

GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS SUPPORT



International  
Women's Day



# IWD Activities

Created by  
the World Association of Girl  
Guides and Girls Scouts

# Introduction



International  
Women's Day



WORLD ASSOCIATION  
OF GIRL GUIDES  
AND GIRL SCOUTS

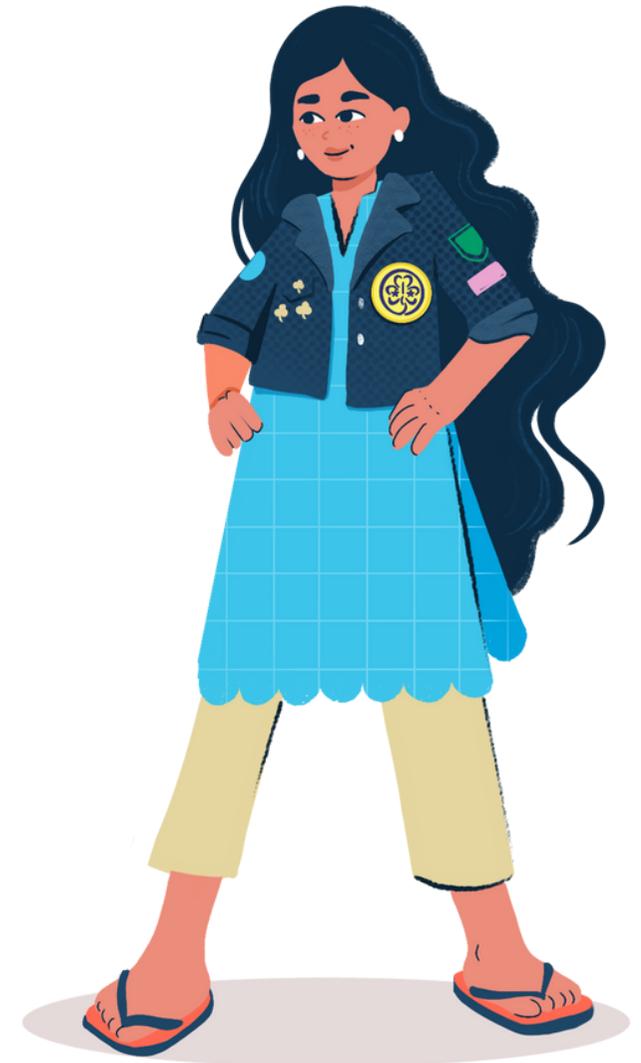
Welcome to our International Women's Day activity pack on gender and women's rights.

In this pack you will find three categories of activities:

1. Understanding Gender: exploring gender roles and stereotypes.
2. Women's rights are Human Rights: exploring the concept of rights and why they are important.
3. Gender & Climate Change: exploring how climate change disproportionately affects women and girls.

For the following age groups:

- Younger years: children 6-11
- Middle years: children 12-15
- Older years: young people aged 15 and above



# Introduction

## Create a Safe and Brave Space

It is important that you create a space for children and young people to feel supported and comfortable to talk about gender equality, and their experiences and rights. It is important to have an agreed code of conduct that is supportive, sensitive and understanding of diversity and difference. We want children and young people to feel safe but also encouraged to speak out and share their experiences, concerns and points of view. We want participants to feel encouraged, that's why you should set not only a safe space but a 'brave space'.

## Agree on the Ground Rules

Ask participants to define their group code to ensure the full participation of children and young people. Ask the group the following questions so that the guidelines are tailored to the needs of the group.

- How can we make this a safe space?
- How can we empower everyone to participate in the sessions?
- How can we encourage everyone to speak out and also support those who need our help?

## Don't forget to remind participants:

They always have the right to say NO to things that make them feel uncomfortable, including any aspect of the following sessions.

