

# TRAINING MODULE **GENDER** (EN)



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## Introduction

For over 20 years, the Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS) - before 2013 known as the Alfred Mozer Stichting (AMS) - has delivered training courses for (social) democrats in the neighbouring countries of the European Union. Based on requests from these countries we send trainers in particular to give campaign training to sister parties, young people, activists and women's organisations. Requests from the latter were traditionally aimed at improving women's political skills, such as debating, public speaking and negotiation, in order to strengthen their position within the party. More women in politics was the motto, so that they would work towards improving the position of women in politics and in society. Demand for these 'women's trainings' has increased over the years. In addition, demand changed because the emphasis shifted towards gender issues.

In order to cater to the increasing and changing demand, we decided to develop a gender training module. Alongside our political skills manual 'How to become a better politician', this module offers theoretical and practical tools for our trainers to provide women's and gender training courses. The theory and practice of this module can, however, be applied to a broad range of target groups: women, young people, minorities, etc. The module serves as a supplement to the trainers' manual. Just as not all FMS trainers are expected to be experts in political campaign theory or communication, we do not assume that all trainers know everything about gender and the discussions on the topic in any particular country. It is much more important to be able to lead discussions on the theme and to foster efficient group dynamics in a training course.

Although in this course we will briefly address theory, the focus during the trainings will be the practical implementation of this module. We will start with a short bit of theory, and then move on to subjects like empowerment, domination techniques, the role of political organisations and diversity. This module elaborates the FMS method: brief theoretical pieces alternating with many exercises and tutorials in a training environment that is safe for the students and that encourages interaction. And finally: don't hesitate to trust your own knowledge and experience and to add other modules and exercises when developing a training course.

FMS trainers Channa Minke, Jamila Aanzi, Kirsten van den Hul and Janna Besamusca made significant contributions to the realisation of this module.

## Background

What is gender? According to the Oxford English dictionary, gender refers to being male or female, especially with respect to social and cultural distinctions, and not to biological ones. Other dictionaries add psychological distinctions. Gender is a fundamental part of your identity due to the role that society attaches to the concept<sup>1</sup>. Professor Ann Oakly played an important part in the formulation of feminist theory by making a connection between inequality and oppression of women and gender in her influential work 'Sex, gender and society' (Oakly 1972). The mainstream thought that the distinction between men and women was 'natural' was eventually eroded by distinguishing between gender and sex, a discussion that emerged after the second feminist wave (see below). The focus shifted to social constructs of being male and female and how On [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org) you can read more about the various aspects of the definition of 'gender'. these social constructs relate to power. This will be discussed further in the chapter on domination techniques.

Further reading on gender:

1. Simone de Beauvoir: The second sex
2. Judith Butler: Gender trouble

## Feminism

There are as many definitions of the concept of 'feminism' as there are feminists, but one of the clearest definitions was formulated by Maria Shear in 1986: 'Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.' Feminism deals with unequal (power) relations between men and women and strives for the emancipation of women. (Women's) movements have emerged from feminist thought that are dedicated in different ways in different contexts to changing unequal power relations. We distinguish three waves in Western feminist history.

1. **The first feminist wave** (1870-1920) mainly focused on the struggle for universal suffrage. The movement was generally progressively liberal and in some cases collaborated with the anti-slavery movement.
2. **The second feminist wave** (1960-1980) opposed the patriarchal society and championed sexual and reproductive rights, economic independence and political participation, under the slogan: 'the personal is political'. This wave was characterised by a generally left-socialist/social democratic orientation.
3. **The third feminist wave** (1990-present) mainly focuses on breaking down gender stereotypes, and features a wide variety of issues. For example, there are neo-feminists who devote themselves to 'typically' female values like peace and tolerance, Muslim feminists who

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<sup>1</sup> On [www.genderspectrum.org](http://www.genderspectrum.org) you can read more about the various aspects of the definition of 'gender'.

champion a women-friendly interpretation of Islam, and anarchic feminists who side with protest movements like Occupy and Indignados. There are also feminists who champion LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi & Trans) rights. An important movement is the black feminist movement, which believes that sexism, class oppression and racism are inextricably linked by means of intersectionality. In other words: forms of feminism that struggle against sexism and class oppression, but at the same time ignore the influence of race may be discriminatory towards women due to racial bias.

