

WEE-NORTH

A Guide to Gender-Responsive Pedagogy for TVET Facilitators



Ministry of Education
REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Gender is how a society defines masculinity and femininity, how men and women, boys and girls, are supposed to behave, what kinds of decisions they can make, and what work they can do. Gender roles are defined according to where you live and in what generation. Gender roles change all the time – they do not remain the same. Gender roles for women in Ghana have changed from what your grandmother experienced to what your daughter’s reality is now.

Traditional gender roles lead to stereotypes about women and men. For example, in Ghana, women are expected to do the housework. So, when they enrol in TVET, they are encouraged to take sewing and catering. Boys are expected to be outside and climb trees, so they enrol in TVET institutions they are encouraged to take carpentry and roofing.

As a result of traditional gender roles, technical and industrial trades training programmes are dominated by male trainees. Very few female trainees take bricklaying, electrical installation, plumbing, carpentry, or welding. This means that young women are left out of good jobs, opportunities to earn income, and choices about the type of work they want to do.

The young women who join WEE-North’s “training-to-employment” programme are pioneers in Northern Ghana in taking industrial trades courses and working in industries. WEE-North’s trainees are doing a great job showing that women can do jobs that were considered to be men’s work. One reason for this is the training methodology followed by WEE-North’s instructors – Gender-Responsive Pedagogy. Applying Gender-Responsive Pedagogy in technical and vocational education and training can reverse the above situation, encouraging young women to study and practice industrial trades. GRP can change students’ perception of gender roles and stereotypes, opening up new possibilities for careers for girls and women.

GRP refers to a method of teaching which recognises that young women are disadvantaged in industrial trades training because of traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes. GRP addresses those disadvantages so that young women can benefit from industrial trades training – gaining skills to get good jobs. Applying gender-responsive pedagogy removes gender stereotypes and biases in industrial trades training, thereby giving better results. Using gender-responsive teaching methods increases female trainees’ interest, confidence and capacity to learn and practice industrial trades.

This booklet provides instructors with tips to become gender-responsive and achieve excellence in WEE-North’s “training-to-employment” programme.

Set up Gender-Responsive Classrooms and Workshops

Classroom or workshop arrangements can positively or negatively affect the teaching and learning process. To achieve a gender-responsive workshop setting, do the following:

- Instructors should frequently stand and move around to maintain contact with all trainees.**
- Tables, stools and shelves in the workshop should be of a height, shape and size that enable young women trainees to see and reach equipment, tools, and materials.**
- There should be enough workstations for all trainees. Otherwise, a rotation plan should be in place so that everyone gets a turn. A gender-responsive classroom and workshop set-up responds to the specific needs of female and**

Establish clear workshop rules about how young women trainees and instructors relate to each other during training and be consistent in applying them.

- Instructors should not have pet names for students or vice-versa.
- Instructors should not touch or play with trainees in an unprofessional way; this includes hugging, hand-holding, fondling of palms or any part of their bodies etc.
- The instructor should protect trainees from abuse and intimidation. Prevent colleagues and friends from coming to the workshop and teasing or harassing young women trainees.
- Do not allow teasing or name-calling behaviour. For example, a girl who behaves in a manner society considers boyish may be teased and given nicknames such as “man-woman”, “hard-body”, “slim-macho”, etc.
- Openly challenge and reprimand anyone who makes negative remarks about other trainees. Set an example to champion and empower young women trainees. For example, where you witness name-calling or teasing, you immediately caution/ warn the culprit and let them know you will sanction them if the behaviour is repeated. You can also get the culprit to render an apology to the victim.

Rules should apply to everyone – there should be no favours for one over the other. The instructor should equally abide by the rules. Sanction or punish those who disobey the rules.

Teaching materials and resources can help address gender biases or reinforce gender stereotypes in the training process. Therefore, it is important for the instructor to carefully choose teaching materials and resources that do not contain messages that suggest that females are limited in their capacity and involvement in certain industrial trades.

- Discuss with young women trainees how stereotypes can limit what they can do and achieve. For example, though some textbooks or resources may only show women in certain professions, such as fashion designers, it does not mean women cannot practice trades that society considers men only professions.
- Encourage them with words like, “there is no limit to what any human being can achieve,” and “some women have done it before, so you too can achieve even better.”
- Encourage them by saying that they can do anything that men can do – including carrying heavy things and climbing up poles and roofs.
- Posters and pictures on the walls should not reinforce female and male stereotypes. Workshops should have pictures of female carpenters, electricians, plumbers, welders, and bricklayers.

When selecting teaching materials, remember that young women trainees have training needs based on what society thinks they can do or cannot do, so the teaching resources you use must aim to change that mindset.

Language is a tool of communication. Inappropriate language can convey negative messages and prevent learning.

