

Celebrate International Women's Day, March 8 **Information for Teacher Training Centres**

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1. Introduction

On the 8th of March International Women's Day is celebrated. Increasingly, International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

Women all over the world must still engage in battles to be treated equal to men. These battles vary in different countries all over the world. Examples of issues are:

- trying to reach equal pay for equal work done by women and men
- discrimination against women in the hiring for certain jobs and promotion to upper-level jobs because prejudice still exists
- battles of sexual harassment at work, in school or in public places
- gender based violence against girls and women
- bad work circumstances in factories where mainly women work
- in some countries girls still do not have the right to education
- being forced into an early marriage
- etc.

The international women's movement has helped to keep paying attention to women's rights and to build support for women to participate in society, and to keep asking political and economic attention to problems related to women's rights.

2. History

It is said that on 8 March 1857 in New York City the first protest march was held. People were protesting against terrible conditions for women working in the textile and garment industries of the United States. It is also possible that the choice of the 8 March as International Women's Day came from a demonstration that took place on the 8th of March 1917 in St. Petersburg in Russia when a huge women strike took place.

Whichever story is true, the fact remains that the 8th of March is officially chosen to be International Women's Day. The anniversary each year is a good time to honour women's achievements and remember women's goals.

The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March during International Women's Year 1975.

Cambodia

Cambodia became a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1992, from when key gender related laws and policies have been passed including the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims.

Gender equality is guaranteed in the Cambodian Constitution which prohibits all forms of discrimination against women (Article 45). Both men and women should have equal opportunity to exercise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

3. Key Facts about Gender Equality in Cambodia

More than half of Cambodia's population are women (51.4 per cent), yet they do not share half of the wealth, resources and voice. (source : <http://www.un.org.kh/undp/what-we-do/gender-equality/gender-equality>)

1. Cambodia ranks 99 out of 145 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) in the Human Development Report 2011. GII is a new measurement replacing the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).
2. Over the past decade, there have been improvements on the status of women in Cambodia. Yet, they remain less visible in public sphere. Women comprise 34 per cent of civil servants and hold 22 per cent of seats in the National Assembly.
3. Almost the same number of boys and girls attend school until the age of 14. However, fewer girls continue in higher education. Adult literacy rates are also unequal: only 70.9 per cent of adult females are literate, compared to 85.1 per cent of their male peers.
4. The number of men and women in the total workforce is almost the same (49.4 per cent women). However, more women are self-employed or unpaid family workers (83 per cent of female employment vs. 76 per cent of male employment). This informal economy provides low, irregular income and unstable employment. More importantly, because many tend to operate unregistered, there is little or no access to organized markets, credits and training institutions and to other public services.
5. Like many other countries in East Asia, Cambodia has the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims. Despite the law, 22.5 per cent of married women experienced violence within their homes and up to 89 per cent do not report the incident, according to a survey by Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2009.

A Gender Assessment of Cambodia done by USAID/Cambodia in 2010 reveals that there is greater awareness of women's rights, especially among young, urban women than a few years ago. More girls are attending school, nearly reach gender parity at the primary level. Women are living longer and healthier lives. More women were elected as commune councillors. But, many of the issues that were identified in the 2006 USAID/Cambodia Gender Analysis and Assessment still remain.

There are still too few qualified women at all levels, in all sectors and institutions. Although more women were elected to political offices, the rates are nowhere near parity. There are far fewer women at all points in the justice system. This creates an environment that may seem unreceptive to women who, for example, intend to file a complaint against their husbands for physical abuse or against powerful land grabbers.

There are more men than women in educational institutions, providing few academic role models for young women. Women make up only less than one-quarter of all public sector employees. There are far fewer women than men in technical line ministries, and on land registration teams. Traditional belief systems that suggest the "proper" roles for men and women have a strong influence on this capacity gap and other dimensions of women's and men's daily lives and opportunities.

Maternal mortality rates continue to be alarmingly high. Anaemia rates among pregnant women and children are unacceptably high. A low adoption of modern contraceptives and an increase in abortions suggest a continued and un-met need for acceptable and effective family planning methods. While HIV/AIDS rates have declined, more than half of all new cases of HIV are among married women.

In education, there are limited early childhood education providers, and even fewer childcare services for working parents. While there is near gender parity in primary school enrolment, this falls off significantly at the upper secondary and tertiary levels. The drop-out rate for both boys and girls is high. However, girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school. More men than women are literate. Efforts have been made to support women's entry into vocational training schools; however, the number of schools and program quality are not sufficient to meet the needs of young people who are entering the workforce.