Social democracy has a long feminist tradition, which started with champions like Alexandra Kollontai, Klara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg, who fought to get women's issues higher on the social democratic agenda. This was not without repercussions, as many of their male colleagues found feminism 'bourgeois', and felt that exploitation of workers should have the highest priority. In spite of this, Kollontai, Zetkin and Luxemburg were very successful. They organised the first International Women's Day (in 1919), worked towards anchoring women's rights in social democratic policy and women like them achieved the introduction of universal suffrage in their countries.

Further reading on feminism:

1. Nancy Fraser: The fortunes of feminism
2. Kirsten van den Hul: Shevolution

## **Women's rights around the world**

International treaties and declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) guarantee the rights of women. The latter convention was initiated when it became clear that in spite of the rights of women having been formally laid down in more general treaties, the practice of discrimination against women continued (and continues), in particular with respect to equality and parity, autonomy, control of one's own life and body and participation in public life. Discrimination of women means: distinction, exclusion or restriction, resulting in or aiming to impair the rights of women. Presently, 182 countries have signed up to the UN Women's Convention. Although this represents some 90% of all UN member states, a number of important countries is still missing, among which the United States of America.

As to Europe, since the foundation of the European Community in 1957 legislation in the area of equality between women and men has been expanded massively. Initially, legislation focused only on equal pay for equal work, but all types of discrimination based on sex have since been included. The EU endeavours to ban trafficking in women, push back violence against women and promotes equal opportunities for men and women in the labour market. And yet, many challenges remain in Europe, such as:

1. **Equal pay:** according to European Commission data from 2013, women are still working 'without pay' for 59 days a year. The pay gap between men and women - the average difference between the hourly pay of men and women for comparable work in the overall economy - has hardly changed over the past few years, and is still around 16%.

2. **Violence:** no fewer than one in 20 women in Europe has been raped at some point in her life. That equals 9 million victims, more than the total population of Austria. Violence against women is also frequent in the Netherlands: according to the researchers, 45% of Dutch women has been the victim of physical or sexual violence. That is considerably above the European average of 33%.

3. **Political representation:** At present, women only make up just over one third of all delegates in the European Parliament. In many member states the ratio of female to male delegates is even lower. In addition, we are seeing an even greater underrepresentation in senior positions, where decisions are made.

4. **Sexual and reproductive rights:** in a number of European countries a debate is raging on sexual and reproductive rights. For example, the Spanish parliament adopted an amendment that significantly restricted access to abortion. In Ireland a fatality recently started a heated discussion: abortion is strictly illegal there, even when the mother's health is in danger.

Further reading on women's rights around the world:

1. Maya Angelou: Letters to my daughter /I know why the caged bird sings / Collected autobiographies

2. Audre Lorde: The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House

3. Nawal El Sadaawi: The Nawal El Sadaawi reader

4. Abenia Busia: Women writing Africa

## **Women in protest**

In recent years, a number of women's organisations have come up that often pursue militant strategies:

1. For example, in 2009 **FEMEN** was founded, an international organisation that describes itself as feminist, atheist and 'sextremist'. Its slogan is: 'Our God is a Woman! Our Mission is Protest! Our Weapon are bare breasts!' FEMEN's actions are playful and often controversial. Indeed, these activists are often reproached for allegedly striving for media attention but lacking in substance.

2. The French action group **Ni Putes, Ni Soumises** (Neither Whores, Nor Doormats) opposes the view of helpless Muslim women who need to be saved by others, and champions the right of Muslim women to self-determination.

3. The Russian women's group **Pussy Riot** is a feminist punk rock band that often puts on provocative actions and is highly critical of the Russian government especially on human rights and the role of the Russian Orthodox church.

