

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## ACTIVITY IDEAS (9–14 YEARS)

### Introduction

International Women's Day is celebrated annually on 8 March. It is a day when people around the world come together to recognise the achievements that women and girls have made, as well as call for further action to close the gender gap in terms of education, health, economics and politics.

You can use the following activity ideas to introduce issues related to gender equality, encourage learners to think critically, and inspire them to take action in their own schools and communities. The accompanying slideshow could be used in an assembly or together with one or more of these activities, to further support a learn, think and act approach. The activities and slides can easily be adapted to suit the needs of younger and older learners. Further ideas and a list of useful resources are also provided below.

Note: Depending on learners' age and the context, teachers may also wish to acknowledge and discuss inequality issues connected to LGBT+.

### Activity ideas

#### Equibingo

Aim: to explore learners' existing ideas and knowledge about the status of women and men in their country and around the world; and the degree to which they think women and men have achieved equality.

Note: This is a quick activity that can be used to both engage and energise learners. The questions can be adapted to make them easier or more difficult, according to the ability and age of the group.

- This activity is best carried out in a large, open space where learners are able to move around freely. If using a classroom, it might be useful to push the desks and chairs to one side first.
- Give each learner a copy of Equibingo (Activity sheet 1 below). Explain that the aim of Equibingo is for learners to interact with each other and complete the questions on the sheet as quickly as possible. They do this by collecting a different learner's name in response to each question and recording these names on the sheet. The learner who collects answers to all the questions in the fastest time is the winner of the game.

Note: The answers to questions 10, 11 and 12 are: 1918, SDG5 and 8 March, respectively. See the accompanying slideshow for further details.

- Equibingo should take less than 10 minutes to play. If no one has answered all the questions in the specified time, then the 'winner' is the participant with the largest number of answers.
- Follow-on discussion should focus on whether learners think life is equal for men and women, and boys and girls, in their community, in the UK and globally. Point out that historically men and women have not been equal, and many inequalities persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If participants found some

questions difficult to answer, this reflects the depth of these inequalities. For example, many people find it much easier to think of a male sports star than a female sports star. If learners offer prejudiced and stereotypical views, encourage others to challenge these and explore what evidence these ideas and assumptions are based on.

## The line of inequality

Aim: to consider what factors (such as gender) might affect the life opportunities, power and influence that someone has.

- Explain that learners are going to play a game to investigate what factors affect the life opportunities, power and influence that someone has. You might like to briefly discuss learners' initial thoughts and ideas. What do we need to be considered doing well in life? What factors might affect the life opportunities that someone has? Why do some people have more power and influence in their communities than others?
- Ask learners to line up at one end of the room, and give each learner one of the Role play cards (Activity sheet 2 below). Alternatively, organise learners into pairs or groups of three and give each pair or group one of the role play cards.
- Explain that the role play cards represent fictional people living in different countries around the world. Ask learners to spend a few minutes imagining the daily life of the person whose role they are playing and to think of a name for their character.
- Read out the list of statements below and ask those learners whose character agrees with the statement to take a step forward. If working in groups, give learners time to discuss and decide whether they would agree with the statement. Encourage those learners who are unsure how to answer to ask you for advice.
- Eventually learners will be spaced out across the room according to how many steps they have taken forward.

## Power statements

1. You receive or received a primary school education.
  2. You can afford to meet your basic needs.
  4. You are never short of food.
  5. You can afford to see a doctor and buy medicine when you have health problems.
  7. You have the power to influence people in your community.
  8. You have people who care about you and protect you.
  10. You have enough money to save some for later.
  11. You have enough spare time and money to enjoy leisure activities with friends.
  12. You are satisfied with your life.
  13. You live in a sturdy house safe from bad weather.
  14. You can afford to go on a foreign holiday at least once a year.
- Once you have read out all the statements, ask learners to stay where they are and introduce their character to the rest of the class. Encourage the learners to give reasons for their decisions about how many steps they took.