- A teacher's constant use of harsh, abusive and threatening language may instil fear in the students. Trainees whose instructor constantly tells them "you are stupid" may come to believe this to be true about themselves. So avoid saying things like "foolish," "lazy," "you are a disappointment," and "I will tell the WEE-North project to take you off the programme."
- Do not say things that reinforce false assumptions about females and males, e.g., "girls aren't good at welding," or "girls can't climb scaffolds."
- Avoid words and pronouns that portray only men or women in specific trades, e.g. always using "she" for caterers and "he" for electricians.
- Do not use negative expressions that demean, exclude, or give some trainees the impression that they are not as bright as others or do not need to perform as well as others. For example, "Ayisha, you need to pull your weight; even Charity is doing well." Saying "even" Charity means Charity is not good enough, or you do not expect much from her. Don't say, "if Memuna doesn't get it right, then no one else will get it." This comment suggests that Memuna is the brightest student, and the rests are below her.

Always use kind, encouraging words to instruct and correct.

Some trainees may not be as outspoken and engaging as others in the classroom/workshop. The reasons may range from personality traits to background and upbringing. Girls are generally brought up to be reserved and less assertive than boys. This situation is more critical when girls find themselves in male-dominated fields – so they need to be intentionally encouraged by acknowledging their efforts.

- Say things like “well done,” “keep it up,” “don’t give up,” “impressive,” “good start,” “you are making progress,” “good try, let’s work on this aspect a bit more,” “keep trying, it will get better,” “you are an achiever” etc.



- Pay extra attention to girls who are shy or have low confidence. Take time and patiently show them how to perform a new skill. Don't forget to smile.
- Connect directly with trainees to understand and appreciate their uniqueness. For example, if you know that one of your trainees is burdened with domestic roles at home, you will understand why she may be a bit slow in her training and find ways to assist her in keeping up with her colleagues.
- Know your trainees by name. Knowing them by name means you will address them adequately. It also shows that you acknowledge their existence and are interested in their work. This will give them the impression that their progress matter to you.
- Maintain eye contact and listen to trainees when they speak.
- Acknowledge the trainee's presence and contributions. For example, praise all trainees for their effort. Do not be selective in congratulating students; endeavour to compliment all students equally. Let every student be treated as important. Avoid having favourite trainees
- Give an equal chance to all trainees to ask questions. Encourage them to ask questions and answer them respectfully. "Good question, Mariama. I know that everyone will be interested in the answer."
- Do not use body language that excludes some trainees or suggests one-sidedness, such as paying less attention to some trainees than others.

For example, do not turn your back to students or do not be on your phone when they are speaking to you. Do not make facial expressions that suggest that you are disappointed in the trainee's question or answer or that the question/ answer is stupid. It will be encouraging to maintain eye contact, be attentive and nod when trainees speak, carefully answer their questions etc.

- Trainees should all have and try their hands at everything, e.g., make sure every trainee practices on all the machines.
- Ensure that trainees have equal access to training equipment, tools, and materials.
- Check to see if all trainees understand the lesson and if they can do the activity according to standard. For example, when you give tasks or learning activities for practice, check if each trainee understands the instructions and is trying their hands at it.
- Pay attention to the composition of young women with a strong background and those with a relatively weak background. It will be good to mix them in the group but pay attention to their work to ensure that the strong ones do not dominate the group.
- Use methods such as group work to ensure that all trainees have a chance to contribute. For example, group work is useful where there are limited resources for each trainee to participate in a demonstration activity.

The instructor should understand what sexual harassment is and explain it to their young women trainees so that they can recognise and report it. Sexual harassment is defined as any behaviour that involves unwanted sexual advances, requests and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

- Explain to trainees that a wide range of behaviour constitutes sexual harassment, including sexual jokes, touching and caressing, comments about an individual's sexual life or body, demand for sexual favours, and threats for refusing to comply with requests for sexual favours.
- Know that the worst victims of sexual harassment are women and girls, even though men and boys also experience sexual harassment. Similarly, instructor-to-trainee harassment is more common than trainee-to-instructor harassment. Instructors are required to respect WEE-North trainees at all times.
- Know the difference between “being friendly” with girls and being flirtatious (sexually playful).
- Jokes, stories, and conversations should not contain sexual references. For example, jokes that make reference to breast sizes, buttocks sizes, or sexual activities are unacceptable.
- Instructors should not call trainees “girlfriend,” “sweetie,” or “my wife” because this changes the atmosphere for learning negatively. It is also a form of sexual harassment and can make trainees very comfortable.
- Believe victims of sexual harassment when they report abuse and take steps to investigate the abuse or support them to make a formal report. Do not discourage victims of sexual harassment from taking steps to report it.

Empower young women trainees to be critical of traditional views of femininity – what it means to be a woman.

- Actively use examples that challenge or reverse traditional gender roles. To encourage your young women trainees, deliberately use examples of women in male-dominated trades, so they see that it is possible for them as young women.
- Identify and showcase women in male-dominated trades – make a list of women in the trades you teach – from the community, region, country, or the world. Share the profiles with your trainees to encourage them.
- Promote the idea that women can do what men can do – they can be great bricklayers and tilers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, welders, mechanics, painters, and plasterers.



WEE-NORTH



  **+233 (0) 550 605 011**

 info@weenorth.org

 facebook.com/WEE-North Project Ghana

