

This module is designed to begin to explore the area of women and work. It will start by looking at how women's work differs, in the main, from men's work and will go on to examine how women work, on average, longer and more flexibly than men.

The module finishes with a role-play on Export Processing Zones where the participants are asked to take on the role of a player in a fictional EPZ. The aim of this exercise is to look at an example of women being exploited in more detail. It is important that this case study is seen in context of women's general economic position in the world as indicated by the gender statistics.



Activity One The way the world works

Aim of exercise:

This is an icebreaker or warm up exercise and is used to begin to explore the difference between men's and women's work.

Timing:

15 mins

What you need:

- Copies of handout 1 for everyone
- Recreate handout 1 on flipchart before the session begins
- A copy of overhead 2 and an overhead projector

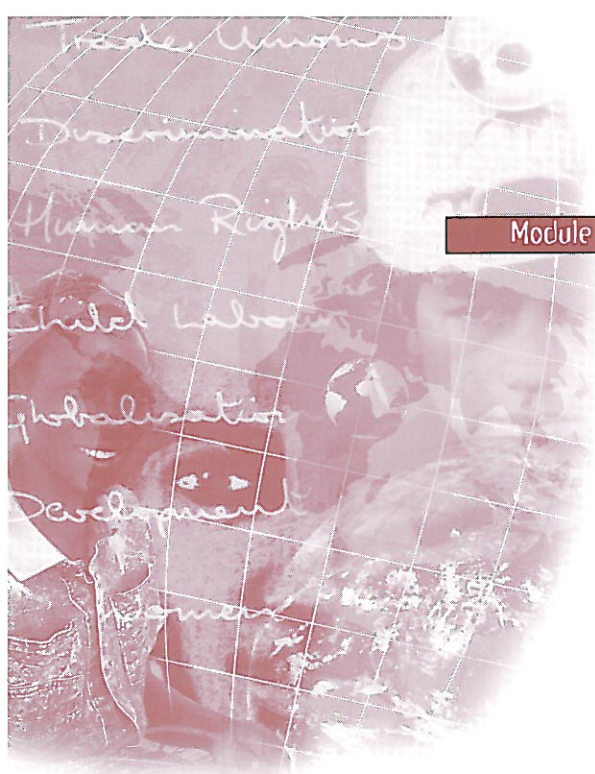
What you need to do:

- In small groups or individually distribute hand out 1. Ask groups/individuals to complete the exercise, filling out each of the circles. Stress that this is not a test and feedback will be to the large group.
- In the larger group, ask group for feedback and record on pre-prepared flipchart.
- Project overhead 1 and re-emphasise points drawn out in the discussion.

Tutors Notes

The conclusions should be largely similar and generally will point to the following:

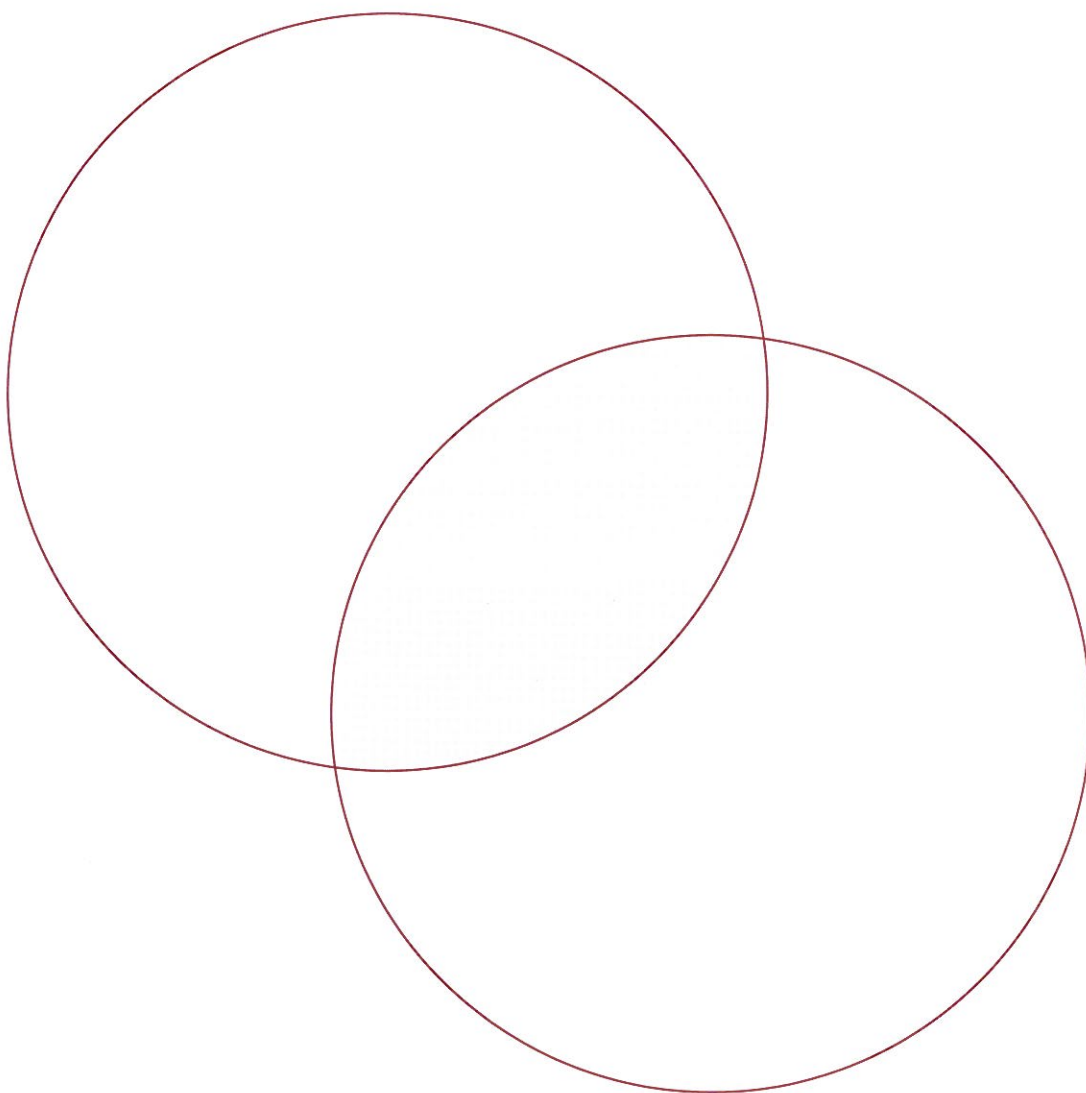
- That women's work is largely low paid, low status
- That men's work is more influential
- That a large part of women's work is invisible or unrecognised (e.g.; housework or childcare)