- Ask the other learners if they think that each character is correctly placed in relation to others, for example: Do you think the hedge fund manager should be further forward than the 12-year-old girl? Encourage discussions when there is disagreement.
- Ask learners to identify what factors affect the life opportunities, power and influence that someone has, for example age, gender, disability, conflict, poverty and climate change. Draw out the idea of intersectionality: where people may be negatively impacted by several factors, resulting in a complex web of interconnected discriminations and disadvantages. Ask learners to identify which characters they think might be negatively impacted because of their gender. How might this person be affected? Why do you think this is? Do you think this is fair?

## Measuring the gender gap

Aim: to collect, interpret and present real-life data related to gender equality; to critically analyse the statistics learners are exposed to in daily life.

- Use the slideshow to share facts and figures related to the issue of gender inequality.
- Encourage learners to think critically about these statistics. What story about gender inequality do these statistics tell? Where does this data come from? Are the numbers reliable? Do you think everyone agrees with these figures?
- Support learners to collect, analyse and present their own gender equality data. For example, learners could investigate how the percentage of girls in school has changed over time, the gender pay gap in the UK, or the progress made in other indicators such as maternal mortality. Learners could create an infographic, slideshow or poster to share their findings with others.
- Useful data sources include:
  - World Bank Open Data: [data.worldbank.org/](http://data.worldbank.org/)
  - Gapminder: [www.gapminder.org/](http://www.gapminder.org/)
  - The Global Gender Gap Report: [www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018](http://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018)

## Equal or unequal in the future?

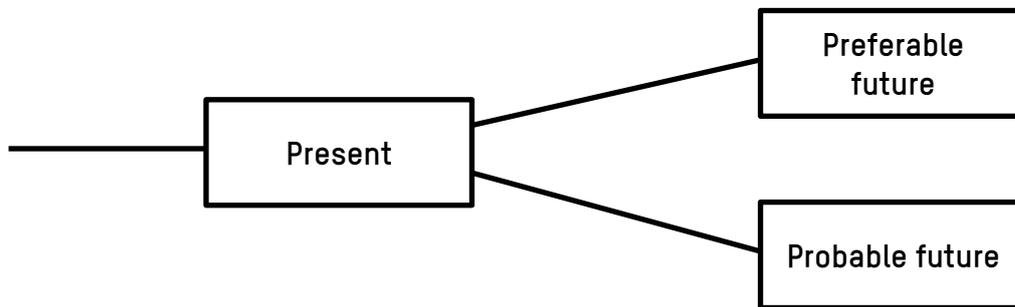
Aim: to identify and discuss examples of gender inequality in our society, before reflecting on what changes learners would like to see regarding this issue in the future.

Note: This activity is a mind-mapping exercise that helps learners to consider and express their ideas – both positive and negative – about the future. For further details, see p.18 of Oxfam’s Global Citizenship in the Classroom: A guide for teachers: [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers)

- Use the accompanying slideshow to introduce issues related to gender equality. Emphasise that although tremendous progress has been made in recent decades, there is still a long way to go before life opportunities are equal for women and men, and boys and girls.
- Organise learners into pairs or groups of three. Give each group a large piece of paper.
- In their groups, learners should draw a time line on a large piece of paper (see the diagram below). Alternatively, you could distribute A3 copies of the template provided in Ideal futures (Activity sheet 3 below).



- On the lower time line, learners should place the things they think will probably happen in relation to gender equality. These can be represented in a variety of ways such as words, drawings or cut-out images. Along the upper time line, learners should add the things they would prefer to happen.



- Allow time for learners to share their timelines and ideas about the future with other groups. Possible discussion questions include:
  - Which changes for men and women do you think are most likely to happen?
  - What changes would you prefer to see happen?
  - Does anyone else share your vision of the future? If so, who? This might be someone in your class, school or community, or a famous person.
  - What needs to change if your preferable future is to become reality? What challenges are there, and how could these be overcome?
  - Who is taking action to create such a future? Who else should be taking action?
  - How can we ourselves contribute to this preferable future?
  - What will happen if no action is taken?

## Differentiation

- Make it easier: Ask learners to focus on a specific example of gender inequality, such as girls' education, rather than the issue in general.
- Make it harder: Ask learners to extend the time line to the left (as shown in the diagram), going back in time before the present. They could then annotate this line to show changes that have happened in relation to gender equality in the past.

