DIVERSITY
in school

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Diversity in School

Diversity in School offers training on gender, sexuality, and ethnic (race) relations for teaching professionals. The resource, originally delivered in Brazil, was the result of a partnership between the Brazilian Government's Special Secretariat for Policies on Women, the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality (SEPPIR/PR), the Brazilian Ministry of Education, the British Council and the Latin American Centre on Sexuality and Human Rights.

Diversity in School was successfully piloted in six cities in Brazil in 2006, involving 1,200 teachers. Since 2008, its contents have revised and expanded so as to make the programme available in a distance learning format throughout the country and more widely.

Reducing discrimination by improving understanding of gender, sexual, ethnic and racial diversity is of central importance to the creation of a positive school learning environment. Because of successful experience in Brazil, we feel that this translated resource has potential value to teachers and teacher trainers/educators in many parts of the English-speaking world.

The course contents are offered here as an open-access online resource designed for educators, teacher trainers and all those interested in addressing issues of *Diversity in School*.

Education, Difference, Diversity, and Inequality

Across the globe, many people experience forms of discrimination and inequality as a result of physical or social characteristics, or identities that are deemed to differ from dominant societal norms. Very often, such prejudice is related to a person's gender, their race, ethnicity and/or their sexuality. However, it is increasingly recognized that markers of gender, race and sexuality are social constructions around which certain societal values and expectations are organised. As such, there can be no universal agreement or 'truth' regarding what it means to be 'normal' or to be 'different' – rather, such notions result from norms and behaviours that differ from place to place.

In many countries, academic debate, policy-making and rights-focused activism have tended to treat gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race as separate and distinct issues. *Diversity in School* seeks to recognize not only the ways that these issues have evolved over time, but also the ways in which they can intersect. One well recognized historical illustration this relates to is Nazi Germany: while official discriminatory discourse related largely to Jewish people, gypsies, 'homosexuals' and others deemed racially or socially inferior, it also had indirect implications for other social groups. The promotion of the 'Aryan race' for example, resulted in many women being excluded from public life as they were expected to stay at home to raise 'racially pure' children.

This synergy between racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes and discourses is not confined to such extremes but continues operating in our everyday lives. One, perhaps banal, example is as follows: if in school a male student manifests signs of being gay, it is likely that someone will call him 'girly' or 'sissy'. However, few people ask why being called a woman should be offensive, or in what sense femininity is a negative attribute. Such an example demonstrates how misogyny and homophobia reinforce one another as discrimination towards women or femininity is fostered via discrimination toward those who are attracted to people of the same sex. Similarly, racist discourse frequently uses characteristics attributed to women to describe minority ethnic groups. In such descriptions, individuals and indeed whole communities are seen as more impressionable, short-sighted, out of control and impulsive and, being deemed 'closer to nature', more in need of tutelage. Such discourse can result in people being treated as dependents requiring protection and in people being unable to fully exercise their political and human rights.

Diversity in School aims to increase understanding, recognition, respect and value of people's differences, enabling them to realise their full potential through the promotion of a culture of inclusion for staff and students within schools and in the wider society. If this programme contributes, even a little, to the education of a generation (or even a small part of a generation) that understands the vital character of social difference, it will have accomplished a significant amount of its objectives.

Contents

This English language abridged version includes four modules. Topics addressed include cultural diversity and ethnocentrism; gender diversity; sexuality and sexual orientation; and ethnic inequality. The first introductory module familiarizes the reader with diversity as a core concept. Each of the following modules is divided into three sections. The first section introduces a general concept; the second one addresses that concept in the school environment, and the third section provides classroom activities to share *Diversity in School* with students.

A note on bibliographic references

Diversity in School contents were originally developed based on Brazilian sources. Therefore, many bibliographic references are only available in Portuguese. Despite this barrier, *Diversity in School* also aims to offer a glimpse of the rich Brazilian intellectual tradition in the fields of gender, sexuality, ethnic relations, diversity and education. Original sources are cited followed by a working translation of each title. ⬤

Module
1

Module
2

Understanding diversity

Different - but equal

In recent decades, many countries have promoted themselves as nations of diversity. However, while diversity within nations is often celebrated, it is not always viewed as beneficial by all within a given society. In many cases, differences amongst people become synonymous with perceived defects in relation to the dominant standards, or parameters of 'normalcy' which underpin culture and society. Thus, seemingly positive discussions or statements relating to difference are very often counterbalanced or offset by more negative statements.

> ## "And… what did she expect would happen, walking around the streets at night in a miniskirt?"

For example, a young gay person, harassed for walking hand-in-hand with his or her partner, might hear, even from people who find violence reprehensible, phrases such as: "It's okay to be gay, but do you need to hold hands or kiss in public?!" Similarly, a female rape victim, upon leaving a party, might hear: "And … what did she expect would happen, walking around the streets at night in a miniskirt?" The "buts" and the "ands" here not only tell us something about the dominant expectations and types of behaviour considered acceptable within the society concerned; they suggest that those who are discriminated against are to blame for the disadvantages they face and are somehow guilty for perpetuating their plight.

This programme addresses such prejudices and encourages teachers and teacher trainers to challenge discrimination both within society, and more particularly, within the school environment.

Understanding culture

Throughout history, people across the world have formed communities in which dominant ideas emerge to shape the social values, norms and expectations which underpin their lives. However, **culture** is neither static nor homogenous, but manifests itself and evolves in different ways over time and space. For example, the status of young people and in particular, women, has significantly changed and in many areas has improved over time. Similarly, the values and processes underpinning marriage have in many places altered. Although once based primarily upon reciprocal obligations and ties between families, individual choice and the desires of the couple have, in many places, now taken precedence over more 'traditional' values.

As cultures evolve, they also vary from place to place and what seems 'normal' in one society may seem strange or aberrant in others. Thus the birth of a child or a marriage may be celebrated in different ways and hold different meanings not only across different countries and regions but also within them.

Even in countries and regions where communities speak the same language, vocabulary and accents vary from one place to another. While this difference may be considered to be a positive attribute, it may also lead to difficulties in communication which, in turn, can fuel feelings of dissimilarity and 'otherness'. A person raised in a rural environment, for example, may speak very differently from a person raised in a city. Such differences are often most likely to collide when people from different backgrounds share the same space. Thus a rural migrant to an urban area may feel out of place or may experience discrimination because of the way that she or he speaks.

Notions of space and time can also vary between urban and rural environments. In areas where people's livelihoods are reliant upon natural resources, for example, time is measured less by conventional day to day activities and interactions, but by the changing seasons. Periods for planting crops or breeding livestock, the success of the harvest and the time for rest and relaxation can be defined by the droughts and rains that come times of the year. Recognition of dimensions such as these enables a more holistic understanding of the diverse ways in which people experience and live their lives.

In all societies there exists a nucleus of conservative resistance against any kind of change. However, the idea of 'tradition', like that of 'progress', should be interpreted within the context in which it is produced: it is a value of a particular culture. Across the world, processes of globalization have meant that 'traditions', values and norms are constantly reinvented and redefined as they interact and blend with other cultures. Globalization is,

The diversity of the Brazilian population is highlighted by 200 categories of indigenous peoples speaking 180 different languages. While individual populations may share some characteristics, rituals and norms, they are also distinguished from one another by the practices and beliefs inherent in each respective culture

Afro-Brazilian music has evolved as people have started to import new high tech instruments which they combine with traditional instruments to create a unique sound.

for some people, seen as synonymous with Westernisation. However, many examples demonstrate that as societies become more deeply inter-linked, the situation is more complex than a simple, unidirectional flow of ideas, products and cultures from the Global North to the Global South.

This complexity is evident in the capacity for resistance demonstrated by indigenous groups. Rather than passively accept the elements and values imposed upon them, people adapt and appropriate those elements of Western society that they consider to have meaning and value whilst at the same time, rejecting others.

Ethnocentrism, stereotypes, stigma and discrimination

Ethnocentrism involves judging another culture relative to the values and standards of one's own expectations and norms. In so doing, one's own culture is normalized and considered superior over others. Ethnocentrism is therefore closely intertwined with stereotyping and prejudice. One example of ethnocentrism relates to the appearance that is deemed normal and acceptable within society. Many indigenous people adorn themselves with body painting, piercing and ornamentation. Yet because they do not wear garments and clothing that are considered conventional, representations of these people - particularly within the Western media - tend to portray them as naked, and in turn, to either romanticize them as being at one with nature, or portray them as lacking in moral decency.

Ethnocentrism depends on judgment. What is right and what is wrong, ugly or pretty, normal or abnormal, is based in one's own cultural standards and behaviour. Generalizing and attributing (usually negative) values to the characteristics of other groups of people can also lead to stereotyping and, in turn, can play a role in defining power relations and influencing prejudice and discrimination.

Stereotyping can relate to a wide range of physical and behavioural characteristics and can have significant and far reaching influences on people's everyday lives. Such influences were particularly evident during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where the process of naturalizing and biologizing differences of **ethnicity**, **race**, **gender**, or sexual orientation, proved a central influence over the rights accorded to, and the restrictions placed upon, women, non-whites and non-heterosexuals. Anthropometric techniques for example, were developed during European colonial expansion, with the aim of categorizing non-white people as socially and physically inferior. Similarly, in many countries, one justification used for delaying the right to vote to women was the idea that their brains were smaller and less developed than those of men. **Homosexuality**,

in turn, was seen as an anomaly of nature that in many places required punishment and correction.

The concept of stigma was defined by the North-American sociologist Erving Goffman (*1990*) as a negative social attribute associated with deviance from the norm. This social attribute is incorporated by people and groups who are discriminated against, for different reasons, including sexual ones. Besides homosexuality, other forms of stigma are associated with poverty, dark skin colour, certain medical conditions (mental illness, for example), old age and so-called 'physical disability'. The production of stigma can only be understood within wider relations of power and dominance (Parker & Aggleton, *2003*). Stigmatized identities lead to differences being transformed into inequalities based on class, age, race or ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation and physical capacity.

Many countries have laws and regulations to promote social equality and to punish discriminatory practices. While such measures constitute a positive step towards respecting diversity and upholding human rights, implementing such legislation is often complicated. It is crucial therefore that society itself undergoes a process of transformation to embody diversity. Communities across the world must move beyond dealing with different people and cultures as a gesture of 'goodness', 'patience', 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' of the other's purported inferiority. It is of extreme importance that the right to ones' beliefs, the right to ones' physical differences, behaviours, and values be respected, without threat to human dignity.

Diversity in schools:
facing discrimination and promoting equality

In all societies, a range of institutions play a role in establishing and upholding societal norms. Schools are one type of institution in which societal norms are reproduced, with staff and students often encouraged to adapt to dominant notions of normalcy regardless of their backgrounds and identities. Thus, for example, boys and men may be encouraged to be 'macho', while girls and women may be praised for their femininity. Within the classroom, the repetition of images, languages, stories, and antipathy towards 'abnormal' behaviours or identities (such as being left-handed or, in the case of boys, being effeminate, for instance) have in many cases, been used to uphold and reinforce societal norms, whilst antagonizing and punishing difference (often considered as 'defects').

