

# Manual with practical exercises in the context of gender sensitization in the work with refugees

December 2022



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Basic issues: discussion papers on development policies, international cooperation and south-north cultural exchange, as well as anti-racist campaigning.

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# INTRODUCTION

The manual we have put together is based on our experiences with a Gender-Tandem-Workshop-Programme for Afghan men and boys and with Afghan women in Austria. We developed these programmes with Afghan associations and experienced trainers, and they have shown to be useful and empowering for participants.

Above all, they encourage the participants to reflect on their own gender role perceptions. While the workshops for women primarily contribute to empowerment, the workshops for men explore alternative perspectives and strategies for action through a critical examination of social (power) relations that disadvantage girls and women and privilege boys and men.

This is because, according to Simone de Beauvoir, what is equally true for men and women is, “We are not born a woman or a man, we are made one.” This is the starting point of the workshops, which makes it possible to achieve changes in one’s own behaviour, as well as in one’s own perspectives.

Thus, critical reflection on gender norms is an objective of both the workshops for women and those for men.

For both, the workshops create a space in which opinions, attitudes, fears, and taboo topics can be addressed without judgment by others- of course, the trainers have to pay attention to this.

The workshop programme for women focuses on empowerment. This can take place on different levels, which of course, cannot all be covered in the workshops. Therefore, the personal level is the focus of this particular workshop.

In dealing with gender norms, the workshops for men are particularly concerned with the critical reflection of one’s own privileged position as a man. However, this does not disregard the fact that Afghan men abroad also experience discrimination; these experiences must also be addressed in the workshops. These reflections aim to develop alternative ideas of masculinities to overcome toxic masculinities.

This brings me to the important topic of violence and violence prevention. It is essential for this topic in both the workshops for women and men to recognize the different forms of violence experienced. What women perceive as violence is not necessarily seen as such

by men. The workshops aim to raise awareness of this issue.

Last but not least, strategies are to be developed in the workshops that help men to act differently- not violently—on the one hand, and on the other hand, support women to clearly name violence as such and to show how to overcome violent relationships.

In the workshops, especially in the work with women, very painful experiences will certainly come to light for many. It is important that the trainers exhibit empathy and give credit to the women for being vulnerable and sharing these experiences in the group. However, as the trainers are not therapists or doctors, it is important to clearly describe and delineate the role of the trainers at the beginning of the workshops. It is equally important to be able to offer a service to those affected, such as counselling centres, therapeutic institutions, etc. These options and possibilities should be outlined to both participants and trainers before the workshops.

Lastly, the trainer tandems are a critical factor of our workshops’ success. To be able to respond appropriately in such situations, it is important that there are two trainers so that one can take care of the affected person if she wants to leave the room. It is very important that those affected who have opened up in the group and talked about their experiences are not left alone.

## What is an intercultural trainer tandem?

In the context of our workshops in Austria, there is one trainer from the majority society who already had a lot of experience in the field of training and one trainer from the Afghan community. The Afghan trainer knew the community, brought a lot of cultural knowledge, and spoke the participants’ language.

In workshop settings, trainers from the majority society work with interpreters, creating a clear hierarchy. In tandem training, it is important that both trainers work with each other as equals and that this goal is clearly communicated to the participants. Very often, such a hierarchy also comes from the participants, which they have already internalised from previous experiences.

What are the advantages of these intercultural trainer tandems?

In addition to the elimination of language barriers, the trainers from the respective communities also overcome cultural barriers and challenges more easily, and trust between the participants and the trainers is built up much more quickly. Cultural sensitivity is thus ensured.

Another essential factor is that the trainers from the community are important role models for the participants since they come from the same community and thus appear more “accessible.”

These tandems also have advantages for the trainers themselves. The trainers from the majority society gain much more insight into the culture and experiences of the community. For the trainers from the community, the experience as a trainer means an expansion of their competence and empowerment on a personal level, as well as within their community.

Even though our experience with trainer tandems comes from a different context than yours, I think this concept also brings many advantages in your context.