4. In the '**Arab Spring**' protests, women also often played an important part. While in the past they tended to be behind the scenes - because they often did not hold positions in which decisions were made and therefore were invisible - women in Tunisia, Libya, Yemen and Egypt stood up to be counted. Yemeni Tawakkol Karman, also called the Mother of the Revolution, was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for her work, as the first Arab woman in history.

## **Equality during training**

Start and encourage in a discussion about the challenges that women, and men, face in political parties and in society; what examples are there from their countries, etc. Think of issues in the labour market, at home, in the street, at school, in politics, in the media, etc. In this way, the trainer will quickly get an idea of what is going on in a country, so you can use your group's knowledge about gender, feminism, etc.

### **Workshop equality**

Divide the group up in pairs and have them draw up a top-three of the main situations in which women in their country are not (yet) treated equally. Then make a list by asking the pairs in turn to name their top three. During this exercise, keep asking whether: A: the group as a whole agrees, and B: whether there are any examples to illustrate why they think this.

### **Workshop equality for mixed groups**

Let the students think of a number of situations in which there are strong gender stereotypes or gender roles; for example in dating (predator and prey), someone who steals your parking space (let it pass or get angry), persuading a teacher to give you a higher mark (cry or shout), a dance/salsa party (waiting to be asked for a dance or hanging round the bar). Pick one or two and let the groups act them out, with the men playing women and vice versa. Discuss how they felt playing the opposite role, and then how men and women are restricted by gender roles and stereotypes.

## **Empowerment**

'To empower' means: to enable. It is directly linked to strength and power. And that is in fact the essence of it: strength and power to have more control of your own situation by using and developing your abilities to actively shape your own life and that of the community of which you are part in economic, social and political terms. Empowering yourself and others

boosts your self-confidence. You can give someone more 'power' in a range of different ways: by delegating authority to someone, by involving someone in a decision-making process, or by giving someone more autonomy. It strengthens people and groups, so that they can take part in society.

Through empowerment, individuals, organisations and communities get a better grip on their own situation and environment. They acquire control and their capacities, such as self-awareness are sharpened. Empowerment is a process whereby people or groups get more influence on the events and situation that are important to them at the micro and macro level. Empowerment is a form of self-guidance; it makes you stronger, but demands some practice. Women can also empower each other. How can they do this? By learning from each other by exchanging experiences (both good and bad), by coaching each other, by nominating each other for positions, by informing each other of any opportunities, and by supporting each other instead of abandoning each other. Help each other by sticking together! Empowerment in itself is not enough. There are still systematic obstacles to equal valuable participation. Below, we set out a number of exercises to practice empowering yourself and others.

## **Empowerment during training**

A frequent problem in empowerment has to do with saying YES or NO at the right times. Here is a suggestion how you can zero in on this during the training.

### **Saying YES and NO**

'YES, of course I'll help you with that, no problem.' You've said it before you know it, even though you know you don't have time for it. Or they ask you again to make coffee for a meeting, being the only woman, even though it definitely is not part of your job description. You wanted to say NO, but you didn't dare. It's not very nice to refuse a request. But it's also not very nice for yourself to say YES to any and all requests, and having to do all these tasks in addition to your own responsibilities.

'NO, I'm not ready for that. Ask someone else.' You've said it before you know it, and you certainly were ready for it. It is a frequent reaction of (especially) women for example when they are offered a promotion. Even leaving aside institutional and cultural obstacles that keep women in unequal positions, women too often still think: I can't do that, I don't have enough experience, I don't have leadership qualities, I'm not good enough. Men, however, tend to respond with an attitude like: 'I was born ready'.

What we are seeing here, is that women say YES to the wrong things and NO at the wrong times. It's a phenomenon that is hard to shake, but it is possible: by practising a lot. Make a list for yourself of 'kind' ways of saying no, and practice them in front of the mirror. When you make a list, you will have a choice of options to use when people ask you. Here are some examples: Recognise your discussion partner's problem by showing understanding, without taking the problem on. 'Poor you!', or 'I can imagine that would be a problem for you'. Use the first person to say what you cannot do. 'I understand that you are very busy, but I can't do it

for you.' Only give the very least explanation. If you give too much information, your conversation partner can use it to start a discussion with you about why you can do it. And if you explain too much, it will come across as an apology.