Although many teachers recognize the existence of discrimination within and beyond the school walls, some believe that it is better to remain silent, fearing that to speak out may result in reprisal and ultimately, further increase prejudice and discrimination.

Until schools offer concrete possibilities for legitimizing diversity - in speech, in text books, in the images distributed in classroom activities, etc. - students are often left with little choice but to repress important aspects of their selves in an attempt to adapt to norms and expectations, or to rebel against them, and in turn, risk being categorized as disruptive and deviant, with likely adverse consequences for their educational success.

Importantly, however, schools are also uniquely positioned to challenge the status quo, and, in so doing, seek to confront and even overturn various forms of prejudice and discrimination. In fulfilling their responsibility to educate citizens, schools are ideally placed to offer mechanisms that enable students and staff to recognize, understand, respect, value and promote cultural diversity. According to Mary Garcia Castro, a UNESCO researcher,

> *"teachers must be motivated to be alert, to teach citizenship and diversity in every encounter, whether inside or outside the classroom, in a vigilant anti-racist, anti-sexist, [anti-homophobic] manner and to respect children's and adolescent's rights as they are and as they are becoming; not allowing stigmatizing jokes or pejorative treatment to take place (…). The **racism**, **sexism**, [**homophobia**] and adultism in us operates in subtle ways; not necessarily intentional or noticed. But it hurts nevertheless, and the recipients suffer these violent acts, which mark their victims in an indelible way. The victims are all of us in some ways, but always some more than others, women, black people, the youngest and the poorest"* (Castro, 2005)

Education is a key determinant of chances and opportunities. And creating an inclusive learning environment, which values and respects diversity and equality, is central to an individual's progression and success. That is why the *Diversity in School* programme promotes mainstreaming diversity within the school environment. Rather than considering it an individual issue requiring sporadic attention, this means the promotion of diversity as a central feature of all educational activities, including curriculum design, development and delivery.

Mainstreaming diversity is, therefore, an interdisciplinary task, for which all educators are responsible - every area of knowledge can and should contribute to unveiling the realities of discrimination, whether through the re-reading of history, through statistical analysis, or through the critical review of literature and the inclusion of authors often excluded because of their identity or point of view. A central part of mainstreaming involves developing pedagogic approaches that enable staff and students to: a) learn to listen and to respect other people; b) learn to evaluate arguments and situations; c) learn to communicate different perspectives; d) learn to work in a team.

The modules which comprise the *Diversity in School* programme are intended to encourage teachers to reflect upon the forms of gender, sexual, ethnic and racial

prejudice and discrimination present within their school environment. Module 2 examines **gender** stereotyping and critically reflects on the ways that social constructions of gender can influence and be influenced by the school learning environment. Focusing on concepts of **sexuality**, **sexual orientation**, and **homophobia**, Module 3 examines the ways in which hetero-normative understandings and ideas can be challenged and the implications of these issues for teachers and students. Module 4 focuses on the concept of **ethnocentrism** and, using Brazilian examples, demonstrates how ethnic and racial discrimination can be challenged within and beyond the school environment.

All modules aim to help teachers to identify how the school itself may contribute to upholding and reproducing inequality through, for example, the teaching materials used, the images displayed, as well as the kinds of attitudes and norms promoted by teachers and school authorities. Importantly, the programme also provides suggestions not only on how teachers can challenge discrimination, but also on how they can be actively involved in the promotion of diversity and inclusion within their school. ●

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Activities **to encourage an understanding of diversity**

Activity
1

Acknowledging discrimination in school

ACTIVITY: Give each student a piece of paper. Ask them to write down whether they feel that discrimination exists in their school. Then ask them to write about a situation that backs up their statement. When all have finished, ask them to fold their pieces of paper and put them into a box. Type up the responses to ensure that they remain anonymous.

Working with the students, categorise any examples of discrimination described, e.g., on the basis of **gender**, **sexuality**, **ethnicity**, and the way in which the discrimination manifested itself, e.g., via insults, jokes, physical aggression, etc. Ensure that the information given here does not identify any individuals.

Take the opportunity to discuss existing cases of discrimination and what can be done about it. Discuss whether the school is succeeding in providing a positive, inclusive environment. Use some of the statements collected to do this.

Activity 2

Discrimination:
If you don't speak out, who will?

ACTIVITY: Ask students to work individually and remember situations in which they felt or witnessed prejudice and discrimination. Talk about the feelings and reactions that these situations triggered (students do not have to describe the situation itself).

Ask students to work in groups to choose one non-governmental organisation or campaigning group that provides support to victims of **gender**, **ethnic** or **sexual** discrimination. Encourage students to collect as much information on the organisation as possible. The research can be done using the internet but, where possible, you can also suggest that students visit some of the organisations or projects.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: Encourage groups to design a poster detailing the work of their chosen organisation or network. This information can then be displayed for the whole school to see and could become part of a school-wide campaign against discrimination.

Activity 3

Stories
of resistance

PREPARATION: Select people who have been key players in the history of resistance to discrimination.

ACTIVITY: Highlight the importance of remembering these people, as their actions show that change is possible and the individuals concerned can inspire new generations. Ask students to form groups and research the biography of some of these people. They should focus on their contributions to the fight against discrimination and the promotion of equality. Information can be presented in groups or on posters.

Activity 4

Building
networks

PREPARATION: Encourage students to think about the diversity that exists among people in their own town or city. While many schools follow similar curricula and have similar learning goals, students in different neighbourhoods may come from very different backgrounds. Encourage students to establish links and communicate with another group of students in a school that is significantly different from their own.

ACTIVITY: Contact the school management or a teacher of another school in order to begin an exchange between your respective students. You can seek to do this via official channels (education authorities), through civil society links or your own networks. You and your counterpart teacher could suggest that students start by writing each other a letter or email introducing themselves (they can talk about their family, neighbourhood, etc.). They can attach photos, postcards, drawings, etc. When they receive a letter from the other school, encourage them to respond with further questions and to research the living conditions and experiences of the other students via newspapers and books.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES: At the end of the term or school year, students should have enough materials to organise an exhibition focusing on the geographical areas and characteristics of each other's pen friends. They can also highlight the similarities and differences between the two groups, using photos and objects. This activity will contribute towards the creation of a network that can promote understanding between different groups.

Gender and diversity

Introduction

The term **gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and for women. These roles and characteristics may influence the status and value accorded to men and to women, and can in turn lead to various forms of **gender inequality**.

This module begins by examining the concept of gender, and explores the processes that can lead to and reinforce gender inequalities. Particular focus is placed on the ways that gender relations are reproduced through education, in science, health and politics, and at work. With a focus on teaching materials, communication and interaction, and bullying and violence, the second half of the module explores how gender inequalities may be reproduced within the school environment.

Classroom activities are included at the end of this module to encourage teachers to reflect on gender relations within their own school, and to help facilitate the promotion of **gender equality**.

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Throughout the module, try to consider the following questions:

• Why is gender so important in defining who we are and how we are treated by others?

• In what ways does gender influence the way that we behave and the expectations that people have of us? What power relations are at play here?

• How are gendered expectations and norms reproduced in the school environment? What role can schools play in challenging unequal gender relations?

The social construction of gender

The search for biological or psychological factors to explain differences between men and women has long taken place in the biological sciences and it is not uncommon to find explanations of gender differences based on the functioning of the brain or hormones. However, social scientists have argued that the role that biology plays in determining

social behaviour is relatively weak. Instead, they argue, it is **culture** rather than biology that makes our species human.

In her book, *The Second Sex*, the philosopher and **feminist** Simone de Beauvoir argues that women have long been defined as 'other' in relation to the male norm, and that this assertion of difference has led to, and helped to fuel, patriarchal gender relations. Stating that "one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman", de Beauvoir challenged any natural determination of feminine behaviour. Instead she argued, the way in which men and women behave in society is the result of socio-cultural conditioning that teaches us to act according to gender specific prescriptions. There are strong social expectations regarding how men and women should behave when walking, speaking, dancing, making love and caring for others, as well as how they should think and interact.

Despite this work, it is still often believed that there is a type of personality or behaviour pattern that is inherently associated with each sex. In Western culture, for example, it is generally supposed that the men are more aggressive than women. The latter are assumed to be more caring and compassionate. Commonly, the reproductive role played by women has led to them being considered closer to nature than men, and has linked them with the private sphere of the home. Men on the other hand, are usually thought to be more closely associated with the outside public world.

Cultures therefore create norms and expectations that are strongly associated with male and female bodies. However, it is important to recognise that not everyone is the same. Having a female body, for example, does not in itself mean that a woman wishes to be

American anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978) sought to examine the link between sex and culture in different societies. Using findings from her 1930s work in New Guinea, she argued that 'sexual roles' (what we now call gender roles) were determined by social expectations and norms. She also found that within different cultures, different attributes and roles were accorded different levels of value amongst men and women. Among the Arapesh people of New Guinea, for example, she found that docility was considered a valued personal trait for both men and women. In contrast, aggression was highly valued for both sexes within Mundugumor culture. Among a third people, the Tchambuli, men were valued for their kindness and compassion, whilst women were expected to be brave and strong, findings which contrast sharply with Western gender norms.

a mother. Similarly, bodies designated as male may express gestures seen as feminine in certain social contexts. They can also have sexual relations with other male bodies – signalling a type of sexuality that goes against expectations that relations between men and women should be the norm.

Sexuality and gender are different dimensions that contribute to the personal identity of each individual. Both originate, are affected by, and change according to the social values in force at a certain point in time. Thus, they are part of culture, helping to organise people's individual and collective lives. In short, it is culture that constructs gender, branding some activities as masculine and others as feminine.

> **TWO** fundamental characteristics are implicit in the notion of gender:

1.

Cultural arbitrariness, that is, the fact that gender can only be understood in relation to a specific culture, because it can have a different meaning according to the socio-cultural context in which it manifests itself.

2.

The relational character of gender categories, that is, it is only possible to think about or understand the feminine in relation to the masculine, and vice versa.

Individuals are not defined by gender alone, but by a range of other factors including race, ethnicity, sexuality, age and social class. Together, these interact to influence the mode and degree of inequality and discrimination that an individual may experience.

In many places, for example, a black working-class man will be judged differently (possibly disadvantageously) in relation to a white middle class woman. At the same time, a white middle class woman may be treated differently to a white middle class man. Thus the relative 'disadvantage' of gender is likely to be influenced by co-existing factors such as race and class, and to worsen when gender is combined with ethnic, racial or sexual discrimination.

As work within the social sciences has highlighted in recent decades, social constructions of sexual or gendered behaviour considered normal, 'correct' or superior over others exist in all societies. Prejudice, inequality and discrimination may be experienced by

those who do not adhere to such norms. Understanding gender therefore helps us look deeper at the processes underpinning the value differences that generate inequalities between men and women.

Throughout the rest of the module, try to reflect on the norms and expectations that are placed upon men and upon women in your own society. Think about how these norms may lead to unequal power relations and gender inequalities. Then think about how these inequalities are reinforced through our daily activities, our attitudes and our actions.

