POWER TO BE EQUAL

TRÓCAIRE WORKING FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

A TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH GROUPS

REF: E30
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE 4

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO EXPLORE GENDER EQUALITY 5

ABOUT SIERRA LEONE 6

TRÓCAIRE’S WORK IN SIERRA LEONE 7

SESSION 1: GENDER

ACTIVITY 1: GENDER OR SEX (15 MINS) 8 12+

ACTIVITY 2: TAILING THE CAT (20 MINS) 9 12+

ACTIVITY 3: A VISITOR FROM SIERRA LEONE ASKS (30 MINS) 10 12+

ACTIVITY 4: GENDER CIRCLES – ADDRESSING LOCAL TO GLOBAL ISSUES (45 MINS) 11 12+

SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING POWER

ACTIVITY 5: POWER POSES – VISUALISING POWER (15 MINS) 12 12+

ACTIVITY 6: TYPES OF POWER (20 MINS) 13 14+

ACTIVITY 7: THE INNER CIRCLE (40 MINS) 17 14+

SESSION 3: WOMEN’S INDEPENDENCE

ACTIVITY 8: WOMEN IN POLITICS (20 MINS) 20 12+

ACTIVITY 9: WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – SUPPORTING DORA (30 MINS) 22 12+

ACTIVITY 10: WOMEN’S SAVINGS AND LOAN COMMITTEE (30 MINS) 24 14+

SESSION 4: POWER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

ACTIVITY 11: POWER TO CHANGE (20 MINS) 26 12+

ACTIVITY 12: A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHILD MARRIAGE (45 MINS) 27 14+

ACTIVITY 13: POWERFUL WOMEN LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY (15 MINS) 29 12+

TAKE ACTION FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT 31

ROMERO AWARD 31

Acknowledgements: Trócaire would like to thank Leti Gorini (Youth Work Ireland, Galway) and Kate Jones (Foróige, Cork) for their participation in the design process of this resource.

Cover: Secondary school students in Makeni, Sierra Leone. Photo Credit: Mark Stedman.
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Power to be Equal, a toolkit for youth groups. This resource aims to support youth organisations to explore the issue of gender equality with a focus on the empowerment of women from a global perspective.

ABOUT TRÓCAIRE AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Trócaire is an Irish NGO and the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. We work in over twenty countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East to provide humanitarian assistance and long-term support to communities. Trócaire works with partner organisations to empower communities to improve their lives, meet their basic needs and ensure their human dignity is respected.

Trócaire’s Development Education work engages young people and their youth leaders through a process of exploration, reflection and action. Young people are supported to make connections between their own lives and global justice issues, and be empowered to make a positive difference in the world. To find out more, read What is Development Education? at: www.trocaire.org/globalgoals.

GLOBAL GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY

In September 2015, seventeen Global Goals for Sustainable Development (referred to as the Global Goals) were adopted by world leaders at a United Nations summit. Goal 5 aims to ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’.

Gender inequality continues to exist worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities, preventing them from reaching their full potential. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require stronger efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that results from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms. Some of the key issues to be addressed in this goal include: all forms of violence and exploitation, child marriage, female genital mutilation and women’s participation in all levels of public decision-making.1

USEFUL LINKS

Take some time to familiarise yourself with the UN website explaining the Global Goals. You can encourage young people to explore them as part of the project: un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda.

Trócaire and The Global Goals is a complementary resource which will help introduce the theme of sustainable development. The resource can be found at: trocaire.org/education/globalgoals, or a hard copy can be ordered by contacting Trócaire’s Youth Education Officer at deved@trocaire.org or call 01 629 33333.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

The activities in this toolkit cover a range of themes related to women’s empowerment. When delivered together, they are designed to achieve the following outcomes for young people:

- Develop an understanding of the concepts of gender, gender equality and gender discrimination
- Develop empathy for women and girls globally who are deprived of their basic rights and opportunities, preventing them from achieving their full potential
- Inspire young people and build their confidence to take action to support women’s empowerment to contribute to a stronger world for sustainable development

The activities are designed primarily for use with young people aged twelve and over. Some activities have a higher recommended age given the sensitive and complex nature of issues addressed within the activity. We recommend you read each activity thoroughly and decide if it is appropriate for your group.

The toolkit has been developed to deliver a four-session programme of ninety-minute sessions. Below is a suggested breakdown of each session; however, it is possible to use activities individually without delivering the full programme.

SESSION 1: GENDER
• Activity 1 – 4

SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING POWER
• Activity 5 – 7

SESSION 3: WOMEN’S INDEPENDENCE
• Activity 8 – 10

SESSION 4: POWER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
• Activity 11 – 13

A key part of this youth programme is to build awareness and confidence among young people to take action for women’s empowerment. On page 31 you will find ideas to inspire a youth-led action project that will make a positive difference in our world.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Materials  Aims  Video

KEY TERMS

Gender refers to characteristics associated with being male or female that are socially determined or learned in society. They are context/time-specific and changeable.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Women’s empowerment concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures which reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality.

Feminism is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes.

Sexism is the belief that male gender identities and masculine gender expressions are superior to female and feminine ones.