# Understanding Gender

## At Work (younger years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	• Participants identify common gender roles and expectations in society.		
<b>Material</b>	Drawing paper, pencils, coloured pencils	<b>Duration</b>	30 mins

### Activity Description

1. Draw people doing different jobs: a firefighter, a surgeon, a pilot, a nurse, and a teacher. What do they look like?
2. Give each of your characters a name and a short background story. What are each of your characters called? What is their story?
  - Were your firefighters, surgeons, and pilots men or women? What about the nurses? And the teachers?
  - Are there jobs we think are more suited for men? And ones more suited for women? If so, why? Where does this belief come from?
  - How do these gender expectations/stereotypes affect girls' ambitions to be who they want to be? [definitions of gender, stereotypes, and gender stereotypes in Glossary]
  - Can you think of women in your community/country who work in professions dominated by men? Has she ever talked publicly of the challenges she has encountered as a woman in her field of work?
  - How can we better understand and challenge gender expectations/stereotypes in our daily life?

# Understanding Gender

## Gender Lightbulb (middle years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	• Participants identify and explain gender stereotyping they experience in their lives.		
<b>Material</b>	Prepare large cards shaped like light bulbs for the participants to write on.	<b>Duration</b>	20 mins

### Activity Description

Prepare large cards shaped like light bulbs for the participants to write on.

1. Discuss what a safe and brave space is and how we can create and keep a safe space in the group [definition of safe and brave space in Glossary].

2. Introduce the idea of a gender lightbulb moment.

*A “gender lightbulb moment” is a time you became aware of being treated differently because of your gender. For example, a girl not being allowed to play football, or a boy being told he shouldn’t play with dolls. It could be anything from the toys you were allowed to play with, having different rules for boys and girls, to feeling uncomfortable in a certain situation because of your gender.*

3. Get into small groups and share your gender lightbulb moments. [definitions of gender, stereotype, and gender stereotypes in Glossary].

# Understanding Gender

## Gender Lightbulb (middle years)

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<b>Material</b>	Prepare large cards shaped like light bulbs for the participants to write on.	<b>Duration</b>	20 mins

4. Write down your answers on a large piece of card shaped like a lightbulb then hang them up on a string for the other groups to read.

5. Go through the other groups' answers and identify similar answers.

- How was the 'gender lightbulb moment' sharing? Did you have moments in common?
- How do these gender differences affect our everyday lives?
- What can we do about the issues we identified?

# Understanding Gender

## Stereotype Buster (Older)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	• Participants identify and challenge gender stereotypes in society.		
<b>Material</b>	Paper, pens, cans, stones, balls, etc.	<b>Duration</b>	30 mins

### Activity Description

1. Discuss/review the concepts of gender, stereotypes, and gender stereotypes [definitions of the three concepts in Glossary].
2. List gender stereotypes you might have encountered personally, observed in your community, or saw in the media. Write each stereotype on its own piece of paper (card sized).
3. Continue to write stereotypes until you cannot come up with anything anymore.
4. Discuss as a group the stereotypes you put down and how you feel about them.
5. Put all the stereotype cards you created up as targets. They could be taped on a wall, on top of a can, etc.
6. Start breaking the stereotypes by standing 2 metres from the targets and throwing an object to hit or knock down the stereotype cards (small stones or balls, use pens to cross them out).

# Understanding Gender

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<b>Material</b>	Paper, pens, cans, stones, balls, etc.	<b>Duration</b>	30 mins

7. After everyone has had a turn, add difficulties to make busting stereotypes more difficult to achieve. Examples may include having a limited number of throws per turn, moving the target further away, covering the throwers' eyes, tying the left ankle of one team member and the right ankle of another team member together and having them walk together to reach the target, adding obstacles for members to climb over or under to reach the target.

8. Play as many rounds as you wish – bust all your stereotypes!

- Was it easy busting the stereotypes in the activity?
- What are ways to bust stereotypes in our society?
- Why is it important to understand stereotypes as part of being a leader?
- Who can challenge a stereotype?
- Did anyone discover a new stereotype through someone else's suggestion?
- What can you do in your community to reduce stereotyping?

