

GENDER EQUITY DIAMOND: GENDER TRAINING EXERCISE

WHAT IS A GENDER EQUITY DIAMOND?



The Gender Equity Diamond is a diagram tool which can be used for clarifying women and men's conceptions of gender equity and their priorities for change. It is based on the Diamond diagram tools developed as part of Participatory Action Learning System (PALS) methodology¹.

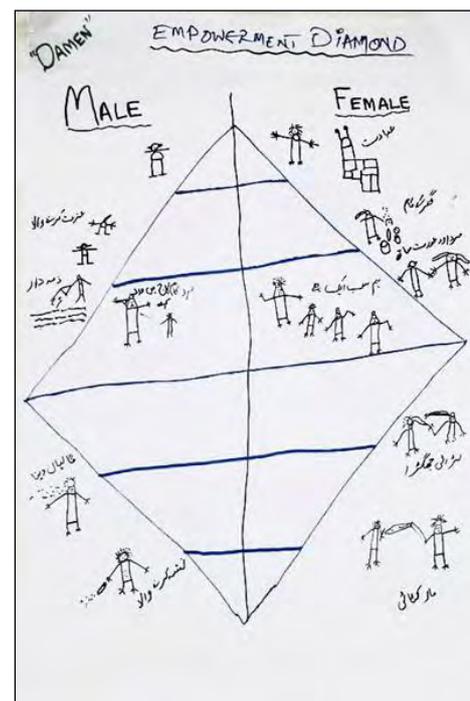
It is a very useful preliminary to clarifying differences between women, between men and between women and men as a non-threatening way of exploring difference and relating gender to common human values. The Diamond can also be used focusing on slightly different questions to look at women and men's concepts of women's empowerment as in Kashf in Pakistan and ANANDI (see also photos from PMN training below).

As a preliminary stage of gender training it is used to bring the concepts of gender from general concepts to a very personal level in order to highlight the considerable areas of

agreement between women and men, and also for the facilitator to assess the likely levels and areas of underlying tension and disagreement which will need to be negotiated during the training.

The exercise is best done using symbols and drawings, as in the photos show here (see also Kashf Empowerment Diamonds and Empowerment Diamonds conducted with ANANDI in India). If this is not possible then words can be used as in the case of this training in Pakistan Micro-finance network described in detail below.

It builds on an earlier activity developed by Oxfam partners which focused on gender likes and dislikes as in the CARE-India example below.



¹ For more about PALS diagrams see the PALS section on www.lindaswebs.info

HOW TO DO IT: PREPARATORY INSTRUCTIONS

Time:

1 hour 30 min

Purpose:

- ◆ To clarify personal views of participants at this particular workshop on gender equity and women's empowerment, areas of agreement and potential sources of tension.
- ◆ To identify the similarities and differences in aims and aspirations between the sexes, and within each single sex group.
- ◆ To highlight those rights and areas which are nonnegotiable for gender equity and those where there is a need for tolerance and understanding of difference.
- ◆ To introduce a participatory diagram tool – the 'difference diamond' which can be used for market research and other purposes.

Materials:

- ◆ 4 Flip Charts, one per group, marked with diamonds as indicated in Fig 1 with spares for rough draft
- ◆ 1 Flip Chart for plenary summary as in Fig 2.
- ◆ Red and Green Markers

FACILITATION GUIDELINES:

Explain the purpose of the exercise and the outline of what is involved.

The best way of understanding 'what gender is all about' is to examine one's own experience of gender differences.

Process:

- 1) Initial reflection individually 10 min
- 2) Main activity in three or four groups 50 min divided by gender and age as decided at the end of the Icebreaker in Introductory Session:
 - Group 1: younger women
 - Group 2: older women
 - Group 3: younger men
 - Group 4: older men

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN FOR PARTICIPANTS

Stage 1: Individual reflection questions 10 minutes

- 1) On three cards and draw symbols in Green to represent the three things you like most about being a woman/man. Mark each with number 1-3 with 1 representing your absolute favourite.
- 2) On a second series of three cards and draw symbols in red to represent the three things you like least about being a woman/man. Mark each with number 1-3 with 1 representing your most disliked aspect.

