

WOMEN, BODY IMAGE AND ADVERTISING

Media
Women
Gender
Gender equality
Gender roles
Stereotypes
Gender-based violence
Media
Values
(Social) Norms

- ✓ 1. To illustrate how subtle gendered images in the media can shape perceptions about women
- ✓ 2. To illustrate how women internalise these images
- ✓ 3. To help learners recognise their own assumptions about gender
- ✓ 4. To explore the implications assumptions may have for gender equality

45 mins

A fast internet connection to view this video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWKXit_3rpQ&feature=youtu.be



A data projector and screen to project the video for the class.

PROCEDURE

- 1 Show the video trailer for the film "Killing us softly".
- 2 Ask learners to think about the messages in the video.
- 3 Ask learners to identify and discuss **gender roles** and **stereotypes**. Guide the discussion by asking:
 - a. What stereotypes are portrayed in advertising about women?
 - b. What stereotypes are portrayed in advertising about men?
 - c. How are these harmful for the self-image of women? How about men? Who is most affected?
 - d. How can stereotypes relate to **gender-based violence**?
 - e. What is the role of the **media** with regard to gender norms, and stereotypes? What is the responsibility of the media?

TEACHER TIPS



General

Some tips for leading the discussion:

In discussion point c. encourage them to think about how constantly seeing, hearing and internalising that women are only sex objects, meant to be attractive, have little other **value**, only have value if they are pretty, or only have value to men when they are young, might impact on a woman's self-image.

In discussion point d. encourage them to think about how these messages in the **media** contribute to the way men treat women in relationships, or impact a woman's self esteem.

In discussion point e. the idea is to get learners thinking about how the media is both constrained by social/cultural norms (they use these images and ideas because that is what readers expect) and also responsible for maintaining these norms (what people see is what they come to expect).

Ask the following, if this does not emerge in the discussion:

- Where do **norms** in the media come from?
- Where do their ideas about **gender** come from?
- Do media projections impact your own ideas about gender roles?

You could also talk more about advertising and eating disorders, and how the media creates unrealistic expectations of women. Ask about the pressure girls face to look the way the media tells them they should.

The video does not tackle beauty ideals and race, but you could ask:

- What features, hair and skin types do the media show as attractive?
- What do you think the consequences are for girls of colour?



Making the Link with Gender & Violence

Learners should consider how women are portrayed in the media and in society, as being powerless. They should understand how by constantly seeing, hearing and internalising that women are only sex objects, meant to be attractive, have little **value**, only have value if they are conventionally pretty or thin, only have value to men when they are young, might impact on a woman's self-image. You might make the comparison between this process and the way that women in abusive relationships internalise the views and ideas of the abuser, that they are worthless, ugly, only useful for sex and so on.



Assessment Ideas

Ask learners to write an essay: Media & its effects on girls' body image.