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



## My Rights (all ages)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All children have the same rights</li> <li>• We should stand up for girls if they are hurt by people</li> <li>• We can help to make our community fairer for girls</li> </ul>		
<b>Material</b>	Flipchart paper and pens, Various simple toys/games, eg sets of cards to play Snap Optional: puppets or materials to make them	<b>Duration</b>	1 hr

### Activity Description

#### Preparation:

- Always create a safe and supportive environment, display the **group code** and **'time out' area** with a dedicated adult.
- Choose one of the **'That's not fair'** scenarios and prepare to act it out in front of the group. Ideally, choose the one most relevant to your community.
- **'That's not fair' scenarios:**
  - A girl isn't allowed to go to school. She has to stay home and clean instead.
  - A girl doesn't feel safe at school. Some boys say nasty things to her.
  - A girl gets served less food than her brother. She doesn't feel well and is hungry.
  - A girl can't play outside with her friends. She has to stay inside while her brother is allowed to play.

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### Preparations continued:

- Optional: Invite a **positive role model** known to the community who stands up for what's right. Ask them to join in the activities and share real examples when relevant with the group.
- Find out or check whether your country has signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Make a list of rules for **'Unfair Island'**: No school; no playing, no healthy food, no religions; no safety.
- If you have access to technology, sing the UNICEF song 'We've all got rights'[1] during the introduction.

### **Introduction:**

1. Begin by **whispering**, "I'm using my voice" to the person to your left.
2. This person must then whisper it a little louder to the person to their left.
3. Repeat with each person increasing in volume until the last person **shouts** it to the whole group.
4. Alternatively, sing Bob Marley's song 'Get up, stand up'[2] together. Tell the group that Bob Marley

wrote it after visiting Haiti and seeing how unfair it was that people were so poor there.

[1] UNICEF 'We've all got rights' song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiPwCMIghhQ>

[2] Bob Marley 'Get up, stand up' song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiPwCMIghhQ>

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### Part 1

1. Sitting in a circle, ask everyone to close their eyes. Tell them that they're travelling to a place called **Unfair Island**. Explain that people living there are unhappy because a cruel leader is in charge, and it rains all the time! Reveal the rules to the group – it's really sad.

2. **Introduce the activity:** the island people have decided to say, "We've had enough!" to the terrible leader. In small groups, they will act out telling the mean leader what they think of the situation and why the rules are so unfair.

3. Split into small groups. Give them a few minutes to practice what they will say. Encourage them to think about why it's important to be able to go to school, have healthy food/drink, play, practice our religion and feel safe. For example, each person could talk about a different rule, eg "We want to play so we feel happy and make friends!"; "We need healthy food to grow, develop our brains and protect us when we're sick."

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



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<b>Material</b>	Flipchart paper and pens, Various simple toys/games, eg sets of cards to play Snap Optional: puppets or materials to make them	<b>Duration</b>	1 hr
<p>4. If you have time, ask groups to share their ideas.</p> <p>5. Come together. Explain that in the real world, there's a set of rules called <b>Human Rights</b> that leaders around the world wrote them to make sure we're all happy, healthy and safe. Many countries have signed these rules and promised to follow them. Tell the group if your country has signed it.</p> <p>6. Explain that EVERYONE has the right to feel safe and happy, and that we can stand up for people who feel unhappy or scared.</p>			

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



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### Part 2:

1. Sitting in a circle, ask: What have we learnt about our **human rights** so far? What did we want to change on Unfair Island?
2. Make a list on flipchart. Add any missing to the list: the right to go to school, play, eat healthy food, practice our religion and feel safe.
3. Explain that all of them can make their communities and their world **fairer**. For example, they should **stand up** for girls who are harmed by others.
4. Remind the group what they learnt in 'Understanding Gender' about the 'gender rules' we feel we have to live by. These rules can mean girls miss out on things like enough food, education, fun, fairness and/or rest. Girls can be **hurt and feel very sad, and be disadvantaged** because of these rules.
5. Ask one girl to join you in the middle of the circle. Explain that you're both going to act out a mini drama. Ask the girl to react to what you do or say as if they would in real life.

