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IDEP

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GENDER AND ECONOMIC POLICY MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE–AFRICA

GENDER AND ECONOMICS

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INTRODUCTION

To establish a common analytical foundation across the diversity of participant backgrounds, this first module aims to ensure that participants share similar understandings of basic economic and gender-equality concepts, how they interact with each other and how basic economic ideas can be approached through a gender lens. Among the participants in the course will be economic policy makers, planners and practitioners, with varying degrees of exposure to working on gender issues in economics. The course will also include gender specialists with varying degrees of exposure to working on economic issues from a gender perspective.

The module does not aim to ensure that everyone operates at the same level of sophistication, though a subsidiary aim is to encourage those with more sophisticated understandings of either economics or gender equality issues to express themselves to others simply and in jargon-free terms, especially when communicating with others less immersed in their knowledge areas. A further subsidiary aim is to encourage all participants to speak and engage with each other.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of the module, participants will share a common understanding of:

1. Basic economic concepts.
2. Why basic economic concepts need to incorporate a gender dimension.
3. Basic gender concepts.

OUTLINE

I. Basic economic concepts.
II. Why gender matters for economics.
III. Agreeing on basic gender concepts.

DURATION

One-and-a-half days.

EXERCISE 1. WHOSE STORY IS IT? ICEBREAKER

Objective: to introduce the group to each other, facilitate the formation of the participants into a group and demonstrate asymmetrical information

The facilitator passes out slips of paper and pens. Everyone very briefly writes down a true story or experience that happened to them on the paper, along with their name. The more bizarre the story, the better it is for the purpose of the exercise. The slips of paper are folded and put into a container, shuffling them and mixing them up. The facilitator picks out four slips of paper and calls out the names of the people written there. These people sit on chairs or a settee apart from the group. The facilitator reads off the stories, then hands the slips of paper back to the four people, but gives only one person her own story. The rest of the group has to try to find out who is telling her own story by asking the four people to tell more fully the story on the slip of paper. The four people try to convince the group that the story they are telling is really theirs; after each of the four has done so, the group votes on who they think is telling her own story.

While the main goal of the game is to have participants relax with each other, the game should later be used to illustrate the idea of asymmetrical information in Section II of this module, before Exercise 3, which explores the concept of asymmetrical information in more detail.

I. BASIC ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

Objective: to enable participants to develop a common understanding of basic economic concepts

MARKETS

A market is any context within which the buying and selling of goods and services takes place. The market does not have to be a physical entity, but it could be. Ideally, markets are a coordination mechanism in which the prices and quantities of goods and services balance demand and supply in equilibrium. In neoclassical economics—economics taught to university undergraduates—a perfect market is one in which there are many producers, each with minimal share of the market; all producers produce a uniformly identical commodity, are free to start and cease production and have complete information about the market for their product. In this type of market, no individual buyer or seller can influence the market—producers and consumers are price takers. Perfect markets represent not so much a reality as a policy aspiration. If there is no interference in the operation of a perfect market, the forces of demand and supply adjust prices for goods and services to establish equilibrium, or balance, between supply and demand; the invisible hand—Adam Smith's famous concept—delivers the goods and services that consumers want because people are free to choose what they want to buy.

DEMAND

Demand—what people would like to purchase—shows the relation between the price of a good or service and the quantity that people are willing to buy. Demand depends upon the price of a good or service, prices of other goods or services, income and the more difficult-to-measure variable of *taste*, which economists call preferences. The law of demand claims that, all else being equal, the quantity demanded of a good falls when the price of the good rises and the quantity demanded of a good rises when the price of the good falls. For example, as the price of meat rises the quantity demanded may fall: Under the *substitution effect,* consumers substitute a less expensive food for the more expensive meat. Goods and services that demonstrate this quality are called *normal goods*. Goods that do not demonstrate this quality are called *inferior goods*. For example, as the price of rice falls it is not necessarily the case that the quantity demanded of rice will rise: Under the *income effect,* the same amount of rice can be bought with less money, and consumers will use the money that they have saved to buy other food rather than more of the cheaper rice. When expressing demand in a graph, it is important to distinguish between factors that result in movements along a demand curve and factors that result in movements of the demand curve itself. So a change in the price of tea results in a movement along the demand curve for tea, but a rise in the price of tea shifts the location of the entire demand curve for sugar, resulting in less sugar being demanded at each and every price, because sugar is *complimentary* to tea.