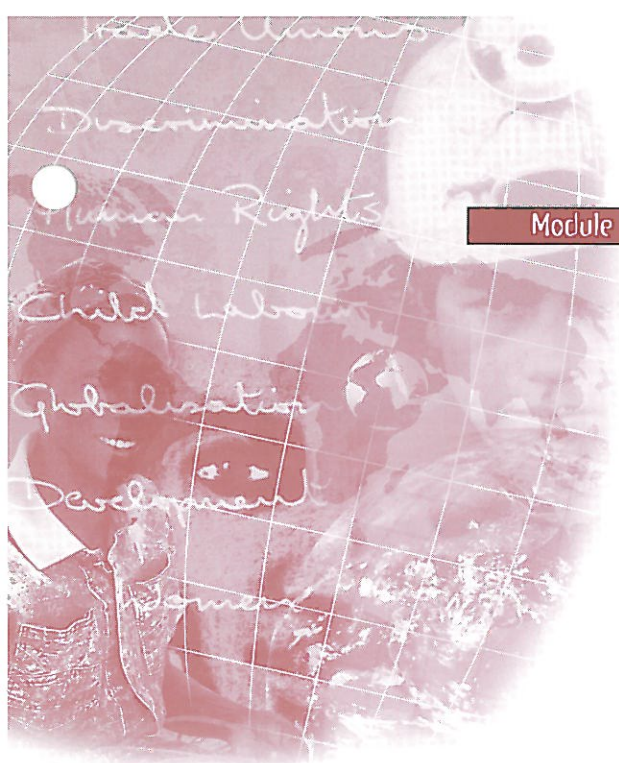


Handout One

The Way The World Works:

- In the top circle, write jobs that are traditionally undertaken by women.
- In the bottom circle, jobs that are undertaken by men.
- In the overlap, jobs that are done by both.





Activity Two

Mr Moyo goes to the doctor

Aim:

To emphasise that in general, women work longer hours and more flexibly than men but that their work is mainly invisible and is not regarded as important.

Timing:

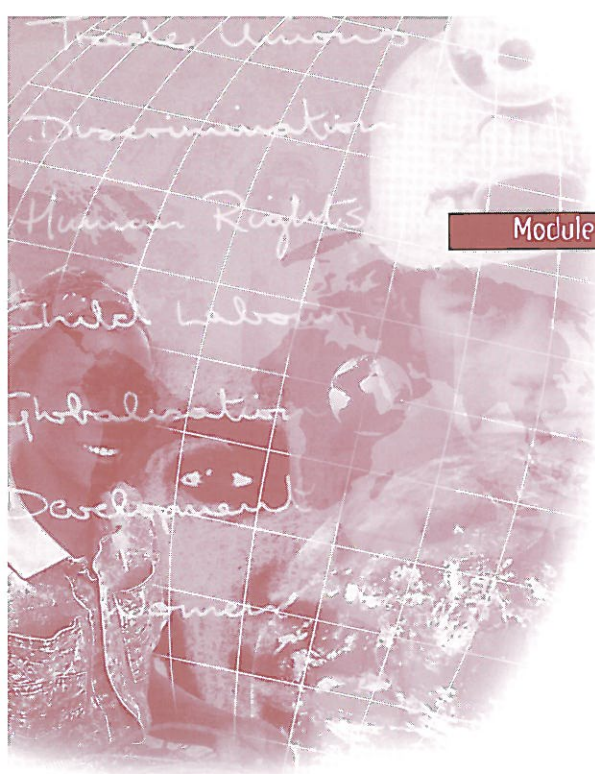
20 mins

What you need:

- OHP
- Photocopy handout 2 + 3 for group
- Copy of overhead 2 + 3

What you need to do

- Ask for two volunteers from the group to role-play the scene.
- Distribute the role-play and ask the volunteers to read the scene, each taking a part.
- When they have finished, ask the group for feedback on the role-play and ask the volunteers how they felt in their respective roles. On OHP project OHP 3, the Cartoon Strip.
- On OHP project OHP 4, facts and figures on women, emphasise that women are discriminated in all forms of public and often personal life (as statistics suggest). The group may go on to relate this to working life for women in Ireland and to draw parallels between women's lives in Ireland and in developing countries.



Handout Two

Mr. Moyo Goes to the Doctor

'What is your job?' Asked the doctor.

'I am a farmer' replied Mr. Moyo.

'Have you any children?' The doctor asked.

God has not been good to me. Of 15 born, only 9 are alive,' Mr. Moyo answered.

'Does your wife work?'

'No she stays at home.'

'I see. How does she spend her day?'

'Well, she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fire, cooks breakfast and cleans the house. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. Once a week she walks to the grinding mill. After that she goes to the township with the two smallest children where she sells tomatoes by the roadside while she knits. She buys what she wants from the shops. Then she cooks the midday meal.'

'You come home at midday?'

'No, no she brings the meal to me about three kilometres away.'

'And after that?'