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



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<b>Material</b>	Flipchart paper and pens, Various simple toys/games, eg sets of cards to play Snap Optional: puppets or materials to make them	<b>Duration</b>	1 hr
<p>6. Act out your prepared 'That's not fair' scenario. Keep it very short and end as soon as you have conveyed the message.</p> <p>7. At the end, ask the girl how she felt. Ask the group how it felt to watch. Then, ask: "As her friends, how could you <b>stand up for her?</b>". Thank the volunteer very much for helping.</p> <p>8. <b>Introduce their activity:</b> to act out or draw the girl and her friends standing up for her rights. If acting out, they could use puppets or props. If drawing, hand out a piece of flipchart and pens to pairs or small groups.</p> <p>9. Allow the group to choose what they do and if they work <b>individually or in small groups</b>. Give everyone time to act out or draw their ideas.</p> <p>10. At the end, bring everyone together. Share with the group some of the wonderful ideas you heard and saw as you moved about.</p>			

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



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<b>Material</b>	Flipchart paper and pens, Various simple toys/games, eg sets of cards to play Snap Optional: puppets or materials to make them	<b>Duration</b>	1 hr
<b>Closing</b> 1. Stand up in a circle. Ask everyone to name one person in their lives who is a <b>role model</b> because they stand up for others.			

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



## My Shero Exhibition (all ages)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Participants identify female role models around them and acknowledge their achievements.		
<b>Material</b>	Arts and crafts stationery.	<b>Duration</b>	30+ minutes

### Activity Description

1. List your own criteria of a “Shero”. The Shero does not need to be famous, but someone who inspires you. Who is your Shero?

*A ‘Shero’ is a female hero, a role model who inspires girls. She can be one's mother, aunt, grandmother, Girl Guide/Girl Scout leader, community/country/world activist, or any female leader.*

2. Create a Shero Board that has her name, picture, a list or pictures of things she has done that inspire you, quotes by her, etc.

3. Share your Shero Board with the rest of the group.

4. Prepare an exhibition with your group to showcase all the Sheros. Include creative elements such as arts and crafts, music, skits, drama, videos, murals, etc.

5. Invite people to visit the exhibition and share your inspiration.

- What can we do to celebrate more inspiring women in our lives?
- What are the challenges these Sheros might have encountered as women in their lives/field of work?
- How can we show appreciation for other girls and women in our lives and celebrate their achievements?

# Women's Rights are Human Rights



## Scream and shout (All ages)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Get energised and voice the issues they care about in a creative way.		
<b>Material</b>	None	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes

1. You are going to a demonstration against gender inequalities. Decide what issue you want to demonstrate against and to find a good slogan that you will all feel proud to chant.
2. How are you going to chant your slogan? GO!
3. One person in your group should now tell you how to chant your slogan: whisper, speak, sing or scream.
4. Vary the instructions and go quicker and quicker until the whole group messes it up!

# Gender & Climate Change



## We're all in this together (Younger years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Play a fairness game to understand why climate change is worse for some people than others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play a game to understand what privilege means</li><li>• Have a chat about how climate change may affect girls differently</li></ul>		
<b>Material</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full cups of juice for 10% of the group</li><li>• 2 jugs/bottle of water</li><li>• Cups of water for the rest of the group</li><li>• Chairs for 10% of the group</li><li>• Cards for every player, 10% of cards should be marked with an x</li></ul> (Try not to use disposable plastic for this activity)	<b>Duration</b>	30 minutes
<b>Preparation</b> <p>If your group has no understanding of gender equality and privilege this is a great activity to introduce the topic.</p> <p>Prepare the cups of juice for 10% of the group and the cups of water for 90% of the group.</p> <p>This activity is better suited to large meeting spaces.</p>			

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<p><b>Activity Description</b></p> <p><b>Step 1: Play a game about privilege and chance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose any running game and play this together for 10 minutes.</li> <li>• Choose one person to lead the activity</li> </ul>			