After you have explained what you can't do, say what you can do. Or try to help them find another solution. If your conversation partner insists, stick to your guns! If necessary, use the scratched gramophone record technique: Keep repeating what you said until your conversation partner understands that no means no. You will come across as more professional and kinder. In addition, you will exude self-confidence. And that in turn will make your conversation partner take you more seriously and find you more trustworthy.

### **Workshop empowerment**

Divide the group into four. Each of the four groups chooses two members who will do the role play in front of the whole group later. The rest of the group helps with the preparation and observation of the role play. Groups 1 and 2 prepare a scene about saying YES to a promotion for which initially you thought you weren't ready, in which they act out two situations: first one in which it goes wrong, including excuses etc. Then they play a scene in which it goes right. Groups 3 and 4 prepare a scene about saying NO to a request that you don't have time for. The request is from a senior colleague who has worked for the organisation for years, for another colleague, who is a junior who has just joined the organisation. Practice how you can reject the request in a pleasant way and say NO.

### **Workshop empowerment for mixed groups**

Discuss a number of examples of positive discrimination (affirmative action) by means of an active debate. Give an example of affirmative action: e.g. gender quota, subsidies to employers for taking on young people or disabled people, priority for single mothers in being allocated social housing. Ask the students who favour a particular policy measure to go to one side of the room and the opponents to the other. Let the students debate each other, and explain that they can change sides if they have been persuaded. Ensure that the policy measures are specific enough to have a debate about: so don't go for gender quota in general, but 30% or 50% in parliament or on boards and in businesses. Give them the space to explore the boundaries between empowerment and favouritism.

### **Domination techniques**

Domination techniques are strategies to exert power over others, in other words, to elicit certain types of behaviour in others for one's own purposes, also if the others do not agree or do not want it (Max Weber). Power is not equally divided over race, ethnicity, gender, age, class or sexual orientation. That is why the balance of power is often unequal; one party is dominant, and the other party cannot extricate itself from it. Power can be exerted physically, economically, ideologically, mentally or relationally.

Consciously and subconsciously, strategies are employed to maintain this balance of power; one such strategy is to use 'domination techniques'. These are methods that are often used to

make and keep those who have less or little power passive and submissive. Both men and woman consciously and subconsciously use these techniques. They are used wherever there is power and influence: in politics, at work, in the media, at school and in social interaction. In debates, meetings and discussions, for example, you often find that men are speaking longer and more frequently than women. This does not mean that women do not have opinions. It just shows that the social constructs are formed in such a way that women structurally take and get less time to speak. Being exposed to domination techniques hurts self-confidence. The domination techniques make you believe there is something wrong with you and/or that you are dumb. They affect your belief in your own abilities. Learning to recognise the techniques helps you:

1. **To realise** that it's not you who is boring, stupid or ridiculous, even though you feel you are.
2. **To understand** that the techniques have a negative effect, and that they must be resisted.
3. **To initiate a discussion.** At work, in the family and at political gatherings it is important that both men and women become aware that there is inequality and that it must be tackled.

## **Empowerment during training**

Domination techniques are often used in political organisations. People have their own agenda, they want to achieve their goals and push others out of the way. By recognising the techniques and giving them a name, they lose their effect. That's why it's important to learn how to recognise them, and also to make sure you don't use them yourself. Below we discuss a number of frequently used domination techniques. It is important to realise that they can also be used in combination. The techniques are not only used against women. Especially when you are training youth organisations, don't forget to mention that these same techniques are often used against young people ('When you get more experienced, you will find that...').