'She stays in the field to do the weeding, and then goes to the vegetable garden to water.'

'What do you do?'

'I must go and discuss business and drink with the men in the village.'

'And after that?'

'I go home for the supper which my wife has prepared.'

'Does she go to bed after supper?'

'No, I do. She has things to do around the house until 9 or 10.'

'But I thought you said your wife doesn't work.'

'Of course she doesn't. I told you, she stays at home.'

(Source: The Oxfam Gender Training Manual.)

Export processing Zones role-play.

Aim:

To look in depth at a situation where mostly women are being exploited. To explore the issues for each of the players in Export Processing Zones. To identify whether there are similar cases closer to home. To identify how trade unionists might act in solidarity with people in EPZs.

Timing:

1hr 25 mins

What you need:

- Copies of role plays for each of the three groups.
- Handouts on Export Processing Zones.

What you need to do:

- Divide group into three, giving each group a role to play.
- Distribute the role cards and ask each group to read the information provided.
- If necessary, explain what Export Processing Zones are (see tutors notes) (10 mins).
- Ask each group to prepare (in their respective roles) to enter into a debate on whether EPZs exploit workers and whether trade unions should be recognised. (10 mins)
- Bring the group together and ask each group to introduce themselves to the other groups
- Once they have done this, ask each group whether they think EPZ's should be regulated and to justify their positions. (20 mins)
- After they have done this, allow time for each group to question them in their respective roles. (15 mins).
- After all questions have been asked, ask groups to 'de-role' and to discuss the exercise. How did each group feel, what does the group think about EPZs? Are there any similar work situations at home? (30 mins).

NB In this exercise, the tutor should encourage the groups to really represent their role and to be as lively and controversial as possible.



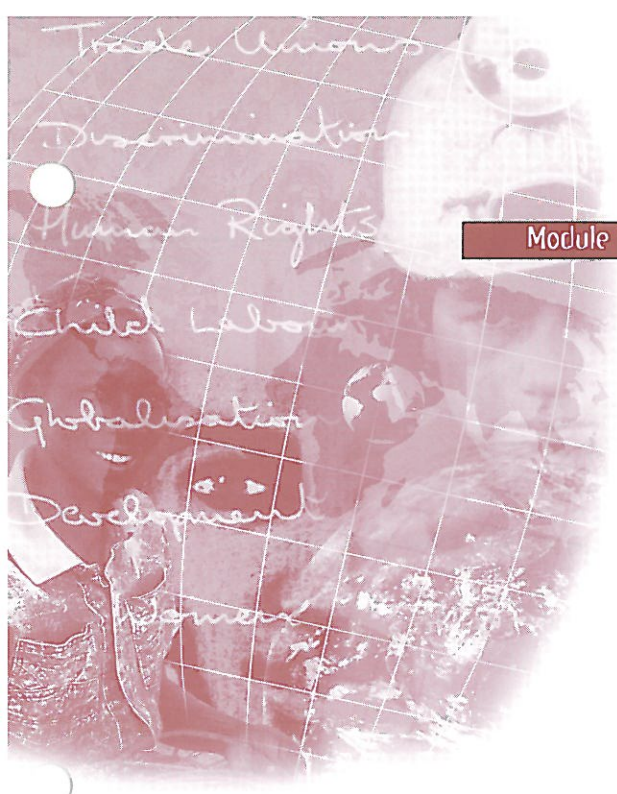
Tutor Notes

What are....

Export Processing Zones (EPZ)

The original idea behind the creation of EPZs was to allow employers to import materials to be worked on and then re-exported without having to pay duty.

It started in the early sixties with a zone around Shannon airport which was threatened by the loss of employment in the refuelling of aircraft on transatlantic routes. It was seen as a cheap way of creating jobs without spending scarce taxpayers money and avoiding a bureaucratic system of reimbursing import taxes on goods intended for export. However from the beginning, this idea had a major drawback. It requires the sealing off of the zone or of designated factories, often behind high fences, to prevent untaxed goods being smuggled into the rest of the economy. As the EPZ concept spread around the world, governments found that they had to add further incentives to attract footloose investors to their enclave; subsidised factory buildings, telecommunication links, energy supplies and most worrying of all, guarantees that the labour force would stay cheap and uncomplaining.