Patriarchy is a system or government in which men control a much larger share of power than women. This is not to say that each individual man controls each individual woman but rather that the majority of power in society is controlled by some men over all women and most men.
In exploring gender with young people, it is vital to create a safe space to encourage full participation in discussions. We strongly recommend that you create a group contract at the beginning of the programme. Below are some tips to support this:

**Make it clear that gender-based jokes and discriminatory remarks will not be accepted.**

**Create a positive environment where all young people can contribute and where views and opinions are respected.**

**Remind young people that gender not only refers to women or men but to the relationship and power dynamics between them.**

**If your young people are having difficulty understanding gender inequality and injustice, it may help to begin by discussing another issue such as race or age.**

**Remind the group that the issues explored are often local as well as global. Encourage young people to be champions for women’s empowerment in their own lives.**

**Encourage young people to explore the fact that while gender inequalities hurt everyone, discrimination consistently deprives girls and women of power and access to resources. It is therefore essential to discuss the consequences of this for women and girls.**

**Explain that some activities might touch on issues that relate to the real-life experiences of group members. Young people should not be pushed to share, while others should be mindful that their opinions might cause upset.**

**Ensure young people know they can discuss sensitive or personal issues with a group leader if they feel uncomfortable or need additional support.**

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**THE ROLE OF CRITICAL QUESTIONING**

The methodologies in this resource will support young people to critically examine the issue of justice through the lens of gender inequality. In leading group discussions it helps to adopt a justice-centred and rights-based approach, focusing on the lack of power often experienced by women.

**Who benefits? Who suffers the consequences?**

**Who has the power in this situation? Who does not?**

**What rights are being fulfilled/protected in this situation?**

**What rights are being denied in this situation?**

**Does everyone have the same rights?**

**How can different rights be balanced where there is an apparent conflict of rights?**

**Who is responsible?**

**Is that fair?**

**How could the unfairness be stopped?**

**Who has the power to change it?**

**Who has responsibility to protect the rights of others?**

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**JUSTICE-CENTRED APPROACH**

**RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**
Sierra Leone was founded by liberated American slaves who settled in Freetown in the late eighteenth century.

Sierra Leone has a tropical climate and extensive mineral resources, such as diamonds, gold and titanium.

Sierra Leone is well known for religious tolerance between Muslim (78%) and Christian (20%) citizens.

English is the official language, but the most widely spoken language is Krio.

Sierra Leone has faced many challenges, including:
• a devastating civil war (1990–2002)
• the outbreak of the Ebola virus (2014–2016)
• mudslides and floods (August 2017)

**BIG ISSUES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE**

- Average extent of school attendance for females is 2.6 years
- Literacy rates of women aged fifteen and above is 38%
- 39% of girls are married by eighteen
- Maternal mortality rate is the highest in the world
- Teenage pregnancy is the tenth highest globally
- 88% of women have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM)*
- Women hold only 12.4% of seats in parliament

* Given the sensitive nature of FGM, caution must be exercised when discussing it with youth groups, bearing in mind the age of young people you are working with and the diverse nature of Irish society. It is up to individual youth workers to decide whether to address this issue or to leave it out.
TRÓCAIRE’S WORK IN SIERRA LEONE

Our work focuses on empowering women and girls through improving livelihoods, women’s leadership and addressing violence against women and girls in Sierra Leone. We currently partner with eighteen local Church and civil society organisations. In 2016, seventy-one thousand people benefited from our work. For more information visit: trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/sierraleone.

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

We aim to reduce violence towards women and to protect women’s rights in Sierra Leone. Our partners provide training and information about gender inequality and violence against women. We also support efforts to provide legal protection and access to justice for women whose rights have been abused.

We support women to have more influence in decision-making processes at community and local level by helping them to develop their leadership skills. We increase the capacity of our partners and women locally so that they can hold government and leaders more accountable on issues facing women.

FOOD AND RESOURCE RIGHTS

Our livelihoods work focuses on improving the food security and income of vulnerable women and girls, whilst also working to protect their rights to and control of resources such as land. This initiative is providing new skills, agricultural inputs and business support to help women earn a living. In addition, we work to reduce women’s vulnerability to abuse by helping them become more economically independent.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

We support local partners to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable groups affected by disaster or crisis. In response to the Ebola virus outbreak (2014–2016) and the landslide and floods that occurred in August 2017, Trócaire and our partners distributed food, water and non-food items to those affected, in addition to providing psychosocial support. In the aftermath, we support communities to rebuild their lost livelihoods and to recover through trauma counseling/psychosocial support.

In August 2017, heavy rains and floods caused a mudslide in which over five hundred people lost their lives. Nearly all the buildings in the area, including Sia Fanta (15) and her family’s home and the local school were destroyed. Trócaire is supporting Sia Fanta’s community through a local partner organisation. Community Action to Restore Lives (CARL) is providing school kits and business recovery grants, and is helping with temporary accommodation support through the church. Support from Justice and Peace Commission/Caritas Freetown is providing continuity and stability to Sia Fanta’s family and community as they get back onto their feet after the disaster.

Sia Fanta and her brother Saha pointing out the mudslide in Freetown. Photo credit: Mark Stedman.
ACTIVITY 1: GENDER OR SEX

Place the words ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ on opposite walls. Read each of the following statements in turn and ask the young people to stand next to the sign to which they think the statement applies. If they are unsure, they should stand in the middle.

