

Different Wages


Equal pay for equal work!

Themes	Social rights, Gender equality, Discrimination and Xenophobia
Complexity	Level 2
Group size	4+
Time	90 minutes
Overview	<p>This is a simulation that confronts people with the realities of the labour market. It addresses issues of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different wages for the same job ▪ Discrimination in the workplace ▪ Policies of low pay for young workers
Related rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right to fair remuneration ▪ The right to equal work and equal pay ▪ The right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of age and sex
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To confront participants with the realities of discrimination in the workplace ▪ To analyse whether discrimination on the basis of age and gender should be allowed or not ▪ To promote solidarity, equality and justice.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 copy of the “Workers’ wage rates” ▪ Labels, one for each participant / worker ▪ Pens ▪ Money. You can use the E-money on page 265.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare the labels. These should state the sex and age of the workers. Use the list of workers’ wage rates for reference. ▪ Decide what work the participants will have to do. Collect together any equipment they will need.


Instructions

1. Explain to the participants that they are workers and have to do some work for their employer (you!). They should not worry; everyone will be paid.
2. Hand out the labels at random, one to each participant.
3. Explain the task and make sure everyone knows what they have to do.
4. Let people get on with the work!
5. When the tasks are all completed, ask people to line up (queue up) to be paid. Pay each person according to their age and sex as laid out in the list of workers’ wage rates. You should count the money out aloud so everyone can hear and all are aware of how much each of the others is getting.


THEMES



SOCIAL RIGHTS




GENDER EQUALITY




DISCRIMINATION

COMPLEXITY




LEVEL 2

GROUP SIZE



4 OR MORE

TIME



90 MINUTES

6. If participants start to question or complain, give brief “reasons”, but avoid being drawn into discussion.
7. You will have to use your own judgement about how far to go, but stop when you believe it is beginning to get too heated! Give everyone time to calm down and to get out of role, and then sit in a circle for the debriefing.

Debriefing and evaluation

Take the discussion in stages. Start with a review of the simulation itself:

- How did it feel to receive more (or less) than others workers even though everyone did exactly the same task?
- Why did some people receive more (or less) than others? Why did this happen?
- How did it feel to get more than others? How did it feel to get less than others?
- Does this sort of discrimination happen in workplaces in your country?

Next talk about remuneration on the basis of sex:

- Can different pay for the same job, when done by a man and a woman, be justified? Why? Why not? When?
- What if a man does the job better than a woman? Is that reason enough for paying the woman less?
- If a man is more qualified than the woman, does it follow that he should be paid more?
- Do you think that there are jobs that should be done exclusively by men? Why? Why not? If yes, which jobs?
- Do you think that there are jobs that should be done exclusively by women? Why? Why not? If yes, which jobs?
- Do you think that the practice of affirmative action (or positive discrimination) can be justified in order to change social attitudes?

Finally, go on to talk about remuneration on the basis of age:

- Is there a policy for different wages on the basis of age in your country? If not, do you think there should be?
- What is the rationale for applying this kind of policy, especially in the case of young people?
- What is your opinion about this type of policy? Is it good? Bad? Necessary? Unnecessary? Give reasons.

Tips for facilitators

You will very probably have to adapt the activity. If you need to add or to delete some workers from the list, make sure that you still have a balance of sexes and a variety of different age groups. If the group is large or if you want to get into a deeper discussion on the two different types of discrimination, it is a good idea to sub-divide the group into two groups. Then one group can take the task of discussing discrimination on the grounds of sex and the other discrimination on the grounds of age.

What sorts of tasks are suitable for this activity? It should be exactly the same task for every worker. Also try to choose something that can be done by several people at the same time, so it does not become tedious for people to wait and watch. Think about the following:

- If you want to go outdoors, can it be done during the season of the year?
- Do you have the space?
- Can it be done equally easily and well by people of different ages and by both men and women?
- Is it safe?
- Will people feel embarrassed or refuse on ethical grounds?
- How long will it take?
- Does it require many skills?
- How can it be repeated several times over?

