



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

# Women's Economic Empowerment and Vocational Skills Development

# Influence of gender roles and stereotypes



An advertisement featuring two Polaroid-style photos of a smiling woman and a smiling man. The woman is on the left, wearing a green and blue plaid shirt. The man is on the right, wearing a grey t-shirt. Below the photos, the text asks: "An wen wenden Sie sich lieber bei einem Computer-Problem?" (To whom do you prefer to turn for a computer problem?). At the bottom, it says: "Rollenbilder engen ein. Umdenken öffnet Horizonte" (Stereotypes narrow horizons. Rethinking opens horizons). The logo for "Stadt Zürich Fachstelle für Gleichstellung" is in the bottom left corner.

An wen wenden Sie sich lieber bei einem Computer-Problem?

Rollenbilder engen ein.  
Umdenken öffnet Horizonte

Stadt Zürich  
Fachstelle für Gleichstellung



An advertisement featuring two Polaroid-style photos of a woman and a man. The woman is on the left, wearing a black top, with a neutral expression. The man is on the right, wearing a black shirt, also with a neutral expression. Below the photos, the text asks: "Von wem lassen Sie lieber Ihre Nägel pflegen?" (From whom do you prefer to get your nails done?). At the bottom, it says: "Rollenbilder engen ein. Umdenken öffnet Horizonte" (Stereotypes narrow horizons. Rethinking opens horizons). The logo for "Stadt Zürich Fachstelle für Gleichstellung" is in the bottom left corner.

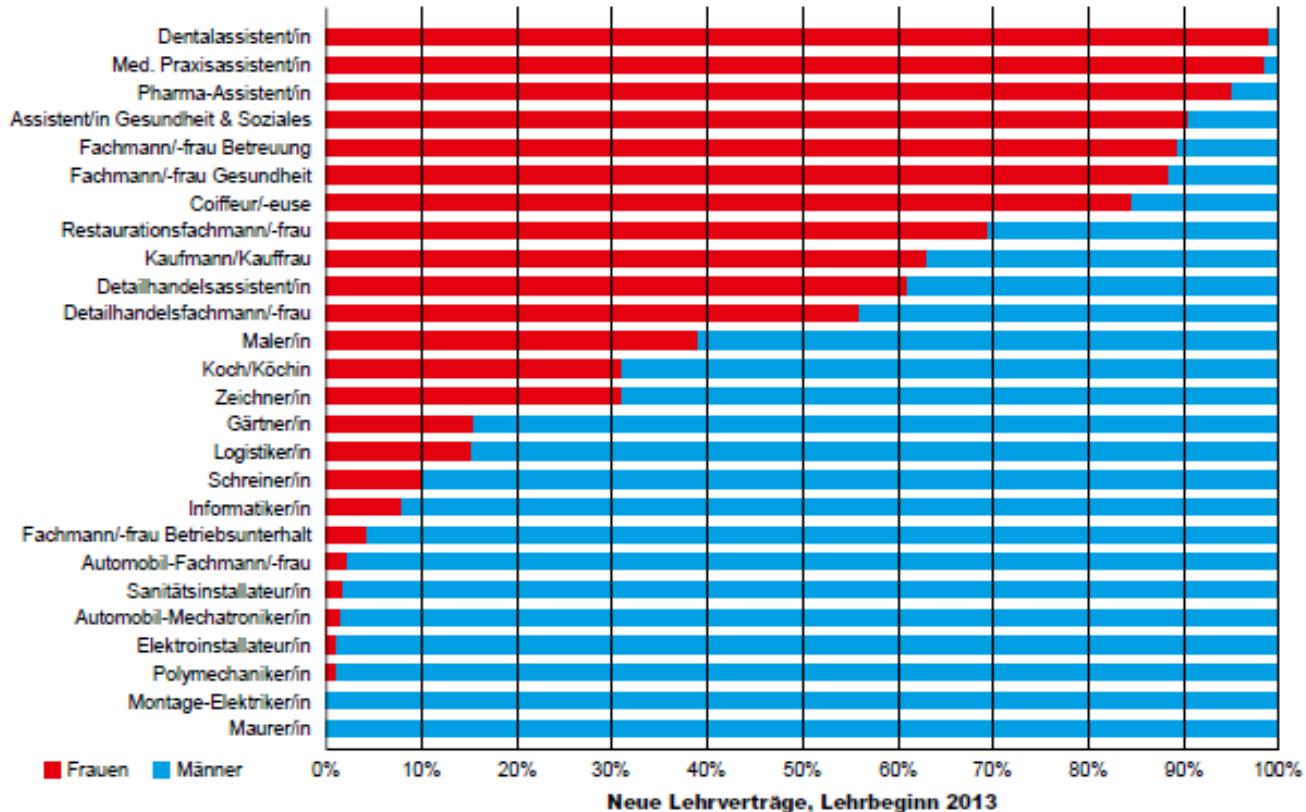
Von wem lassen Sie lieber Ihre Nägel pflegen?