Handout Four (a)

Marketing and Public Relations Manager - Multi-national Company

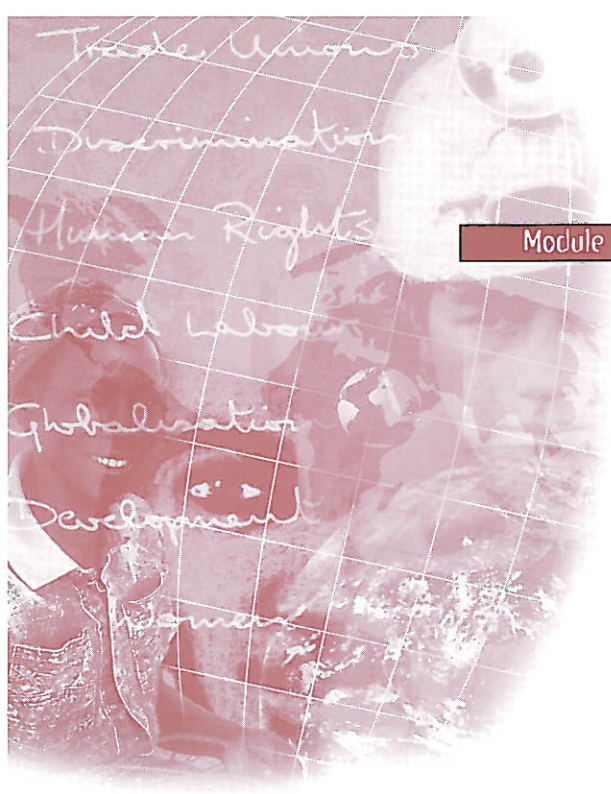
You are one of the largest multinational companies working in textiles and garment production. The company started as a family business at the turn of the century and developed due to hard work. Since then, the company was bought out and has merged with several other smaller firms and now has bases in US, Germany, France, and Ireland as well as factories in parts of Asia and Central America.

The company prides itself in having good employee relations, illustrated by the company slogan 'Everyone Matters.' You regularly sponsor local charities and have a charitable fund to which groups can make requests.

In recent years, the company initiated moves to work alongside Fair Trade Groups to evolve a company code of conduct which governs all your direct employees. Where possible, you try to ensure that contracted staff are treated fairly.

Because of the excellent company/employee relations, there is no need for trade unions and you ensure that you consult with staff when appropriate.

You see EPZs as an excellent initiative and a way of helping poor countries to develop their economies. By sourcing our factories in poor countries, you are providing sorely needed jobs for local people and are also providing much needed income for the host country.



Handout Four (b)

Worker in the Export Processing Zone

Your name is Rosa Maria Mendoza and you are a worker in an industrial park owned by a foreign company.

The work is hard, you have a quota to meet every day, and is very repetitive. The place where you work is very basic, the lighting isn't great and sometimes when you have to work overtime, your eyes get so sore you can barely see.

Jobs are scarce in your area and you badly need the money from your work, even though it's not very much. This means that even when you were sick last year, you had to turn up to work. If you hadn't, you would have lost your job. It was a struggle to keep up with the work when you were unwell but the alternative would have been worse, you have a family to feed back home.

You rarely speak to the supervisors. They stand around to make sure you are working as hard as you can. They only give two breaks to go to the toilet and lunch is often eaten at your workstation.

Recently some of the other women have been trying secretly to form a trade union. They have been trying to get as many people as possible to join and have asked you. Whilst you think that a trade union would be a good idea as it might be able to do something for you, you are scared to join because you will lose your job and what would your family do then?