It is important for the success of the trainer tandems that the trainers have enough time to find each other as a tandem and discuss topics that will come up in the workshops with each other in advance. The two trainers must trust each other. Sometimes in workshops, after a while, the discussions began to be held in the language of the community, and the trainer from the majority society can no longer follow. They must be able to trust that the workshop will continue as the two trainers have discussed in advance.

Such trust must be built and takes time.

We wish a successful training!

Magda Seewald

Gender Advisor VIDC Global Dialogue

# INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES

## ACTIVITY

### Name origin

## OBJECTIVE

- Introductions and getting to know the participants, especially if they do not know each other yet.
- Individuality and diversity of the participants is shown

## DURATION

25 minutes

## MATERIAL

NA

## INSTRUCTION

The participants should introduce their name one after the other and tell something about it, e.g.:

- What is the meaning of the name?
- Do you like your name or not? And why?
- Who chose the name? Is there a reason for it?
- Should your name have been different?
- What other forms of your name are there?
- Are there any funny stories with your name? (e.g. on the phone, confusion...)
- What would you like to be called?

To visualize the “desired name”, the participants can write their name on a name tag.

**ACTIVITY****Gender Brainstorming****LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Understanding that there are biological and also socially and culturally determined characteristics and roles within the concepts of “man” and “women”
- Understanding that some differences between men and women are determined biologically, while others are cultural or social

**DURATION**

30 minutes

**MATERIAL**

Flipchart, pens (min. 3 colours)

**INSTRUCTION**

Allow the participants to brainstorm on what it means to be a “man” or a “woman”. Dialogue facilitators should then explain that some of these concepts are biological and some are concerned with social or cultural differences. Using the flipchart, explain that the group should brainstorm which characteristics they associate with men and women. Participants should say the first characteristic they think of, when they hear the word “man” or “woman”. Write down all of these characteristics on the flipchart. (Tip: Do not tell participants that these characteristics will be categorised as biological or social/cultural) until after they have brainstormed their lists. Facilitators should also have a few of their own examples prepared so that they can participate with the group. After approximately five minutes, read back through the list with the participants. Decide together if these characteristics are biological or social/cultural. If participants are unsure, ask them if a person from the opposite gender could also have that characteristic. Circle biological characteristics with one colour, and social/cultural characteristics with another colour.

**RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP**

- Which characteristics are linked to men and women?
- Are these characteristics biologically or socially constructed?
- What is the difference between social and biological gender?

Source: *Projekt Integration durch Dialog Handbuch KAICIID, S.79*

**ACTIVITY****Possibilities for Women and Men****LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Reflecting on norms and role models, culture, own ideas
- Changeability of gender and culture or through migration

**DURATION**

50 minutes

**MATERIAL**

Flipchart, pens

**INSTRUCTION**

Two flipchart papers are prepared English and Urdu.

**Sheet 1:**

*What can a woman\* do?*

In Afghanistan

In Pakistan

*What must a woman\* do?*

*What is a woman\* not allowed to do?*

**Sheet 2:**

*What can a man\* do?*

In Afghanistan

In Pakistan

*What must a man\* do?*

*What is a man\* not allowed to do?*

Start with sheet 1. The participants should express their thoughts on the four areas together in the group. The workshop leader enters what has been said in the respective field. In the meantime and afterwards, the different positions are discussed. Afterwards, sheet 2 is worked on in the same way. At the end, both sheets are compared and discussed.

Source: Media Mondiale Liberia: Training Manual for Women's Empowerment, 2013



## Recognition - Discrimination

### ACTIVITY

#### The invisible Half

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

- Increased awareness of the lack of social recognition and the value of unpaid work, which is mostly performed by women/girls
- Developing interpersonal skills, as well as empathy and critical thinking, to reduce prejudices
- Promoting mutual understanding and respect between different genders
- Valuing the work of all individuals- especially women and girls
- Preventing gender discrimination
- Promoting social equality for both men and women

### DURATION

60 minutes

### MATERIAL

Paper and pens, scissors, dustbin, flipchart

### INTRODUCTION

Divide participants into pairs. Each pair of participants draws a picture of a landscape: One is responsible for the upper half, while the second person is responsible for drawing the lower half. The groups show their work. The dialogue facilitators come and tear up the pictures and throw away one half, explaining that the one half is not so important. This is followed by a discussion of how the participants felt; what the effect is on the picture, and how one could relate the activity to real life. Participants will reflect on the lack of social recognition and the value of unpaid work, which is often performed by women and girls.

### RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

- How did you feel when you and your partner were only given one sheet of paper?
- How did you work with your partner to complete the task? Did you agree on who would go first?
- Did you put a lot of effort into your drawing?
- How did you feel when the sheet of paper was cut in half?
- Have you been in a relationship where your half wasn't visible?
- Was there an experience in your life where you felt like someone didn't appreciate your work? Are there times where you didn't appreciate the work of others?
- How can we apply this activity to real life

### TIPS

- This activity is relevant for groups of men or women.
- The term "work" refers to any form of work, such as domestic work, bringing up children and working outside the home

Source: *Projekt Integration durch Dialog Handbuch KAICIID, S.87*

# ONLY FOR WOMEN

## ACTIVITY

### Empowerment

## OBJECTIVE

- Reflecting on the concept of empowerment as an essential goal of the workshop.
- -Getting to know the three levels of empowerment

## DURATION

50 Minutes

## MATERIAL

Paper and pens, scissors, dustbin, flipchart

## INSTRUCTION

The following blank table is drawn on the flip chart.

Personal level	Relationship level	Societal level

Participants are asked what empowerment means to them. The workshop leader takes notes. (approx. 15 min.) Afterwards, the workshop leader explains that empowerment is an essential goal of the workshop and describes the three levels of empowerment:

1. Strengthening self-awareness and self-image by reflecting on one's own experiences and attitudes.
2. Creating awareness and expanding knowledge according to the motto "knowledge is power"
3. Building networks among each other,

As a next step, the handout Empowerment (based on Jo Rowlands, 1996) is handed out and the workshop leader takes up some selected points of the three levels. This should provide impetus for a more intensive discussion. The workshop leader should try to involve as many participants as possible, e.g. by asking "What do you think about this?", "What are your experiences?", "Does anyone have a different opinion?", "What else can be empowering and is not on the handout?". It is important here to give participants the broadest possible understanding of Rowlands' concept of empowerment.

**ACTIVITY****„Tree of Life“****LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Self-reflection, self-affirmation, confrontation with personal history.
- Realise that no woman\* is alone with her experiences; the experiences are individual, but there are similar structural disadvantages/forms of discrimination- the realisation of this can have a unifying effect.
- Learning to understand oppression/power

**DURATION**

90 minutes

**MATERIAL**

at least one large sheet of paper per participant, numerous coloured pens

**INSTRUCTION**

Explain that trees have a universal meaning in many cultures and represent “life”. This exercise will use the image of a tree and is meant to help the participants to reflect on their own lives so they can better understand how they became the women they are today. You might go outside the training room while explaining this exercise and look for a tree where you can show the roots, trunk, fruits and buds.

The trainers explain to the participants that they are going to draw a tree on paper that will represent their own personal “tree of life”. Assure them that this is a personal exercise and not a “drawing competition”, so they shouldn’t worry if they are not used to drawing or if they do not think they are very good at it. All their drawings will be good and perfect in their own way. Ask the participants not to comment on or laugh at other people’s trees, but to work on their own tree in silence during the whole exercise.

Draw a tree yourself on a flipchart to illustrate the exercise. Make sure that your tree does not look perfect so that the participants won’t be intimidated by your drawing skills. Then present a flipchart with the following instructions (see below) on how to “name” the different parts of their personal tree of life.

- The ROOTS represent the family and community you come from and other people or things that influenced you when you were young (both good influences and bad influences).
- The TRUNK represents everything about your life today: what you do, who you live with: your work, your family, your community.
- The FRUITS represent all your achievements: the things you were able to achieve through your efforts (whether small, every-day achievements or big achievements). Give each one a separate fruit. The BUDS represent your hopes for the future (small or big hopes). Take enough time to make sure that all the participants understand the instructions.

