



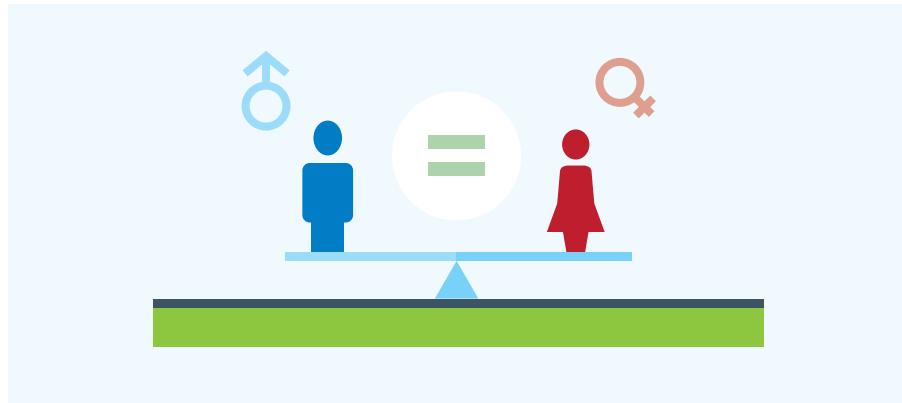
What is gender?

Definition



In programs of response to epidemics term “gender” is widely used. However, people do not always have clear understanding what it is.

Gender is socially approved ideas on how biological sex of a person should be manifested. These ideas are backed by respective norms, practices and attitude on every single level of social life. For example, these are ideas of who and how should look like, behave, what to do and for whom, who with and how should create a family and even how to feel and speak.



Gender notions



Peculiarity of traditional gender ideas is that they are seen by people as unshakeable. However, gender, as social construct, is changing throughout the course of history and society development.

One more peculiarity of traditional gender ideas is that they describe certain hierarchy of gender relations. In patriarchal society, masculine identity invariably is perceived as dominant and leading, and feminine identity is perceived as obeying, helping and driven. Gender inequality, existing in society is also perceived as something usual, as course of nature, but can change to greater equality when society develops.



Stigma and discrimination



Deviations from generally accepted gender norms can be reasons of stigmatization and discrimination. Communities representatives, for example, which do not fit into generally accepted ideas. Can face violation of their rights, exclusion from social life, marginalization, increased vulnerability to risks for life and health.

For example, discrimination of LGBT communities, double discrimination of women who use drugs, have PLWH status of involved into sex work, gender-based barriers on use of condoms as measures of prevention of transmission of HIV and other infections, ignoring of gender-specific needs and barriers during HIV and TB treatment – these all are serious problems of effective response to epidemics. They appear as a consequence of the fact that certain communities do not fit into generally accepted gender norms, or as a consequence of inequity in the norm, when women and their needs are perceived as secondary or those which can be ignored.

Gender within the HIV and TB responses



In terms of response to epidemics of HIV and TB, communities fight for more open society, discrimination elimination, equal access to vitally important services. Gender equality in access to resources, participation of all groups in decision-making, vitally important for communities, and gender-sensitive approaches to provision of services in prevention and treatment are one of keys to sustainable development of human capacity.