Stage 2: Equity diamond group activity 40 minutes

- 1) On the Flip Chart each group member should put number 1 likes at the top of the diamond and number 1 dislikes at the bottom of the diamond. Number 2 and 3 likes and dislikes should then be progressively ranked in the two other segments of the diamond.
- 2) The different symbols should then be aggregated so that symbols representing similar aspects or concepts are combined into one, with a new card represented by one commonly agreed symbol and a vote number to represent the number of cards. The should then be pinned in the relevant level on the diamond.

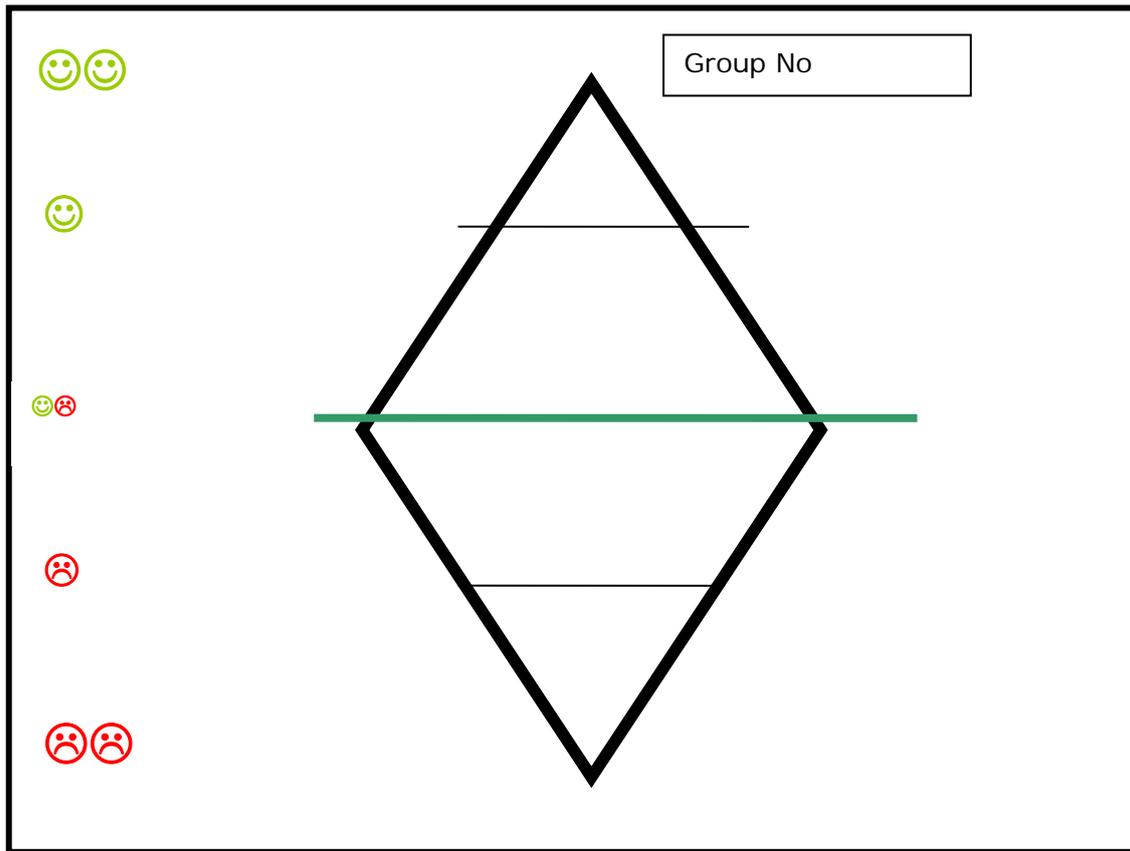
3) Consider each symbol and on the card ring in red those which you consider to be biologically determined and hence not possible to change.

4) Of those remaining ring in green those you think should be priority for change.

4) Choose a group representative to feedback to the plenary.

Stage 3: Equity diamond plenary feedback 40 minutes

- 1) A representative from each group in turn comes to the front and re-pins the cards at the appropriate level on the group diamond, with women on the lefthand side and men on the right. They should also explain the reasons for their ranking and the discussion behind it.