1. Women give birth to babies. **SEX**
2. Most building site workers in Ireland are men. **GENDER**
3. Men’s voices break at puberty, women’s do not. **SEX**
4. Breast and cervical cancer are the most common cancers affecting women. **SEX**
5. Globally, four times more men than women graduate from university in engineering and related fields. **GENDER**
6. In the world’s largest five hundred corporations, less than twenty bosses are women. **GENDER**
7. Women on average live longer than men. **SEX**
8. Women can breastfeed babies, men can bottle-feed babies. **SEX**
9. Women are twice as likely to be the victims of intimate partner or family related deaths than men. **GENDER**
10. Men are better drivers than women. **GENDER**

All statistics come from unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/worldswomen.html
On the flipchart, draw a cat without a tail. Split the young people into groups of three or four and give the following instructions:

- The aim of the exercise is to draw a tail on the cat
- Ask for a volunteer drawer from Group One
- This volunteer must wear a blindfold and his/her team members must direct him/her to the correct place to draw the tail
- Members of the other groups can shout out incorrect details if they want

Once the first group has completed the task, ask Group Two to come up.

Note: Be careful not to stand near Group Two at this point, so that Group One hands over the blindfold without being asked to do so. The facilitator should not hand over the blindfold.

Once all groups have drawn a tail, ask the groups to explain the instructions that were given.

- Did the instructor ask ALL groups to wear a blindfold?
- Why did all groups decide to wear a blindfold?
- Why did we do this? [Because we feel the role is set in the beginning. Link this to a discussion on stereotyping: What happens first becomes the ‘truth’ … this leads us to follow ‘traditions’ …] 

Explore the experience of the drawers, who received an influx of messages. Relate this to all of the messages we receive from family, friends, school and the media that influence the decisions we make. These messages inform what we learn to be social norms.

- How did the drawers feel? It is likely that they will say they were totally confused as they were being given lots of different instructions.
- Where does this happen in life? For example, your parents tell you one thing but your friends tell you the exact opposite. You might feel one thing but society is telling you another.

**SUMMARY**

Each person makes standards all the time. The standards for being male and female were set even before we were born. Those that try to break out of those stereotypes may face resistance.
**ACTIVITY 3: A VISITOR FROM SIERRA LEONE ASKS**

**Flipchart paper, markers**  
To explore where gender stereotypes come from and how they can influence relationships, ambitions and expectations  
30 MINS

Read aloud to the group:

Trócaire has invited two young people from Sierra Leone to visit Ireland. They don’t know much about your community and would like to know what is unique about women/girls and men/boys in your society. To help them, draw a picture of either a typical man or a typical woman and explain what makes them distinct from each other.

Split the participant into small groups and give each a sex to draw (you can focus on teenagers, younger children and/or adults). Ask them to draw a typical person, focusing on these questions:

- What do they look like?
- What are they thinking about?
- How do they spend their free time?
- What type of attitude/personality do they have?
- What type of work do they do?

When the groups are finished their drawings, explain the difference between the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. We are born with our sex, which makes us either male or female, whereas gender roles and stereotypes are something we learn and are taught throughout our lives – we are not born with them. So the good news is that gender roles are not fixed; if we challenge the negative stereotypes, they can change!

Ask the groups to report which aspects of their drawings relate to sex and which relate to gender. Some exploratory questions include:

- Where do gender norms and stereotypes comes from?
- How do gender norms and stereotypes affect boys and girls?
- Do you believe these stereotypes have positive and negative impacts on people?
- Are they generally positive or negative?

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: GENDER STEREOTYPES AUDIT**

Plan a trip to the local shopping centre to conduct a gender audit. In small groups, young people should take photos showing examples of gender stereotypes being reinforced in the products marketed at younger children, especially clothes and toys. When the group presents their findings, encourage actions such as highlighting the issue on Facebook, tweeting the company to ask for an explanation or writing a letter of complaint.

Photo credit: Meri Leggott – Let Clothes Be Clothes.
**Activity 4: Gender Circles – Addressing Local to Global Issues**

**Flipchart paper, sticky notes, pens, markers, laptop or phone recording device**

**youtube.be/Zkb-zg4JCLk from 1:10 – 6:00**

**To build confidence in challenging gender stereotypes and gender discrimination**

![Diagram of concentric circles: Youth club/school, National, Global]

1. Draw three concentric circles on the flipchart. Ask the young people to write on sticky notes some gender issues in their youth group or school and place these in the inner circle. Then on different coloured sticky notes, give examples of gender issues at a national level in Ireland, and place these in the middle circle. Repeating the process, fill the outer circle with examples of gender issues worldwide.

2. Once all the sticky notes are in place, try to make links between the circles. Query how some of the global issues might also be local issues or vice versa. How does media influence our awareness of national and global gender issues?

**Meghan Markle Challenging TV Advert**

Ask the young people to think about the following questions while watching Meghan Markle speak about gender equality at UN Women in 2015:

- What stereotypes did Meghan challenge?
- What difference did her actions make?
- Is 2095 a good timeline to achieve gender equality?

Meghan Markle addressing UN Women in 2015.

**Create Your Own Broadcast**

Ask the young people to think about an aspect of gender inequality they would like to challenge, perhaps one listed in the circles earlier. In small groups, they should imagine they are going onto a radio talk show and have one minute to convince listeners of the importance of their issue. They should ask listeners to take one action to challenge this issue – this could be changing their attitudes and behaviour or it could be a practical action.

- Each small group has fifteen minutes to prepare their broadcast
- Give out flipchart paper to make notes
- Take each group into a separate room to record their broadcast on a laptop or phone
- Play each broadcast to the whole group and ask the rest of the group to give it a star rating out of five, and give a prize to the winning team
ACTIVITY 5: POWER POSES – VISUALISING POWER

When you power pose, you adopt body language (and posture) that is open, takes up space and conveys power. The idea is that confident body language can give others an impression of confidence and make you feel open and disinhibited. When we feel small or weak, we physically close ourselves off. We unconsciously wrap ourselves with our arms or hide ourselves from others.