## Breaking down the bricks

**Aim:** to identify and discuss examples of gender inequality in learners' own school and community, before thinking critically about what action could be taken to overcome these barriers.

**Note:** It is important to make it clear to learners that taking action is voluntary. Campaigning is not for everyone, and it's okay if learners just want to find out more about an issue rather than take action. However, you will probably find that learning about this issue will mean many of your learners do want to respond in active ways. Taking action can be an appropriate and empowering response to real-life global issues for young people as they experience being part of bringing about change that improves the lives of people living in poverty.

This activity is adapted from a Bricks and hammers activity in Get Global!, a teachers' guide on how to facilitate active global citizenship (see p.18): [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get-global](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get-global)

- Ask learners to suggest ways in which life and opportunities for girls and boys are unequal in their school (or community). For example, this might relate to access to certain sports, the proportions of males and females taking certain GCSE subjects, or more direct examples of prejudice or discrimination through the use of social media. You might like to allow time for learners to first discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups before sharing and recording their ideas in a whole-group discussion.
- Organise learners into small groups and give each group a large piece of paper. Ask them to draw a brick wall on their paper (see example below). They should then label each brick with one of the examples of gender inequality identified previously.
- Learners should then make paper hammers to knock down these bricks. A template is provided in Hammers (Activity sheet 4 below). On each hammer, they should write an action that could be taken to overcome this issue and make life fairer.
- As a follow-up activity, learners could be supported to choose, plan and carry out some of these actions to promote gender equality in their school (or community).

## Further ideas

- Use the internet to research how some different organisations are taking action to promote gender equality. Explore the targets for gender equality outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. How well do learners think these targets will help in achieving the future they would like to see?  
[www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality/targets/](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality/targets/)
- Learners could use a why-why-why chain to think critically about the possible causes of specific examples of gender inequality, for example access to education, by repeatedly asking questions beginning with the word 'why'. For further details, see p.12 of Oxfam's Global Citizenship in the Classroom: A guide for teachers.  
[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers)
- Use an issue tree to support learners to explore the causes and effects (or symptoms) of gender inequality and potential solutions. For further details, see p.13 of Oxfam's Global Citizenship in the Classroom: A guide for teachers.  
[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide-for-teachers)
- Learners could find out more about some of the ways in which people around the world are taking action for gender equality. Examples include:
  - HeForShe movement: [www.heforshe.org/en/movement](http://www.heforshe.org/en/movement)\*
  - Womankind Worldwide: [www.womankind.org.uk](http://www.womankind.org.uk)
  - Women's March: [womensmarch.com](http://womensmarch.com)
  - One's Poverty is Sexist campaign: [www.one.org/international/take-action/poverty-is-sexist/#](http://www.one.org/international/take-action/poverty-is-sexist/#)\*

\*For safeguarding reasons, please be aware that these campaigns encourage people to sign up and share their contact details.

## Useful links and resources

- **Gender Respect Project**

Try other teaching activities and ideas from the Gender Respect Project. Led by DECSY, this project aims to help children and young people to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence in both a local and a global context.

[genderrespect2013.wordpress.com/teaching-ideas](http://genderrespect2013.wordpress.com/teaching-ideas)

- **Get Global!**

See Get Global! for a wealth of ideas on how to facilitate active global citizenship. Support learners to move from thinking critically about issues that are important to them, to planning and participating in action, and to reflect on their performance and assess their work.

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get-global](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/get-global)

- **Teaching Controversial Issues**

See Oxfam's recently updated Teaching Controversial Issues guide for guidance, classroom strategies and practical teaching activities for managing controversial issues in the classroom.

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues)

- **FYS Forum**

This online platform provides teaching ideas, methodologies and resources for exploring gender issues through youth forums. Learners might like to run a forum with other schools in their local community.

[fys-forums.eu/en/fys-toolkit/forum-curriculum](http://fys-forums.eu/en/fys-toolkit/forum-curriculum)

- **International Women's Day**

Find out more about International Women's Day, this year's campaign theme and the events taking place around the world to recognise the achievements that women and girls have made, as well as call for further action to reduce the gender inequalities that exist in our society.