### **Making people invisible**

Example: Rihanna takes part in a union meeting. It is her first meeting, and she will address the group for the first time. Her heart is pounding and her palms are sweaty. 'Why am I so nervous?', she wonders. All the others are looking relaxed and at ease. The speaker before Rihanna starts his argument. It's clear that he is used to addressing groups. He slams the table to make his point, and speaks at length and resolutely. There is no doubt: this is someone who knows what he is talking about. Then it's Rihanna's turn. She runs through her presentation. It only takes a few minutes. Rihanna hears how shrill and uncertain she sounds. But fortunately, it is over quickly. She waits for a reaction. No one says anything. The meeting continues as if she never said anything. Rihanna feels terrible. 'Did I say something inappropriate or stupid?' she wonders. I should have kept quiet.

'Making people invisible' is to forget, overlook or ignore someone. It robs people of their identity and reminds you that you are less important than other people and you don't have any influence. 'Making people invisible' means that someone chooses to treat someone else or a group as if they are not actually there.

You can ask the group one or more of the following questions to start a discussion. Have you ever experienced that:

1. *The chairman of a meeting ignored your request to speak?*
2. *You were not asked to give your opinion in a meeting, at work, or in a private situation?*
3. *No one responded to what you said?*
4. *Issues that you raised were not included in the minutes?*

Have you ever noticed how few women are represented in the media? Not to mention all the women who are missing from the history books. All too often when working groups or think tanks are formed, women are overlooked. People often say that this is a coincidence or that women couldn't be found for that particular subject.

The fact that people are being made invisible is often difficult to address, because it often happens without words, but with body language, gestures or in fact a lack thereof. For example, someone may read the paper when someone else is talking, talk to their neighbour, yawn, exchange knowing glances with others, get up and walk around, get a drink, in fact, do everything except listen to the person who is speaking.

Many women find that they are not being listened to. In some cases, this is partly because they only raise their points at the end of a discussion. At that time, bringing up new points can be seen as inappropriate. At other times, however, your input may be ignored because you are a woman. It is not hard to see, then, that women speak less often in meetings and that they are less willing to join a discussion panel on live television.

If you are in a situation in which you are being ignored, avoid becoming uncertain. If you recognise it is a domination technique, you can avoid taking it personally and actually believing that your opinion is irrelevant. If people don't react to what you are saying, you can mention that no one has responded to your point yet, and that you would like to hear their reaction. It is important to make other people aware of what is happening and that everybody should ensure that everyone in the meeting can make his or her point.

### **Ridiculing**

Example: Irina returns from a conference on equal rights, where she has heard a lot of new information. She looks forward to telling her friends about everything she's heard. 'Was it interesting?', Tom asks as Irina comes in. 'Yes, it was great', Irina answers. 'There were maybe

150 women...' She doesn't get the chance to finish. 'What a henhouse!', Tom jokes. The other friends laugh and start cackling loudly. Irina tries to speak, but she keeps getting interrupted by more jokes. In the end, she shouts angrily: 'Alright, never mind, you don't give a damn about what I have to say!' 'We're just kidding', the men say. 'Can't you take a joke?'

Ridiculing happens when someone's contribution is being ridiculed, when someone's behaviour is compared to that of animals (like chickens), when someone is being portrayed as highly emotional or sexual, or when she is portrayed as cold and manipulative. The jokes in question are jokes that make you feel uncomfortable. Ridiculing is an effective domination technique: when you're using it, you can make people laugh, but the person who is at the receiving end will feel embarrassed because the joke is on her. This is very unsettling.

If this happens in a bigger group, the temptation is to laugh it off and forget the incident as quickly as possible. But that would not solve anything. When you recognise domination techniques for what they are, you can call the person using them to account without being embarrassed or getting angry. If you express the effect the joke has on you, the other part will have to admit that it wasn't meant like that. You can also help each other by not laughing when jokes are made about women, gay people or other groups.

### **Withholding information**

Example: After a meeting, people say: Let's go for a drink. Steve and the other colleagues say they will come along. Tom sighs; he would much rather go home. He doesn't like to go to the pub after every meeting, but he knows what's going to happen. Next meeting, the other colleagues will have sorted everything out. He will have no more say in anything. It's not just a matter of having a drink: they also exchange information and anticipate the formal decision-making by making arrangements ahead of time. So Tom decides to join them in the pub. But who are they to decide where and when the decision-making happens?