Ask the participants to draw their tree, including all four sections (roots, trunk, fruits, buds), without writing anything on it yet. Allow some 10-15 minutes to do this and ask the participants to put down their crayon / pencil when they have finished their drawing.

Read the instructions for the roots again (they should still be on display on a flipchart). Go to your own tree, and put some examples of your own personal roots on it.

Ask the group to do the same, and to put their crayon/pencil down when they have finished. They can either write words or draw little things according to the instructions given (e.g. for the roots, they might want to draw the house where they grew up as children, the face of a particular school teacher who they liked, etc.). For the

section on “achievements” (“fruits”), stress that they do not have to look for big things, but for anything that they feel they have done well in their life, e.g. bringing up their children.

Wait until everyone has finished, and then move on to the next section of the tree (from roots to trunk to fruits to buds). Stop after each section until everyone has shown they have finished by putting down their pencil or crayon, and then give the instructions for the next section, demonstrate what they should do on your own tree, and ask them to do the same until everyone has completed the trunk, the fruits, and the buds. Make sure they have enough time for each section.

When they have finished, ask the participants to split up into groups of 3 or 4 and to share their drawings with each other. Emphasize that they are free to share those parts of their tree that they want to, but they are under NO obligation to share everything. Ask them not to comment on what their group members say, but just to listen and be present.

Give approximately 25 minutes for this exercise.

Bring the participants back to the plenary, and ask the following questions (prepared on newsprint beforehand). Allow some time to discuss each set of questions before you move on to the next.

- How was the experience of drawing? What was easy? What was hard?
- How did you feel when you shared your experience? What was easy? What was hard?
- How did you feel when you were listening to someone else’s tree of life? What was easy? What was hard?
- What was the experience of drawing like?
- How did you feel when you shared your experience?
- How did you feel when you listened to another woman\*?
- Was it difficult to think about what your own roots are? Was there anything that felt good about that?
- What was it like to consider the tribe, what makes you, who you are? (Often it is hard to define ourselves. What do we define ourselves by? By relatives? Men\*?)
- Was it nice to think about the "fruits"? Or was it difficult?
- How did it go with the branches? (Sometimes it is difficult to have plans, perspectives and wishes... where do they come from, do I determine them myself, do I have any perspectives at all)?

Ask the participants if, while they were discussing their trees, they noticed that they had had similar experiences in their lives. They might respond by giving shared experiences of being disadvantaged because of being a girl / woman, e.g. their parents choosing to educate a male child rather than them;

It can be discussed that this experience of discrimination is not an individual problem of individual women\*, but a part of the rules and structures of most societies. However, it should also be mentioned that "being a woman" alone does not mean that everyone has the same experiences!

(Debriefing approx. 30 minutes)

**NOTE:** The workshop leader should pay close attention to the mood in the room and of the individual participants! It should be clarified in advance who from the tandem will take over which role, in case a woman\* wants to leave the room/talk/leave etc.

After this exercise, a short break is recommended (after a short "catching your breath") before continuing with the next exercise. The women\* should not go into the break with very negative memories. A short break can also be taken during the exercise if the energy drops or the need for it is there. The decision to take a break should always be made with regard to the dynamics in the group and the mood of the individuals.

## Strengthening exercise

### ACTIVITY

#### Self-esteem and understanding of roles

### OBJECTIVE

Increasing self-esteem by means of a metaphor through which one sees oneself as a valuable treasure.

### MATERIAL

A chest, a box or a suitcase with a mirror on the inside of the lid (show photos of it in the ToT).

In the context of the ToT it will each\*r with cell phone camera selfie setting

### DURATION

About 45 min

### INSTRUCTION

The exercise is done in three rounds; first the women sit in a circle. The suitcase with the mirror is placed on one side of the room so that only one person can see what is in the suitcase. Each participant is asked individually to look into the suitcase completely silently and without showing or saying what it is, asked to look into the suitcase. After that, a discussion is held with the question "what did you see?".

