

## What does gender mean?

Gender is a social construction of roles for men and women

The term gender relates to social and cultural differences for men and women

Gender is not about biological differences

Gender roles are determined by society and they can be changed



We see gender in attitudes, behaviours, limitations and expectations thought of as "normal"

Biological sex defines male and female human beings based on different anatomy

Gender is not about the promotion of girls and women only; it's about gender relations between men and women, and girls and boys, and their roles



Out of the 781 million illiterate adults worldwide, **2/3 are women**



Worldwide, more than **700 million women** alive today were **married as children** (below 18 years of age)

## Why does that affect me?

Differences in gender roles can lead to discrimination and gender-stereotyping; ever been told you can't do something because you're a girl? Understanding this can help you to tackle discrimination you may experience because of your sex.

Roles assigned to men and women can affect our choices. For girls it may mean being pressured to get married young, have children before being ready and leaving school early.



Stereotypes can lead to girls and boys being streamed into certain subjects and fields; for example girls are often steered away from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Stereotypes can mean that girls have to stay home and help with domestic duties instead of going to school, or instead of doing homework or socialising.



**83%** of domestic workers in the world are female



The number of women in **senior management** globally is **24%**

## How can we change this?

*Gender equality is not only a women's issue; it is a human rights issue that affects all of us – women and girls, men and boys. We all benefit socially, politically and economically from gender equality in our everyday lives. When women are empowered, the whole of humanity benefits.*



**12%** of the global engineering workforce is female

*Gender equality liberates not only women but also men from prescribed social roles and gender stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> Here are a few ideas to help you begin to break the cycle of gender discrimination:*

Discuss gender inequality with your peers and safe strategies that may help you address this. What have you experienced? How did it make you feel? How might things be different?

Support your friends and peers, we all experience challenges and problems, share yours and be sympathetic when others do – support your sisters!

If you know an inspirational woman, perhaps a female teacher, businesswoman, your Mother or Auntie, talk to them about how they made their success.

Write down your dreams and goals, then research inspirational women that have achieved similar dreams and goals – you can make them happen too!



**5.9%**  
*of heads of state  
in the world are women*



*Every additional year of  
education, corresponds with  
a 15-25% increase in  
future wages for  
women*

## What makes a leader?

*A leader is someone who has influence, someone who others follow, or someone who guides or directs others. Leaders are not just political, they are at home, in communities, in schools, in cities, in countries, on the sports field – they are everywhere. Anyone can be a leader.*

## What kind of leader would you like to be?



**Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**  
President of Liberia,  
Nobel Laureate



**Francisca Nneke Okeke**  
Nigerian scientist and Professor of  
Physics at the University of Nigeria,  
L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science  
Awards Laureate for Africa in 2013



**Henriette Ekwe Ebongo**  
Journalist, publisher and  
political activist, Cameroon



**Jennifer Nansubuga  
Makumbi**  
Ugandan novelist  
and short story writer

## Neema Namadamu: An inspirational leader



Neema Namadamu was born in a very remote area in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. She was the fourth child born to her parents, but the first one who lived.

Ms. Namadamu contracted polio at the age of two which left her disabled.

Ms. Namadamu is a symbol of strength and grace in the face of adversity. Throughout her life she has been a strong advocate and supporter for the rights of people with disabilities, rights of indigenous people, and gender equality. She graduated from Congo's national university, being the first disabled woman and the second woman from her community to achieve such an accomplishment.

Ms. Namadamu has become known internationally for her peacekeeping efforts and activism, having founded Hero Women of Congo, running a Media Training Centre for women, and supporting many efforts, including an organisation for disabled women seamstresses.