PREFERENCES

Consumer choices regarding what people would like to purchase determine what an economy produces; as firms must sell goods and services to stay in business, they must therefore sell what customers want to buy. This means that neoclassical economics is based upon the consumers being *sovereign*, in that having ultimate authority over their preferences means that they have ultimate authority over markets.

SUPPLY

Supply—what producers of goods and services offer to sell to consumers—is the relation between the price of a good or service and the quantity of a good or service that producers are selling in the market. It depends upon the prices of inputs needed to make the good or service, technology levels and the prices of other goods or services. The law of supply claims that, all else being equal, the quantity supplied of a good or service increases as the price of the good increases. When expressing supply in a graph, it is important to distinguish between factors that result in movements along a supply curve and factors that result in movements of the supply curve itself. A change in computer prices leads to a movement along the supply curve for computers, but an invention—a change in technology—that makes it cheaper to produce computers at each and every price moves the location of the entire supply curve for computers.

EQUILIBRIUM

Equilibrium is a situation in which supply and demand have been brought into balance. The equilibrium price is the price that balances the supply of firms and the demand of consumers. Equilibrium quantity is the quantity supplied and demanded when the price has fully adjusted to balance supply and demand. Equilibrium is established when firms respond precisely to consumer demand; consumer sovereignty holds that if firms charge more than individuals are willing to pay, demand falls, while if firms charge less than individuals are willing to pay, demand increases.

ADDING UP MARKETS

The market demand and supply for goods and services offers a simple—but not overly simplistic—framework for understanding the buying and selling of goods and services in individual markets by individual consumers and individual firms. This branch of economics is called *microeconomics*. If all the goods and services produced by all the firms in an economy are added up, this is called *aggregate supply*, the total output that firms produce and plan to sell at a given price level. If all the goods and services that individuals, firms and governments plan to buy at a given price level are added up, this is called *aggregate demand*. The branch of economics that examines the behaviour of the economy as a whole is called *macroeconomics*.

EXERCISE 2

Objective: to undertake elementary demand and supply analysis

This small group activity is designed to work through basic demand and supply concepts to establish a common basis of knowledge. At this stage, the facilitator can expect the economists to lead the gender specialists through the exercise. This will also facilitate the participants identifying with each other as a group. Each group should contain an even mix of economists and gender specialists.

GROUP A: APPLYING DEMAND

Instructions

Facilitators allocate participants into groups of four. Each group should work their way through the following exercise, for which they will need only a pencil and some paper.

1. Demand data for oral rehydration therapy (ORT) salts are shown in the table below. Plot the demand curve on a piece of paper.

TABLE 1.1: DEMAND FOR ORT SALTS

Price (cedis)	Quantity demanded (millions)
10	10
12	9
14	8
16	7
18	6
20	5

2. What happens to the demand curve when the government provides a cash transfer to people to buy the ORT salts? Illustrate on the diagram that you have drawn.
3. What happens to the demand curve for ORT salts when the availability of safe drinking water improves? Illustrate on the diagram that you have drawn.
4. Discuss whether you think that there are any goods for which demand *falls* as incomes *rise*.
5. Goods that are extremely fashionable, such as the latest Nokia mobile phone, may be demanded even though they are expensive relative to competing goods. Discuss whether you think the demand curves for such goods slopes downward, like an orthodox demand curve.
6. It is very common for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its policy advice to countries, to recommend that exchange rates be devalued, interest rates be increased and tax collection be improved. What effect do you think that this policy advice has on aggregate demand—the plans of all the individuals and firms and the government to buy goods and services at a given price level? Illustrate your thinking using a demand curve.
7. Demand depends upon the price of a good or service, prices of other goods or services, income and preferences. The group should briefly discuss whether it thinks any of these factors might be affected by gender. The economists in the group should address the ideas of gender specialists in economic terms.

When groups have completed the questions, signal the facilitator to examine the answers.

GROUP B: APPLYING SUPPLY

Instructions

Facilitators divide participants into groups of four. Each group should work its way through the following exercise, for which participants will need only a pencil and some paper.