Call out a mixture of the power poses suggested below. Ask the group to imagine a situation where they might be using this pose.

After the activity, reflect on what kind of people the group visualised for the high power and low power poses. Were any of these gender specific? What does power look like? Can it be both positive and negative?

**HIGH POWER POSE**
- Sitting with legs open, chest open, and arms slightly away from the body
- Arms raised in a V above the head
- Arms are wide, chest is open, fingers are resting on the tips – the base of the palm is lifted
- Arms crossed behind the head, sitting or standing

**LOW POWER POSE**
- Sitting with hands folded in the lap
- Arms crossed over the chest
- One arm across the body in a self hug
- Hunching
Activity 6: Types of Power

Note: Power can be used positively and negatively, but power is not in limited supply. One person having power does not mean they must take power away from another person. Everyone can have power.

Rotating Gallery

Stick each of the four pictures on flipchart paper and put them up around the room. Divide the group among the photos and ask them to answer the following questions, writing their answers on the paper around the picture:

- What might be happening in this picture?
- How is power being used?
- Who has the most power?

Rotate the group around the four photos every few minutes.

Using the following information about Sia Fanta’s life in Freetown, explain how power affects the lives of young people in Sierra Leone.

Power within: Sia Fanta has been set back by the mudslides that destroyed her home and possessions, including her schoolbooks; however, she has self-belief and belief in her right to education and is determined to continue her education and study to become a doctor.

Power over others: Peer pressure has a big influence in Sia Fanta’s community. Many teenage girls do not have much money and can be easily influenced by boys or older men who offer them mobile phones or drugs in exchange for their company. In these situations, girls can be vulnerable and suffer abuse.

Power with others: Sia Fanta’s friend, who is also fifteen years old, is pregnant. Because of the laws in Sierra Leone, she is not allowed to go to school while she is visibly pregnant. Sia Fanta believes this is not fair. She is supporting her friend and giving her encouragement to continue her studies at home.

Power to act: There are some women in Sia Fanta’s community who are acting to make things better for women and girls. Eva is standing for election. Sia Fanta believes that people like Eva will influence change. If more women go into politics, there will be more advocacy of women’s needs.

Matching

Ask the group to stand in the middle of the room. Read the description of each of the four types of power to the group. After each, ask the young people to stand by the photo they think best represents this type of power. Discuss what was written on the flipchart paper and any examples of how this type of power might be used among young people in your community.
**Power within me** is the strength inside ourselves to positively influence our own lives and the lives of others. It comes from the confidence to express our ideas, having information to take informed decisions, knowing our rights and the ability to defend them. This positive power can be used to confront the negative uses of power in our communities and the world.

**Power over others** is the power that one person or group uses to control another person or group. This can happen in a number of ways, including direct violence, or indirectly through following community beliefs and practices that place men as superior to women.

**Power with others** is the power felt when two or more people come together and offer each other support in the face of injustice. This includes joining our power with individuals and groups to respond to injustice with positive energy and support.

**Power to act** is the actions that individuals and groups use to create change. This power draws on the belief and positive energy that exists within ourselves.

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**PRESS PAUSE**

Split the participants into small groups and allocate each group a type of power. Ask them to come up with a ‘press pause’ that tells a story representing the type of power they have been given. To create a press pause they must use their bodies to silently present a scene, as if a TV show has been paused. Each group should create three scenes, showing the beginning, the middle and the end of the story.

After fifteen minutes, invite each group to showcase their scenes. The rest of the youth group must guess the type of power and the story they are representing.

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**STICKY NOTES**

Give each participant two different coloured sticky notes. On each sticky note, the young people should write an example to finish the following sentence:

*I had power within when …*

Ask the young people to discuss their answers in pairs and then ask for a few examples from the group.

Remind the young people that they don’t have to share anything they don’t want to.

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**DEBRIEF**

Host a group discussion, asking the group the following questions:

- What can we learn from this activity?
- What do you think are the consequences of feeling a lack of power?

Highlight the fact that we all have power, and one person having power does not mean that someone else has to have no power.

End with a positive affirmation by considering what the group can do together to ensure that everyone feels they have power within themselves.
**Handout: Drawings of Power**

**Power Within Me**

**Power Over Others**
Handout: Drawings of Power

Power with Others

Power to Act for Change
ACTIVITY 7: THE INNER CIRCLE

Distribute the character cards among the group. Allow time for participants to familiarise themselves with their character without sharing with others. Ask the participants to stand in a circle. Explain that you are going to read out a number of statements. After each statement is read out, participants should take a step into the circle if the statement is true for their character/community – then everyone claps for them. As you read out the next statement, characters should move into or out of the circle if the statement applies to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step into the circle if the following statement applies to you:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I will likely finish my secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I don’t have to worry about my health or well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can marry who I choose, when I choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I will choose when to have children and how many children I will have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have good self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can make decisions that will affect my life without interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I will receive equal pay for equal work compared to someone of the opposite sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is unlikely that I will be a victim of physical or sexual violence from a partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I will have full control over my finances without interference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It is possible that I could become a senior manager or boss of a company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Men and women are seen as equals in my community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE IN THE DEBRIEF

- Who was included most? How did it feel?
- For others, how did it feel when you couldn’t take a step in?
- Was any character excluded from every opportunity? How did this feel?
- Why do you think such differences of opportunity exist between men and women in different countries?