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<p><b>Instructions for activity leader:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give out the cards at random to the group.</li> <li>• Once everyone has a card, invite those with an x to sit on the chairs. Observe what happens in the group. Try not to give out any information about why this is so.</li> <li>• Give everyone on the chairs the juice drinks and a jug of water. Give everyone on the floor cups and a jug of water to share.</li> <li>• Observe the group and see if anyone shares. Do not influence the group or prompt any actions.</li> </ul>			

# Gender & Climate Change



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### Step 2: Debrief the game

- How do you feel about sitting on the chairs or on the floor?
- How did you feel about the other group? Did you think it was fair?
- Why do you think one group was given more?
- Has there ever been a time where you have felt you were treated unfairly because you are a girl?
- The cards were given out at random. This represents different situations that we are all born into, because we don't have a choice about where we are born or whether we are born male or female. What we do have control over is what we do as a group and how we can support each other. The people on the chairs had the most privilege and the people on the floor had the least privilege.

# Gender & Climate Change



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**Breakout box:** Privilege means a right or a chance (that was not earned) given to some and not others.

### Step 3: Have a group discussion about privilege and climate change

- You are now playing a new game. Only people who are sitting on a chair, or who have drunk juice in the last 20 minutes will win the game. Give them one minute to complete the game.
- As a group, did you end up sharing what you had (limited juice and chairs) before the last game? Why or why not?
- What happened when you had to make a choice to try and win, or help others to win the game? Did you think it was a fair game?

# Gender & Climate Change



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like in the last game, climate change affects us all, but the effects of climate change are worse for people with the least amount of privilege.</li> <li>• If everyone in the game had shared their juice or chair before the start of the last game, everyone would have instantly won. In the same way, we can't wait for climate change to have an effect to start being fairer, because it will be too late. We need to make sure that women and girls are being treated fairly and equally to men and boys, so that climate change isn't worse for them. Together we can support each other!</li> <li>• Name a way climate change may impact people. Describe how this may be different for people with the most and the least privilege.</li> </ul>			

# Gender & Climate Change



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### Breakout box: Impact of climate change on people with less privilege

- Because of climate change, some vegetables might stop growing, and some animals might die. People with a lot of money can buy different types of food in shops, but people with less privilege have no choice but to eat what they grow or can afford. So they might not eat what they want or as much as they would like.
- In some communities, women and girls are usually in charge of getting water for the family, but because of climate change, there can be less water available so they have to travel further to get water. The point is this issue doesn't affect the men and boys from these communities as much, because it's not considered their responsibility and they can do other things instead.

# Gender & Climate Change



International Women's Day



WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS

## Powerful chain (Middle Years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Celebrate your skills and use your strengths to become a climate hero. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about your unique skills</li><li>• See how climate change may affect girls</li></ul>		
<b>Material</b>	• Paper and Pens	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes
<b>Preparation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If girls in your group have little self-confidence or feel limited by gender inequalities, this is a great activity to complete.</li></ul> <b>Activity description</b>  <b>Step 1: Celebrate your skills and personality as a girl</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have you ever been told there are things you cannot do or ways you cannot be because you are a girl?</li><li>• In Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting, we believe that every girl should be able to be herself, learn new things and do what she wants! Today, you will get a chance to explore everything girls can be and how this can be helpful to protect the planet!</li></ul>			

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<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Celebrate your skills and use your strengths to become a climate hero. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about your unique skills</li><li>• See how climate change may affect girls</li></ul>		
<b>Material</b>	• Paper and Pens	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Start the game with one person saying their name and two things they like about themselves. This should not be about how they look. For example, "I'm Bupe, I climb trees and I am a good friend".</li><li>2. Anyone in the group who likes the same thing about themselves should now race to take Bupe's hand. The first person who reaches her hand repeats the thing they have in common and add another one about themselves. For example "I'm Aisha, I'm a good friend and I am curious."</li><li>3. The game goes on until everyone has shared things they like about themselves and you have a long line.</li><li>4. Take a moment to recognise and celebrate your strength as a group of girls with so many amazing qualities!</li></ol>			