More men than women work in the formal sector due to gender differences in educational attainment, and beliefs concerning suitable employment for women (and men). It is more difficult for women to rise to entrepreneurial leadership positions. Women earn less money than men for the same work. They make up the majority of the agricultural workforce and own nearly two-thirds of micro/small/medium enterprises. Yet, women have less access to inputs including credit, technologies, and market information. They also are less able to secure their land tenure rights, and less likely to participate in capacity building opportunities if held in locations away from their homes. Overall, there are few business development services that support women's enterprises.

Limited attention is given to the needs of the youth population. 62 per cent of Cambodians are less than 25 years old. Girls in female-headed households with no adult male are more likely to work. These girls earn less money than their same-age male cohorts, and are more likely to drop out of school sooner than boys. On the other hand, far more young men than young women reported engaging in high-risk sexual practices. There is no systematic effort to draw young people into politics and public office. In the same manner, since few girls graduate from the university level, they are less likely than boys to get jobs in the formal sector.

Following recommendations in this gender assessment these problems could be addressed by:

1. Investing in strengthening women's capacities to enter the labour market and public service.
2. Investing in poor rural households.
3. Invest in associations that support women in politics, education, health and business.
4. Invest in issues related to men and boys.

4. Theme for International Women's Day

The UN each year declares an International Women's Day theme and in 2012 it was "Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty". The UN theme for International Women's Day 2013 is:

"A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women".

"The Gender Agenda: Gaining Momentum" is the 2013 theme for International Women's Day as mentioned on the www.internationalwomensday.com website.

Many organisations develop International Women's Day themes relevant to their local contexts. In the Teacher Training Centre you can choose your own theme for International Women's Day.

5. Possible activities with student teachers

In the week before the 8th of March 2013 you can pay attention to the purpose of International Women's Day together with the student teachers at your college.

You can choose to organise an event outside of the regular lessons.

This event could start with a speech on International Women's Day done by the school director as well as a student teacher. After the speech it is possible to choose one or more activities as described below.

If there is no possibility to organise an event outside the teaching hours then the activities below could perhaps be done in the regular lessons of General Culture, Social Studies or Morality and Civics.

Please find below ideas for activities that can be organised.

5.1 Writing activity



Have students write a story about a woman that has been or is important in their life.

This can be a woman that has been important for:

- Cambodia
- International
- The personal life of the student teacher

Students can first do some research to collect more information, either on the internet, or in the library, in the newspapers.

5.2 Posters/slogans

Have students create posters and/or slogans that would be appropriate for use on International Women's Day and hang them where people can see them.

5.3 Debate in groups

Organise a debate with the student teachers.

The topic of the debate can be: **Of course girls are treated differently than boys!**

- First ask all students to write arguments supporting this statement. Each statement should be written on a separate piece of paper. Then ask them to also write arguments against this statement on different pieces of paper.
- Divide the students into 3 groups: 2 groups will debate and 1 group will observe and judge the discussion.
Decide which group will be in favour of the statement "Of course girls are treated differently than boys!" and which group will be against. Divide the written statements to the right group.
- Ask both groups to prepare the debate using the ideas that were given by all student teachers. Emphasize that the student's own opinion does not matter; they have to debate according to the group that they are assigned to.



When preparing, tell the students to keep in mind: What is the best opening argument? Do we have any examples that support the arguments? How can we explain the argument better? Which arguments are less strong? Etc.

- Choose someone from the observers group that will facilitate the debate, giving both groups equal opportunities to speak, watching the time, intervene when people are talking at the same time.
- The debate can start:
 - Student 1 opens the debate stating the arguments that were prepared for about 2 minutes.
 - Student 2 from the other group will respond using arguments against.
 - Student 3 responds, etc.
- The facilitator summarizes and tries to draw a conclusion.
- Ask the observing group which of the debating groups is the winner, who was most convincing in the arguments.

5.4 Two-minute-gender-debate in pairs

Students face each other in pairs and engage in the following 2-minute debates. Students in line A are assigned the first argument, students in line B the second, which means they will argue for that statement, even though it is not necessarily their own opinion.

