

Cards for Gender-Bender Game	
Use Contraceptives.	Get sterilized.
Village Head	Teacher
Soldier	Police

Cards for Gender-Bender Game	
Fetch water From Well.	Minding children.
Wash clothes.	Cook.
Airplane Pilot.	Shopping for groceries and household needs.
Determine sex of fetus upon conception.	Determine number of children to have.
Taxi or bus driver.	Sea/ship captain.

Sample cards for the Gender Bender Game: - add/subtract as needed.

Cards for Gender-Bender Game	
Wash clothes and kitchen utensils.	Nurse.
Breast-feed.	Construction laborer.
Become a doctor.	Take sick baby or child to doctor.
Get pregnant, give birth.	Get Prostate cancer.
Assist birth (Midwife).	Become Governor.

Sample of second grouping based on physical or physiological capabilities and limitations (human nature/reproductive function).

Only Female	Only Male	Both Male and Female can do it
3. Breastfeed 5. Get pregnant and give birth.	10. Determine the sex of the fetus on conception. 15. Get Prostate cancer.	1. Washing clothes and kitchen utensils. 2. Maintaining cleanliness of house. 4. Become a doctor. . 6. Assist birth (deliver babies). 7. Fetch water from well. 8. Wash clothes. 9. Airplane pilot. 11. Bus or taxi driver. 12. Nurse 13. Construction laborer. 14. Take sick baby/child to doctor. 16. Becoming a Governor. 17. Minding the children. 18. Cook. 19. Shop for kitchen and household needs. 20. Determine number of children to have. 21. Become ship captain. 22. Use contraceptives. 23. Get sterilized. 24. Village Head. 25. Teacher 26. Police 27. Soldier

NOTES: If one game result in a grouping showing those now grouped in the third column are still found in the “Only Female” and “Only Male” columns, this means that the participants still have gender bias. This is still commonly found in many communities. If your game result still shows gender bias, then further discussion should be encouraged.

A sample list of Roles, Jobs, Responsibilities that can be found in family or household and community life.

Those listed here are only illustrative and can be further developed to include different roles, jobs, and responsibilities according to what are current in a certain community.

1. Washing clothes and kitchen utensils.
2. Maintaining cleanliness of house.
3. Breastfeed.
4. Become a doctor.
5. Becoming pregnant and giving birth.
6. Assist birth (deliver babies).
7. Fetch water from well.
8. Wash clothes.
9. Airplane pilot.
10. Determine sex of fetus on conception.
11. Bus or taxi driver.
12. Nurse
13. Construction laborer.
14. Take sick baby/child to doctor.
15. Get Prostate cancer.
16. Becoming a Governor.
17. Minding the children.
18. Cook.
19. Shop for kitchen and household needs.
20. Determine number of children to have.
21. Become ship captain.
22. Use contraceptives.
23. Get sterilized.
24. Village Head
25. Teacher
26. Police
27. Soldier

DESCRIPTIVE PAPER The Gender Bender Game

The Gender Bender Game is a practical activity where the facilitator (health-worker, health promoter or health programmer) along with members of the community participate in identifying the stereotypic male and female roles and responsibilities that currently prevail in the community. This can be done with blank cards or pieces of paper and writing in the roles and responsibilities or with pre-prepared pieces of paper or cards with the roles and responsibilities individually written or typed on the cards. Then participating community members together discuss and categorize each role and responsibility according to whether it is usually a female or male role/responsibility in their community. This activity would yield optimum learning experience if the participants are men and women; and young and old. There is no limit to the number of participants as long as all have an opportunity to take part in the fun.

The outcome of the game may reveal inequities in the division of work, roles and responsibilities within the household and can also show that the jobs, roles and responsibilities in the community that are currently regarded as only for males only or for females only can actually be done by both females and males.

By participating in this game and by drawing their own conclusions based on their observations community members realize and understand that there are gender biases and inequities in the community and understand the detrimental implications and consequences especially for girls and women and for the community in general. With this realization the community can make their own decision to act and gradually change the situations that are discriminative towards, and harmful for women and girls.

GENDER-BENDER GAME INSTRUCTION

Instructions for the Facilitator:

1. Invite community members to take part in the game. The group can be men only, women only, or mixed. The age group can also be mixed. This game can be played with as little as 4 participants to 25 or even more.
2. **Divide** a white board into three columns. Name the columns: **Mostly Female; Mostly Male and Both Common**. You can also use pieces of paper to make the column headers and use the floor as your white board.
3. **Cut** the roles/jobs cards attached. (Or start with blank cards, distribute to participants and ask participants to write one role/job/activity on a card)
4. **Ask** participants to place the cut cards (with roles/jobs) into three categories:
 1. **Usually/Mostly female**
 2. **Usually/Mostly male**
 3. **Common for both female and male**
5. **Ask participants to note the groupings** and ask whether there are tendencies specific to males and females for certain roles, job and responsibilities.
6. **After sufficient time for discussion (15 minutes)** ask the participants to re group the roles and responsibilities under the following categories (prepare category labels as before):
 1. Can only be done by males (physiologically).
 2. Can only be done by females (physiologically).
 3. Can be done by both (physiologically).
7. Ask participants to discuss the results of the first grouping and the second set of groupings and ask them to think about the implications. As a facilitator you can point out that the participants as a group agreed that there are a lot of roles, jobs and responsibilities that can be done by both males and females. As a facilitator you can also point out that those in the category of "males only" or "females only" are limited to those that are determined by anatomy and physiology (human reproductive system).

BRIEF ABSTRACT

This abstract was prepared for submission to health conferences.

Title of Abstract: The Gender Bender Game:

Empowering communities through a hands-on learning game to raise awareness of gender bias.

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Background: Gender discrimination or gender bias related to roles and responsibilities have been entrenched since the beginning of human existence and have been perpetuated from one generation to the next by both men *and* women alike. This session will introduce a participatory learning game, the **Gender Bender Game**¹, and illustrates how it can be applied in raising awareness and empowering communities to initiate changes in regard to gender bias at the community level.

Discussion: Gender bias and discrimination can have dire, even fatal consequences for girls and women in communities where women have little or no power to make decisions that affect their reproductive health. An example: A couple a low-income community has 5 girls, all under 8 years old. The husband wanted a boy. The wife dies during her sixth childbirth due to complications. How can we educate the communities on gender bias, its consequences and elimination thereof? Traditionally, in Indonesia this would've been done through one-way information dissemination sessions and usually the majority of the audience failed to catch or retain most of the messages by the time the health promoter finished. **The Gender Bender Game** is a hands-on exercise where community members identify the existing stereotypical male and female roles and responsibilities; and then reassess and re-categorize them on the basis of physical, physiological and mental capability, considering what can be done by women/girls, or by men/boys or by both. Both the health promoter (facilitator) and community members participate in the learning process of identifying problems, finding alternative, solutions and taking action to solve their own problems.

Conclusion: By taking part in the game community members realize and internalize to what extent the gender biases exist in the community and decide what they can do to change the situation. This game can also be adapted and applied in addressing other various community issues.

Keywords: gender equality, gender equity, gender bias, gender mainstreaming, Participatory Learning and Action (PLA).

The full description of the Gender Bender Game is in the following pages.

¹ "The Gender Game" was incorporated into the Interpersonal Communication & Counseling Skills training module of the AusAID-funded Women's Health & Family Welfare (WHFW) project in NTB and NTT, Indonesia in 2000.

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