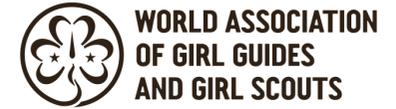
# Gender & Climate Change



## Powerful chain (Middle Years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Celebrate your skills and use your strengths to become a climate hero. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about your unique skills</li><li>• See how climate change may affect girls</li></ul>		
<b>Material</b>	• Paper and Pens	<b>Duration</b>	20 minutes
<b>Step 2: Explore your strengths to become a climate hero</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about the two qualities you shared with everyone. How and when are those qualities useful in life?</li><li>• How can you use them to help protect the planet? Maybe they would be useful to help protect animals and plants? To help other people understand what climate change is? Or to change your habits so they're not harmful for the environment?</li><li>• On a piece of paper, draw the things you can do to help protect the planet, thanks to your unique strengths!</li></ul>			

# Gender & Climate Change



## Speak up for women (Older years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Practice your debating skills during this fishbowl discussion activity!		
<b>Material</b>	None	<b>Duration</b>	30 minutes
<p><b>Preparation:</b> Display the facts in the fact sheet around your meeting space.</p> <p><b>Activity description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learn about how women around the world are being affected by climate change by going around the meeting space.</li><li>• Create two circles. In the inner circle (the fishbowl), four debaters will have a discussion, and in the outer circle, the rest of the group will listen. If you're in the outer circle and want to become a debater, go and tap someone on the shoulder to take their place in the inner circle.</li><li>• The theme of the debate is "Are women and girls more affected by climate change than men and boys?". Half of the debaters at all times must be on the "yes" side and half on the "no" side. Don't hesitate to play out a debater on a side you don't personally agree with!</li><li>• You can come into the discussion at any time and on either side. Try to enter the inner circle at least once!</li></ul>			

# Gender & Climate Change



## Speak up for women (Older years)

<b>In this activity you will:</b>	Practice your debating skills during this fishbowl discussion activity!		
<b>Material</b>	None	<b>Duration</b>	30 minutes
<p><b>Tip for the leader:</b></p> <p>If at some point the conversation starts to stall, you can use the below facts to help facilitate the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Women spend 3 times as many hours doing unpaid domestic and care work as men each day, like taking care of the house, children, food, water, etc.</li><li>• Women earn 23% less than men globally.</li><li>• Globally, women are just 13 per cent of agricultural land holders.</li><li>• Two thirds of illiterate adults in the world are women.</li><li>• 1 in 3 women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence - mostly by an intimate partner.</li><li>• Women only occupy 24% of parliamentary seats worldwide.</li></ul>			

# Gender & Climate Change



## Climate change and gender equality

- Climate change causes extreme weather and natural disasters by speeding up the water cycle on Earth. Women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die during a disaster.
- Disruption to health services during natural disasters affects girls and women's access to important health services such as sexual and reproductive health, and healthcare during pregnancy and birth.
- Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80 per cent of households that don't have access to water on-site. Climate change is making water availability less predictable in many regions in the world because of droughts and water contamination, which means that girls have to travel further to fetch water, which can cause them to miss school.
- If current trends continue, by 2025 climate change will be a contributing factor in preventing at least 12.5 million girls from completing their education each year.
- Heatwaves and a lack of access to clean water for proper menstrual hygiene can cause bacteria and infections.

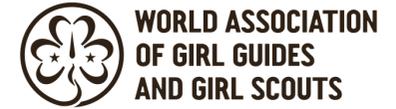
# Gender & Climate Change



## Climate change and gender equality

- 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.
- At the UN Climate Change summits between 2000 and 2010, only 30% of delegates were women.
- Women's traditional skills and knowledge in innovation, food, energy and waste management can be used for climate action.
- Women are on the frontline of community responses to natural disasters
- When provided with the same access to resources as men, women can increase their agricultural yields by 20 to 30 percent, contributing to world hunger reduction by 17%.

