do and I like | I do but don't like | I don't do and I don't want to do | I don't do but I would like to do |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Girls |                 |                     |                                   |                                   |
| Boys  |                 |                     |                                   |                                   |

## Debriefing and evaluation

1. Debrief the activity, asking question such as these:
  - a. Were you surprised by some of the things that people like and don't like doing?



- b. Looking at the list of things children would like to do but don't. Do you notice any patterns?
  - c. What happens to a girl who does 'boys' things'? To a boy who does 'girls' things'? Why does this happen?
  - d. How would adults in your family answer the four questions?
  - e. Do members of your family have the same ideas about what is 'appropriate' for men and boys or women and girls?
  - f. How do we get our ideas about what is 'appropriate' for men and boys or women and girls?
2. Relate the activity to human rights by asking questions such as these:
- a. How does limiting what boys and girls can do affect them individually? How could it affect a family? A society?
  - b. Do you think gender roles (or stereotypes) are changing? If so, how?
  - c. Have you ever tried to challenge gender roles? What happened?
  - d. Why do gender roles/stereotypes limit a person's human rights?
  - e. What can we do to challenge gender roles in our group?

### Suggestions for follow-up

- Other activities that address gender roles/stereotypes: 'ONCE UPON A TIME...', P. 125 and 'BOYS DON'T CRY', P. 78
- The activity 'WORDS THAT WOUND', P. 202, examines hurtful language based on gender stereotypes, as well as other kinds of insults.

### Ideas for action

- Discuss with the children some of the things they thought of under the category 'Don't do but would like to do'. Help them find opportunities in the group to try out some of these activities in an accepting environment.

### Tips for the facilitator

- Encourage the children to include behavioural expectations and physical appearance among the 'activities appropriate to your sex' (e.g. liking pretty clothes, gossiping, crying easily, using bad language, getting into fights).
- Alternative: Some children may be reluctant or embarrassed to reveal that they like doing things that some consider 'inappropriate'. To avoid this, you could 1) collect the slips, shuffle them and ask the children to read out answers from anonymous children of either sex; 2) divide the children into small, single-sex groups of boys or girls and ask them to answer the questions together as a group; 3) use a printed form with the questions.
- If appropriate for this group, introduce the word 'stereotype' and discuss what this means, eliciting examples from the group. Discuss how stereotypes can limit people's human rights.
- When asking what happens to children who do not conform to gender stereotypes, ask for some of the names these children are called and discuss the implications of those words (e.g. 'sissy', 'tomboy', 'gay').