In the second round, each woman looks in the mirror again and thinks about what roles she takes in life: e.g., mother, sister, strong woman, confident woman, independent woman, teacher, etc.

Next, each woman thinks about her favorite roles, writes these roles down and presents them to the group. This can be followed by many discussions and ideas about different roles in life. There can also be discussion about the importance of how we see ourselves and the energy one gets when looking in the mirror.

*Source: Up to here and no further! Tools for Empowering Migrant Women in Dealing with Sexualized Violence in Public Spaces. A manual for trainers: Project "Draw the Line - Training and empowering immigrant women to prevent sexual violence and harassment".*

# ONLY FOR MEN

## Masculinities

### ACTIVITY

#### Collage male pictures

### OBJECTIVE

Ideal as an entry point Examination of expectations of masculinities

### MATERIAL

Journals, magazines, sheets of paper, scissors, glue and pens

### DURATION

Around 90 min

### INSTRUCTION

Place the magazines in several piles, e.g. in the middle of the room, along with glue, scissors, etc. The men are given the task of making a collage from the magazines on the theme of 'men'. They should take about 30 minutes to look for pictures, cut them out and glue them on the sheet. It is recommended to put the pictures on first and then glue them. Finally, the boys should choose a title for their picture and write it on the poster.

Afterwards, the participants present their posters. It is also possible to make a 'Vernissage' (the pictures are hung up in the room, there is time to look at the exhibition). In the group, you can now discuss the collages based on the following questions:

- Why did you choose this particular title for the picture?
- What do you like about the 'man pictures' and what don't you like?
- Do the people depicted correspond to the men in your lives?
- What content and themes do not appear in the man pictures?
- Why is this content missing?

When the discussion comes to an end/seems exhausted, you can conclude the exercise by having everyone in the group silently reflect for a few minutes on the following question: "Which image of being a man do I like?" These personal answers and topics now remain with the men, no more discussion follows, the silent round serves as a conclusion.

Source: Stark! Aber wie?, S. 23

## Exercise on the concept of strength

### ACTIVITY

#### Who is the strongest?

### OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this exercise is to differentiate the concept of strength and to stimulate a discussion among the men about what forms of visible/invisible strength there are and how they are also located in the life world.

### MATERIAL

„Who is the strongest?“ Template cut into strips, sheets of paper A3, glue

### DURATION

Around 45 min

### INSTRUCTION

The men form groups of 2 to 4- depending on their needs and the group situation. Then the group leader gives each group a complete set of situations. The boys are now given the task of sorting these situations in the group out in such a way that the person they find the strongest is at the top and the other situations are graded according to their "degree of strength". After the group has agreed, the situations are pasted on an A3 sheet of paper. The groups then present their ranking to the large group and are asked to briefly explain why they chose exactly this sequence.

### TIPS:

During the evaluation discussion, the group leader can again collect on an extra flipchart, the key terms and topics that were used to justify the ranking. This can help to make "invisible" forms of strength more visible, or serve as a repository of topics for further in-depth discussion. Furthermore, the situations can also be supplemented and adapted depending on the background of the group.

Source: Stark! Aber wie? S. 41

### Template for exercise “Who is the strongest?”

- A nurse cares for patients in good spirits despite an exhausting night shift in the morning.
- Parwiz is asked by the group to do a dangerous task. Parwiz says ‘No, that’s too dangerous for me, I won’t do it.’
- Ali is regularly slapped in the face by his father because of poor grades. Ali does not tell anyone about it and tries to cope with it alone.
- Mohammad Naim is at a party and brags about having many affairs.
- Jawid is being teased by other children. When he is insulted and laughed at again by some children, Tamim stands in between and says: ‘Stop it and leave him alone!’.
- Tahir makes disparaging remarks about refugees/Afghans.
- Kalim punches Ahmad, who has made disparaging remarks about his family, in the face with his fist, injuring him. The wound has to be stitched in the hospital.
- Mrs. Chaudhary is divorced and lives alone. In addition to working at the supermarket, she runs the household, takes care of the children and looks after her sick father. When her daughter is banned from school because of a violent incident, she reacts calmly and takes time to talk to her daughter in peace.
- Fareed is known for his propensity for violence. He never needs cigarettes out of fear of him, because a hand gesture is enough and everyone in the clique gives him a cigarette out of fear.
- An athlete sets a new world record in weightlifting.