The teacher trainer will say one of the opposing statements and the pairs of students debate on that for 2 minutes using arguments to support the opinion that is assigned to them. The teacher trainer watches the time. After 2 minutes the students move up one place in the line to ensure a lively pace. They will debate with someone else on a new statement. Then the teacher will say the next opposing statement and the new pairs discuss again for 2 minutes. Statements can be:

Line A	Line B
Women are better leaders.	There are only very few female heads of state in the world.
Housework should be shared between men and women.	It's a woman's job.
A quota system should exist in companies and governments to ensure 50% of managers are women.	Don't be ridiculous.
Gender equality and respect for women should be taught from elementary school.	That only emphasizes the difference even more.
Violence against women should be punishable by life imprisonment.	That's a human rights abuse against men.
Language should be more gender equal. Why the "he" in "she", or the "man" in "human"?	Language is just language.
Being a woman is harder.	Men have the toughest lives.
Men don't have to give birth.	Women don't have to fight in wars.

5.5 Discussion in groups

Discussion idea 1 (in pairs)

Man vs. Women: Students in pairs write down 5 advantages of being a woman, and five advantages of being a man. Discuss which advantages are better. Change partners and relate what you discussed with your previous partner. Change partners again and discuss again. Return to your original partner and decide whether it is more advantageous to be male or female.

Discussion idea 2 (in small groups)

Organise the students in groups of around 6 people.

The main issue of the discussion can be: “how can we eliminate obstacles that prevent girls from going to school or finishing school?”

A variety of discussion questions can be offered:

- Is it really necessary to have International Women's Day? Why? Why not?
- What issues in Cambodia are barriers to achieve equal rights and opportunities for girls and women in Cambodia?
- Which obstacles are there for girls to finish high school?
- What could be done to work towards a solution for these issues?
- Who is responsible for solving this problem?



5.6 Case Study: “Gender is also taught in school”

Distribute the case study below to groups of around 6 student teachers.

After reading the case study the students can discuss on the following questions:

- What is the main idea of this case study?
- Which of the mentioned situations in the case study do you recognize from your own school experience?
- Has anybody ever told you that you had to do something because you are a boy / girl? If yes what was it, and did you do it?
- Is there any truth in the statements from the case study? And if there is any truth in the statements is that bad or not?

Statements:

- being a girl it is important to be sweet and neat
- being a boy I always want to be tough and active
- the teachers say we are all the same, but they do treat us differently sometimes
- boys in groups show more excessive boyish behaviour than in normal situations

Case study : Gender is also taught in school

“Going to school I find really exiting. I can learn a lot there and not only from the teachers, also from my friends. By the way we have much more female teachers at our school. Soon I learn whether I am a boy or a girl. I know this already when I am around 3 years old. When I am 1 year older I already know exactly what behaviour is supposed to be suitable for my sex; I can tell you that the men go to work and that women are at home taking care of the children, whether this is true at my home or not. I also notice that when a boy puts a barrette in his hair he is laughed at and that longer hair is supposed to be for girls.....

Being a girl I am constantly told that it is important to be sweet and neat. At school I can express emotions. As a boy I constantly hear that the REAL boys are tough and active, and I show my emotions less and less.

The teachers say we are all the same, but they do treat us differently sometimes. As a boy I get to answer more questions in the classroom so I can show how much I know. As a girl I am asked to repeat what has been said already. We are constantly addresses as boys and girls instead of children and therefor the difference between us seems to become important.

In our lesson books also we have a lot of gender stereo typed examples like where dad goes to work and mummy is doing the house work.

When we do activities at the school grounds with the teacher we are a big group and an easy way of dividing us is into a group of boys and a group of girls. In these groups we start to prove that we really are “girls” or “boys” and show more excessive girly or boyish behaviour according to the sex-stereotypes than in a normal situation. In a situation where there aren't so many children, boys and girls do play together and do the same kind of games.

Girls can also show aggressive behaviour but usually a bit different than boys; they use their mouth by scolding or socially excluding others. Boys use their hands and feet to put up a fight but forget a quarrel easily.”

6. More information

More information can be found on several websites.

6.1 Cambodia

Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) <http://www.gadc.org.kh/>

Key Facts about Gender Equality in Cambodia: <http://www.un.org.kh/undp/what-we-do/gender-equality/gender-equality>

Ministry of Women's Affairs Cambodia: <http://mwa.gov.kh/en/ministry-background>

Gender Assessment Cambodia USAID/Cambodia: http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/Cambodia_Gender_Assessment_2010.pdf

6.2 International

UNESCO Gender and Education: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/gender-and-education>

UNESCO Gender Equality: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml>

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative: <http://www.ungei.org>