Gender socialization and inequality

Culturally accepted notions of masculinity and femininity affect the way that a person is socialised right from the moment they are born. How a child's room is decorated, the clothes that they are given to wear, the toys they are given to play with and the activities they are encouraged to engage in are all influenced by, and in turn help to reinforce, culturally accepted ideas regarding what it means to be a boy or a girl. In places where scanning technology exists to determine the sex of an unborn baby, such ideas and actions can begin to exert their influence even before the child is born!

To give boys swords, weapons, cars, and electronic games that incite violence may result in them being raised to feel that aggression is a desirable quality for men, while giving them items such as balls, bicycles and skateboards, may indicate to them that boys and men 'belong' in and have precedence over public space. Similarly, giving girls toy kitchens or an iron may influence their understandings of women's role as being confined to the domestic sphere. Indeed, research in several different countries has found that such socialization processes can influence the amount of domestic work that it is assigned to girls and boys. Table 1 for example, indicates how domestic work is strongly gendered, with girls taking on considerably more work within the house than boys.

Table 1: Time spent on household chores
by girls and boys in Brazil. (*Soares & Saboia, 2007*)

Schooling years	Proportion of people age 10 years or over who perform domestic tasks			Average hours spent on domestic tasks per week		
	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN
4 years or less	67.9	47	89	21.8	10.6	27.8
5-8 years	72.1	51.3	92.3	20.1	9.7	25.8
9-11 years	73.3	52.5	92.8	19.8	9.9	25.1
12 years +	73	54	88.7	18.1	9.2	22.6

The same research found that the allocation of domestic chores is not restricted to a particular class or group, but takes place across people from all social and educational backgrounds. For a great many women across the world, housework is an extra duty that is rarely given much recognition, only noted in its absence when chores are not done.

Such an example demonstrates how cultural and social norms and expectations can fuel, and be fuelled by, relations of power. While men and boys can and do face disadvantage, experiences from across the world demonstrate that inequalities are more predominantly experienced amongst women and girls. Even within households, it is often reported that it is men who are accorded the highest status, whilst women are considered lower in the social hierarchy.

It is important to ask ourselves why this situation has arisen, and to examine the social constructions of gender that continue to uphold such power relations.

Space and the gendered division of labour

In all societies, certain ideas and norms exist regarding the use of different spaces by men and women. At the same time, the way in which different spaces support and sustain gender divisions and gender relations can shape men's and women's unequal experiences. Very often, spaces are differentiated as being either 'private' or 'public', and are associated with distinctly gendered norms and expectations.

An example of the division of public and private space is evident when someone insults a woman. Calling her a name associated with a public space, for instance, 'street walker', or a 'tramp', may imply that a woman has acted inappropriately and immorally. Names associated with private spaces, such as 'housewife', 'family girl', and 'home maker' follow the same logic. The street versus home opposition illuminates the way in which men have become associated with the public world of production, while women are linked with the private world of reproduction.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, the reproductive role of women restricted their opportunities to pursue a professional career. Because of this, women were often not considered to be a part of the economically active population. However, the development of the **contraceptive pill** in the second half of the twentieth century proved vital in helping enable women to exercise some level of control over their sexual and reproductive lives, and in turn, increased their ability to participate in the labour force. It is however, important to recognise that such technologies are still not accessible to many women living in poverty or in strongly patriarchal societies. At the same time, while such technologies have expanded women's reproductive and sexual choices, and therefore, their opportunities to engage in paid employment outside the home, women

in many parts of the world now face a double day of labour as they struggle to combine paid and domestic duties.

Changes in attitudes and processes of globalisation have meant that the presence of women in the global labour market is now significant. However, women continue to suffer many forms of discrimination compared to men. The historical exclusion of women from the public sphere has in many places left a legacy in which sharp divisions of labour and associated inequalities persist.

> **!**
>
> **Reports that compare the position of men and women in the labour market often point to the following inequalities:**
>
> • **A large portion of top management is occupied by men (including within the education sector).**
>
> • **Men tend to earn significantly more than women.**
>
> • **Greater concentrations of men in areas such as engineering and IT, while women tend to work in lower paid activities such as education and care.**

While it may seem that choices or modes of access to the labour market mirror what are perceived as natural preferences and variations in aptitudes and skills between men and women, their distribution in the labour market and the resulting inequalities associated with this can in large part be attributed to socially constructed expectations and norms regarding what it means to be a man or a woman.

In many societies, for example, it is expected that boys with low levels of educational attainment will work in construction, transport, or agriculture, or follow a career in the military. In general, girls in the same educational situation are expected to work as secretaries, caterers, receptionists or telemarketing operators, or to undertake domestic or caring roles. Even among young people who manage to get a university degree, it is very often the case that women enter careers linked to the social sciences and humanities (education, language and literature, history and the arts), as well as 'caring professions' (nursing, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutrition).

While in most countries an increasing number of women can nowadays be found studying courses such as law, engineering and architecture, such subjects still tend to be dominated by, and generally perceived as the realm of men. Even in contexts where there is a strong presence of both men and women, gendered norms often continue to dictate the roles that each will play. In a bank or supermarket for example, male employees can

often be found in managerial and security roles, whilst women are usually more likely to work in catering and routine administrative roles.

Education

Education is another important area in which gender inequalities are evident. Prioritising the education of boys over girls was – and in cases remains, a commonly accepted norm within many cultures. In countries such as the UK and Brazil, for example, it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the government opened up higher education to women. In other cultures, the education of boys continues to be prioritised as men are considered to have the greatest future potential as household breadwinners. In some contexts, changing attitudes and attempts to meet universal targets such as the Millennium Development Goals[1] have led to a recent surge in the educational enrolment of girls.

Science and health

Science often claims to offer an objective, neutral standpoint. However, a range of examples demonstrate that science has not always provided a totally impartial picture, and that the information produced by scientists is influenced by social and cultural values and norms. In biology and medicine, for example, understandings of women's bodies and women's health has been heavily influenced by dominant ideas regarding what is deemed to be acceptable behaviour. From Aristotle to Darwin, woman was considered an incomplete or lower version of man, a deviation, a monstrosity or an error of nature. Such notions became the foundation of Western perspectives on gender differences. While intellectual and physical strength is exalted in men, reproduction and maternity is exalted in women.

The entry of women into scientific and health-related professions is fairly recent. In England during the second half of the 19th century, feminists campaigning for voting rights, saw the entry of women into medicine as necessary for two reasons. The first was the belief that women doctors would bring more comfort and security to female patients, freeing them from the abuses perpetrated by male doctors. The second reason was the hope that female doctors would help challenge and reconstruct existing notions of femininity and masculinity which undermined the physical and intellectual capabilities of women. Such actions could in turn help redefine women's identity and justify their inclusion in political decision making.

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1. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

It was only from the 1960s that feminism began to analyze the construction of women's place in society and to challenge the notion that women's primary role was to reproduce. Translated in the motto 'our bodies, our business', the **feminist movement** has since attempted to ensure that women are able to access contraception and abortion, and thus assert some level of control over their sexual and reproductive lives.

Political participation

Although women represent over half of the global population, in all countries of the world they are under-represented in positions of government and policy making. A 2006 report by the Inter-parliamentary Union found that Rwanda had the highest level of female participation in government with 48% of parliament members being women. The Nordic countries, known for their gender equality are also positioned near the top of the ranking: Sweden (45.3%) in second place; Norway (37.9%) in third place; Finland (37.5%) in fourth; and Denmark (36.9%) in fifth. Other countries that have relatively high female participation in government include Holland (36.7%). Cuba (36%), Spain (36%), Costa Rica (35.1%), Argentina (35%) and Mozambique (34.8%).

Elsewhere however, the picture is not so positive. The USA is below the world average of 16.6% at 15.2%, while in Brazil the figure is only 8.8%, and in some countries in the Middle East the figure is less than 7%. The Inter-parliamentary Union reports some improvement in countries minimum quotas for female candidates have been introduced, as has been the case in Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela (*Abdela & Boman, 2010*).

Credit has also been given to countries such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq and Liberia where progress in female participation has been made despite recent and large scale conflict. There has also been an overall increase in female participation in government, and in 20 parliaments around the world, women already occupy 30% of the seats. However, the same report emphasises that the aim of achieving a minimum of 30% of women legislators worldwide – a target originally set at the UN Women's Conference in 1995 – still remains distant.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is caused by prejudice and inequality between and amongst men and women. Research has found that boys and men tend to be most exposed to violence in the public sphere, while girls and women tend to suffer more violence within the household.

Very often, violence amongst men and boys is gang-related and takes place in urban areas. This violence also tends to be influenced by race and class, with most of those involved being poor and from minority ethnic groups. At the same time, the Map of Young People and Violence developed by UNESCO, shows that in many places, boys and young men from middle class backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to alcohol-related traffic accidents. In all cases, the actions of boys and young men are influenced by the dominant ideas and expectations of what it means to be a man.

Violence against women often takes place when masculine stereotypes encourage men to be aggressive and domineering and women to be submissive. Violence can take a range of forms including threats, physical aggression, sexual abuse, rape and sexual harassment. Incidents of domestic violence may be associated with the use of alcohol and/or other drugs, marital or neighbourhood conflicts, and situations of extreme material poverty. However, it is important to recognise that this violence is not always poverty-driven, but can take place across all social classes.

Because much gender-based violence takes place behind closed doors, it is often perpetrated by men who are well known to the woman involved. This includes husbands, fathers, uncles and brothers. A key factor influencing such violence is the subordinate position that many women occupy in relation to men. This is particularly apparent in

Despite the many disadvantages and inequalities that they face, it is important to acknowledge that women are not passive victims, but have agency to challenge and resist dominant patriarchal norms. Over the past century, global and national feminist movements have been influential in challenging the subordinate position of women and in fighting for gender equality. One example of such action can be seen through the suffragettes, who fought at the beginning of the twentieth century for women to have the same voting rights awarded to them as men.

Social analysts see the feminist movement as responsible for great changes that took place during the second half of the twentieth century. This movement showed society that women suffered discrimination - from subjection to male authority in the domestic sphere to wars in which women are vulnerable to mutilation, rape and other abuse. By bringing into discussion the inferior and less valued positions that women occupied, activists and policy makers have sought to tackle gender inequalities in a range of settings including the labour market, political, judicial and scientific sectors, and in school, health services, unions and churches.

situations where women have little independence and have to rely on men for finances and key resources such as land. In cases, women e.g. mothers-in-law, are themselves implicated in this violence either through their participation in it, or through their tacit acceptance of the ongoing violence that is perpetrated.

Many countries have policies to protect women from violence and to persecute offenders. However, in practice, a range of factors make these policies difficult to enforce. For many women, reporting such violence means not only risking the loss of their family, their husband, their home and/or their assets but also the public shame and humiliation that they may have to endure where health, legal and police services question their claims or provide ineffective support.

Challenging forms of gender-based violence has long formed a central axis in progressive politics. Understanding the social mores which uphold domestic and familial violence against women is an important starting point for tackling such discrimination and inequality. ●

Gender and diversity within schools

The first section of this module emphasised that gender is a socially constructed concept, and examined the ways in which such constructions have resulted in a wide range of gender inequalities. We will now examine how social constructions of gender can be both reproduced and challenged in a school environment.