# WOMEN AND MEN

## Marriage and partnership

### ACTIVITY

"Good" relationship/marriage - "Bad" relationship/marriage

### OBJECTIVE

Discussion of the wishes of relationship partners or intimate partners, ideas/realities of "relationship".

### DURATION

60 minutes

### MATERIAL

Flipchart and pens

### INSTRUCTION

**Step 1:** Good relationships: Participants think of a couple relationship in their circle of friends, their parents' circle of friends, or relatives (couples of any age) that they think is a good relationship. Once they have thought of an example of a good relationship, they discuss with their neighbor what makes this relationship a good relationship (without revealing who specifically is being thought of).

Afterwards, some examples of what makes a good relationship are collected and written down on flipchart. There will be different or even opposing characteristics on the list. What may be good for one may not be good for another, yet, both can be well-functioning couple relationships. A good relationship is based on mutual respect, which must always be there. Now examples of signs of mutual respect in a relationship are collected. Participants are also asked to consider what on the list we gathered earlier is more of a personal need.

**Step 2:** Bad Relationships: Now participants think of a couple relationship in their area that they think is a bad relationship that is not working well. When they think of one, they turn back to the neighbor\* and discuss why it is a bad relationship. As before, we will again compile all the characteristics of bad relationships on the flipchart. As in good relationships, there can be very individual reasons why someone is unhappy in a relationship. The basic characteristic of bad relationships is the lack of respect and behavior that disregards the basic rights and dignity of the partner. Examples can be collected here of characteristics of disrespect or violation of basic rights and dignity.

**Note to workshop leaders:** care should be taken to see if relationships that are not based on mutual respect are cited as examples of good relationships. For example, some participants may find it good when one relationship partner obeys and submits to the other and they find it bad when both partners claim the same rights. In such cases, it is important to emphasize the importance of equality and mutual respect in a relationship. Being part of a couple does not mean giving up or losing basic freedoms.

The resulting discussions may deal with relationship, division of roles, child rearing, etc.

Source: *Heartbeat – Herzklopfen. Beziehungen ohne Gewalt, S.16*



## Forms of violence

### ACTIVITY

#### Four corners of violence

### OBJECTIVE

- Introduction to the topic of violence
- Classification and differentiation of different forms of violence
- Visualization of subjective perception

### MATERIAL

Example sentences, 4 pieces of paper (A4 or A3) with terms aggression, insult, violence, other (in ToT online variant)

### DURATION

60-90 minutes

### INSTRUCTION

In a room, hang up the four concept sheets in one corner each. Then the workshop leader reads out different example sentences or statements on the topic of violence.

The participants are now given the task of positioning themselves in the corner to which they would assign the sentence and read them out. After each example sentence, individual participants are asked about the reasons for their positioning, and these are discussed with the other groups.

Source: *Toolbox Alles Gender aber wie? Gender in Kinder- und Jugendarbeit. Bundesjugendvertretung S. 10*

### Example sentences

- A husband beats and insults his wife.
- Two teenagers provoke each other until one says “whore child” to the other.
- Sarwar thinks it is the husband’s job to make decisions for himself and his partner.
- Three police officers intervene in a fight involving several youths in a park.
- Karim becomes angry and reacts aggressively when his partner talks to another man.
- A child is home arrested.
- You observe as an older man stares a young girl up and down.
- A father beats his son for coming home two hours late.
- Nasir likes to scare friends by driving recklessly.
- Two male friends are sitting across from a girl. Suddenly, one of them says to the girl, “Do you want to kiss me?” Both boys laugh out loud.
- Gulsum and Aisha throw stones at their cat and then lock it in a box.
- “Gay pig!”
- At the youth center, a boy runs past a group of girls. He stumbles and almost falls down, and the group of girls laugh at him.
- At a party, a boy approaches a girl and says, “Nice breasts you have.”
- Two young women yell at each other in a bar, one pulling the other’s hair.
- “You victim.”
- Two boxers are in the ring just before the start of the fight.