Examples of tasks:

- Clean the blackboard/whiteboard and neatly write a given phrase on it.
- Take books off a shelf and put them in a box. Carry the box to the other side of the room and unpack the books onto a second bookshelf.
- Make an origami aeroplane or simple hat
- Collect three different types of leaves and mount them on a piece of paper
- Look up the definition of a word and write it on a piece of paper. (If you choose different words, each relating to human rights, then at the end you may have a short glossary of terms!)

When you are paying out and have to give explanations for the different salaries, you will have to think up “reasons”. They can be grounded in what actually happened or they can be ridiculous.

For example:

- Someone who stumbled gets less
- Someone who smiled and looked happy gets more
- It’s Tuesday!

The information below, and the background information in chapter 5 will help you to be a resource person during the discussions.

Variations

If you do not feel it appropriate to do this activity as a simulation you could adapt the information to use as a basis for discussion. You could create a ‘fact sheet’ for each worker with information about the work they do, their age, sex and remuneration. You could also include other details such as educational background and professional experience. Alternatively, you could develop a few in-depth case studies for different workers. However, you should be aware that discussion alone will not stimulate the strong emotional response that you get through the simulation.

Suggestions for follow-up

If the group enjoys role play and would like to explore the role of trade unions in defending workers’ rights for fair pay and conditions, you may like to do the activity “Trade union meeting” on page 244.

Further Information

The issues about inequality of workers’ remuneration are different in different countries and also different depending on whether the issue is age or sex discrimination. Discrimination on a

Key date

1 May

International Workers Day

Right to Fair Remuneration

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 7

“The States party to the present Covenant recognise the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work, which ensure, in particular:

- (a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
 - (i) fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value, without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work.”.

European Social Charter Article 7 (5)

The right of children and young persons to protection of fair remuneration for young workers and apprentices.

Article 8 (3)

The right of employed women to protection for non-discrimination between men and women workers in respect of remuneration.

gender basis is nothing more than evidence of discrimination against women. Historically, women have been disadvantaged in the social, political and economic spheres. Examples of discrimination against women in the workplace include discrimination during the selection and interviewing of job applicants, discrimination in relation to promotion prospects and the fact that, on average, they get lower wages than men. It is a violation of the right to fair remuneration when women receive less than men do for doing the same job.

As workers, young people should also receive fair remuneration. However, here the situation is complex and differs from country to country. In general, the unemployment rate for young people is higher than for adults.

Although the principle of equal work for equal pay is generally upheld, youth remuneration is often held to be a special case and many countries have policies that allow young workers' to be paid less than an adult for the same job. These policies are justified on two grounds. On the one hand, there is the aim to discourage young people from entering the labour market and to encourage them to stay at school to gain a good education. On the other hand, it should still be attractive for employers to hire inexperienced and low-skilled young workers, especially the ever-increasing numbers of school drop-outs, who otherwise would be "loose on the streets", getting into trouble and being a burden on the state. The application of this kind of policy and its success in decreasing youth unemployment varies from country to country.

The European Committee of Social Rights (the implementation body of the European Social Charter) does not view low pay for young people as incompatible with the guarantee of a fair wage so long as the difference is reasonable and the gap closes quickly. For example, a wage 30% lower than the adult starting wage is seen as acceptable for fifteen to sixteen-year-olds. However, for sixteen to eighteen-year-olds, the difference may not exceed 20%. Youth wages are not always low. In fact there are a lot of well educated young people who earn a lot of money - too much in the eyes of some people! For example, young people flourish in the sectors based on new technologies and receive far higher remuneration than older workers who are close to retirement age.

HANDOUT

Workers' wage rates according to sex and age.

	Sex	Age	Pay in Ems
1.	Male	35 years	100
2.	Female	16 years	30
3.	Male	22 years	70
4.	Female	32 years	90
5.	Male	16 years	50
6.	Female	19 years	60
7.	Male	26 years	100
8.	Male	20 years	70
9.	Female	24 years	80
10.	Male	37 years	100
11.	Female	17 years	30
12.	Female	23 years	80