Teaching materials, interaction and play

Although gender socialisation processes start within the family, it is important for teachers to be aware that the school environment can also play a role in reinforcing and exacerbating gendered expectations, norms and subsequent inequalities. One way in which this occurs is through the use of teaching materials which promote stereotypical gender roles and inequalities. Globally, research analysing school books from a gender perspective has consistently reported that women, girls and non-white people remain under-represented in publications used within the classroom.[2]

At the same time, the perspectives in many school books tend to reinforce social inequalities through the use of unequal and hierarchical images. Materials which, for example, show women working as nurses or carers, and men as doctors and managers may influence career choices amongst young people, and stifle aspirations which do not fit with gendered expectations and norms.

Use the template below to evaluate books and educational material in your classroom. Think about the ways in which gender inequalities may be reinforced by these materials.

1. Title:
....

2. Topic or discipline:
....

3. Publisher and publication date:
....

4. Author(s) name:
....

5. Author(s) gender:
Female [ ]   Male [ ]

6. Number of activities/occupations mentioning:
girls [ ]   boys [ ]   women [ ]   men [ ]

---

2. Template by *Auad (2006)*, based on Andrée Michel's works.

7. Number of illustrations featuring:
girls [ ]   boys [ ]   women [ ]   men [ ]

8. Number of times the text mentions:
girls [ ]   boys [ ]   women [ ]   men [ ]

9. Adjectives used to describe:
Girls: ....
Boys: ....
Women: ....
Men: ....

10. Describe the language used in the text to refer to men and boys and women and girls.

....
....

11. Do the men and women featured in the text contribute significantly? How?

....
....

12. What role models are presented for girls, boys, women and men?

....
....

13. Is the text written in a contemporary and realistic style?

....
....

14. Are there specific sections that deal solely with women or particular ethnicities? If so, how are social minorities approached?

....
....

15. How can this text influence the aspirations of girls and boys in relation to education and profession?

....
....

16. Write a one page summary of the book or material under analysis. Discuss whether or not it should be adopted and why.

....
....

Gendered assumptions may also be made by teachers with respect to the behaviour and aspirations of students. Such assumptions can in turn influence the way that girls and boys are treated, and the opportunities that are made available to them. The following table illustrates some of the characteristics commonly associated with girls and boys in the classroom.

Table 3: Characteristics associated with boys and girls
(*Belotti, 1985*)

Boys	Girls
Dynamic, noisy and aggressive	Quiet and passive
Undisciplined and disobedient	Disciplined, obedient and conscientious
Untidy and sometimes dirty	Tidy and clean
Independent, with little need for teacher's affection or approval	Dependent, with need for teacher's affection and approval
Self-assured	Emotional and lacking in self-confidence
A strong sense of friendship and loyalty to other boys	Volatile friendships and loyalty to other girls

One example which demonstrates such gendered assumptions can be seen in the way that teachers – particularly in junior schools – may organise students in their classroom. Where teachers assume that boys are rowdier than girls, for example, they may alternate the seating of boys and girls to encourage good behaviour. Alternatively, they may divide students into groups based on gender. These kinds of assumptions influence student performance, with girls feeling that they are expected to remain quiet and not ask questions and boys feeling pressured to be rowdy and disruptive. Girls may also be asked to carry out organisational and care-based tasks within the classroom, and this again can reinforce gender stereotypes.

Language can be a shrewd and effective way of creating and upholding differences and unequal power relations. Because of this, it is important that teachers pay attention to language use within the classroom – between themselves and students, within learning materials used, and amongst students themselves. That way, it may be possible to challenge the **sexism**, **racism** and **ethnocentrism** with which language is often imbued.

It is also important to consider whose voices are dominant within the classroom and how this may also influence relationships between students. In classrooms where boys' voices dominate, some girls may feel too intimidated to contribute to learning activities.

At the same time, teachers may find that they interact and give disproportionate attention to the more outspoken students, whilst giving less attention to those who are quiet and do not speak out.

Gender inequalities in schools are evident not only in the pedagogical approaches employed within the classroom, but also in more informal play and leisure activities. At first sight, it may seem that the playground offers a gender neutral environment since boys and girls are usually able to mix more freely and independently than when being taught inside the classroom. However, a closer look will often reveal that spaces of play and leisure are also gendered in line with dominant notions of masculinity and femininity.

In most school playgrounds, some activities are undertaken by both boys and girls. In games such as 'hide and seek', the activity may not be particularly gendered. But in other activities such as those based on gender-divided team games, gender differences may be reinforced. Other activities are very strongly inclined towards either boys or girls. For example, while girls may spend time walking around chatting in pairs or groups, boys may be more likely to be involved in activities like football or sport. When girls and boys want to play in ways typical of the opposite sex, such behaviours may be considered as 'unnatural' by teachers and other students, and may in turn lead to name-calling, exclusion and other forms of discrimination.

Sexual relationships

While masculine and feminine norms and expectations are embedded during childhood, their influence is particularly evident when young people initiate sexual relationships. Such experiences are mediated by gendered expectations regarding the way that young women and young men should behave. Common expectations in this respect are:

Girls and young women	Boys and young men
Need to be 'careful' and delay sexual initiation	Can engage in their first sexual experience at an early age
Should have a more limited amount of sexual experience than men	Should take pleasure in multiple sexual experiences, sometimes simultaneously
Should not be the initiator of a relationship	Should initiate numerous relationships to prove their virility and masculinity
Should aspire to marriage and motherhood	Should demonstrate a certain disdain for attachment and emotional involvement

These models of sexual behaviour can have adverse effects when boys and girls do not fit the gender stereotypes. Any deviation in conduct risks being severely criticized,

with girls being labelled as 'whores' and 'wanton' if they are perceived to have an active sexual life. At the same time, however, girls who do attempt to meet gendered norms may be labelled as 'frigid', 'butch' or 'nuns', particularly by their male peers.

Despite these gendered expectations, research in many places has found that girls tend to engage in sexual activity at an earlier age than boys. Where teachers consider that this goes against societal norms of acceptability, girls may be considered as reckless and immoral. In such cases, they are likely to be blamed for risking detrimental consequences to their studies by pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. As well as verbal abuse from fellow students and teachers, in some countries young women may be forced out of school once their pregnancy is known about, with few options made available to continue their education. Such attitudes not only discriminate against girls and young women, they also fail to recognise the value that pregnancy may hold for them. Research has found, for example, that for many young women, particularly those from relatively poor socio-economic backgrounds, pregnancy and motherhood hold deep symbolic value, and can provide young women with status, respect and the possibility of marriage and security that they would not otherwise have. (*Heilborn* et al., 2006)

Bullying and violence

At school, discrimination against groups seen as different is exercised through name-calling, persecution and physical aggression. While such bullying is often quite open, more subtle forms of harassment and discrimination can take place through forms of exclusion. Additionally, **gender**-based bullying may intersect with prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of **sexuality**, **ethnicity** and **race**.

Although bullying takes place between students, teachers may also be involved. A recent study in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais documented the case of a teacher attempting to 'normalize' the behaviour of a gay student trying to 'cure' him of his **homosexuality**. The teacher's 'treatment', which took place during class time in the presence of the rest of the students, consisted of asking the boy questions and ordering him to answer them 'in a man's voice and manner'. Every time the student walked to the front of the class, the teacher told him to 'walk like a man' (*Ferrari, 2003*). Such examples of bullying both uphold and reinforce gender discrimination, and are likely to negatively impact on the educational experience and success of the student(s) involved.

It is also important to recognise that forms of violence that take place outside the school can adversely impact on the wellbeing and educational attainment of students. For example, although domestic violence is usually directed against women, it also has negative repercussions on children. Children may be frightened of other people, particularly those in roles of authority (such as teachers), and may, as a result, perform

poorly in school. Alternatively, children may copy the violent gestures they have seen at home within their peer groups. By being aware of these issues, teachers are well placed to provide pastoral and academic support, and to act to prevent forms of bullying and violence which may result from them. ●

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Activities to encourage a better understanding of gender

Activity 1 ## There are families - and there are families

This activity aims to encourage students to reflect on **gender** relations within families.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to work in pairs. Get them to introduce themselves to each other and to ask the following questions:

- Who do you live with?
- What kinds of work does each person in the family do? Does this differ between men and women?
- Who spends most time at home? Why do you think this is?
- How is housework divided up at home? Does this differ between boys and girls and men and women?
- Who contributes the most to paying the bills?
- Who makes most of the decisions? Why do you think this is?

Encourage students to introduce their partner to the rest of the class, summarising the information gathered during the interview. For example: 'This is… who lives with… At home, she shares tasks equally with her brother and sisters.'

Observe and make note of the comments, laughter, and body language of the class as students hear about their classmates. These contain important clues to understand how students perceive these issues. Take the opportunity to critically discuss issues that may arise. Remember, the aim is to help students to reflect upon stereotypes and prejudice.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES: 1) Ask students to write a short report summarising the data gathered through the interviews. 2) Ask them to look at the ways that gender relations within families are portrayed in television programmes and adverts and in magazines. Encourage students to bring some examples of these to class for discussion. The discussion could focus around the composition of families, the kinds of lifestyles they lead and the types of work that men and women are doing. Try to ensure that a range of different family situations are discussed e.g. single parent families, gay couples with children.

<table>
<tr><td>Activity
2</td><td># Challenging
gender norms</td></tr>
</table>

PREPARATION: Watch the film 'Billy Elliot'[3]; although it is a U classified film, make sure it is appropriate to the students in your class. Make notes on the characters and scenes you want to highlight in the class discussion.

ACTIVITY: show the students the film, or selected clips from it. Ask them to consider the following:

- What concerns are raised about the boy's behaviour? Who is concerned? Why?
- What kinds of activities are deemed 'normal' for boys in this community? Why do you think this is? How do you feel about this?
- How do the family respond to Billy's career as a ballet dancer?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES: 1) Ask students to think about the toys and clothes that they were/are given. Get them to compare and reflect on the differences between genders. 2) Talk about activities and professions that are associated with men and boys, and with girls and women. Think about why these activities are gendered and how this may impact on their own aspirations. Use examples which demonstrate how gendered activities can change over time to encourage discussion on ways of changing societal norms.

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3. Billy Elliot (UK, 2000, 111min).

Gender
and relationships

The aim of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on the ways gender can influence social expectations and norms regarding sexual relationships.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to reflect upon the following scenarios:

A female student went out with three different classmates during one term and was heavily criticised by fellow students. One day, as she walked to school, she saw her name together with an insult graffitied on the wall. At around the same time, other girls started avoiding her, laughing at her and whispering when she was around.

A male student of the same school also dated three classmates in one term, but he was not criticised. Instead, his classmates considered him a hero, and nicknamed him 'Tiger' as a compliment. He also noticed that girls started to look at him in admiration.