- Because Shaima doesn't want to dance at a party, she has to listen to constant sayings like, "Come on, don't be so shy."
- You get a nice smile from someone you like.
- A mother yells at her child, "Will you stop being so annoying!"
- A young person is walking on the street. Suddenly he is bumped into by another pedestrian unintentionally.
- Parsa often smashes objects at home when he is angry.
- Whenever Aunt Maleeha comes to visit, she kisses Mahaz from top to bottom, even though he doesn't like it at all.
- You get praise from someone close to you.
- Basim's father asks him to carry the muck downstairs. Basim replies, "Do it yourself!"
- You notice someone backbite about you.
- A teenager is attacked on the street by a group of other teenagers. They threaten him and want to take his cell phone. When he tries to defend himself, one of the attackers falls on him.

## Violence in a partnership, scope for action and possible solutions

Duration: About 65 minutes

The trainers must be prepared for the fact that the participants themselves have experiences, strong negative feelings and emotions come up, some may want to leave. It must be discussed beforehand in tandem how to deal with this.

The duration of the individual blocks depends strongly on the mood, the dynamics and the course of the unit, and is therefore flexible.

### ACTIVITY

#### The Cycle of Violence

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding violence in a relationship
- Develop an understanding of why it is difficult to get out of a violent relationship.
- Develop strategies against violence

#### DURATION

35 minutes

#### MATERIAL

Case study Cycle of Violence: Zahra stays despite the beating

A jug filled with water and a large glass

#### INSTRUCTION

Participants are asked why they think women are in abusive relationships with their husbands. The responses should be written down on a flipchart. For example, the following points could be mentioned:

They do not want to leave their children behind.

They do not have their own source of income to support themselves and their children.

A "married woman\*" has a higher status than a "single" one, which should not be given up.

They are better protected from (sexual) assault by other men\* if they are married.

They do not speak the language of the country and would not be able to cope on their own.

Their own family puts pressure on them.

The workshop tandem explains that above all the dynamics of the relationship also play a role in why women\* do not leave violent men. This dynamic becomes visible in the case study "Sarah stays despite the beatings". This dynamic can be called the "cycle of violence". In the 1970s, this dynamic was first studied by the American psychologist Lenore Walker, who wanted to understand and explain the dynamics of domestic violence.

#### **Case study: Zahra stays despite the beating**

*Zahra lived with her husband Naser and her three children in a small house near the village market. When they got married, Naser paid the dowry to her family and from the beginning expected Zahra to work hard to make up for it. He would often tell her that he had paid a high dowry for her so she better work and be an obedient wife, or else he would send her back.*

*Zahra worked from early morning until late in the evening selling vegetables in the market. When she got home, she would be tired, but she still had to cook dinner for her husband, wash clothes and look after her young children as well.*

*Naser was a charming man when their relationship started, but after the wedding and more so after the birth of their first child, things got bad: he would often take the money that Zahra earned and go out in the evening and drink with his friends, and when he came home he would call Zahra names, and ask why she was lying in bed and not cooking his dinner. He would push her around while she tried to explain that it was late and that she had made dinner ages ago, and sometimes he would slap her. Once it had started the slapping got worse and worse until Zahra was enduring beatings that went on for hours. When she saw such a beating coming, Zahra usually asked her neighbor Mariam to take care of her children so that they would not see her getting hurt, or be beaten themselves when they cried out*

*After these bad beatings, Naser would usually leave the house and stay away for a day or two. Mariam would then come to help Zahra, treating her wounds and whispering to her that she should leave Naser, since he was a bad husband who did not care for her.*