1. Supply data for ORT salts are shown in the table below. Plot the supply curve on a piece of paper.

TABLE 1.2: SUPPLY OF ORT SALTS

Price (cedis)	Quantity supplied (millions)
10	3
12	4
14	5
16	6
18	7
20	8

2. What happens to the supply curve when the government subsidizes the company making the ORT salts? Illustrate on the diagram that you have drawn.
3. What happens to the supply curve for ORT salts when an improved production process is introduced? Illustrate on the diagram that you have drawn.
4. It is very common for the World Bank, in its policy advice to countries, to recommend that external trade be liberalized, that internal trade be deregulated, that state-owned enterprises be privatized and that the private sector be allowed to offer goods and services that were previously reserved for the public sector, such as

health care and education. What effect do you think that this policy advice has on aggregate supply—the total output that firms produce and plan to sell at a given price level? Illustrate your thinking using a supply curve.

5. Supply depends upon the prices of inputs needed to make a good or service, technology levels and the prices of other goods or services. The group should briefly discuss whether it thinks any of these factors might be affected by gender. The economists in the group should address the ideas of the gender specialists in economic terms.

When the group has completed the questions, signal the facilitator to examine the answers.

The facilitator should complete the exercise in plenary by asking for volunteers to explain the answers to the following questions:

1. Referring back to the information provided in Tables 1.1 and 1.2, facilitators should ask someone to plot the demand curve and the supply curve for ORT salts together on a new diagram. What is the equilibrium price?
2. The facilitator should have another volunteer show what happens to prices and quantities when a) the demand curve shifts and b) the supply curve shifts.
3. Assume that the government sets a maximum price for ORT salts that is below the equilibrium price. Have a volunteer try to illustrate what happens using the diagram drawn to answer Question 1 in this section.

II. WHY GENDER MATTERS FOR ECONOMICS

Objective: to facilitate the acquisition of a common understanding of why basic economic concepts need to incorporate a gender dimension

PREFERENCES IN ECONOMICS

Neoclassical economics does not address the question of what determines an individual's preferences to buy a good or a service because the determinants are assumed to originate outside the economy and its operation. Institutional economics disagrees, arguing that the habits, customs, conventions and norms that shape preferences are created within cultures that socialize individuals and, in so doing, affect how individuals acquire and process the information they need to make choices, including economic information. In this approach, consumers are not sovereign. Individual agency in expressing preferences is highly constrained by socially defined conventions and the psychological need of individuals to conform to social expectations. So economic choices are socially molded through the groups within which individuals place themselves, and preferences are therefore embedded within the social aspects of the economy's operation.

GENDER AND PREFERENCES

If the neoclassical economic argument is correct, gender relations may affect preferences, but this cannot be known and therefore can be ignored. So the gender identity of a consumer would not be relevant to an economic analysis. If the institutional economic argument is correct, preferences are heavily shaped by prevailing patterns of gender relations as females and males conform to different sets of social conventions and expectations, and this molds the goods and services for which they express a preference. For example, women and men may have different preferences for the amount of meat that they would like to consume on a daily basis. The evidence strongly supports the proposition that consumer preferences are shaped by gender relations.

PREFERENCES: INCOME AND NEEDS

The social conventions and expectations that shape consumer preferences are affected by income levels; the social conventions and expectations of the rich differ from those of the poor. But consumer choices must also satisfy a set of human needs, shaped by bio-physical and social relations, including the prevailing pattern of gender relations. If income rises, needs are first met, after which additional income is spent on nonessential consumption goods and services. If income falls, needs must be met before any nonessential spending is made; if it falls far enough, consumers must decide which needs are most important to them. So there is a hierarchy of needs that affects and is affected by consumers' income and that will be reflected in consumer preferences. Institutional economics calls this the *theory of lexicographic* preferences, and it suggests that prices may be less important in determining what consumers demand than are incomes, the hierarchy of needs, and the social relations and structures that shape the hierarchy of needs.

HOUSEHOLDS

Many goods and services supplied by firms and purchased by households for consumption (e.g., food) cannot fulfill any needs unless they are further transformed into an item that can be finally consumed. Such transformation requires labour (e.g., cooking). In addition to food preparation, such labour includes childcare, the maintenance of clothing, the reinforcement of shelter and the provision of hygiene and sanitation. This work takes place within households and is not paid, but does cost time and effort. Thus, in economic terms, households allocate resources—in this case, labour—to produce goods and services. Firms rely on this labour being available so that their goods can be processed after consumers have bought them.