FACILITATOR WRAP UP NOTES

As far as possible the wrap-up should follow directly from the discussion. Based on previous such Activities it is likely that the discussion will raise many interesting points. Those points which do not arise from the current discussion should be mentioned referring to the discussion in West Bengal in Facilitator Background Notes:

1) *There are many broad similarities in aspirations between women and men:*

- ◆ the valuing of personal independence and freedom
- ◆ wanting power to make decisions within the family,
- ◆ wanting women to be able to have a greater share of earning an income
- ◆ wanting legal equality
- ◆ wanting to stop violence against women

2) *Biological sex differences are very few and not all are undesirable but the gender inequalities resulting from them are*

socially rather than biologically determined:

- ◆ Women may greatly enjoy motherhood and breastfeeding. However now that there is technology to help women control their fertility, in the interests of the planet as well as themselves, these functions only take up a small part of the time in women's lives. They need not constitute a disadvantage. There is no biological reason why men should not play a much more equal role in childcare. Studies have shown that this is actually necessary for the healthy development of children, particularly boys. There is also no biological reason why the whole of women's identity, work prospects and other aspects of their lives should be dominated by ideals of motherhood.
- ◆ Men's claims of their biologically superior physical strength may be contested. Women's endurance, ability to withstand cold and superiority at long-distance swimming, ability to withstand the pain of childbirth and greater resistance to disease of girl children (if treated equally) are areas where women are stronger than men.

Many Indian women carry very heavy weights and burdens which many of the men would find difficult. Physical strength is very much dependent on cultural norms regarding the types of work and exercise which are socially acceptable and also degree of equal access to different types of food and healthcare.

- ◆ Men's moustaches and beards, although making shaving a daily irritant for some men, are not a significant advantage or disadvantage in terms of gender inequality.

3) A gender focus is not 'anti-men' but anti the gender-stereotyped masculinity and femininity which perpetuate stark inequalities in both livelihood outcomes and human rights:

- ◆ Men have much to gain from women's empowerment as equal partners within households and communities. Men may not want to be the only breadwinners in their households. Many men want to be freed from heavy work burdens and/or to be able to be close to their children and play their rightful role in their upbringing
- ◆ It cannot be assumed that men universally support or promote gender inequality. Men may be very self-sacrificing in ensuring that women within their households get more than their share or equal shares of household resources. Some men may register land in their wife's names as an insurance against widowhood and destitution. Some fathers are very supportive of their daughter's education. Within households women's role as household managers may be very highly valued by both men and women and enjoy equal status. Some men have been very active in opposing sexual violence against women in their communities.
- ◆ It also requires change in women's attitudes to be prepared to take on responsibilities and develop themselves in ways which they may not previously have thought of. It also involves women being aware of the ways in which they themselves oppress other women. Conflicts between mothers in law and daughters-in-law are proverbial. Better off women exploit poorer women. Women may be the most active ones in censoring women who

oppose cultural tradition and break established norms of female modesty and respectability.

4) Nevertheless it is also likely to be clear from the discussion that although gender affects both women and men it is women who are most constrained in realizing their aspirations.

- ◆ Most of the common aspirations are recorded by men as things they liked about being men. For women most of these are aspirations which they are unable to attain because they were women.
- ◆ There are areas where men in particular might have to give up existing privileges in order to meet women's aspirations. Sharing of household work is a particularly contentious issue. Men may question why women should not do the lion's share of household chores especially if they are not working outside the home; others may acknowledge that in many situations it was the burden and responsibilities of housework that confined women to the home; in other cases it may be women who prevent men from working in the kitchen because they feel it is their domain that is being invaded.
- ◆ There may be other areas of disagreement over what is meant by equity, particularly in relation to the law and religion. Some male participants may complain that women make false accusations against men to get them into trouble.