Withholding information happens when a group of people - often like-minded people - seek each other out to prepare the decisions. This restricts other people's access to information. In politics especially, information is exchanged and opinions formed during informal gatherings. Not everybody is invited to these informal events or has equal access to these events. In Finland this is called sauna politics. Many buildings, including offices, have saunas, and in the male part a lot of wheeling and dealing goes on. Female politicians can't just get a towel and join in, so they hear what has been discussed only afterwards.

Withholding information is a classic domination technique. When you notice information is being kept from you, you may start to feel uncertain or excluded. That makes it easier for the others to keep their dominant position. It may also happen subconsciously: people may be unaware that exclusive information exchange excludes other people. By recognising the technique, you can see that it is necessary to ensure that you have access to this information and that it is not odd to ask for it. It is also important to ensure that you have a good network and that you prepare for meetings well together, so you are ready to object when it becomes clear that things have been decided in advance by a selected group of people in the meeting.

## Double whammy

Example 1: Tessa calls her parents to ask if they can babysit her son tonight. She has an important meeting she can't afford to skip. 'Aren't you spending too much time on these meetings? You see your son so rarely,' her mother protests. Tessa gets this a lot from her parents. They feel she should stay home at night and look after her son rather than go to meetings. It is clear they believe that this is not compatible with being a good mother. Even so, they agree to babysit. During the meeting, Tessa is asked to join a working group that meets every Wednesday evening. Tessa says: 'I'm sorry, but I can't. I've promised my son I'd be home on Wednesday nights. Tessa realises the others aren't happy about this. In the corridor, she hears people muttering to each other: '...stay home with the kids...', and 'This working group happens to be a lot more important than babysitting. It's a typical woman's choice.'

If a woman is working and/or politically active, she's told she's neglecting her family, that her work takes its toll on her family, that she's only thinking of herself, etc. This is what is known as a 'double whammy': it is wrong when a woman does something, but also when she doesn't. It's a domination technique that is often used against victims of prejudice and stereotypes. For example, women who are active in the feminist movement are accused of being responsible for high divorce rates, and at the same time that women are not active enough in politics. 'Damned if you do and damned if you don't.'

It is important to learn to recognise this domination technique. Like men, women are needed everywhere: at work, in politics and for their children. As stated earlier, domination techniques can be used in combination. One example of a combination of ridiculing and the double whammy is the the technique of guilt and shame.

Example 2: During a meeting Deria proposes to change the setup of the meeting in order to improve the atmosphere: 'Let's meet occasionally without an agenda and take turns to bring a cake. 'What kind of stupid idea is that?' says Mehdi scornfully. 'This isn't a tea party. This is serious business.' 'But it's always the same people talking during meetings, so I thought it would be a good idea to change the setting a little, so that...' Mehdi interrupts Deria. 'Well, it certainly isn't my fault if some people don't open their mouths. Why don't they do a course in public speaking? This is not a daycare centre.' Deria feels stupid. Maybe her suggestion was silly. What will they now be thinking of her?

Women feel guilt and embarrassment when they are told they are not good enough. It makes them question themselves. 'Perhaps it was my fault, maybe I brought it upon myself.' With rape, too, women are often told they brought it upon themselves or that they should have realised that they should not have been in a particular place at a particular time. Feelings of shame and guilt prevent women from standing up for themselves. It is important to counter such feelings. One of the conditions for doing so is not allowing yourself to feel them, by recognising the technique, and not causing or increasing such feelings in other women. In volunteer organisations it is important to realise from time to time that the others are not

there just for you. When someone wants something different or is not available, ask yourself what it is that you really want them to do. Are your expectations actually reasonable?

### **Stealing ideas**

Sometimes other people take over your recommendations and suggestions and then get the recognition for them. You're surprised and don't quite know how to respond to this. Some people also find it more important for the substance to be heard rather than that people remember who came up with the idea in the first place. But perhaps they should make a fuss about it. Things like this can make a real difference to a career. It is often difficult to bring this up yourself, so other people have to be on the alert and flag it up: 'You mean the idea that Eva first raised.'