Women dominate the provision of these bio-physically and socially necessary services. Thus, in households, social and economic institutions combine and reinforce each other: The structure of the household affects and reflects the gender division of labour between household activities geared toward maintaining the family and caring for children (traditionally considered women's domain) and participating formally in the labour force as the household breadwinner, such as in commodity production (traditionally considered men's domain). The performance of unpaid care work in the household is a precondition of supplying labour for commodity production. This means that intrahousehold resource allocation and the role of gender shape the ability of firms to supply and be able to sell goods and services, even though economic analysis typically does not account for the effects of gender roles.

The gender division of labour is the result of (patriarchal) gender ideologies that define women and men asymmetrically with regard to the other. These social identities, however, produce both social and material differences between females and males, and thus, gender-based social and material inequality.

EXTERNALITIES

Externalities are the spillover effects of an economic activity onto an individual or a community that is not directly involved in the activity. In such a case, prices in markets do not reflect the full costs or benefits in the production or consumption of a good or service. The social and economic benefit of performing unpaid household care work creates a positive externality—the availability of labour for commodity production—that is not reflected in the cost of production of a good or service.

PUBLIC GOODS

Public goods are goods or services that, if supplied to an individual consumer or firm, are available to others at no extra cost. There is a strong incentive for firms not to provide public goods because individuals benefit from their provision without having to pay for them.

Markets therefore will not supply public goods because doing so can never be profitable for firms. An everyday example is street lighting; if supplied to an individual, even at a cost, other individuals can use it without paying for it and therefore markets will not provide it. The benefits of unpaid household care work are public goods; in the aggregate, societies benefit from the provision of bio-physically and socially necessary services without having to compensate the providers of such services for their provision.

GENDER-EMBEDDED MARKETS

As mentioned above, the markets described in perfect competition are not found in practice. Transactions are not anonymous; the identities of the buyer and seller often affect the terms and conditions of sales, and hence gender relations can affect market operations. For example, the terms and conditions of a sale need not be the same for a female farmer as they are for a male farmer. At the same time, prices may not give the same information to the buyer and the seller. Such *asymmetrical information* may be an outcome of gender relations. For example, a male buyer of a crop may not reveal what he knows about the market conditions for the crop to a female seller of the crop because she is a woman. The *bounded rationality*—that is, rationality limited by the information available—that results from such asymmetrical information may be shaped by prevailing gender norms, resulting in non-market-based resource allocation and coordination mechanisms and institutions that also reflect a dominant set of gender relations. For example, if the female seller of a crop knows that the male trader will not give her the best possible price because she is a woman, she may choose to distribute her crop to certain members of the community in exchange for a commitment to work in her fields later in the year. Finally, while production is a precondition of market activity, reproduction in a precondition of production, and the social and economic reproduction of individuals, households and communities are the result of a gender division of labour that signals the characteristics of the dominant set of gender relations. So gender relations are embedded within markets and can result in markets that, far from being perfect, are often incomplete, fragmentary or missing.

EXERCISE 3

Objective: to demonstrate that markets may have gender relations embedded within their operation

This exercise uses the idea of the prisoner's dilemma to show that markets are rarely, if ever, perfect: Asymmetries of information between women and men mean that gender relations are embedded within the operation of markets and, thus, markets are social institutions subject to the prevailing parameters of a set of gender relations.

Instructions for Participants

The group is split into two groups, which stand on opposite sides of the room. Each group must nominate one person to act as recorder. A card game is then played, in which each person in one group is matched with someone in the other group. The objective of the game, for each individual, is to earn as much money as they can.

To each member of both groups, the facilitator gives a pair of playing cards—one red card (hearts or diamonds) and one black card (clubs or spades). The numbers or faces on the cards do not matter—only the colour.

Members of one group are all asked, one at a time, to play one of their cards by holding it face-down to their chest, so that the whole group can see that they have chosen a card to play, yet nobody in the group knows which card it is. The facilitator will then tell them who they are matched with, and each person in the pair can reveal the card that they have played. This constitutes one round; the game lasts five rounds.

In the first round, individuals are randomly matched with another participant. In the second round, individuals are randomly matched with a different participant. In the third round, individuals are randomly matched with yet another participant. In the final two rounds, however, individuals are matched with the same participant they were matched with in the third round. This means that, in the first two rounds, people do not know who their partners are but in the final three rounds, they do. In the final two rounds, individuals are allowed to communicate with their partners prior to selecting a card to play.