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# Influence of gender roles and stereotypes

## Geschlechtsspezifische Berufswahl



Die meisten Berufe werden weiterhin vorwiegend von Männern oder vorwiegend von Frauen gelernt. So sind die Frauen in den medizinischen Assistenzberufen und in der Betreuung fast ausschliesslich unter sich. Andererseits sind auf Baustellen und bei den Fahrzeugspezialist/innen fast nur männliche Lehrlinge vorzufinden.



# What to do?



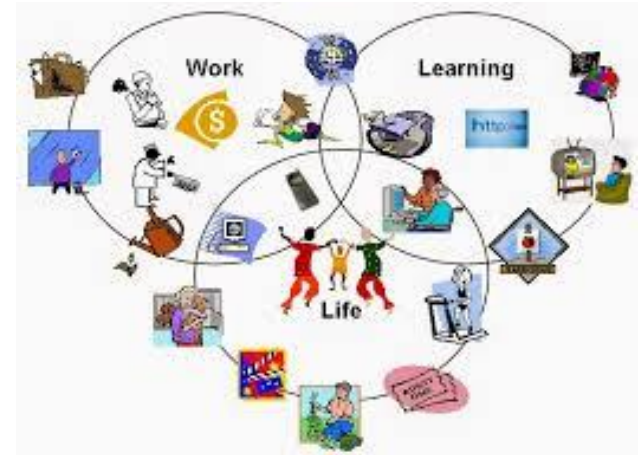
# Before training

- Gendered labour-market analysis
- Career counselling and guidance
- Advocacy through female role models and male champions



# During training

- Appropriate infrastructure
- Location of training centre
- Gender-sensitive training materials
- Female trainers
- Include life skills



# Transition from training to employment

- Placement services
- Role models and mentoring
- Provide gender-specific advice to potential employers





# Further information

## Mainstreaming Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) in Market Systems Development



Home doubles as a small grocery shop in Bangladesh (© Helvetas/ICM B. Akash)

This guidance sheet is one of a series written to support SDC staff in ensuring that gender issues are taken into account transversally in different thematic domains – in this case, focusing on market systems development (MSD). It outlines key gender issues regarding women's economic empowerment in MSD and how these can be integrated in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of cooperation strategies and project interventions. Some existing familiarity with MSD terminology is assumed.

### Key Issues

- A. What motivates women?** It is crucial for Market Systems Development (MSD) projects to adopt a gender lens during their market analysis. In particular, they need to analyse the incentives for women to be engaged in the market and how these incentives can be met – as well as the constraints that they face. The demands of unpaid care, for example, may be a constraint that must be addressed. Such considerations will affect the selection of market systems, the systemic change objectives, and the choice of partners.
- B. Are men on board?** While men are not the primary focus when mainstreaming WEE, the impact on them also has to be considered. Often women are unable to participate in market systems as their husbands are afraid that by so

doing, they will bring shame on the family and/or start questioning his role as "household head". Wherever this is a possible perception, WEE interventions should proactively seek men's support; without this, there is a risk of triggering domestic violence.

- C. What is the business case for market players to change?** Market players have an essential role to contribute to WEE, e.g. by employing women, providing adequate services to women, etc. When partnering with these market players, it is important to consider their interest ("business case") to make the necessary changes to be inclusive. WEE interventions should therefore be based on a sound business case, which is promoted by projects in a facilitative manner.

## Gender and Vocational Skills Development

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Trainer education: A woman trainer in Nepal explains the concept of electrical circuits. (© HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

This guidance sheet is one of a series written to support SDC staff in ensuring that gender issues are taken into account transversally in different thematic domains – in this case, vocational skills development (VSD). It outlines key gender issues regarding VSD and how these can be integrated in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of cooperation strategies and project interventions.

### Key Issues

- A. Be pro-active in recruiting trainees:** It is generally more difficult to engage women than men in VSD, particularly women who experience multiple, intersecting inequalities such as caste and ethnic-based discrimination, low income, and living in a remote geographical location. Depending on the project goal, either design training specifically for such women, or include certain courses tailored to their needs, and target them in recruitment campaigns.
- B. Gender-friendly teaching:** Ensure that training institutes are comfortable learning environments for women, with separate toilets, possibilities for childcare, and training materials that show women as well as men in employment. As far as possible, aim to have a mixed staff of women and men trainers.
- C. Link training to employment:** Work with potential employers to ensure that training is relevant and fits market demand, and that equal opportunities for women and men are championed. Aim to link training performance to the successful subsequent employment of graduates.

Gender and Vocational Skills Development



## Promoting equal participation in sustainable economic development

Toolbox

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