HAWA’S STORY

Watch the video (youtu.be/OqG3PMEWAcI) about Trócaire’s women’s empowerment programme in Somalia and consider the following questions:

- What’s inspiring about Hawa’s story?
- Does she live up to gender stereotypes?
**Handout: Character Cards**

**Hawa (Female, 14), Somalia**

You never had the opportunity to attend school. While your brother went to the local primary school, you stayed back to tend the goats. Your father has informed you that he has arranged a husband for you. He plans for you to leave home once your period starts. In order to prepare you for marriage you will undertake an FGM ritual.

**Gebremichael (Male, 18), Ethiopia**

You live at home with your parents and until recently you didn’t have a steady job. As a daily labourer, you can earn 75 Birr (€2.50) a day (females earn 45 Birr) for a twelve-hour shift. You recently joined the beekeeping cooperative, which is owned equally by its ten male and ten female members. All decisions are made together.

**Hilda (Female, 19), Nicaragua**

You were fifteen when you had your daughter Bahiona. After some negotiating with your husband you joined the new women’s group in your community, but you have very low self-esteem and are embarrassed to talk in case you say the wrong thing. People in the community don’t like the group. They say you are doing bad things and that you are lazy.

**Claire (Female, 17), Ireland**

Your mother was a nurse and even though you have been getting high grades and would like to become a doctor, your family are encouraging you to following in her footsteps. You have recently started training every day as it keeps you fit and helps to control your weight. You are saving your money to get lip fillers, so you can have that Instagram pout.

**John (Male, 16), Ireland**

You live in the countryside on your family farm. Your dad has a thriving milking business and he is planning to buy you a car for Christmas. Your mum has always been a housewife, she does all the cooking and cleaning, while you do man’s work out on the farm after school. You are an excellent rugby player and popular among your peers.

**Noella (Female, 18), Democratic Republic of Congo**

You met your husband when he came to your town for medical treatment. His wife left him and he needed help to look after his children. Your family were paid one goat as your bride price when you were sixteen. After a year the first wife returned and you both now live in separate dwellings but in the same locality. You recently saved enough maize to buy a motorbike, but your husband sold it and bought you some clothes with the money.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTER CARDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bati (Female, 40), India</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You get up at 3 a.m., clean the oven, and light the fire to heat the water for bathing, sweep, fetch water and cook breakfast. You go to the field to work until 5 p.m. Although your workload is exhausting and sometimes makes you ill, you accept it as women’s burden. You have been elected to the local council, but must ask permission from your husband to attend meetings. Recently he has asked you to stop participating in so many meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>William (Male, 55), USA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You attended private school and one of the best universities in the world. You are fascinated by computers and started your own company, which has been very successful. You are a very driven person and worked hard to improve your business. You are married with three children. You have made a lot of money and have a lot of influence worldwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fadia (Female, 15), Sierra Leone</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your parents, sisters and you were lucky to escape the mudslide in your city. Your home was destroyed along with all your possessions. You are currently six months pregnant, which means you are not allowed to go to school. You spend the day with the other young mothers in your community, but you miss school as you were a good student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boston (Male, 34), Malawi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are the chief of the village. As part of your status, you have three wives. Your boys will all complete their schooling, while the girls attend for the first three years only. In your community, a husband and wife do not walk together side by side in public as this is a sign of weakness on the part of the man. It indicates that he is under his woman’s control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dora (Female, 37), Sierra Leone</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You never got to go to school. Two years ago your sister died, so it’s your responsibility to take care of her three children, along with your own two children. You had to ask your husband’s permission to join the women’s farming group but he has been supportive and he sees the benefits the group has for your family. You now have more money to provide nutritious food for your children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 8: Women in Politics

Split the young people into small groups and distribute the handout and scissors. Ask each group to rank the countries from those with the most female representation in national parliaments (similar to Dáil Éireann in Ireland) to those with the least female representation. Groups can use a map to locate the country if they are unfamiliar with them.

After ten minutes, ask the groups to report their top and bottom countries. What criteria did they consider when making these selections? Did they make any assumptions about the countries, such as wealth, religion, geographic location?

Reveal the correct answers below, highlighting some of the main points. Ask young people which stats they found most surprising? Hold a discussion about gender quotas in politics. What are the long-term and short-term benefits and consequences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Per cent of women in national parliaments</th>
<th>World Ranking (/189)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

Points to Highlight:

- Rwanda and Bolivia are the only countries globally with over 50% women in national parliament.
- Indonesia has the highest Muslim population globally with 225 million Muslims.
- Japan is one of the richest countries in the world, with the third highest GDP globally.
- Only five countries in the world have no female representation in national decision-making: Qatar, Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Yemen.
- Only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians were women as of June 2016.¹
- Eleven women are serving as heads of state and twelve are serving as heads of government as of October 2017.
- Half of all countries use some type of electoral quota for their parliament to recruit more women into political positions and to ensure that women are not only tokens in political life. It is felt that any society needs a minimum of 30–40% female politicians to reach a critical minority.²
- In 2012, Ireland introduced a rule that parties lose 50% of their funding if they have less than 30% of candidates of any gender.
- Women’s representation in local governments can make a difference. Research on panchayats (local councils) in India discovered that the number of drinking water projects in areas with women-led councils was 62% higher than in those with men-led councils. In Norway there is a direct link between the presence of women on municipal councils and the availability of childcare facilities.