Earnings are determined by the card that individuals play in relation to the card played by the person matched with the individual.

- If individuals play a red card, their earnings increase by \$2, while the earnings of the person matched with them do not change.
- If individuals play a black card, their earnings do not change and the earnings of the person matched with them increase by \$3.

This means

- If both individuals play red cards, they both earn \$2.
- If both individuals plays black cards, they both earn \$3.
- If one individual plays a black card and the other plays a red card, then the first individual earns nothing and the other person earns \$5.
- If one individual plays a red card and the other plays a black card, then the first individual earns \$5 and the other person earns nothing.

For the game to work, the facilitator must ensure that the participants clearly understand the choices available to them. The recorder writes down the colour of a card when an individual plays it, the colour of the other participant's card, and each individual's earnings in the following table:

TABLE 3: EARNINGS FROM THE GAME

Period	Your card (R or B)	Other's card (R or B)	Earnings
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

In economic terms, the game is a prisoner's dilemma with low gains from cooperation of the following form:

TABLE 4: A PRISONER'S DILEMMA WITH LOW GAINS FROM COOPERATION

		Player 1	
		Black	Red
Player 2	Black	(3, 3)	(0, 5)
	Red	(5, 0)	(2, 2)

It is to be expected that, in the first three rounds, both players opt for red, because if one player opts for black and the other opts for red, the first player gets nothing. In the fourth round, the participants are allowed to communicate. This yields the possibility of cooperation or defection (cheating): Cooperation is the best possible outcome, with both players agreeing to opt for black. In the normal sequence of events, cooperation should be established by the fifth round.

The key lessons of the prisoner's dilemma game are:

1. Without information, there are individual incentives to opt for rational choices that are the worst possible outcome in terms of joint earnings; this is the case when both players opt for red. Therefore, anonymous market exchanges by individuals do not necessarily yield the best result for society as a whole.
2. With information, there is incentive to cooperate; if both players opt for black, they are better off. However, there is also an incentive to defect for private gain at the expense of society as a whole. This is witnessed when two individuals agree to opt for black but then one individual cheats and opts for red. The individual who has not cheated

and trusts the other loses badly. Even with information available markets may not necessarily be the best way of making choices.

3. In actual markets, information may not be distributed evenly. This means the benefits from cooperation may not be distributed evenly.
4. In particular, the distribution of information in markets may differ between females and males. This has implications for women's abilities to participate in markets.
5. In addition to the issue of incentives, the prisoner's dilemma illustrates the need for the provision of public goods. If all information is freely available and no player is excluded from such information, a better outcome is ensured for all players. Public goods can make markets work better, but because they must be made available to all, there is an incentive for firms not to provide them. The facilitator can also link the game's illustration of the need for public goods to the provision of unpaid household care work—the provision of such services predominantly by women provides benefits to society as a whole for which the women are not compensated. This means that men have an incentive not to increase their contribution, as they benefit from the work in any case.

At the conclusion of the game, the facilitator should review the key message that markets subject to asymmetrical information may not generate the best outcomes, and that the basis of such asymmetrical information may be gender relations. Thus, gender relations, again strongly affect the operation of markets. The facilitator should encourage the group to discuss this result and its implications, paying particular attention to the implications of the exercise for the economists that are participating; this exercise substantially undermines a lot of their training.

III. AGREEING ON BASIC GENDER CONCEPTS

Objective: to enable participants to share a common understanding of basic gender concepts

EXERCISE 4

Objective: to introduce, understand and debate key terms in gender analysis

The facilitator should ask participants to name any terms and concepts that are used in relation to gender that they feel unsure about. Write each of these terms and concepts on the flipchart as well as on a separate piece of paper.

Before the module, the facilitator should also have prepared a set of pieces of paper, each of which contains one of the following:

Sex versus *gender*

Gender division of labour

Gender equality

Formal equality versus *substantive equality*

Feminism versus *African feminism*

Household versus *African household*

Discrimination

Facilitators should divide the participants into groups of two or three. Hand out the slips of paper so that each pair or group of three people has one paper to discuss. Give these small groups five to ten minutes in which to agree on how they understand the concept written on their piece of paper. The facilitator must explain that some of the terms ma be controversial, and there is not always one correct definition of eac term, but it is important that the group as a whole has a more or les shared understanding of the concepts in order to have sensibl discussions in the rest of the course, rather than all talking past eac other by using the same terms with different meanings.

