

EQUAL RIGHTS

# “Female” or “male” – how does this influence your life?

## WHAT’S THIS ABOUT?

Everyone has ideas about what is male or female. This is about taking a closer look at these ideas. Historical objects show that there are counterexamples for every idea. Ultimately, there remains the question of where these ideas help in life and where they limit the opportunities of individuals.



APPROX. 95 MINUTES TOTAL



THE EXERCISE CONSISTS OF FOUR PARTS



FOUR PERSONS OR MORE



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY,  
EVERYDAY RELEVANCE,  
EMPOWERMENT



OBJECT REVIEW,  
GROUP DISCUSSION,  
CREATIVE WRITING

# "Female" or "male" – can this be seen in the object?

## HOW IS IT DONE?

The group divides into groups of two. Each small group gets action sheet A parts 1–3. The small groups look at the images on this and write down their ideas. After ten minutes, the groups of two present their results. Then action sheet A part 4 is handed out, the newly created attributes are compared with information about the images and discussed.

Questions for the group:

- What do you think about your attributions after reading the texts for the objects?
- Can the objects actually be clearly assigned to a gender?



APPROX. 20 MINUTES



FOUR PERSONS OR MORE



ACTION SHEET A PARTS 1–4  
(DISTRIBUTE DIFFERENT PARTS  
IN INTERVALS)

## GOAL

Introduction to the topic  
through own attributions

Looking at objects from  
predominantly Islamic regions



# Woman or man – who made it?

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

Now that you have seen the difficulties of assigning the categories of "male" or "female" when looking at historical objects, the focus is on ideas that you have about female or male inventors.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

The group leader hands out action sheet parts 1 and 2. The group should guess whether the innovations were invented by men or women. What is important is that the participants explain which text detail leads them to assume a certain gender. For each invention, the group leader notes the gender that the group agrees on after the discussion and reads the names of the actual inventors at the end.

## GOAL

Questioning role assignments that seem to be typical for genders

Getting to know inventors



Women invented:

- the coffee filter (Melitta Bentz), no. 2;
- the dishwasher (Josephine Cochran), no. 5;
- the windshield wiper (Mary Anderson), no. 6;
- the first computer program (Ada Lovelace), no. 8.

Men invented:

- the TV (Paul Nipkow), no. 1;
- the spinning machine (Richard Arkwright), no. 7;
- ready-made baby food (Justus von Liebig), no. 4;
- the tin can (Nicolas Appert), no. 3.



## EVALUATION

Next, with the help of the info sheets, an astrolabe is presented as an example of an invention by a female scientist from predominantly Islamic countries. All examples can be discussed again: It should become clear that men as well as women were active in areas not typical for their roles and that women were already important inventors in the past.



APPROX. 30 MINUTES



FOUR PERSONS OR MORE



ACTION SHEET B – PARTS 1 AND 2, PENS, ASTROLABES INFO SHEET, ASTROLABE MAKER INFO SHEET

# What does your dream job look like?



## GOAL

Thinking about equal opportunities in respect to choosing a career

Reflecting on how your own career choice is linked to gender-specific structures



## WHAT COMES NEXT?

After considering ideas about roles in respect to inventions and science, you can think about whether these ideas are influencing your desired career.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

With the questions on action sheet C, participants evaluate their own career choice. Then they read the text and learn which gender-specific differences exist in career selections. After a few minutes, they present their “dream job” to the group.

In groups of up to ten people, the dream jobs are written on individual pieces of paper and then randomly selected by the participants. Then everyone has to find arguments as to why this could be a dream job for both genders. If there are ten or more people, you need some space:

Four participants – in mixed groups of two girls and two boys – stand in the four corners of the open space. The rest of the participants go to the person whose “dream job” they like the most or they stay in place.

The goal of the four “dream job” representatives is to convince other participants about their “dream jobs” with arguments. All other participants can switch back and forth between the four people. What counts in mixed groups is which one is more gender-balanced after ten minutes. If the groups aren’t mixed, the focus is on which group has found more convincing arguments to make their “dream job” equally appealing to girls and boys.

## EVALUATION

Questions for evaluation in the group:

- Did you choose other professions than those chosen most according to statistics?
- Did you select professions that were typical or non-typical of a gender? Why?
- What effects does the career choice have on subsequent working hours, advancement opportunities and earning possibilities?



APPROX. 30 MINUTES



FOUR PERSONS OR MORE



ACTION SHEET C, PENS

# "Female" or "male" – how does this influence your life?

## THIS IS HOW IT COMES TOGETHER

At the end of the exercise, all participants get the chance to personally take stock and write themselves a message for the future.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

The participants each get a sheet of paper and an envelope. The paper can now be written or drawn on. The topic is a glimpse into the personal future: how will I live? The group leader encourages the participants to integrate the previously discussed aspects of "male" or "female". Can you free yourself from gender-specific attributions in your vision?

- Will it be possible to reconcile family and career in ten years?
- Can men and women equally take time off work to take care of their family?
- Will women earn as much as men?

The participants write and create a message to themselves by documenting how they want to shape their lives so that the vision of a gender-equitable society will become a reality in the future. At the end, every personal message is put into an envelope and can either be mailed as a letter to yourself or stored in a safe place for the future.

## GOAL

Reflection about how the participants imagine and desire their own future



APPROX. 15 MINUTES



FOUR PERSONS OR MORE



PAPER, COLOURED PENCILS,  
ENVELOPES, POSSIBLY STAMPS

