

unit **2**

activity **15**

images of changing gender roles and norms

OVERVIEW: Students interview a grandparent (or someone from that generation) about gender roles and norms when they were young, compare them with their own experiences, and discuss how gender roles change.

OBJECTIVES: To enable students to name at least three ways that gender roles or norms have changed over time; to strengthen research skills.

DURATION:

Steps 1–3: 15 minutes

Homework: 1 hour

Step 4: 30 minutes

MATERIALS:

Board+chalk (for Step 3);
interview chart handout.

TO PREPARE:

If some students do not have an older person to interview, identify older people who are willing to be interviewed. If possible, make copies of the chart for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Explain that this activity explores how gender norms have changed over time.
 - You will interview separately two people from your grandparents' generation (your grandparents or someone else). If possible, they should be of your own sex. If you do not know any older people, your family (or I) can help you find an older person to interview.
 - Ask each older person what male and female roles were like during their adolescence and youth. Find out what they think has changed since then. Ask about education, having fun, friendships, romance, customs related to marriage, and work. Allow the person you interview to speak about anything he or she wishes to describe.
- 2 Draw the interview chart on the board, or if you have made copies of the chart, pass them out. Review the chart and how to use it, explaining:
 - In the left column, record the person's answers to your questions.
 - After the interview, write in the right-hand column what these roles are like nowadays.
- 3 Make sure everyone understands the assignment and has someone to interview. Tell the students when the interviews and charts must be completed.
- 4 After students complete their interviews, discuss:
 - Whom did you interview?
 - How did it feel to interview older people about gender roles? What, if anything, did you or they find uncomfortable or difficult to talk about?
 - What did they tell you that surprised you? Based on this exercise, do you think that gender roles are unchanging or that they can change?
 - In which areas of life have gender roles and norms changed the most? Which changes do you think are for the better? For the worse? Why?
 - Many factors bring about change. How can globalized media affect gender roles? What about technology and the Internet? The actions of individual leaders? The actions of grassroots movements for social justice?
 - Do you think gender roles will continue to change in the next generation? In what ways?

Adapted from *Gendering Prevention Practices: A Practical Guide to Working with Gender in Sexual Safety and HIV/AIDS Awareness Education*. (Jill Lewis. 2003. Oslo: NIKK—The Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research.) <www.nikk.uio.no>.

INTERVIEW CHART

Topic What was this like:	In grandparents' time	For you now
Schooling?		
Home chores?		
Having fun with friends?		
Having a romantic relationship?		
Being a parent?		
Working at a job?		
Other questions:		