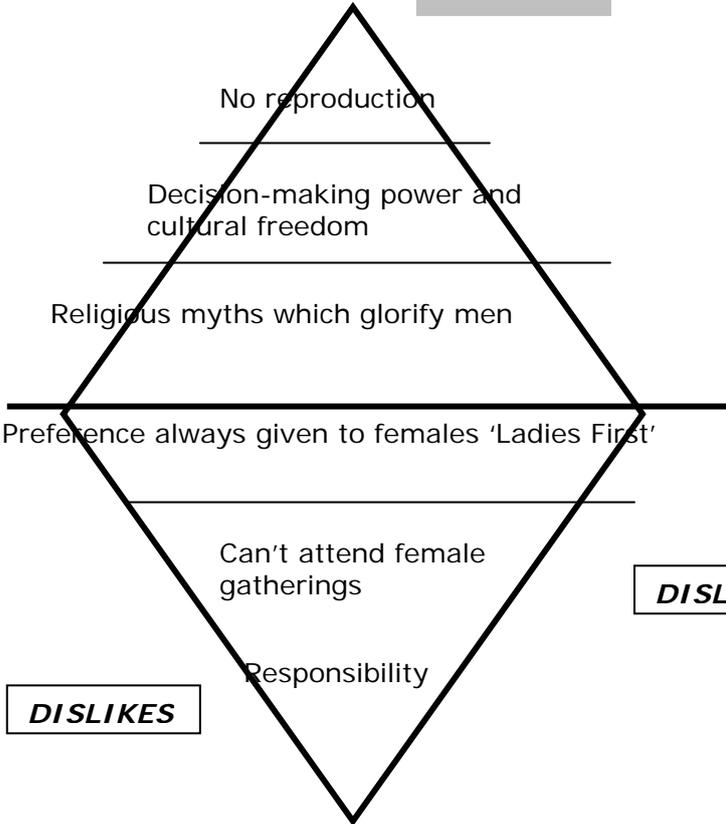
5) There are also significant differences of opinion and priorities for change between women and between men:

- ◆ Not all women or all men will make the same choices in prioritising change.
- ◆ Some changes may encounter opposition not only from men, but also from women.
- ◆ For some women other dimensions of inequality may be more important in the short-term than gender inequality.

