



## Module 6:

# Gender and Family Roles

## Schedule for the Unit



### Learning Outcomes:

Students should learn:

- About the traditional roles of women and men in British and Irish society;
- About how these roles still continue to exist in Northern Irish society nowadays;
- To assess to what extent their own families differ from average families in relation to gender roles.

### Activity 1:

A brief questionnaire looks at how work is shared between male and female family members in the homes of the students. What roles and responsibilities do they have themselves?

### Activity 2:

The results of the classroom survey are being compared with large survey data from Northern Ireland. How do the students' own families compare with the average family in Northern Ireland?

### Activity 3:

Students discuss the traditional perception of men's and women's jobs. What characterises a 'man's job' and what identifies a 'woman's job'? Have gender perceptions and stereotypes of jobs changed during the past decades? What has led to the changes?

### Activity 4:

Summary of discussion about male and female roles in society.



**Module 6:****Gender and Family Roles****Factsheet 1****Traditional gender models:**

Traditionally, the man was the main breadwinner of the family whilst it was usually the woman's responsibility to look after the home. Looking after the home incorporated activities such as raising children, cleaning, cooking, looking after sick or elderly relatives. Before compulsory schooling was introduced education and religious upbringing also largely fell into the responsibility of the female head of the family, usually the mother.

Market capitalism has brought about a radical change in gender roles. About 70% of women in working age are now in employment. This compares with around 80% of all working age men. Behind these statistics, traditional gender roles and inequalities have continued to exist:

**Women:**

- Women are being paid less money than their male counterparts for the same jobs;
- Women are more likely to be in short-term or part time employment than men;
- Women are less likely to be in management positions (only 24% of managers in the UK are female, and in 2005 only one of the top 100 FTSE companies are headed by a female) or represent the public in parliaments.
- In the 2003 Northern Ireland assembly elections, 21 out of 108 elected candidates were women. Only 3 out of 18 Northern Ireland seats in House of Commons in Westminster were won by women in 2005 (Michelle Gildernew (SF), Sylvia Hermon (UU), Iris Robinson (DUP))

More detailed information about the perception of women in the parliament can be found in the following publication:

**Women's Hour** (by Yvonne Galligan and Lizanne Dowds)

[www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update26.pdf](http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update26.pdf)



## Men:

For men there are few structural inequalities. The most notable ones are:

- Many men are not entitled to paternity leave;
- In case of divorce or separation custody over children is in most cases automatically awarded to the mother and some men do not have the right to see their children.

Other inequalities relate more to the traditional role of men, such as:

- Boys receive less Relationship and Sexuality Education than girls;
- Counselling services and support networks dealing with men's issues are still largely unavailable. The fact that four out of five people who commit suicide in Ireland are men shows that such services are badly needed.

For more information on emerging men's issues and stereotyping on men see the following short publications:

**Men in the Mirror** (by Steve Biddulph)

[www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update7.PDF](http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update7.PDF)

**Mystery Man?** (by Paula Devine)

[www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update38.pdf](http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update38.pdf)

## Gender Division of Labour in the Home

Gender roles in the labour market have changed considerably, but perceptions about lives of men and women have been remarkably consistent in Northern Ireland:

In the 2003 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey:

- 36% of both women and men agreed that having a job is alright, but what women really want is a home and children;
- 43% agreed with the statement that being a housewife can be just as fulfilling as a paid job;
- 44% agreed that the family life would suffer if the mother was working full-time; and
- 46% agreed that a pre-school child would suffer if the mother worked.

Men in Northern Ireland said they spent on average around 6 hours weekly on household work, compared to over 17 hours that women said they spent. Yet, 44% of both men and women said they never disagreed about the sharing of household tasks and a further 28% said they disagreed only rarely.

→ A brief Research Update on this topic titled: **What Women Want? Women and gender roles in Northern Ireland** (by Ann Marie Gray and Gillian Robinson) can be found at: [www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update24.pdf](http://www.ark.ac.uk/publications/updates/update24.pdf).



More useful information dealing with gender issues and equality can be found at:

[www.equalityni.org/](http://www.equalityni.org/)

The Equality Commission Northern Ireland

[www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/)

The Woman and Equality Unit of the UK government

[www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/eyewitness/difference/women/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/eyewitness/difference/women/index.shtml)

The BBC Eyewitness

[www.mensproject.org/](http://www.mensproject.org/)

The Men's Project

[www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-women-politics.html](http://www.whrnet.org/docs/issue-women-politics.html) Women's Human Rights Net

<http://iwwraw.igc.org/>

The International Women's Right Action Watch

<http://youngwomen.womenlobby.org/>

The European Women's Lobby/Young women for Equality in Europe

<http://www.fnf.org.uk>

Families Need Fathers





## Module 6:

### Gender and Family Roles

#### How to?



**This sheet provides hands-on guidance on how information on Gender and Family Roles can be accessed on the ARK website and other relevant sites:**

#### Activity 1:

This activity just requires paper and pen. **Worksheet 1** provides the questionnaire and questions for this activity.