¹ unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures
² quotaproject.org/
Handout: Country Cards

Bangladesh

China

Ireland

Japan

Nicaragua

Qatar

Rwanda

Sierra Leone

United Kingdom

United States of America
ACTIVITY 9: WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT – SUPPORTING DORA

Write the questions on flipchart paper and display for the group. In groups of four, ask the young people to read Dora’s story and consider the following questions:

- What strengths does Dora demonstrate?
- If Dora lived in Ireland, how might her experience be different?
- How has Trócaire through our partner KADDRO made a positive difference to Dora’s life?
- What challenges do you think Rugiatu might face in the future?

After ten minutes, bring the group back together and ask for feedback from the various groups.

CREATE YOUR OWN CARTOON

Groups should create their own cartoon imagining what the future will hold for Rugiatu. Assign one of the following tasks to each group:

1) Create a cartoon showing the best case scenario for Rugiatu
2) Create a cartoon showing the worst case scenarios for Rugiatu

Each group should present their cartoon and consider one action they could take to help achieve the best case scenario.
‘YOU MUST STAY SERIOUS ABOUT SCHOOL’

When her sister Yaikin died from Ebola, suddenly Dora went from having two children to care for to having five. ‘It was a burden but it didn’t affect me. They are my children. I could help them and they could also help me.’

For twenty-one days after her sister’s death, Dora’s family was required to stay at home. Dora couldn’t leave to tend to her farm so her food supply was severely impacted. She fed the children a small morning snack and a rice dinner. This wasn’t enough to provide the nutrition young children need.

Trócaire partner Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO) were the first responders in Kambia, one of the most vulnerable parts of Sierra Leone. Families received food supplies, water and firewood to help meet their basic needs.

LONG-TERM SUPPORT FROM KADDRO

After the crisis, Dora had three extra children to feed and send to school, so she needed support to increase her income. Dora is a hard-working woman. Her ability to run a small business despite her lack of schooling illustrates her strength and determination. ‘I regret that my parents didn’t send me to school but at least I am smart, which means I can do something for my life.’

Dora joined a local women’s farming group supported by KADDRO aimed at families affected by Ebola. Dora had to ask her husband, Alafia, for permission to join the group and he was supportive. The group received corn and okra seeds, cassava stems, potato vines and chickens. The produce from the community farm supplemented Dora’s income and that of other women in the community.

Dora has now saved a bank of seeds so that she doesn’t have to spend what little income she has buying supplies at planting time. Having extra produce to sell means she has a little more income, which is critical for school fees in particular. It also means she can buy better quality and more nutritious food for her children.

‘I am happy to be part of the farming group with the other women. But I only keep the company of the clever, thoughtful women.’

All Dora’s hopes are for her children, ‘I do not want [my niece] Rugi to end up like the women in this community. Many of the girls are married young. I pray that Rugi can stay in school and become someone that is admired in the community. She really wants to be a teacher and I hope she can achieve that dream.’

Dora with her family, Rugiatu in the middle. Photo credit: Mark Stedman.
Activity 10: Women’s Savings and Loan Committee

Ask for five volunteers (or pairs) and give them out the handout. They have ten minutes to consider the main points and will have one minute to make their case for the loan. The rest of the group will be the village savings and loan committee. Prepare the flipchart as below and give each person a sheet of paper to make notes. Read the following brief to the whole group:

In Sierra Leone, many villages have a savings and loan scheme (VSL). Each person/family that joins the scheme has to deposit money into the scheme each month. The members can then apply to borrow money from the scheme to use for different things.

Your group will take on the role of the Women’s Village Savings and Loan Committee. Over the past year, the twenty-five members of the scheme have managed to save 750,000 leones. Five loan applications have come in from various community members. You should make notes during each applicant’s interview and you can ask each applicant three questions. The group should give a score out of ten for each of the following criteria: quality of the idea, impact the loan will make, ability to pay back the loan. Your group must consider all applications, and decide if the different loans will be approved or rejected.

### Decision-Making Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loan application &amp; amount</th>
<th>Quality of idea (10)</th>
<th>Impact of loan (10)</th>
<th>Ability to pay back (10)</th>
<th>Total score (30)</th>
<th>Allocated amount</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start a band, 450,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Will provide entertainment for weddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickens and goats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School fees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed diversification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After preparation, the applicants will be asked to stay in another room until they are invited in one at a time to make their case. The group should discuss each application after the interview and score it. Once they have heard from all the applicants, the committee will then decide how many loans to give out and how much to give each applicant. The applicants are invited to hear the committee’s decisions.

**Debrief**

1. Which applications were strongest and why?
2. How does gender inequality affect the various community members?
3. What difference are village savings and loan committees making to people in Sierra Leone?
4. Do you think this is a good example of community resilience? Why?
**Name: Marie Sesay**  
**Requested amount: 300,000 leones**  
**Loan application: Chickens and goats**  
**Reason:** I am raising my five children alone since my husband died from Ebola three years ago. My husband’s family took our home when he died, so I am now living with my father. He will allow me to use some of his land to keep some animals. If I receive the loan, I will buy two kid goats and six chickens. I have participated in training run by the local NGO in how to raise them, now I want to put my training into practice. The chickens I will use to get eggs to eat and sell, providing my children with more protein and vitamins in their diet. The goats I will raise until we can sell them for slaughter. Once I pay back the loan, I will invest my profits to buy more animals.

**Name: Yeama Koroma**  
**Requested amount: 450,000 leones**  
**Loan application: Bakery**  
**Reason:** I have been paying into the scheme for over one year and would now like to borrow money so that I can build a small oven in my yard to bake bread. I intend to bake bread every morning, keeping some for my family, and selling the rest by the roadside. My twelve-year-old daughter will help me with this. She has finished primary school but we cannot afford to send both her and my son to secondary school, so she will help me with the bakery. With my profits I hope to save for the bride price for my son to marry soon, then his wife can become our family property and she can help with the bakery too.