The facilitator should then ask one member of each group to tell the fu group of participants how they understand the concept. After eac explanation, invite other course participants to add, amend, or challeng the definition. Encourage discussion and even some debate. If th discussion goes badly off course, the facilitator should gently steer i back to a better definition of the concept.

After discussion of each concept, the facilitator should sum up with ho they understand that concept, using the module guidelines below fo assistance.

Go around the room until all concepts have been discussed.

After the module, add simple explanations for any extra terms tha participants named. Ensure that all participants receive copies for their file

SEX AND GENDER

Sex refers to the biological differences between female and male peopl It is fixed and does not change over time, across countries, or acros cultures. Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunitie associated with being female and male and the relationships betwee women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations betwee women and girls on one hand and men and boys on the other. Thes attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed an learned through socialization processes. They are context- and time specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected of, allowe for and valued in a woman or girl and a man or boy in a given context. I most societies, there are differences—and inequalities—between wome and girls on one hand and men and boys on the other, in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, and access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of a broader sociocultural context. Other important criteria for sociocultural analysis include class, poverty level, ethnic group, age and ability.

GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

The gender division of labour refers to who (women or men, young or old) usually does what in terms of different types of work: paid work on the land as well as in factories, mines, building sites, hospitals and offices; unpaid household care work, such as cooking, cleaning and caring for family members; and community activities, such as volunteering to care for community members who are ill and need help at home.

GENDER EQUALITY

Equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are considered, while recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is often understood as equality of opportunity. This means that women and men—or girls and boys—are not discriminated against in access to opportunities.

FORMAL EQUALITY AND SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY

Formal equality is a principle of equal treatment: Individuals who are alike should be treated alike by society, according to their actual characteristics rather than stereotypical assumptions made about them. Formal equality can be equated to equality of opportunity, the degree to which people have the same freedom to seek education, work, and leisure, and to otherwise develop and apply themselves to the best of their abilities. It does not account for differences in the characteristics and circumstances of different people and the effects this might have on their abilities to benefit from opportunity. As a result, formal equality often does not produce equal results because of significant differences in the characteristics and circumstances of women and men.

Substantive equality, like formal equality, requires that people be treated in the same way, but goes further in requiring also that the characteristics and circumstances of different people, or groups of people, be accounted for in deciding how they should be treated, to ensure that all are equally able to benefit from opportunities that present themselves. Substantive equality can be equated to equality of outcome.

FEMINISM

Feminism is a social movement that questions gender inequalities and tries to change them. Feminism focuses not only on women, but on the socially determined structure of relationships between women and men that result in women and men having different responsibilities assigned, different activities undertaken, different access to and control of resources, and different decision-making opportunities. Feminism can be thought of as similar to black consciousness, which questions race inequalities and tries to change them.

AFRICAN FEMINISM

African feminism challenges the assumption that gender oppression in Africa is exclusively the result of a patriarchal structure of female-male social relations, arguing also that specific forms of gender oppression arise from the legacy of the colonial experience. Colonialism's impact on Africa was vastly different in different places and spaces. African feminists argue that sexist, racial, class and ethnic oppression are inextricably bound together, and together have marginalized women in Africa. Struggles for gender equality must therefore challenge multiple sites of oppression, operating within the unique characteristics of African cultures and societies.

AFRICAN HOUSEHOLD

While the general definitions of gender and the economic characteristics of the household given in part II of this module are important, the specific characteristics of African households also must be recognized. Colonialism transformed prior African gender ideologies and drove a material wedge between women and men, evidenced in gender-based social differentiation. Within African households, women and men often have differential access to production resources, such as land, capital, technology, sources of income, credit and education. As a result, women and men within African households implicitly and explicitly negotiate the terms and conditions of their interdependence and relative autonomy. The social and economic content of bargaining processes must be understood if the dynamics of African households are to be appreciated.

DISCRIMINATION

In dictionary terms, discrimination means treating people with different characteristics—such as women and men—differently. The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) goes further in defining discrimination as different treatment that is unfair. Discrimination is sometimes explicit; other times it is implicit because it does not, for example, say females and males will be treated differently, but instead uses characteristics that are more common for females or males to discriminate. For example, job descriptions that specify a height restriction may implicitly discriminate by excluding those that do not meet the height restriction. CEDAW commits signatory states to combat both implicit and explicit discrimination.

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