#### Activity 2:

In this activity, students are required to look up results of the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey. This can be done as follows:

1. Open your web browser and type in the URL for the ARK homepage, which is: [www.ark.ac.uk](http://www.ark.ac.uk)

From here, there are two ways of finding the required information:

- a.) On the ARK homepage in the **Word Search** type in 'Gender and Family' and mouse click on Go, which starts the search programme.

A screen appears with the results, which will look similar to this:

#### [NI Life and Times Survey - Gender and Family Roles Resources](#) ★★★★★



**Gender and Family Roles Resources** Questions on **Gender and Family Roles** were asked in 1998 and 2002. ARK Resources \* What women want? Women and **Gender** Roles in Northern Ireland by...

<http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/results/genderres.html> 01/21/04, 11786 bytes

#### [Young Life and Times Survey 1998 - Family and Gender Roles](#) ★★★★★

Young Life and Times 1998: **Gender and Family Roles** Listed below are the questions asked in the **Gender and Family Roles** module in 1998....

[http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/1998/Gender\\_and\\_Family\\_Roles/](http://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/1998/Gender_and_Family_Roles/) 09/23/03, 7905 bytes

#### [NI Life and Times Survey - Gender and Family Roles](#) ★★★★★

Module: **Gender and Family Roles** This page lists the questions asked within the **Gender and Family Roles** module, and for which years. Clicking on the year printed after every question will bring you to the results for that year. Publications and further information on **Gender and Family Roles**

<http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/results/gender.html> 01/21/04, 32411 bytes

Click on **NI Life and Times Survey – Gender and Family Roles**.



This opens a NILT page, headlined: ‘**Module: Gender and Family Roles.**’

b) You can also get to this page through the menu bars of the ARK website:

Click on **Specialist Sections** → **Surveys** → **NILT**.

This takes you to the NILT Homepage. Once on this homepage, click on **Results** and then on **List of modules**. From the list choose **Gender and Family Roles**.

2. On the **Gender and Family Roles** page scroll down and view the tables to the following questions. (The results tables page appear if you click on the year behind each question)

HHJOB1: *In your household who does the laundry?* [2002](#)

HHJOB2: *In your household who makes small repairs around the house?* [2002](#)

HHJOB3: *In your household who looks after sick family members?* [2002](#)

HHJOB4: *In your household who shops for groceries?* [2002](#)

HHJOB6: *In your household who does the household cleaning?* [2002](#)

HHJOB7: *In your household who prepares the meals?* [2002](#)

RHLDWORK: *How many hours a week do you personally spend on household work?* [2002](#)

SHLDWORK: *How many hours a week does your spouse/partner spend on household work?* [2002](#)

SHAREWRK: *Do you and your spouse/partner share household work?* [2002](#)

### Activities 3 and 4

These activities just require pen and paper.

You may want to encourage students to look up further resources and information on gender inequalities and stereotyping in order to find more facts and arguments for the concluding discussion or debate. A list of useful resources is included at the end of **Factsheet 1** for this module.



**Module 6:****Gender and Family Roles****Worksheet 1**Activity 1**Gender Role Questionnaire**

Please answer the following questions about your home. Tick the relevant boxes:

**Who in your home usually:**

	<b>A male</b>	<b>A female</b>	<b>Both males and females</b>	<b>Some-one Else, not belonging to the household</b>
Does the laundry				
Makes small repairs around the house				
Looks after sick family members				
Shops for groceries				
Does the household cleaning				
Prepares the meals				
Cleans the car				
Does the gardening				
Maintains the household budget				
Helps with school homework				

Now count up the scores. Every tick equals one point. Count up the total score for all females and males in the house. If males and females share a task evenly, give a half point to each females and males.

**Total Score Females: \_\_\_\_\_ Points**

**Total Score Males: \_\_\_\_\_ Points**

Who scored more points, males or females?

Are there typically 'male' and typically female tasks in the home?

Do the members of the family who do most work in the house also have a full-time job?