[www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)

## Find out more

Oxfam puts women at the heart of all our work. Not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it's vital in our fight for a world without poverty. The world has made great progress against poverty in the last few decades, however many millions of women and girls are still trapped in lives of hardship and fear, by discrimination and abuse. But time after time, we have seen how women who can get an education, earn a fair living and enjoy independent lives, can leave poverty behind - and bring their families and communities with them. Find out more: [www.oxfam.org.uk/women-unlimited](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/women-unlimited)

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## Equibingo

## Activity sheet 1

Find someone who:

<p><b>1. Can name a famous female sports star.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>2. Can name a female prime minister or president.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>3. Can name a famous male dancer.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>
<p><b>4. Can name a global business or brand managed by a woman.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>5. Can name a famous female scientist.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>6. Can name a female superhero from a film or comic.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>
<p><b>7. Can name an important invention by a woman.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>8. Knows someone who has or had a stay-at-home dad.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>9. Can name a prominent campaigner for gender equality.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>
<p><b>10. Can name the year in which women first won the right to vote in the UK.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>11. Can name which one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addresses gender equality.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>	<p><b>12. Knows when International Women's Day is.</b></p> <p>Learner's name:</p> <p>Answer:</p>



## Role play cards

## Activity sheet 2a

<p>After a successful career in business you have become a politician in Rwanda. You are the mother of two children, you have influence and can afford everything that you need.</p>	<p>You are a married woman living in the UK. You have four children. Your husband works and has a good salary. You would like to work, but it's difficult for you to find a job that gives you the hours that you need to drop off and pick up the children.</p>
<p>You are a 23-year-old woman living in India. You have been visually impaired since birth. You would love to be a teacher, but you weren't able to go to school when you were younger because of your disability. You live with your family, helping with housework and looking after your younger brothers and sisters.</p>	<p>You are a male care worker, caring for elderly people in a residential home in the UK. You were employed through an agency back in Poland, your home country, which arranged the position for you. Your pay works out below the minimum wage because of unpaid overtime; you often work 50 or 60 hours a week.</p>
<p>You are a hedge fund manager for an energy company in the USA, managing £3 billion worth of assets. You are absolutely rolling in it and are one of the 25 richest hedge fund managers in the world. You are the father of two small daughters.</p>	<p>You are a female garment worker in a factory in Bangladesh that is a supplier for a major supermarket chain. You are treated badly, often working long shifts without even a toilet break. It's not unusual for the company to 'forget' to pay you for overtime. But you must keep your job. You don't know how your family would get by without your income.</p>
<p>You are a female accountant working for an international travel company in the city of Mumbai in India. You have a nice apartment and live quite well on your salary. You are thinking of starting a family.</p>	<p>You are a single mother of three young children, living in the UK. You would like to work but can't afford the cost of childcare. You receive financial support from the government, but these benefits have been cut recently and you worry about how you will pay the bills. Sometimes you go without food so that your children have enough to eat.</p>