Ask students to discuss the following:

- What do you think about these two situations?
- Why do you think that the boy and the girl were treated in different ways?
- How do you think that each person felt about this treatment? How do you think this might influence their attitudes towards future relationships and their self respect?

| Activity **4** | # Pandora's box |

PREPARATION: Bring a box in which you can put phrases, excerpts of song lyrics and/or poems, sayings, jokes, newspaper/magazine headlines, photos, etc. which can be used to stimulate a discussion about gender and sexuality. Put each item inside an envelope and put all the envelopes inside the box. Some examples of phrases and words that you could use are as follows:

- 'Boys can't take care of babies. Girls can do it naturally'
- 'Boys are more into sex than girls'
- 'Condoms reduce men's pleasure'
- 'Men are not good at housework'
- 'Women can't drive'
- 'Women make better nurses. Men are better engineers.
- 'Your friends are homosexual – you must be gay or lesbian'

ACTIVITY: Get each student to take it in turns to take an envelope from the box, read its contents and express his or her opinion on the issue. The rest of the group will also have the opportunity to comment.

While the discussion is taking place, note down issues that are hotly debated, as well as issues that raise questions. This is a good opportunity for you to learn about the beliefs of your students and for them to critically reflect upon their own attitudes and values.

<table>
<tr><td>**Activity**
5</td><td>Gender
and the media</td></tr>
</table>

PREPARATION: Ask the class to select adverts from television and magazines that sell products using the body and **sexuality**. Get them to bring examples to the class.

ACTIVITY: Get students to work in groups or pairs. Distribute the adverts and ask groups to identify the ways that women and men are portrayed in them. Ask them to discuss the following:

- Why did you choose this advert?
- What products are being sold and who is the target audience?
- How are women and men portrayed in the advert? What kinds of images and language are being used?
- Is there a sexual/erotic element? If so, why do you think this element was chosen?
- What links are established between the product and the target gender? Can you identify discrimination or gender stereotyping?

Reflect on the ways that advertising sells ideas, and can reinforce gender stereotypes.

| Activity 6 | Teenage pregnancy |

ACTIVITY: Ask students to identify the causes and consequences of teenage motherhood and fatherhood. Try to ascertain students' perception of the issues. Watch the film 'Juno'[4] or any other film dealing with teenage pregnancy and parenthood – make sure the film is suitable for your students' age group. Make notes of any characters or scenes that should be highlighted in the discussion.

After watching the film, facilitate a discussion about the issues covered. You can use the following questions to initiate the discussion:

• How do people respond to teenagers who become pregnant? Why do you think this is?
• How do teenage girls and boys deal with motherhood and fatherhood? What impact can it have on their social status, and on the opportunities available to them?
• Are representations of motherhood and fatherhood influenced by factors such as class and ethnicity?

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4. Juno (Canada, United States, 2007, 96min).

Sexuality and sexual orientation

Introduction

This Module will examine some of the different situations in which prejudice and discrimination are experienced by men and women because of their **gender** identity and **sexual orientation**. It does this by bringing together the categories of gender and sexual orientation and reflecting upon sexuality-related rights. The module then examines how forms of prejudice and discrimination related to sexuality can be challenged within schools.

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Throughout the module, try to consider the following questions:

• **Why is** sexuality **so important in defining who we are and how we are treated by others? Is our sexuality static or can it change during our lives?**

• **Why are some manifestations of** sexuality **considered normal and others not?**

• **How does sexuality relate to the makeup of the family? Why are some manifestations of sexuality seen as legitimate in the family and others not? How might this affect the development of children and young people in education?**

• **What is the role of school in the promotion of** sexual rights**? How can school become a freer, safer environment that builds citizenship and promotes the inclusion of all expressions of sexuality?**

Social constructions of sexuality

A working definition of sexuality which is used by the World Health Organization is as follows:

> *"Sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction.*
> *Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships.*
> *While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.*
> *Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors."*

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Despite this holistic approach, there remains a common belief that the body – and by extension, sexuality – is the most 'natural' and primal expression of our being, as gendered people. Nowadays, it is also recognized that desire and the search for pleasure, as well as the need to share intimacy and affection, are intrinsic to all human beings. However, while these needs relate to the privacy and wellbeing of each individual, their expression is constantly subjected to public scrutiny, as social norms influence the kinds of sexuality that are perceived as 'normal' and those that are not.

In most societies, the union of a man and a woman is considered the sexual norm. Yet while heterosexual relationships are often considered to be 'right' and 'normal', bodies, desires, feelings and behaviours are not convergent and do not necessarily correspond to these expectations. For example, a man may be 'masculine' and still feel sexual desire for another man. A woman may feel 'feminine' and yet be attracted to other woman. Someone who is born with masculine bodily attributes and is raised to 'act as a man' may feel 'feminine' (or vice-versa), to the extent that he wants to change his body to become as womanly (or as manly) as those who had that gender attributed to them at birth.

Sexuality, contrary to what many people think, is not a question of 'instincts' dominated by nature, impulses, genes or hormones. Neither is it limited to the bodily possibilities of experiencing pleasure and affection. Whilst the importance of the body's physiology has some influence on what is possible in terms of sexuality, biological preconditions do not in themselves produce sexual behaviours, gender identity or sexual orientation. They make up a set of potentialities that only acquire meaning through socialization and learning of cultural rules.

Sexuality, like gender, is therefore, above all, a social construct. Understanding our sexuality involves a continuous and non-linear process of learning and reflecting, through which we develop a perception of who we are. This is a process that unfolds in specific historical, social and cultural conditions, and is influenced by factors such as class, **ethnicity**/**race**, **gender**, and age. People's experiences of, and attitudes regarding sexuality are also moulded alongside other experiences, including the social groups that they identify with, where they live and the kind of community that they are a part of. That is why expressions of human sexuality are so diverse and manifest themselves in different ways throughout one's life.

There are also opportunities and challenges that are specific to each era. As we **saw earlier**, the discovery of the contraceptive pill, for example, had a great impact on the society of the day. In recent decades, the repercussions of HIV and AIDS and the emergence of assisted reproductive technologies (artificial insemination, etc.) have influenced the affective and sexual behaviour and attitudes of today's young people. These events have changed sexual and romantic relationships, with values and experiences differing between men and women and between people of different sexual orientations.

some termi nology

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the sex of the persons who we view as objects of desire and affection. Three major types of sexual orientation are generally recognized: heterosexuality (emotional, sexual and erotic attraction by persons of the opposite sex); homosexuality (emotional, sexual and erotic attraction by persons of the same sex) and bisexuality (emotional, sexual and erotic attraction both to persons of the same and the opposite sex).

In many cases, a person's sexual orientation becomes fixed at a certain point in their life. However, for others sexual orientation may be more fluid and may change over time and space. Many people for example, come to 'realize' they are gay/lesbian only as mature or elderly persons. Often, social pressures suffered at the start of their emotional life lead them to establish heterosexual relations during their youth. After achieving a certain degree of stability and independence, they recognise their gay/lesbian identity.

Today, there is a consensus among scientists that sexual orientation is made up of at least three dimensions: desire, behaviour and identity. When we talk about 'sexual identity', we refer to two different things:

1. The way a person perceives themselves in terms of sexual orientation; and
2. The way a person makes public (or does not) that perception of themselves in certain environments and situations.

Importantly, sexual desire, behaviour and identity do not necessarily take the same form or follow the same direction. Thus, there is no direct connection between the desire a person feels, their sexual behaviour and the way they perceive themselves. For example, it is possible for someone to have sex with someone of the same sex without that person perceiving themselves to be gay/lesbian or bisexual. It is also possible to have same-sex desires without participating in same-sex sexual relations.[5]

For example, there are men who have sex with other men, sometimes for money or other kinds of rewards who, independently of the sexual role they play, see themselves as simply 'men', not as homosexuals or gays. In certain environments, to go out with a person of the same sex does not necessarily imply the commitment to a fixed sexual identity (such as gay, lesbian or bisexual). Even between men and women who experience homosexuality as a crucial and distinctive aspect of their lives, there is a great diversity of denominations, representations and identities regarding lifestyles, aesthetic preferences, body image, age and generation, class, religion, **ethnicity**/**race** and **gender**.

5. The US biologist Alfred Kinsey argued that there was a continuous gradation of human sexuality, from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality, with a wide range of variations. To learn more about this, follow the link. Film suggestion: Kinsey, about the life of Alfred Kinsey and the impact of his research on sexual behaviour of North-American men and women.

Sexuality, surveillance and control

Social, civil and political rights relevant to sexual and reproductive health have been recognized since the early 1990s. They were asserted by the International Conference on Population and Development, which took place in Cairo in 1994, and by the 4th Women's World Conference in Beijing, in 1995. However, while there have been significant advances in the recognition of reproductive rights, in many countries the concept of sexual rights has been harder to establish or has tended to remain restricted to issues related to health. Through political and social activism, the **feminist**, gay and lesbian, and **transgender**-**transsexual** movements have sought to enable freedom of sexual expression and to widen the notion of sexual rights.

As we have seen, sexuality is the term used to refer to a variety of capacities associated with sex. But what does the word 'sex' mean? In fact it can mean several things at once. The word may designate a practice – 'to have sex' or 'to maintain sexual relations with someone'. But it can also indicate a set of physiological attributes, reproductive organs and capacities that allow us to define different categories of people – as belonging to the 'same sex', or the 'opposite sex' – according to specific characteristics of their bodies and/or attributed to their attitudes and behaviours.

In general terms, two approaches to understanding sex coexist in modern society: a positive approach, relating to the pleasure of the body and the senses; and a negative, repressive approach which promotes discipline and social control over the expression of desire(s). Thus, on the one hand, there is the idea that sex is an energy that derives from our body, a fundamental physical impulse that demands satisfaction. On the other hand, families, schools, religious institutions and governments have invented rules to keep sex under control. This has involved the development of detailed surveillance mechanisms

Miriam Ventura, a Brazilian law scholar, classifies sexual and reproductive rights as follows:

1. The right to decide over reproduction without suffering discrimination, coercion, violence, or restriction on numbers of children or time between births;

2. The right to access information and the means to enjoy healthy and safe Reproduction and sexuality;

3. The right to control over one's body; and

4. The right to live according to one's sexual orientation free from discrimination or violence.

(Ventura, 2002:20)

and social control, and the promotion of feelings of fear by associating some experiences of sexuality with disease and danger.

The effort to map 'abnormalities' and to establish personal identity categories linked to sexual orientation has in most places, led to the imposition of **heterosexuality** as the 'natural', 'healthy', 'normal' sexual orientation, provided it is practised among adults, legitimated by marriage and associated with reproduction.

This **heteronormativity** lies at the root of the social order within which boys and girls are brought up, and is the origins of the control all people are subjected to when it comes to their identification as man or woman. While dispositions that are consistent with what is expected of the male or female gender are celebrated in children

> Many Western societies assume as norm the white, heterosexual man whose background is urban, Christian and middle-class. This subject has historically become the reference that no longer needs to be named. 'Other' social subjects become 'marked', and are thus defined and named in relation to that norm as main reference. Thus, women are represented as 'the second sex', and gays and lesbians are described as deviant from the heterosexual norm.
>
> *(Louro, 1999, p.15-16)*

and adolescents, expressions that diverge from that pattern – as well as evidence of affection or attraction to persons of the 'same sex' – are corrected. This order triggers violence against young people identified as gay, lesbian, transvestite, transsexual and transgender, who are constantly warned that society will not respect their 'choice' of sexual identity.