# CONGRATULATIONS!



Thank you for using the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts IWD Activity Pack!  
We hope you have enjoyed the activities.

If you are interested in joining us, you can **become a WAGGGS volunteer** or get involved with the national Girl Guiding or Scouting association where you are from, or, better yet, do both!

- Based in the Western Hemisphere? Find the national association for your country **here**.
- Based in the Asia Pacific? Find the national association for your country **here**.
- Based in Europe? Find the national association for your country **here**.
- Based in Africa? Find the national association for your country **here**.
- Based in the Arab region? Find the national association for your country **here**.



## Acknowledgments

This International Women's Day activity pack was curated by WAGGGS staff, Nefeli Themeli and Elsa Cardona.

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# GLOSSARY



International  
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WORLD ASSOCIATION  
OF GIRL GUIDES  
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## **A Brave Space:**

This refers to making children and young people feel supported and comfortable to talk about their experiences. In a 'Brave Space' there should be an agreed code of conduct that is supportive, sensitive, and understanding of diversity and difference. As well as feeling safe, participants should also be encouraged to speak out and share their experiences, concerns and points of view.

## **Climate Change:**

A change of climate which is caused directly or indirectly by human activity that changes the composition of the atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over similar time periods. Climate change is harming the natural world, and our communities, and it concerns all of us.

## **Discrimination:**

Happens when people act in ways that limit other people's rights, opportunities and ability to participate fully in society. Discrimination can occur on the grounds of race, class, sex, gender, age, religion, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. It includes attitudes, behaviours, and practices that result in people being treated differently because of social characteristics rather than their personal skills, capabilities or rights. Discrimination can also happen when people are treated the same, when they would need to be treated differently to achieve the same result. Policies and laws can also be discriminatory. Girls can face different and multiple forms of discrimination, for example they can be discriminated against because of their age and because of their gender.

## **Empowerment:**

Expanding people's ability to take control of their lives and make important life choices. This means expanding people's power or helping them to discover the power they already have.

# GLOSSARY



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## **Gender:**

Refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.<sup>1</sup>

## **Gender equality:**

Refers to the enjoyment of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of girls, boys, men and women. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men and boys as well as women and girls. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Equality between women and men is a human right.<sup>2</sup>

## **Gender inequality:**

It is defined as a disparity and imbalance in power, status, rights and opportunities between women and men, girls and boys. Gender is a socially constructed concept, and determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. This results in women and girls being discriminated against and prevented from enjoying their human rights.<sup>3</sup>

# GLOSSARY



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## **Gender discrimination:**

Refers to discrimination on the basis of one's sex.

## **Human rights** - see rights

## **Power:**

Having freedom of choice and action to shape one's life, including the control over resources, decisions and institutions necessary to do so.

## **Privilege:**

A right or exemption from liability or duty granted as a special benefit or advantage. Oppression is the result of the use of institutional privilege and power, wherein one person or group benefits at the expense of another.<sup>4</sup>

## **Rights:**

Freedoms and entitlements that belong to everyone because they are human. Rights are about respecting people's dignity and ensuring they have the resources needed to survive, develop and participate in society.

## **Rights-based approach:**

Refers to activities, programmes and services that are designed to promote, fulfil and respect human rights. Such approaches support those with less power to demand their rights, while holding duty-bearers accountable to fulfil their obligations to rights-holders.

# GLOSSARY



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## **Sex:**

Refers to the biological differences between girls and boys, and women and men.

## **Sexual violence:**

"is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object".<sup>5</sup>

## **Stereotypes:**

Mental images that organize and simplify one's notion or image of a person or group of people. These oversimplifications contribute to discrimination and prejudice. Gender stereotypes refers to widely held beliefs about the characteristics, behaviours and roles of girls and boys, women and men.

<sup>1</sup> UNWOMEN, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF, CEDAW in Brief for Adolescents, Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement, Policy and Practice, (2011) UNICEF New York

<sup>4</sup> Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power and Privilege <https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/>

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization, Violence against Women Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women Factsheet no. 239, (2012) World Health Organization Geneva



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