### **Underestimation and insults**

These domination techniques are used when a person deliberately underestimates your ability to understand matters and insults you. Remarks like 'you wouldn't understand' or 'you're missing the point' are used to intimidate you. In situations like these, the matter is often that it is the conversation partner who has not expressed himself or herself clearly or has not listened to you properly. Other ways of putting you off-balance are: 'Can't you take a joke?' 'You are lovely when you're angry!', and 'You look so sweet!'. This is what former Dutch prime minister Balkenende said to presenter Mariëlle Tweebeke when he didn't want to answer her question during an election debate in 2010.

Some women experience that the chairman of a meeting treats them like a little girl: 'Didn't you know that, sweetheart?' These are techniques to render you harmless, and to discredit input from women. You can deal with this for example by ignoring these kinds of remarks and continuing with the points you wanted to make. You can also highlight the insult and make explicit what is happening, like this: 'Thank you for your compliment, but I thought we were here to listen to a party leader who had something to say. Didn't you hear my question? Let me repeat it for you: ...'

### **Interrupting**

It is usually men who interrupt. Women are interrupted more often than men. When someone interrupts you, make clear that you have not finished. Ask if you can finish your point and then do so in the way you had in mind. Don't rush because you know someone else wants to speak. If other people keep talking, wait until everybody is listening to you again. In this way, your input gets the attention it deserves and in the future the person who interrupted you will wait for you to finish.

### **What do you do when domination techniques are being used?**

1. Expose domination techniques in meetings, seminar, conferences, etc. If you know the techniques, it is easier to recognise them. This will help you to realise that it's not you who is boring, stupid or ridiculous, even if you feel you are. It is the technique that makes you feel that way. Develop the confidence that your impression of the situation is correct.

2. Tell other people about the oppression. Solidarity is important. When other people know what is going on, he or she can support you when it happens. By putting it into words, other people will recognise it more easily and feel inclined to do something about it.

3. Confront the person who uses the domination technique. Explain carefully why you feel oppressed. Be aware that the technique can be used subconsciously. It is important to highlight this as soon as possible.

### **Workshop domination techniques**

Domination techniques are exposed best when you see them in action. Most people have been subjected to them at some point, but don't immediately recognise them from a theoretical description. So follow up the theory with a theatre workshop. Divide the students into groups of four to six people. Instruct each group to act out a situation that occurs frequently in their organisation, like a board meeting, negotiation, preparation of some activity, etc. Let them prepare a scene of no more than five minutes in which they have to use at least two of the domination techniques discussed. It is not important to have them act out the solutions perfectly, because they will be discussed during the feedback round. Possible variation: ask the rest of the group to put their hand up when they recognise a domination technique. When they do, they should take over the role of the person who is the victim of the technique by changing seats with them and do the exposing on his or her behalf.

After every role play, take time to discuss with the group what just happened. Let them recognise the techniques, discuss how they work, how the victim felt and whether they have been at the receiving end of such a technique. Then ask if anyone knows a way to deal with the situation better. Make sure that you have a few concrete examples at hand. After the last role play, also discuss the role of the bystanders: why didn't anyone help the victim? Didn't they recognise what was going on, or didn't they dare to step in?

### **What can political organisations themselves do?**

Political organisations are all about power and influence. And that's what domination techniques are used to achieve. In order to limit them, it is important to actively flag them up. Make sure that equality is not just a political aim of the party, but that the party should also put its money where its mouth is. Here are some tips to discuss during trainings.

1. If you organise activities that draw a lot of new members, explain to them **what kind of behaviour is expected** of them. For example, at the start of a meeting or training weekend, point out explicitly that sexist, racist, homophobic etc. jokes and remarks are not funny and are not compatible with being left-wing/progressive.

2. Appoint someone for members who feel disrespected or who have other unpleasant experiences, such as (sexual) intimidation. Always **appoint a person of trust**, preferable a man and a woman, where members can report any trouble they have.