One such example can be seen in the way that **homosexuality** has been widely understood as an abnormal and 'deviant' identity. Indeed, it was only in 1990 that the World Health Organization's General Assembly removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. The term **homophobia**, coined during the 1960s in the field of psychiatry, is often used to describe the psychosocial root of anti-homosexual stigma and prejudice (*Herek, 2004*). Homophobia generates and is present in insults and caricatures relating to gender roles (for example, of effeminate men and masculine women), as well as in physical violence – lethal, in certain cases – that is suffered by gays and lesbians, and transsexual and transgender people.

Existing data show that in some places, sexuality-related violence is commonplace. Across Latin-America, such violence has been found to be particularly marked against transgender and transsexual people.

Respecting sexual diversity is fundamental to promoting human rights. However, those who have same sex desires and behaviours are often forced to refrain from demonstrating them in public, or risk being ostracised, insulted or attacked. Many religions condemn and persecute sexual minorities. Same sex couples in most countries are denied the right to marriage, a family and raising children. Bisexuals are often considered 'indecisive' and/or may be thought to pose some kind of danger public health. Transgender and transsexual people are insulted and may be attacked on the basis of their appearance and behaviour. Their gender identity may be systematically denied (for example, in identity papers); they may be discriminated against in public places and excluded from the formal labour market, the school environment and daily life.

While in Brazil 20.3% of gay men polled in a recent survey reported experiencing sexuality related violence, almost 50% of transgender and transsexual people reported having suffered physical violence as a result of their gender and sexual identity. Threats and verbal abuse were reported by 71.2% of 'trans' people interviewed, while sexual abuse had been experienced by 22.5%.

(Carrara & Vianna, 2006)

Sexuality-based discrimination is also linked closely to other hierarchies such as **gender**, **ethnicity**/**race**, age and social origin. In such combinations, some behaviours are more 'tolerated' than others. For example, being gay but having a masculine identity is often more tolerated than being an 'effeminate gay'; being effeminate and rich is tolerated more than being gay and poor; being gay, poor and white is more tolerated than being gay, poor and black; being gay and black is more tolerated than being lesbian and black. Many transgender people suffer multiple forms of discrimination and violence not only for being seen as gay/lesbian, but also because they are often poor and because they assume a gender identity that challenges the 'normal' male/female dichotomy.

In recent years, rising levels of divorce, re-marriage, cohabitation and the use of reproductive technologies have challenged traditional family models centred around the traditional heterosexual norm. Despite such changes, in most countries, people who do not fit this norm continue to be discriminated against when it comes to the raising of a family, even though gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans people have the same capacities to love, establish close emotional relations and raise children, as heterosexual people. ●

Sexuality in school

HIV and teenage pregnancy have put **sexuality** on the agenda of educational policy and curriculum reform in many countries. Recognition of the importance of sexuality has also given rise to discussion of a number of more personal matters such as self-esteem and respect, solidarity, and respect for diversity and difference. At the same time, however, the models of behaviour promoted and transmitted through schools also embody many of the prejudices and inequalities prevalent within society, and confer legitimacy on them through institutional weight and collective sanction.

Even where education about sexuality and relationships is not part of the school curriculum, sexuality is present in a variety of forms in school life: in presuppositions about family constitution and the roles of men and women; in school books and in pedagogic practices; in toilet and desk graffiti; in insinuating looks; in love notes and malicious messages; in games, jokes and nicknames that stigmatize 'delicate' boys and the 'forward' girls, etc. This section therefore encourages teachers to adopt a critical view of the ways in which sexuality is approached in their school. In so doing, teachers are encouraged to consider the prejudices and the inequalities that may exist and to develop initiatives to challenge such discrimination.

Discrimination at school

For many young people, adolescence is a time to establish romantic and sexual relationships. In most schools, however, messages which promote a heterosexual norm are upheld, whilst other forms of sexuality are given little attention, or are represented as being abnormal and problematic. Such attitudes can have adverse impacts upon the wellbeing and freedom of expression of students who do not fit in with the heterosexual norm. For example, while young people who identify as heterosexual may feel able to express their sexual orientation at ease, same sex attracted young people may feel that they have to keep their sexual orientation hidden so that they are not discriminated against.

Homophobia is widespread in many school environments. As indicated earlier, many young people report being marginalized by teachers and other students because of their sexuality. Teachers may also be the victims of this type of discrimination. It is important to recognize that homophobia does not impact only on those whose gender expression is different from the expected norm – but on all children and young people who fear the consequences of being labeled lesbian or gay.

Homophobia establishes a regime of control over sexual behaviour in the pursuit of conformity to dominant gender patterns. It influences the types of physical contact that are allowed and in which contexts, the bodily and verbal language that are acceptable, as well as the emotions one should express or avoid. Homophobia also regulates anything considered to be a deviation from masculine and feminine norms and in so doing, plays a part in upholding patriarchal gender relations.

Transphobia is one of the most violent and harmful forms of sexual prejudice-based violence. While some gay men and women are able to hide their sexual orientation, transgender people (and, to a certain degree, transexuals) find this much more difficult. The prejudice and discrimination which results from this is often marked by the student dropping out of school. Rejected by family and society, and with few educational qualifications, many are left with little choice but to turn to sex work or prostitution.

Research carried out at Brazilian LGBT parades shows that 34.4% of trans people interviewed reported having had suffered discrimination and abuse at school. Thus it is not surprising that trans people often have the lowest level of formal education compared to other sexual minorities. In Brazil, 17.8% of gay interviewees had not completed secondary schooling, while among trans people the percentage goes up to 42.4%. Similarly, while almost half (46.2%) of lesbian interviewees had obtained a university degree, only 21.4% of trans people had attended university.

(Carrara, Ramos & Caetano, 2003)

Expulsion from school due to sexual orientation has also been reported. In such cases, the individual concerned may be viewed as a risk that might contaminate other people. Such cases demonstrate how those who are discriminated against are often seen as being responsible for their own circumstances, and are expected to change their behaviour in order to solve the 'problem'.

Homophobia is not only reported amongst students but also amongst some teachers. It may also constitute the prevailing ethos of a school. Sometimes schools are anxious that sexuality education may lead young people into behaviours that are condemned and contrary to healthy development. Teachers and parents may feel that children and young people should not be taught about sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights. However, denying students education about sexuality and refusing to engage with these issues can contribute significantly to the perpetuation of prejudice, discrimination and inequality.

Tackling sexuality-related discrimination in schools

In order to understand how **homophobia** may be reinforced at school, TRY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

1. YOUNG PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT SEXUALITY FROM A RANGE OF SOURCES, INCLUDING POPULAR CULTURE.
What are the dominant images of sexuality offered to young people by television and the mass media. How can such representations be challenged within a school environment?

2. SEXUAL IDENTITY IS FLUID AND DYNAMIC.
How was homosexuality seen during your own adolescence? How is it seen today? How many lesbians and gay men were 'out' then compared with now? What implications does this have for how young people can build a positive identity, and what barriers are still in place?

3. SEXUAL IDENTITY SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN RELATION TO THE CONCEPT OF **heteronormativity**.
How is heteronormativity upheld within your school? Which sexualities may be legitimately talked about and practiced? Which ones may not, and why this is?

4. RESEARCH CLEARLY SHOWS THAT DISCUSSION OF HOMOSEXUALITY DOES NOT ENCOURAGE HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE AND IDENTIFICATION.
Why do some people believe that it does?

5. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT OLD ENOUGH TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS GAY, LESBIAN OR TRANSGENDER.
Why might this be? What kind of power relations are at play in such assumptions?

6. THINK ABOUT STUDENTS AT YOUR SCHOOL WHO HAVE SUFFERED ONGOING HOSTILITY BECAUSE THEY ARE CONSIDERED SEXUALLY 'ABNORMAL'.
Has this experience had consequences for their education attainment and their lives more generally?

(adapted from *Briztman*, 1996)

Mainstreaming work on sexuality

In many schools, education about sexuality and relationships is either absent or, at best, remains limited to health and reproduction. In some schools, this occurs because teachers feel that sexuality is an inappropriate topic for discussion, or because dominant religious and social values dictate that unequal gender and sexual relations are upheld. However, for many young people, school may be the only place where they feel able to openly discuss sexuality-related concerns. Because of this, it is important that teachers seek to establish a dialogue with students that goes beyond restrictive and moralizing approaches to reproductive health issues. Key areas for discussion include sexual diversity, pleasure, emotional involvement, expectations, fears, entertainment, questions, and respect for sexual diversity. In order to be effective, this dialogue should be non-judgmental and should promote reflexivity in order to empower young people as individuals capable of making their own decisions, and who are aware of their possibilities in life, their rights and responsibilities, and social change.

For maximum effectiveness, it is also important that sexual education is not confined to biology and science lessons, but is introduced or mainstreamed across a variety of subject areas. History teachers, for example, can encourage students to examine sexual behaviour as influenced by political, cultural and economic factors in different eras. Art teachers could stimulate enquiry into the ways in which sexuality and sexual diversity have been, and are, represented through different forms of artistic expression.

There are also more subtle ways in which a school may seek to encourage students to engage with issues of sexuality. The type of teaching and learning materials used for example, can send messages to students which may uphold or challenge dominant norms. In most schools, text books reinforce conventional images of sexuality, while not even acknowledging other forms of sexual orientation or gender identity. Teachers may therefore seek to find or develop alternative materials which engage positively with sexual diversity. While such materials may prove controversial amongst parents and students, the possibility of some negative reactions should not justify inertia or omission. If teachers do not use their skills and experience to engage creatively and constructively with sexuality, they will contribute to the continuing legitimization of prejudice, discrimination, gender hierarchy and homophobic violence in school.

It is important for teachers to feel supported in their work and for relevant training and ongoing encouragement to be provided. Good quality education about sexuality will have repercussions not only for young people but also for colleagues, parents and community and religious leaders. Because of this, it is recommended that schools seek to build a local support network for this type of work, which includes representatives from civil society, government bodies and religious institutions who can help add weight and legitimacy to the task. ●

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Activities to encourage a better understanding of sexuality

Activity 1

Let's talk about sex

This exercise is designed to initiate discussion about sex and **sexuality**.

ACTIVITY: Hand out paper to the students. Ask boys to write the letter M (male/masculine) and girls to write the letter F (female/feminine) at the top of the page. Then ask them to write down the first word or feeling that they have when they hear the word 'sexuality'. Ask students to fold their paper and collect this in.

Request the help of one or more students to write on the board the key words emerging from the activity, separating them by male and female responses. Highlight any differences or similarities between the genders.

In order to make the discussion livelier, you could raise the following questions:

- Who do you feel comfortable talking about sex and sexuality with? Why?
- Do you think your friends know everything about sex and sexuality? Why do you think this?
- Who knows more about sex and sexuality – boys or girls? Why do you think this?

If you think your students felt comfortable in the discussion, ask them to share some of their initial reactions. You can also suggest that students make a collective poster with the words and phrases identified during the exercise. Give the poster a title and exhibit it in the classroom.