*When Naser came back home, he usually brought a gift and showed remorse at his wife's bruises and swollen face. He would apologize tearfully, ask his wife for forgiveness and promise that he would never beat her again. He would say that he loved her, and had only beaten her because of the things she had done, and if she could only behave differently and not provoke him, then he would never do it again. For the next few days he would stay at home, playing with his children, being nice to his wife and even helping her with the daily work. But eventually he would start to blame her for little mistakes again, and sooner or later the violence would take its course. Mariam kept telling her friend to leave her husband, and go back to her family but when Naser apologized and said he was sorry Zahra wanted so badly to believe him, and would tell Mariam how much he loved her, and that it was her fault that he lost his temper because she did not do what he asked her to. All she had to do was make sure she behaved in the way he wanted her to, and everything would be fine between them.*

The trainers must again pay close attention to the mood and reactions of the individual participants! They themselves decide whether a discussion will take place straight away (perhaps there will be an immediate request to speak) or whether they will take a break and what this will look like (e.g. stay in the room, open the window, experience a moment of silence together or take a break- however, it is recommended not to leave the participants alone before the discussion).

It may also happen that one or more participants tell that they are/were in such a relationship themselves or know domestic violence from parents, grandparents, relatives. Stories, emotions and feelings can be allowed and can be healing for the person affected and also for the other participants who may also have had experiences but do not talk about them.

It is important to listen, to show empathy, to thank the person for their openness and courage. It is important to say that solution strategies will be discussed as a result. It is important to try to give the person what she would like to have herself (some may want to go out, stop, drink water, continue...). However, she should not be left alone!

The course of the workshop can be changed a lot! Maybe it makes sense at this point to discuss the list of contact points! This is up to the trainers.

Afterwards, the cycle of violence is drawn on a flipchart or should have already been prepared. Discuss this cycle of violence with the participants until you are sure that the concept is well understood.

Emphasise the fact that this cycle is extremely pronounced and it is very difficult for women to leave the abusive relationship because the 'quiet' phase (also called the honeymoon phase) is so promising for women to stay. And since these patterns are often passed on from one generation to another, they cannot be easily overcome. Both women and men need intensive counselling so that real, lasting changes can occur.

This is followed by a discussion of strategies for those affected (next exercise).

Source: *Medica Mondiale Liberia: Training Manual for Women's Empowerment, 2013*

**ACTIVITY****Scope for action and solution strategies****LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Develop strategies against domestic violence

**DURATION**

30 minutes

**MATERIAL**

non

**INSTRUCTION**

- Think of the story of Zahra. Zahra does not know what to do, whether to leave her husband or what she could do to stop him beating her. She has become very depressed and hopeless and feels almost too weak to get up in the morning. One day she gathers her courage and visits her neighbour Mariam to seek help.
- Ask the participants to imagine they are in Zahra's place. If they were Zahra, what would they expect from Mariam? How should Mariam behave and what should she do so that the participants in Zahra's shoes would feel better and more hopeful.
- Have the participants brainstorm under the heading "How can Mariam best help Zahra? The facilitating trainer writes down the participants' answers on a flip chart. Write down each answer, and then ask the others if they think so too. If all participants agree with a suggestion, tick it. If participants disagree, put a question mark next to it. If the facilitator finds that a suggestion contradicts the objective of this workshop, put a question mark next to it, even if all participants agree.

**Collecting scope for action and possible strategies for the supporters.**

The main goal here is to reflect on what the women\* would need as victims or if they were in Zahra's situation. Mariam's scope of action can be:

- Mariam should listen to her story and give her time to express herself.
- She should find warm words so that Zahra feels understood.
- She should not judge Zahra by saying, for example, "You provoked your husband, that's why he beats you. Stop provoking him."
- She should take her story seriously and really believe it without questioning it.
- She should not force Zahra to do anything, but talk to Zahra about the options available to her.
- She should not put Zahra in danger, for example by talking to her husband or calling the police without her consent.
- She should not tell anyone what Zahra is going through.
- She should check in with Zahra after a short time to see how she is doing or whether her situation has improved or worsened..

*Quelle: Medica Mondiale Liberia: Training Manual for Women's Empowerment, 2013*

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