Handout Four (c)

Host Country

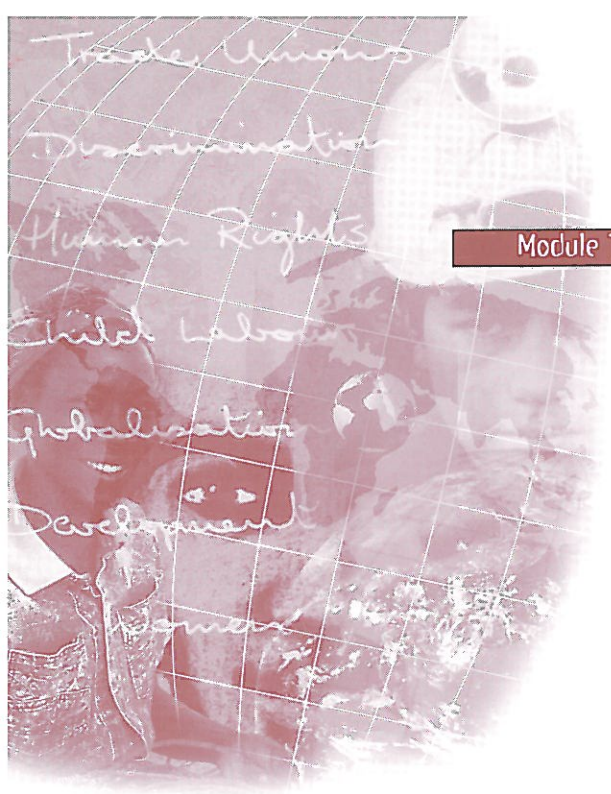
Minister for Trade, Government

You are very proud of the companies that you have attracted to your country. Five years ago, before your government came to power, there were hardly any EPZs, now there are nearly 100 companies providing much needed jobs.

As a poor country, you must do all you can to attract foreign investment. Of course you would like to be in the position where you could pick and choose which companies were given preferential treatment but this would be a luxury that your economy can't afford.

Your role is to make your country as attractive as possible to foreign investors, after all, there is a lot of competition with neighbouring countries. You allow special tax incentives as well as excellent communication lines. The best thing, though is the willing labour force. A job in an EPZ is highly sought after and there are many people trying to get work there. The workers are mostly young women, they are the quickest and the easiest to manage. Once the EPZ has been set up, it basically runs itself and some of the companies rent private land for periods of up to 50 years.

Some people complain about so called bad working conditions in the EPZs but what do they want, to return to mass unemployment?



Handout Five (5)

Women of the World at Work

Life for working women is seldom easy. Women Working Worldwide discusses some of the challenges and issues.

The participation of women workers in the global economy has been increasing:

- By 2000, women's economic participation will be equal to men's.
- In 1994, approximately 45% of women aged between 15 and 64 were deemed to be 'economically active'.
- Since 1980, women have been providing the bulk of new labour supply around the world.
- Women have been the cornerstone of export oriented development in the South.

The last point is crucial, in world market factories/production women form the majority of the workforce. The most visible evidence of this is in Export Processing Zones (EPZs). Currently there are more than 850 zones worldwide and numbers are increasing. In the Philippines, for example, there are 35 zones in operation and a further 53 are planned. The majority of 4.5 million EPZ workers are women, over 90% working in garments and electronics.

Trade and liberalisation policies have been a major contributory factor to the growth in demand for women's labour, with the emphasis on export production, opening up of markets etc. A common view is that this generation of employment for women is a largely positive phenomenon and whilst Women Working Worldwide does not dispute that the empowerment of women must be related to employment, the picture is far more complex.

For most women workers there has been an increase in the quantity and not the quality of work, terms and conditions such as pay, hours, promotion etc have not improved and employment for women has been concentrated in a narrow band of occupations. In the increasingly competitive business environment, women have constituted a flexible workforce. Women's increased involvement can also be seen as a sign of distress as they struggle to cope with a rising tide of poverty and insecurity.