Activity 2

HIV and AIDS

PREPARATION: Give students some background information on HIV and AIDS. Suggest that the class splits into groups with each researching a different aspect of HIV. Topics may include: national epidemiological statistics; HIV transmission and prevention; the achievements of HIV positive people's movements; HIV- and AIDS-related prejudice and stigma; gender relations, etc. Ask groups to bring the data to the next class.

ACTIVITY: Get each group to present their findings. Take the opportunity to discuss relevant issues and stimulate a debate around topics such as the following;

- Who is vulnerable to HIV infection and why?
- Why might condom use be difficult or problematic for some people?
- Why is HIV often thought to be linked with **homosexuality**?
- Why isn't treatment available to everyone who needs it?

Look out for language that discriminates (either overtly or implicitly) against HIV positive people, and discuss such instances in order to eliminate prejudice. It may be useful to ask the class to design a poster which displays the information they have found.

Activity 3

Sexuality-related discrimination

PREPARATION: Find some examples in the media which demonstrate cases of discrimination and/or violence against lesbians, gays, transgender people or transsexuals. Using examples from different parts of the world will help to demonstrate the diversity of ways in which sexuality is understood and responded to in various contexts. Make some copies of the International Declaration of Human Rights.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to work in groups or pairs. Each group should be given an example from the media and a copy of the International Declaration of Human Rights. Encourage the groups to analyse the example and write a brief assessment of the situation. Students can then identify which articles of the Declaration were violated in each case. As a class, ask students to identify which rights tend to be upheld and which are more commonly violated in different parts of the world. Also ask them to think about any instances of homophobia that they have witnessed in their own community.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: 1) Ask students to write a news piece about human rights and equality for lesbians, gays, transgender people and transsexuals, based on the International Declaration of Human Rights. After the texts have been presented, suggest that the students make a poster portraying their texts and the Declaration articles that inspired them. Exhibit the posters in school. 2) If possible, consider inviting speakers from local or national LGBT groups to discuss their work and the fight against sexual discrimination.

Ethnic inequality

Introduction

This module begins by examining the concept of **ethnocentrism**, and explores how it has influenced ideas about **race** and **ethnicity**. Taking Brazil as a case study, the module then examines how racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination can result in a range of social and economic inequalities. The second part of the module focuses on the role that schools can play in combating racial and ethnic discrimination, and promoting diversity.

Throughout the module, try to consider the following questions:

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• Are ethnicity and racial identity important in defining who we are? If so, in what ways?

• How have interactions between people from different cultures changed over time? How have these interactions influenced ethnic relations and what kinds of power relations are involved?

• What is the role of the school in the promotion of ethnic and racial equality? Whose voices are included in educational materials, and whose are not? How can the school promote the inclusion of people from all ethnic backgrounds?

Ethnocentrism, racism and prejudice

In all societies, it is common for people to assert that their way of life is better, more correct, or at least more interesting that that of other groups of people. Such attitudes come about when people are socialised to favour particular things over others, and when cultural norms give value to certain aspects of living, while expressing disapproval of others. We call this tendency ethnocentrism or a way of seeing the world in which one particular (ethnic) group becomes, in its geographic and moral standing, the benchmark against which other groups are measured and evaluated.

Encounters between people of different **cultures** have long taken place. In the past, they were commonly underpinned by relationships of commerce and/or conflict. While these occasionally led to closer interaction and the merging of different cultures, different social groups often remained distinct from one another. However, in our increasingly globalised world, improved communications, new technology and cheaper transport have made it easier for people to migrate to, and settle in, other places, resulting in a more diverse range of interconnections.

Despite this increase in circulation of people and ideas, the tendency to naturalize differences across societies has not disappeared; on the contrary, it has assumed other forms. Furthermore it has served to control not only the relationship with those who are distant, but also relations inside the same society. One of these forms, perhaps the most perverse of them, is **racism**.

Racism is a doctrine which claims that inherent differences amongst various races determine individual or collective achievement. Racism usually involves a belief that one's own race is superior and dominant over others. This, in turn, can lead to forms of discrimination against those deemed to be inferior. At times throughout history, attempts have been made to use scientific explanations to 'prove' the existence of racial disparities. While these assertions have thrived off claims of scientific objectivity, ideas about race are maintained largely through repetition, ignorance and prejudice.

One example which illustrates the way that racism has had profound impacts upon different cultures and societies can be seen in the programme of European colonial expansion which took place between the 19th and 20th Centuries. Until the beginning of the 19th Century, the term race was rarely used. Instead, the concept of 'lineage' was used to describe the way that European nations were derived from ancient tribes, such as the Saxons, the Bretons, the Latvians etc.. At the same time, forms of colonialism were predominantly mercantile, with other cultures often considered as equal trading partners, or as 'noble savages' to be respected.

Throughout the 19th Century, however, ideas about race and, in particular, racial difference, came to the forefront. In large part, these ideas were influenced by emerging biological and evolutionary theories, created to explain the differences between animals and humans. Importantly, however, dividing and categorising people into 'racial types' also helped to legitimise increasing colonial ambitions for territorial and resource acquisition. By claiming that human beings in other places were of a different, less evolved racial type than their own, the colonisers were able to justify their actions in seeking to assert control

Charles Darwin (1809 -1882) was a British naturalist who achieved fame upon convincing the scientific community that species evolve by a process of natural selection. This theory became a central paradigm to explain diverse biological phenomenon. His work also influenced the later notion of 'Social Darwinism' - a term used to describe perceived hierarchies amongst human beings.[6]

6. *See Paul* (2003).

over them. In the same way that biological differences were believed to render women inferior to men and to deny them rights to suffrage, for example, colonised populations were deemed incapable of self-governance.

By creating such categories, and promoting them through popular imagery and discourse, many Europeans came to believe that their lineages were racially distinct from, and superior to, those of African, Asian, and American peoples. Such ideas in turn, influenced the development of other discriminatory theories, one of which was eugenics. Emerging in the late 19th Century, **eugenics** used evolutionary theory to justify the ultimate goal of improving the human species. At the heart of this process was the aim of controlling human reproduction through prohibiting inter-racial marriage, and eliminating groups of people supposedly responsible for the transmission of undesirable characteristics. The implementation of a eugenics policy was seen in the 1930s, when the Nazi run German state set out to 'purify' the Aryan race. This involved separating out and eliminating people seen to have characteristics deemed to be deviant, such as minority ethnic groups, people with mental and physical disabilities, and homosexuals.

While scientific arguments which distinguish between different races are generally no longer given credence, it is vital to recognize the continuing existence of racism as an attitude. It is also important to acknowledge that while historically, many forms of racism were directed by the West, racism exists within and between all societies, with implications for discrimination against many groups of people deemed to be racially and ethnically inferior.

Race and inequality

As we saw earlier, ideas regarding the extent to which particular people and their attributes are valued within a society are determined by cultural norms. In some cases, the status of people may change. However, in others, social mobility and status are far less flexible. In mediaeval Europe for example, status as a peasant was fixed by rigid rules with very restricted opportunities for upward progression. Likewise, the caste system in India, which, until relatively recently, fixed a person's social status from birth, enabled few prospects for social mobility.

The passing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948[7] was an important event which challenged the existence of such rigid social hierarchies. Asserting that all people are free and equal by right, the declaration stated that independent of social origin, individuals should all have the same chances to rise to better social positions and enjoy the same rights and freedoms as one another. The Universal Declaration also reinforced a principal of non-discrimination on the basis of race; a pledge that was later

7. See http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

expanded upon in the International Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination[8] which dealt with protection against discrimination based on colour, on descent and on ethnic or national origin.

Despite such positive developments, evidence suggests that discrimination on the grounds of race and **ethnicity** still exists and, in turn, influences the inequalities experienced by many people throughout the world. Using Brazil as a case study, it is possible to see how these ongoing inequalities affect people's daily lives.

Racial inequality in Brazil

At the turn of the 21st Century, black men and women represented 45% of the Brazilian population, but 64% of the poor population and 69% of the population living in conditions of extreme poverty (*Henriques, 2003*). Using the Human Development Index (HDI)[9] as his basis for measuring development, the Brazilian economist Marcelo Paixão found significant differences in the quality of life experienced by black and white people of Brazil. While Brazil ranked 79th overall in the HDI, a hypothetical nation comprised only of Brazil's black population was ranked 108th place for HDI. At the same time, a hypothetical nation comprised only of Brazil's white population was ranked in 49th place.[10]

The reasons for such disparities are strongly influenced by the socio-economic circumstances in which people live. Households headed by a white person, for example, have an average income twice that of households headed by those categorised as black or 'mixed'[11]. The composition of the household has also been found to be an important factor. Households headed by white people tend to have fewer dependents, while households headed by non-whites contain relatively more people under the age of fifteen. The differences are exacerbated when factors such as **gender** are involved. Among households headed by a black person, for example, 63.4% are headed by a woman. Given that black women in Brazil have been found to earn on average only 45% of the income of white women, and up to 70% less than white men, such households are clearly disadvantaged relative to others. Indeed, figures suggest that a combination of disadvantages means that black women are much less likely to reach the age of 75 than their white counterparts[12].

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8. See http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm

9. The Human Development Index attempts to measure a country's level of development using measures of life expectancy, mean and expected years of schooling and income sufficiency. See http://www.undp.org/.

10. See Nascimento (2007).

11. The IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) classifies the country population in four ethnic-racial broad categories: white, black, 'pardo' (roughly equivalent to 'brown', of mixed color), and 'indio'(indigenous populations).

12. IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) databases are available in English.

While racial inequalities in rates of literacy and educational attainment in Brazil have decreased in recent years, significant differences still remain. Black and mixed-colour students, for example, receive an average of five years of schooling compared to seven years for white students. Between the ages of 15-17 years, 60% of young people who are white are studying at secondary level compared to only 32% of young people who are black or mixed. Similarly, while 21.5% of white people aged 18-19 go on to higher education, the figures are only 4.4% for black people, and 3.2% for mixed-colour people. For those aged between 20-24 years, 53.6% of white people are in higher education compared to only 15.8% of non-whites.

These inequalities are also influenced by the educational attainment of parents, suggesting that disadvantages are reproduced across the generations. In addition, regional disparities in educational provision and attainment exist along racial lines. In Brazil, the white population is concentrated in the most economically advantaged regions of the country (South and Southeast), while the presence of black and mixed-colour groups is much greater in the Northeast.

The type of employment that is available to people in Brazil is also influenced by ethnicity. Women categorised as black or mixed-coloured for example, are much more likely than white women to be found working in domestic service. While this may be due in part to levels of educational attainment, it is also important to consider the role of prejudice and stereotyping in perpetuating racial inequalities. Stereotyping involves simplifying conceptions of people based on a set of prior assumptions made about them. This in turn, can influence the way that people and their abilities are perceived, as well as the opportunities that are then made available. The expression, to 'put someone in their place' thus not only presumes that there are places, but also that each person knows which place is his or hers. In Brazil, stereotypes which place black people in subservient positions are common, with acceptable paths for upward social mobility generally limited to success in music or sport. ●

Ethnic inequality in schools

The first section of this module emphasised how perceptions of **race** and **ethnicity** can result in a wide range of inequalities. We will now examine the ways in which racism can exist within a school environment and to how it can be challenged.