**Name: Ishmael Kamara**  
**Requested amount: 300,000 leones**  
**Loan application: Medical care**  
**Reason:** My daughter is sick and needs urgent medication to treat her condition. She is sixteen years old and is nine months pregnant. She was admitted to a local hospital with typhoid, but the hospital doesn’t have the medication to treat her pain. The nurse has called the doctor in the next district to come and perform a C-section, but he will only come if we pay him. She has two other children and we don’t want to leave them without a mother. We don’t know how we will afford to pay back the loan, but my daughter is in severe pain and we are desperate for your help.

**Name: Doris Bangura**  
**Requested amount: 250,000 leones**  
**Loan application: School fees**  
**Reason:** My twin daughters have completed primary school and are bright children. I want them to go to secondary school but do not have the money for school fees, uniforms and books. I am on my own now after I left my husband because he beat me and the children. He blamed me for being married before, even though my first husband, the twins’ father, died from Ebola. I am part of the women’s farming group and have proved that I am a hard worker and good bookkeeper, but I am struggling to earn enough from the sale of my vegetables to look after my children. I want my twins to get the education I never had. If my daughters can get a good education, they will be able to find work and send money to help the family here.

**Name: Ya-Koloneh Kamara**  
**Requested amount: 175,000 leones**  
**Loan application: Seed diversification**  
**Reason:** I have been growing rice and cassava in our village for twenty-five years. It is eaten by my family and our neighbours. I now have twelve mouths to feed, since I took in my sister and her family after her husband died from Ebola two years ago. I was forced to remove my daughter from school to help me run the family farm. With the extra money I will gain from selling the cocoa, I will be able to buy mattresses for the children, fix the roof of our home, pay for school fees, and buy more seeds to plant. Eventually I will make enough money to buy some land to grow more cocoa, and perhaps provide employment for others.
ACTIVITY 11: POWER TO CHANGE

As a group, watch the Trócaire Power to Change video, which showcases the work of Access to Justice Law Centre (AJLC), a Trócaire partner working in Sierra Leone. The project uses drama with young people to challenge community attitudes to issues related to gender equality, such as access to education for girls, child marriage, teenage pregnancy and violence against women and girls.

To encourage active listening, write the following questions on flipchart paper before showing the video:

- What challenges are young people in Sierra Leone facing?
- How is the afterschool club helping to address the issues facing young people?
- How effective do you think the project is?
- Why do you think Trócaire works through partners such as AJLC?

Split into small groups to discuss the questions, writing answers on flipchart paper. After ten minutes, ask the group to give feedback on their discussions to the wider group.

Young people from the AJLC afterschool club in Kambia with Ellen Donnelly from Trócaire’s Development Education team. Photo credit: Trócaire.
ACTIVITY 12: A COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHILD MARRIAGE

This activity uses drama to explore social issues affecting women and girls. Perhaps consider using some energisers to help get the young people ready for drama.

Tip: Try to mix those that are more confident throughout the group, but ensure the Village Male Chiefs and Women’s Group are played by confident young people to get the most from the discussion.

SETTING THE SCENE

Explain that the activity will involve everyone imagining that you live in Kambia, a large town in northern Sierra Leone. Today the community has come together to discuss the issue of child marriage having watched a drama delivered by the young people in the afterschool club. Although the Sierra Leone Child Rights Act of 2007 prohibits marriages for children under the age of eighteen, many girls in your community marry before they reach that age. A government minister has come along to hear views from the community and it is important that everyone is involved in the discussion.

Split into six groups and give each group one role card and ask them to imagine themselves in that role and think about the main points they would like to make at the community meeting. They will then have to nominate one person to speak on their behalf at the community meeting. Allow ten minutes preparation time.

Convene the community meeting by inviting the representatives to sit at the top of the room. Provide each representative with an opportunity to speak. Then invite questions from the floor and further comments from the representatives.

FOLLOW UP

- Ask the young people to reflect on what was positive and what was challenging about the discussion.
- What do you think are the main challenges in addressing gender inequality in Sierra Leone?
- Why is gender equality a complex issue to address?
- Can you agree on three to five basic principles that could help to achieve gender equality?

KEY POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT

- Trócaire recognises the influence chiefs and religious leaders hold in local communities. We work with them to understand the power they hold and to use it for positive change, such as the introduction of women-friendly local laws.
- Trócaire supports KADDRO, a local NGO in Kambia. The organisation enables vulnerable women and their families to gain economic independence. The organisation works alongside AJLC to support women to address social issues in their community, such as violence against women and girls.
- Trócaire implements the Living Peace Methodology to engage men and boys alongside women and girls to effectively promote improved gender relationships. Communities develop action plans to promote positive masculinity and an enabling environment for women.
HANDOUT: ROLE CARDS

YOUTH GROUP
You are members of the afterschool gender equality club. Your group is made up of an equal number of boys and girls. When you first came together, the boys did all the talking and the girls sat back. Through drama activities, you have explored many issues that impact gender equality in your community. You have recently developed role plays about child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and the school drop out rate of girls in order to educate community members about the injustice of gender inequality. You want girls and boys to have an equal chance to attend school and realise their hopes and dreams.