3. **Make equal representation a standard feature.** Ensure that you yourself do not allow prejudice, and that you emphasise diversity. You might set a quota for women, ethnic minorities, LGBTs, regions, etc. Ensure that the delegations have the correct male/female ratio etc.

4. In the publishing materials of your organisation **don't just use the male form** and don't tolerate any prejudice. When writing materials, also use 'they' instead of 'he' or 'he/she', and why not call a police officer Anna?

5. A major part of the responsibility for a good position for women lies also with women themselves. **Encourage women** to play an active role in the organisation and stand up for themselves. Make clear that that is what you expect from them.

6. As the chair of a debate or conference, or even a smaller meeting, try to **give the floor to a man and a woman in turn**. If you find that more men than women want to speak, you may opt for a 'strict zip system' for a while. After a man, give the floor to a woman, and vice versa; if there isn't a woman who wants to speak after a man, close the debate. This may sound forced, but experience teaches that this helps women to feel more engaged and confident to actively participate. It also motivates delegations to bring women who really have something to say.

## Organisation structure during training

You may ask the group: 'If people start noticing that the chair systematically allows fewer women to speak than men and does not rebuke the participants in the meeting when they behave inappropriately, what does this do for a. the chair's credibility, and b. the quality of the outcome of the meetings?' That helps to highlight the issue.

### Workshop organisation structure

Divide the students into groups of four or choose four volunteers to act out the following scenarios. The four play a group of members of the volunteer organisation where the training is being given who are developing a campaign together. One of them plays Fatima, a young woman or mother who has missed a number of meetings over the past few months. The other three play three types of leaders, who confront the member who is often absent with this fact. For example, the passionate leader who expects 100% commitment, the plodder, the paternalistic leader, the empathic leader, or the excessively responsible leader who tends to do everything him or herself. Role play the three scenarios before the group and discuss whether Fatima remains a member and whether the campaign is completed.

## Diversity yields returns

Scientific research has demonstrated again and again that diversity yields returns, and that diverse teams are better at approaching problems from different angles and solve them.

Research done by McKinsey showed that between 2008 and 2010 companies with diversity at the top were also top financial performers (McKinsey Quarterly, April 2012). There appears to be a strong correlation between diversity at the top and the success of an organisation. And the same is true for politics! In party executives where strategic decisions are made, it is very important to have different visions, life experiences and cultural backgrounds. This puts executives in a better position to take well-considered decisions. Diversity prevents tunnel vision. But the number of diverse teams remains appallingly low. Organisations often say: 'We want more diversity, but we can't find the right people.' Diversity is often associated with obligation, social desirability, with being a burden, with investment, with costs - anything but success.

A diverse team is often better able to deal with the challenges in society and exploiting opportunities. Diversity boosts creativity. But dealing with people from diverse backgrounds isn't always easy. It can make people uncertain and cause tensions, which leads to communication problems and conflicts. That is why entrepreneurs and managers often consider diversity a burden. It is sometimes natural for organisations to opt for homogeneity, but then women and young people are often missing from teams.

### **Diversity yields return during training**

Ask the students in a training course about the situation in their organisation/party. Have you ever wondered how diverse your own organisation is? Are the people in it aware of the benefits of diversity (more members, a bigger market and new customer groups)? Is the organisation willing to invest in bringing in people from diverse backgrounds, also people who are now on the side-lines? And does the organisation accept the internal changes this can cause?

### **Workshop diversity**

Divide the group up into smaller groups (four to five each). Give the groups time to prepare (20 minutes or so) and let them make two lists: what is happening in their organisation to promote diversity, and what else could they or should they be doing. Let the groups present their lists to the class.

# FMS

Foundation Max van der Stoel

The **Foundation Max van der Stoel (FMS)** is a political foundation affiliated with the Dutch Labour Party. The vision of FMS stems from a social democratic background with international solidarity as its mission. The FMS believes that the voice of people in developing countries should resound in Dutch and European politics. In order to put development cooperation on the top of the political agenda, the FMS advocates fair Dutch and European politics and organises political debates and public events on international solidarity.