A school without colour

Schools form an integral part of society and are often influenced by the same existing ideologies and norms of their wider context. As with many other institutions, schools play a key role in reproducing ideas regarding **ethnocentrism**, race and ethnicity, and in reproducing racial and ethnic inequalities. At the same time, however, schools are uniquely placed to challenge discrimination and to promote more inclusive approaches to learning.

In most societies, relatively few schools could be accused of being purposefully and explicitly prejudiced along racial or ethnic lines. However, it is important to recognise that inequalities are upheld as much by what remains silenced or overlooked, as by what is openly said and done. Schools that try to be 'colour blind' or 'neutral' in order not to discriminate, for example, often inadvertently downplay the inequalities that black and minority ethnic students face, and thus negate their experiences and everyday realities.

Racial and ethnic discrimination are also often considered to be historical rather than contemporary and ongoing issues. Common representations of black and indigenous people as victims of the colonial era also homogenise these groups and overlook the wide variety of experiences that individuals have had.

At the opposite extreme, schools may give a disproportionate amount of attention to particular cultural events or celebrations and, in so doing, place too much emphasis on what is deemed 'diverse' and different in relation to what is considered to be the expected norm. Striking a balance is therefore essential. Likewise in discussing discrimination it is essential to ensure that it is not treated as a problem created by the one who is discriminated against, rather than the one who discriminates. Thus ethnic-racial issues end up being discussed as a black or indigenous concerns rather than a discussion of the relations between people of differing ethnicities.

Stereotypes and prejudice at school

While schools may unconsciously reinforce racism through the negation or celebration of difference, the content of school materials can also be a contributory factor. Although many publishers have taken positive steps to ensure that people from different backgrounds are included in teaching and learning materials, the following issues still apply in many places:

! • Black and indigenous people still remain relatively invisible in books, posters, and other teaching materials. Where they are present, they tend to be presented as a minority, and rarely play a central role.

• Except in chapters specifically relating to slavery, there tends to be an omission of race in history books. Where black or indigenous people are present, they are often praised for their 'white' characteristics. In some cases, illustrators have even tried to lighten their skin colour.

• Where black characters appear in children's literature, it is not uncommon for their identity to remain obscure. Black characters are often known only by their first or nicknames, with little or no attention being given to their family background, or their life beyond that which relates to the white characters.

• Black people tend to remain strongly associated with manual labour and subservient positions. In book illustrations, cooks, nannies, maids, and domestic workers are often represented as black women, even when these texts do not make mention of colour or race. Similarly, there are materials which represent black women as objects of sexual desire or which stereotype black people as singers, football players etc.

• In some teaching and learning materials, black people are given brutalized or animal-like features.

• Indigenous groups are often made to seem the same, and appear as naive and backward. Yet at the same time, when indigenous people are seen in urban, academic or political contexts, or present themselves articulately, they are accused of having abandoned their heritage and ancestry.

Unless teachers critique such materials and stereotypes, they may find themselves implicit in upholding racism. Racism may also be reinforced when teachers do not act to tackle discriminatory remarks or behaviours. Racist jokes and nicknames, for example, may be treated as 'funny' or disregarded as problems that need to be dealt with outside of the school environment.

The promotion of ethnic-racial equality

Schools and educators have a responsibility not only to challenge ethnic and racial discrimination, but also to actively promote and endorse diversity and equality. In so doing, teachers may find it helpful to:

• Recognise the right of all students to learn about their own culture and background.

• Recognise the ethnic and racial voices that are missing, distorted or stereotyped in teaching and learning materials. Address these missing perspectives, particularly in work on history and culture.

• Include ethnic and racial issues in all aspects of teaching and learning, and initiate actions to combat racism and discrimination.

• Examine the impact of racism in the school curriculum, and the ways in which it frequently coexists alongside other forms of discrimination

• Combat prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes within and beyond the school environment.

• Discuss race and ethnic inequality with other educators, and with civil society and minority ethnic organizations.

• Take affirmative action to guarantee access to and the involvement of groups that are under-represented in higher education and university settings. ●

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Activities to encourage a better understanding of race and ethnicity

Activity 1 Ourselves and others

ACTIVITY: Start by providing a definition of '**ethnocentrism**' and stress that it can occur in all places across the globe. Then get students to brainstorm groups of people often considered as very different, e.g. men-women, black-white, **homosexual**-**heterosexual**, old-young. Divide the class into groups based on these dichotomous categories and then sub-divide the groups into two. One half of the group should seek to interview at least three people from their category about the population that they are generally thought to contrast with.

For example, if the group is going to investigate the 'old/young' dichotomy and there are six people in the group, three students could interview elderly people and another three students could interview young people. The interviews should elicit how each group feels about the other.

Each student sub-group can then organise their interview responses to present to class. Students can then produce a large poster using the collective research to highlight oppositional views and common stereotypes, reflecting upon ethnocentrism and looking for historical and social explanations for such views. Take the opportunity to help students think about whether these views change according to **gender** or **ethnicity**.

Activity 2

Racism – is it history?

ACTIVITY: Present students with a definition of 'racism'. Then ask them to look in newspapers and on television for cases of ethnic-racial discrimination. It may be more interesting to split the students into themes, for example, racism in sport; racism at work, racism in television, etc. Highlight how various forms of racism may affect men and women differently. Encourage students to summarise the case, including information about the person who suffered discrimination (ethnicity, gender, age, job, qualifications, country of origin, etc.), the person who perpetrated the discrimination, the type of discrimination (what was said or done, reasons behind it) and the development of the case.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: Get students to debate whether there is racism in the areas in which they live. Encourage them to consider what forms of racism and inequality exist, and why. Get students to work in groups to identify strategies to combat racism in their area.

Activity 3

Role-reversal

PREPARATION: Choose a film that uses role-reversal as a way of reflecting upon racial discrimination, such as the American comedy Watermelon Man, by Melvin Van Peebles (1970, 97 min). The film tells the story of a racist white man who one day wakes up to discover he has become black, and has to face the racial prejudice and discrimination of those around him.

Before class, watch the film and select specific points to be discussed.

ACTIVITY: Watch the film (or extracts from it) with your students and ask them to consider the following:

- What kinds of discriminatory attitudes are evident?
- What language is used to describe black and white people?
- What stereotypes are evident, and how does this influence the way that people are treated?

Activity 4 Ethnic and
racial stereotyping

PREPARATION: Ask students to identify television programmes in which racial and ethnic stereotypes are evident. Ask them to make a note of the programme, when it was produced, the main features of the character and the context of the action.

ACTIVITY: Collectively analyse the features found and the stereotypes present in television characters. Highlight any examples that suggest that non-white characters have a secondary role, a low social status, or are semi-criminal, lazy, etc. Talk to the class about the ways in which such images can reproduce stereotypes and prejudice.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY: Ask students to collect excerpts from novels that describe characters of different ethnic backgrounds and skin colours. Get the students to analyse them, and identify stereotyped characteristics.

Glossary

Bisexuality: Feelings or behaviours of romantic and/or sexual attraction towards persons of the same and the opposite sex.

Culture: A uniquely human phenomenon that reflects the capacity of human beings to give meaning to their actions and to the world that surrounds them. A culture is shared by members of a social group, and does not refer to exclusively individual phenomena. Every human grouping, from different eras and diverse geographical areas, attributes unique significance to apparently similar objects and passages in life. Culture, therefore, is more than just a system of customs, it is an object of human intervention, which makes life an inventive enterprise – a readable, assessable, and interpretable experience.

Ethnic/ethnicity: Refers to a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, a common culture and/or an ideology that stresses common ancestry.

Ethnocentrism: A term used to describe the generic feeling of people who prefer the lifestyle and norms of their own social or cultural group over that of others. The term, in principle, does not necessarily prescribe a negative attitude towards others, but a worldview centering on the core values of the group to which the individual belongs. However, evaluating all other group or cultural attitudes from this perspective can generate positions or actions of intolerance.

Eugenics: A 'science' that gained particular attention during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and intended to regulate the transmission of hereditary characteristics within different social strata. This was to be achieved through the control of human reproduction, the prohibition of inter-racial marriage and the elimination of groups that were supposedly responsible for the transmission of undesirable characteristics.

Feminist movement: A social and political movement that fights for equal rights for women and men, both in terms of legislation and public policy. Feminist organizations often offer support services and social programmes for women.

Gender: The term gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and for women. In recent decades, the concept of gender has had a profound influence on thinking about equality.

Gender inequality: The unequal value and treatment accorded to women and to men.

Heteronormativity: A viewpoint which asserts that heterosexuality is the normal and most acceptable sexual orientation, and that sexual and marital relations should be between a man and a woman. Thus, any variation or departure from the heterosexual male/female model – either through manifestations linked to homosexuality or transgender – is marginalized or persecuted as being dangerous to the social order.

Heterosexuality: Feelings or behaviours of romantic and/or sexual attraction for people of the opposite sex.

Homophobia: A term used to refer to hatred and contempt for people with a sexual orientation that is other than heterosexual, most generally expressed in the form of hostility and disapproval towards people who do not fit social expectations of gender roles. Such censorship – common among children and adolescents and rarely challenged by adults – ranges from jokes and verbal abuse to acts of violence, sometimes lethal.

Homosexuality: Feeling or behaviours of romantic and/or sexual attraction by people of the same sex.

Race: From a scientific point of view, human races do not exist; there is only one human race. However, from a socio-political perspective, it is possible (and necessary) to acknowledge the existence of racist attitudes. Therefore, it only makes sense to use the term 'race' in a racialized society – one marked by racism.

Racism: A doctrine that attests not only to the existence of races, but also to the natural and hereditary superiority of one race over another. A racist attitude attributes qualities to individuals and groups based on their alleged biological association to one of these races, and thus, their supposed native and hereditary qualities or defects. Thus, racism is not only a reaction to the other, but a way of subordinating the other.

Sexism: the prejudiced attitude that prescribes different roles and behaviors for men and women, subordinating female to male.

Sexuality: Sexuality is central to human life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality can be experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. These are shaped in different ways in different social contexts and historical periods. Sexuality is a dynamic concept that is used in a myriad of ways, has multiple and contradictory interpretations, and is at the heart of many debates and political disputes.

Sexual orientation: An enduring pattern of emotional and/or sexual attraction. Generally, three types of sexual orientation are recognised: heterosexuality (physical and emotional attraction for the 'opposite sex'); homosexuality (physical and emotional attraction for the 'same sex'; and bisexuality (physical and emotional attraction both by 'same sex' and 'opposite sex' persons).

Sexual rights: Rights that grant individuals freedom and autonomy in sexual choices, such as the right to practise a sexual orientation without suffering discrimination or violence, and a woman's right to determine if and when to have children.

Transgender: Person who has a gender identity that is different from the sex designated at birth. Transgender men and women may manifest the will to undergo hormonal therapies and/or surgical interventions in order to adapt their physical attributes (including genitals) to their own gender identity.

Transsexual: Person who identifies with a gender that is inconsistent with their assigned sex.