WOMEN’S GROUP
Your group supports local women who have experienced violence from their husbands. This is very common in your area. The women come together to offer support and guidance to each other. You have set up a savings group that offers small loans to women to help pay school fees. You believe that women need to become more involved in the community. You feel your opinions and observations should be valued and that you should be involved in the community’s development. You believe that girls are more than just wives and mothers and should be treated with respect.

PARENTS
You work long hours and try to do the best for your family, but it is a daily struggle just to feed them. You would like to be able to send all your children to school, but you can’t afford to. The government says education is free, but they only pay for one teacher at the local school. The community pays for local teachers, as well as the cost of uniforms and books. In your community, it is common for the eldest daughter to marry between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Families use the bride price to pay school fees for younger children, so child marriage is the only financial option available to you. You would love to focus on your children’s education but you get no support from the government.

VILLAGE MALE CHIEFS
You have the power to adjudicate on customary law and hold a lot of influence locally. As part of your status you are expected to have more than one wife and many children as this is a sign of masculinity and power. In your villages, a man will provide for his wife and the women will take care of him and the children, it has been this way for generations. While you recognise the contribution of women in the home and family, you do not believe they should become involved in community issues. In your culture, being a ‘good wife’ will bring ‘blessings’ from God to the wife and her children. Times are changing but you feel it is your responsibility to keep the traditional values alive.

GOVERNMENT
You outlawed child marriage in 2007, yet ten years later the issue still exists. You feel that because many parents did not get an education, they do not understand the importance of progress towards women’s equal place in society. They see their daughter as property and with such high levels of poverty, you can sympathise with this perspective. The international community is looking at your high child marriage and teenage pregnancy rates and says you need to make more progress; however, poverty, jobs, access to clean water and education are also major priority areas.

LOCAL NGO
Your organisation was set up by a man who is passionate about gender equality. Coming from a single parent family, he witnessed his mother struggle and wanted to ensure that this isn’t the case for future generations. Your NGO supports women to improve their income through farming activities. This helps them to become financially independent. You have realised that when women are financially independent they are likely to reinvest money into their children’s education and nutrition. Your NGO has supported more girls to complete school and women have become stronger at refusing to agree to child marriage for their daughters.
As a whole group, discuss the three quotes from these famous women who are taking action for women’s empowerment. Ask the group the following questions:

- Which quote inspires you the most and why?
- Consider the audiences that Malala, Emma and Chimamanda are targeting with their quotes. Why do you think these are important audiences to reach?

**INSPIRING WOMEN LOCALLY**

Make a list of women or men in your own life who are powerful advocates for women’s empowerment. This can be in their attitude and behaviours or it could be a practical action they have taken to create change. What is it that makes them inspiring?

**MEET YOUR INSPIRING PERSON**

Make a plan to meet with your inspiring person. Find out more about what inspires them to take action and report your findings to the group.

**ADAMA – INSPIRING GIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE**

‘When I was a young girl I enjoyed growing food and selling it at local markets. This lead me to undertake my degree in general agriculture. I love working with the KADDRO farming groups and supporting them to grow their food.

‘I see the positive impact KADDRO has on the lives of women and girls. The mothers benefit from our programmes and the children can go to school because of this support. We don’t just give families school supplies. We give parents seeds so that they can grow enough crops to afford the school fees themselves.

‘When I am working in the communities, I speak not only about agriculture but about opportunities for girls’ education. When I first began working in the communities, people were surprised to see me, a young woman. Parents would bring their children to me and say, “Look at Adama. She has a professional job and is supporting her family. Just look at her footsteps and follow her.” They encourage their girls and the girls tell me, “I want to be just like you.”’
MALALA YOUSAFZAI
‘When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful … I raise up my voice – not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard … we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.’

EMMA WATSON
‘How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation? … We want to try to galvanize as many men and boys as possible to be advocates for change.’

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE
‘A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves. And this is how to start: We must raise our daughters differently. We must also raise our sons differently.’
TAKE ACTION FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

A KEY PART OF THIS YOUTH PROGRAMME IS TO BUILD AWARENESS AND CONFIDENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION FOR WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT.

ROMERO AWARD
Your call to action is to speak up and speak out for women who experience injustice! There are lots of suggestions below to get you started.

Trócaire will recognise all your actions with a certificate of achievement as part of our Romero Award. You can win prizes for your youth group and showcase your project at our national event. For further information, register online at: trocaire.org/romeroaward

A mural of the late Archbishop Óscar Romero in San Salvador, El Salvador. Photo credit: Jorge Dan Lopez.

YOUTH CLUB CHALLENGE
• Make a display board for your youth club about the issue
• Design a board game about gender issues for young members of your club
• Plan an event to celebrate International Women’s Day, 8 March, or International Day of the Girl Child, 11 October

COMMUNITY CHALLENGE
• Invite youth groups from your area to attend a TED-style event of inspiring talks and videos about women’s equality locally and globally
• Write your own drama about gender issues and host an event
• Organise a film screening about an issue relating to women’s empowerment

CAMPAIGN CHALLENGE
• Look for online campaigns such as heforshe.org to support
• Invite your local politician to a meeting to discuss Ireland’s contribution to the Global Goals
• Organise a postcard campaign or petition

ONLINE CHALLENGE
• Make a video about gender equality and post on social media
• Tweet companies or politicians addressing a gender issue about which you are concerned
CHECK OUT OUR CLIMATE CHANGE YOUTH RESOURCE

Climate Change, Climate Justice: Toolkit for Youth Groups
trocaire.org/education/climate-change/youth

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