### Activity 2:

In the past, the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT) has repeatedly looked at the issues of gender division of labour in the home. The last survey was undertaken in 2002. Visit the ARK website ([www.ark.ac.uk](http://www.ark.ac.uk)) and find out how women and men in Northern Ireland compared with regards to the following questions:

1. Who mainly did the laundry?
2. Who mainly made small repairs around the house?
3. Who mainly looked after sick family members?
4. Who mainly did shop for groceries?
5. Who mainly did the household cleaning?
6. Who mainly prepared the meals?
7. How many hours a week did men and women say they and their partners spent on household work?
8. Did men and women think they share the household work fairly?
9. What can you find out about the employment status of men and women (working full time, part time or being at home?)





Discuss in small groups how do these results compare with the situation in your own families.



Activity 3:

**Men’s job - women’s job?**

Spend five minutes in small groups to discuss occupations that are typically carried out by women, mainly by men or by both genders. Use the table below for this task. Afterwards discuss the questions underneath the table:

Job title	Usually carried out by:		
			 or 
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

1. What is the nature of jobs carried out usually by men?
2. What is the nature of jobs usually carried out by women?

When discussing this, consider the following aspects: pay, job security, status, activities involved.

Why are there so few:

- male nurses, childminders, secretaries and primary school teachers?
- female lorry drivers, soldiers, mechanics, builders and fire(women)?

3. To what degree does stereotyping of maleness and femaleness contribute to the choice of young people’s occupations?
4. Are there any areas where changes have taken place in relation to gender roles (i.e. men entering ‘female domains’ and women entering ‘male domains’)?



Activity 4:

Finally, discuss the following three questions in class:

1. Is there still gender inequality in Northern Ireland?
2. Do people in Northern Ireland still have stereotypes about the roles of men and women in the workplace and at home?
3. What can be done to tackle existing stereotypes and inequalities between men and women?



## ARK School Resource

### Gender and Family Roles



#### Handout 1

#### Activity 2:

Questions asked in 2003 NILT survey:

#### 1. Who in your house does the laundry?

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	0	49
Usually me	4	36
About equal or both together	10	9
Usually my spouse/partner	49	0
Always my spouse/partner	32	0
Is done by a third person	3	2
Not answered	2	4

#### 2. In your household who makes small repairs around the house?

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	30	3
Usually me	49	6
About equal or both together	9	10
Usually my spouse/partner	4	43
Always my spouse/partner	2	28
Is done by a third person	5	6
Can't choose	1	0
Not answered	2	4

**3. In your household who looks after sick family members?**

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	2	26
Usually me	4	38
About equal or both together	39	25
Usually my spouse/partner	33	1
Always my spouse/partner	14	1
Is done by a third person	1	1
Can't choose	5	3
Not answered	2	5

**4. In your household who shops for groceries?**

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	1	31
Usually me	5	31
About equal or both together	34	30
Usually my spouse/partner	38	3
Always my spouse/partner	19	0
Is done by a third person	1	0
Can't choose	0	0
Not answered	2	4

**5. In your household who does the household cleaning?**

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	1	32
Usually me	6	42
About equal or both together	25	17
Usually my spouse/partner	39	1
Always my spouse/partner	22	0
Is done by a third person	6	4
Not answered	2	4

**6. In your household who prepares the meals?**

	%	
	Male	Female
Always me	1	27
Usually me	6	40
About equal or both together	31	25
Usually my spouse/partner	39	3
Always my spouse/partner	20	1
Is done by a third person	1	1
Can't choose	0	0
Not answered	2	4



**7. On average, how many hours a week do you personally spend on household work, not including childcare and leisure time activities?**

	%	
	Male	Female
None	19	2
1 - 10 hours	58	31
11 - 20 hours	10	40
21 - 30 hours	1	13
31 - 40 hours	2	6
41 + hours	0	4
Not answered	11	5

**8 On average, how many hours a week does your spouse/partner spend on household work, not including childcare and leisure time activities?**

	%	
	Male	Female
None	2	28
1 - 10 hours	39	58
11 - 20 hours	22	4
21 - 30 hours	13	2
31 - 40 hours	6	0
41 + hours	5	1
Not answered	12	6





**9. Which of the following best applies to the sharing of household work between you and your spouse/partner?**

	%	
	Male	Female
I do much more than my fair share	3	45
I do a bit more than my fair share	3	28
I do roughly my fair share	36	22
I do a bit less than my fair share	29	1
I do much less than my fair share	25	1
Not answered	4	2

**10. Which of these descriptions applies to what you were doing last week:**

	%	
	Male	Female
Working full-time	52	22
Working part-time	4	22
Looking after the home	0	17
Not working (seeking work)	7	4
Not working (and not seeking work)	1	4
Caring for elderly or disabled person full-time	0	1