**EXAMPLES FROM FIRST PMN WORKSHOP
MARCH 2004**

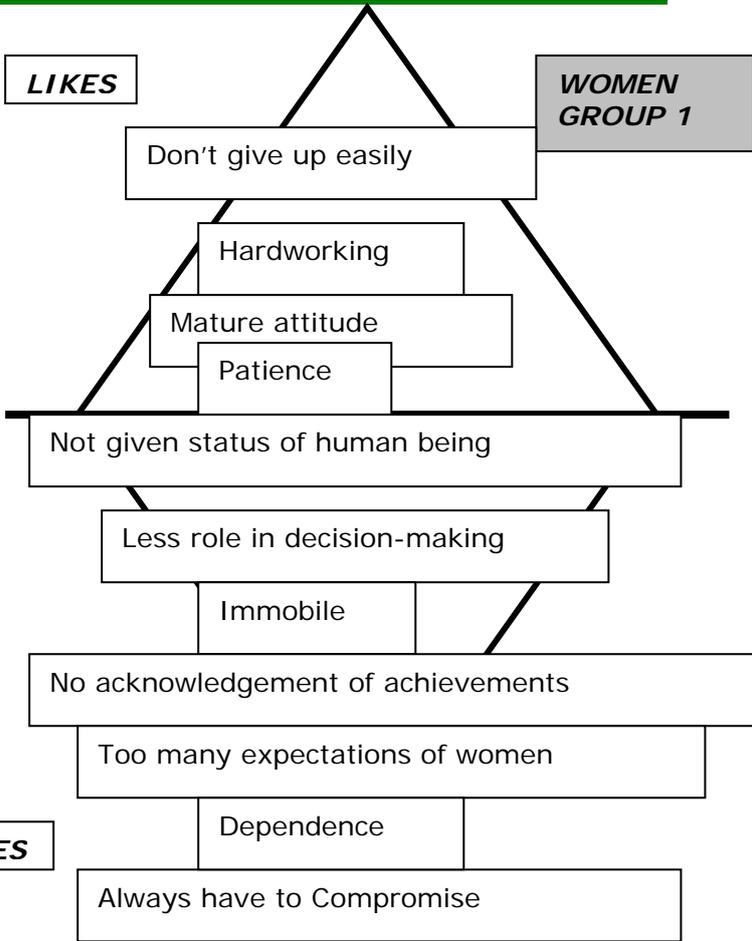
LIKES

**MEN'S
DIAMOND**



LIKES

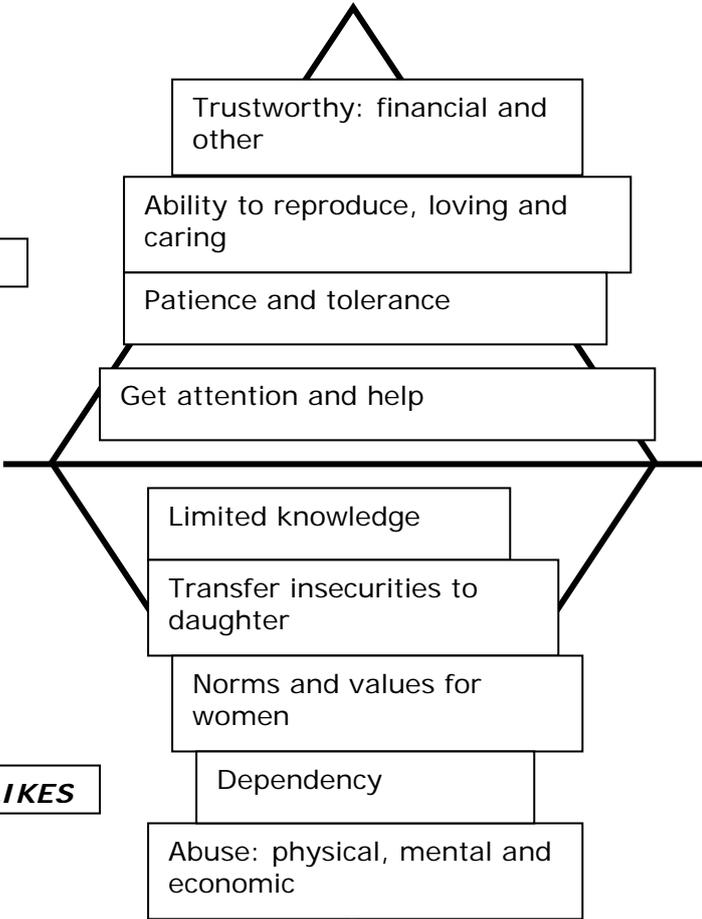
**WOMEN
GROUP 1**



LIKES

**WOMEN
GROUP 2**

DISLIKES



WEST BENGAL CARE-INDIA LIKES AND DISLIKES

In a similar exercise from CARE-India in West Bengal which focused on a Matrix rather than a diamond (but where the men took the exercise more seriously) there were many broad similarities in aspirations between women and men:

- ◆ the valuing of personal independence and freedom
- ◆ wanting power to make decisions within the family,
- ◆ wanting women to be able to have a greater share of earning an income
- ◆ wanting legal equality
- ◆ wanting to stop violence against women

WHAT IS GENDER? DISCUSSIONS FROM WEST BENGAL WORKSHOP

	Women	Men
Likes	Women loved being women. motherhood, feeling loved and breast feeding, 'feminine' qualities of compassion, ability to adjust and adapt to situations special facilities in public transport access to good things in life such as clothes and cosmetics the choice of being either a housewife or a working woman.	Men too loved being men especially independence and unlimited freedom moustache as a sign of manhood ability to roam around bare chested in summer freedom from the responsibilities of pregnancy, child care and changing nappies power to make decisions in the family ability to appreciate beautiful women. - male physical strength
Dislikes	There was a long list of dislikes: the different kind of violence most faced restrictions imposed on them by families unending chores and thankless housework social pressures to conform lack of value of their work and earnings insecurity and dependence on others the fact that their opinion was not given importance the inadequacies of law such as property rights.	Men too felt that they did not like many things the pressures to perform and excel and inability to satisfy wife's expectations shaving everyday was a chore for many the fact that some men torture women and misbehave the law was unjustly against them. Husbands are victimised if the wife had an 'unnatural' death within 7 years of marriage or accuses him of marital rape..
Priorities for change	physical insecurity economic insecurity and dependence men to share household chores change unequal laws.	the macho image women to share the burden of earning for the family change laws that are pro women and anti male.