Most women workers remain unrepresented by trade unions, especially in the EPZs and as homebased workers.

Handout Five Continued

Women of the World at Work

These trends become clear when we look at the rising numbers of homebased workers during the last 20 years. This has been the result of subcontracting chains often on a global scale. Homeworking is not an old fashioned form of employment but has developed as an integral part of the 'new' global economy. The largest number of homeworkers are found in developing countries but numbers have also increased in more developed areas. Most homeworkers are women who endure poor pay and lack social and legal protection. There are over one million homeworkers in the UK with approximately 200 million in EPZs worldwide.

The impact of trade and trade policy has and will continue to be substantially different for women and men. It has become clear that 'the economy' is not a gender-neutral structure in which men and women undertake different activities.

Trade policy is not simply a series of technical processes which affect everyone the same. A 'Free Trade' policy which is based on an economic model that ignores women's unpaid labour and puts women in low pay and low status jobs, will further build on existing gender inequalities.

Much more work needs to be done on building up gender sensitive models of the economy and exploring the current impact of trade policies on women workers. Women Working Worldwide is part of a group of organisations, including trade unions lobbying for changes in trading systems to benefit women.

Women Working Worldwide is a small women's non governmental organisation (NGO) active in campaigning, networking, education and research to support the rights of women workers in the global economy. Work initially focused in Manchester on women workers in the garment industry. The focus has now widened to cover gender and trade issues. Women Working Worldwide works with a range of women worker's organisations in the south - both trade unions and NGOs.



Activity Four

How can we respond?

Aim of activity:

To develop ways for members to find out more about the issue and act in solidarity with women workers.

What you need:

- Copy of overhead.
- Flipchart paper and pens.

Timing:

30 mins

What you need to do:

- Open a general discussion about what trade unionists can do in solidarity with women workers. Encourage group to be as creative as possible.
- Project overhead 4 with ideas on solidarity actions.
- In small groups, ask participants to look at ways they might act in solidarity with women workers and to record these on flipchart.
- Come back to larger group and feedback ideas.

Tutors Notes:

You should encourage the group to be as creative as possible. Undoubtedly the first step to solidarity is to find out more about the issue so have the list of resource organisations available and encourage participants to contact them to find out more information. Participants should also find out what their own unions are doing and what links they have with women workers.



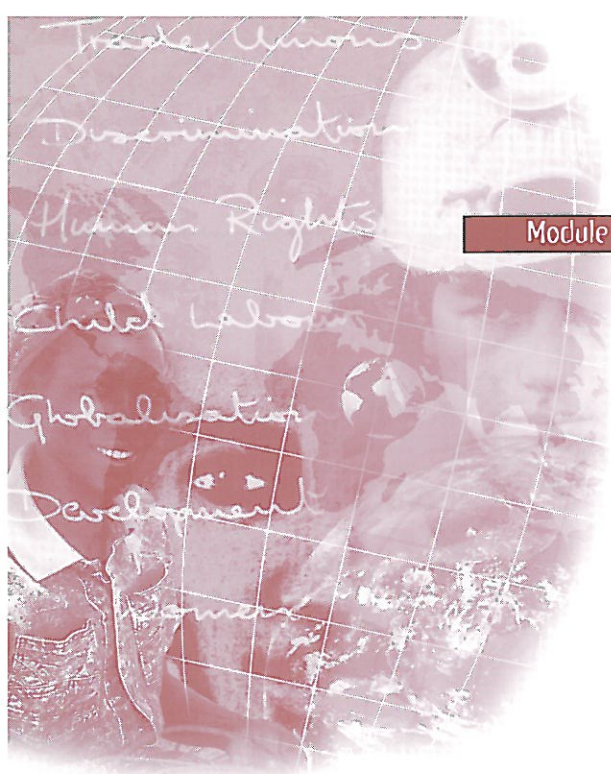
Overhead One

Invisible labour

Women's contribution to economy remains largely hidden

Women's work is largely unpaid in domestic, agricultural and informal sectors.