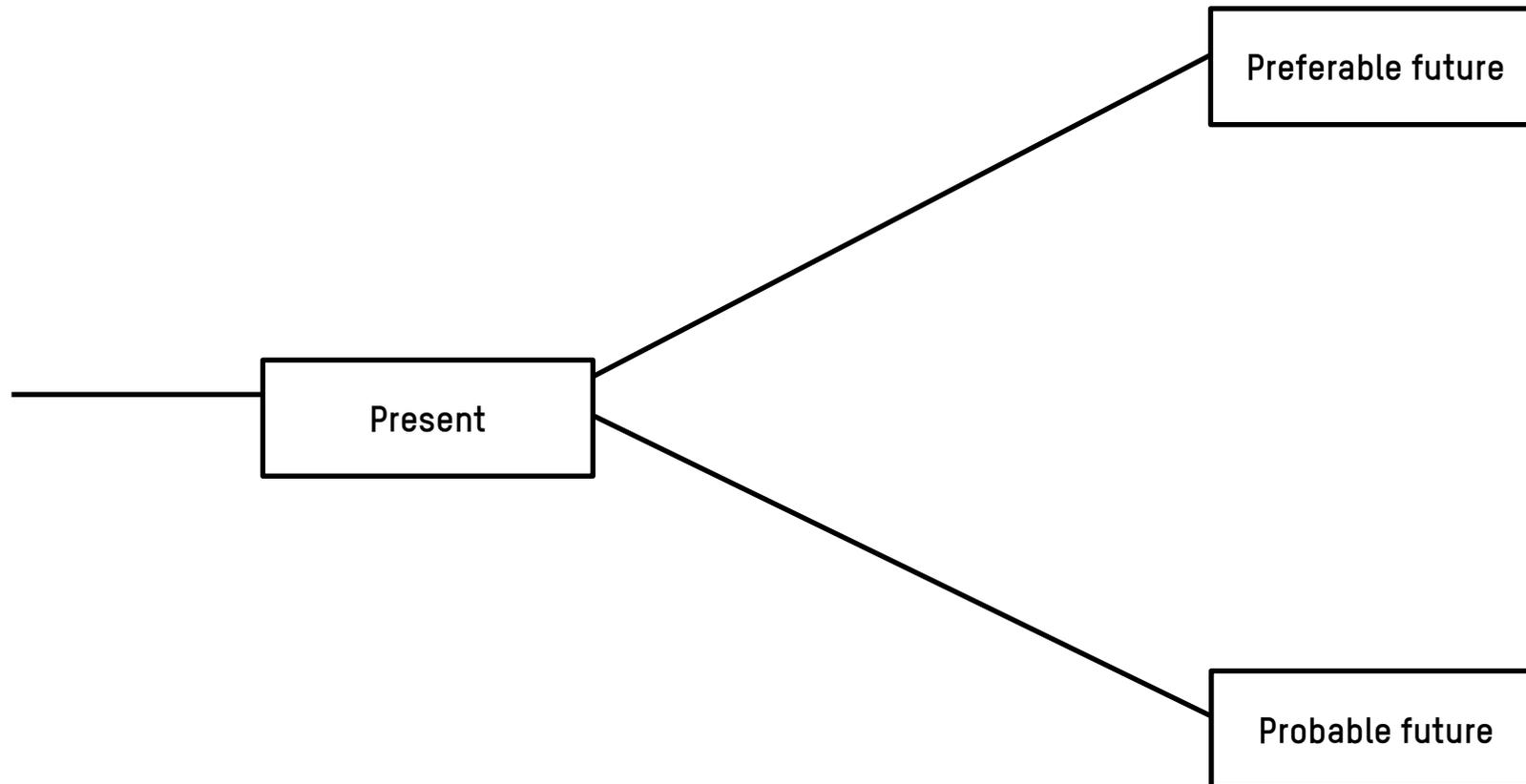


## Role play cards

## Activity sheet 2b

<p>You are a male employee of a national human rights organisation, working in Afghanistan. You do a dangerous job and work very long hours for a small salary. You aren't married and don't have any children.</p>	<p>You are a male teacher in an inner-city school in Brazil. Your school doesn't have many resources, and you wish that there was more money available for education. You have always wanted to be a teacher, but you have been pushed to get by recently as the cost of living is rising faster than people's incomes.</p>
<p>You are a 12-year-old girl from a farmer's family, living in rural Ethiopia. You have been taken out of school because your mother needs help collecting water and wood. The walk to collect these is becoming longer every month.</p>	<p>You are the teenage son of the chief executive of a large manufacturing company in Nigeria. You go to a private school and are currently applying to go to university.</p>
<p>You are a married man with four children, running a food centre in a small town in Iraq. You lost an arm in a war but have a good income.</p>	<p>You are a female journalist for a national newspaper in the UK. You have worked hard for your position. You have a small daughter who you hope will have similar opportunities in the future.</p>
<p>You are a male subsistence farmer growing rice in Pakistan. You are only able to grow enough food for you and your family to eat. You would like your children to have an education and more opportunities in life than you have had.</p>	<p>You are a 31-year-old man living in Peru. You were injured in an industrial accident three years ago and are no longer able to work. You don't receive any disability benefit and must rely on begging and support from family and friends to get by.</p>





Hammers

Activity sheet 4