If included in labour statistics, the rate of women's participation would be equal to if not more than men's.



Overhead Two

Gender Statistics 1995

Taken from Human Development report
1998

Country	Life Expectancy at Birth %	Adult Literacy Rates %	Share of Earned Income %	Seats in Parliament held by Women.
Ireland	79 female 73 male	99 both	27 female 73 male	14%
UK	79 female 73 male	99 both	38 female 62 male	12%
Denmark	78 female 72 male	99 both	42 female 58 male	33%
Chile	78 female 72 male	95 both	22 female 78 male	7%
Iran	69 female 68 male	59 female 78 male	19 female 81 male	5%
India	62 female 61 male	38 female 66 male	25 female 75 male	7%
Kenya	55 female 53 male	70 female 86 male	42 female 58 male	No info
Ethiopia	50 female 47 male	25 female 46 male	33 female 67 male	No info
Sierra Leone	36 female 33 male	18 female 45 male	29 female 71 male	No info

THE LIE OF THE LAND

HOW DO YOU MAKE A LIVING HERE? DO WOMEN WORK?

NO, WE DON'T WORK... WE JUST STAY AT HOME...

... AND FETCH THE WATER, FIND THE FIREWOOD, AND LOOK AFTER THE CATTLE...

... AND DO THE WEEDING, THEN HARVEST THE CROPS, AND SELL THEM IN THE MARKET...

... AND PREPARE THE GARDEN, AND PLANT THE SEEDS...

... AND BUY FOOD AT THE MARKET, COOK MEALS, AND DO THE HOUSEHOLD CHORES...

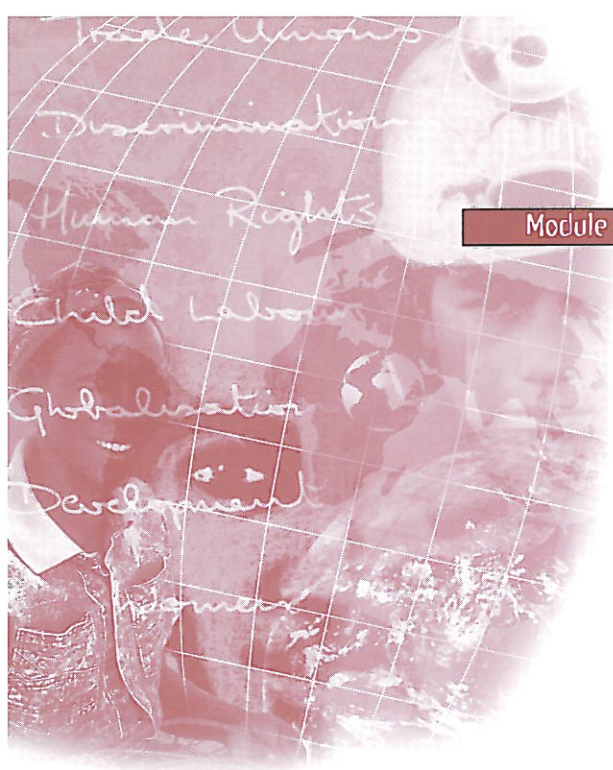
... ATTEND THE WOMEN'S GROUP MEETINGS FOR OUR COMMUNAL TASKS - LIKE MAKING BRICKS FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING...

... AND WASHING AND MENDING THE CLOTHES FOR THE CHILDREN WE BEAR AND RAISE... THAT'S ALL...

... SO, NO, WE DON'T WORK!

MMM... I JUST WANTED TO CHECK!





Overhead Four

Is your union organising internationally?

- Education
- Campaigns
- Motions
- Solidarity Network
- Congress Solidarity Committee
- Third World/Solidarity Fund
- Fair trade products

In summary:

International Solidarity.