

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK:

THE ROAD TO GENDER EQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

- ✓ 1. To demonstrate that progress towards women's equality in South Africa has not been smooth or continuous.
- ✓ 2. To demonstrate that policies meant to ensure gender equality do not always translate into equal opportunities for women.

★ Cards (provided)
Game Board (provided)

🕒 25-30 minutes

PROCEDURE

PRIOR TO CLASS

- 1 Print a set of game boards and cards (provided). You will need one set for every 5 learners in the class. Printing or copying the boards and cards onto heavy-duty paper will make them sturdier and more durable, but ordinary paper will also work.

IN CLASS

- 2 Divide learners into groups of 3-5 and have them sit in small circles around centrally located desks. Hand out a board and set of cards to each group, and instruct learners to shuffle the cards and place them in a pile with the printed side down.
- 3 Ask each learner to find a small object (e.g. coin or eraser) that they can use as their game piece.
- 4 Explain to learners that the game they will be playing is about **gender equality** in South Africa after the abolition of Apartheid.
- 5 Explain the rules of the game to the learners as follows:

a. Going around the circle, each player takes a turn by drawing a card and reading it aloud.

b. Each card describes a historical scenario and gives the player instructions on what to do next (e.g. how many spaces to move ahead or backwards, or not to move at all). Learners should follow these instructions and move their game pieces accordingly.

c. When learners land on a space that has additional written instructions, they should follow those instructions also.

d. When learners land on the squares marked 'Surprise!', they should flip a coin. If the coin lands on 'Heads' then the learner moves forward 3 spaces. If the coin lands on 'Tails' they should move back 2 spaces.

e. The object of the game is to reach the end of 'The Road to Gender Equality'.

- 6 Once learners have finished the game, debrief the class by pointing out that what is presented in the game are historical facts – things that have happened in South Africa's road to gender equality. Teachers may want to engage further; some prompts for discussion include:

a. Which of the facts on the cards surprised you?

b. Do you feel that the road to **gender equality** has been smooth or rocky? Why?

c. What other examples can you think of, in South African society, that shows the advancement of women in the past few years?

d. What other examples can you think of, in your community, which demonstrate that women's rights are not yet fully realised?

e. In your opinion, why is the realisation of women's rights difficult to achieve in practice?

f. What do you think could help make equal rights a realisation in women's everyday lives in South Africa?

- 7 At the end of the lesson it is important to emphasise that although achievements in **gender equality** have come a long way in South Africa (and we may be better off than other countries), there are many problems with implementing the kinds of policies that are intended to create equal rights for **women**. In other words, although we have progressive laws on paper, these rights are not always 'real'.



TEACHER TIPS



General

This exercise is a useful teaching resource because it cuts across a number of topics that include: history, South African policy and legislation on **gender equality**, the rights of girls and **women**, and it questions socio-cultural attitudes that violate women's rights. The exercise allows learners to think critically on how written policies (intended to improve the rights of women) may or may not be implemented, and how this impacts the women the policies intend to serve. The exercise is useful in that it illustrates that women's **empowerment** is more complex than simply passing new laws.

The complex interplay between patriarchy, class, race and gender can be addressed in the exercise. Discussion will help learners to understand that these factors combine in different, layered ways to complicate the realisation of gender equality.



Making the link with Gender and Violence

The exercise focuses on **gender equality**, patriarchal domination, **women's empowerment** and violation of women's rights; and how the process of achieving women's empowerment has advanced or lagged over the years. It helps learners understand that having laws on paper which address equality and **gender-based violence**, does not necessarily mean a woman's risk of **violence** and **oppression** is eradicated.



Assessment Ideas

The discussion component of the exercise allows the teacher to assess the learners' understanding of the complexities of achieving gender equality. The exercise allows for learners to practice their critical thinking skills.

Teachers may ask learners to write about a piece of legislation in South Africa intended to improve women's equality. They should reflect on whether the law, as it is currently written and implemented, makes rights real in their community. Learners can also suggest how the realisation of rights under the law could be improved.



Variation

This game can also be played as a whole class. The teacher can either draw the template on the board, or enlarge it onto a larger sheet of paper to allow all learners to play. In this case there need only be one game piece (use tape, prestick or a magnet to hold it in place on the board). Learners take turns drawing cards and reading them aloud, while one learner moves the game piece along 'The Road' accordingly.



References:

Adapted from a game referenced in Remmer & Talbott, 2010, *Vision 2020 Educator Guide*, Drexell University College of Medicine –Institute of Women's Health and Leadership

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S FREEDOM FROM PATRIARCHY IN SOUTH AFRICA (CARDS)

Print and cut out these cards for the game.

It's the 1920s
You are a woman living in South Africa, **you are not allowed to vote**
STAY WHERE YOU ARE

It's 1930
Under the Women's Enfranchisement Act, as a European (white) Woman **you have the right to elect and be elected to the Houses of Parliament.**
MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES.

It's 1925
You are an African woman living in the rural areas. Under the **Natives (Urban Areas) Act No 21 of 1923, you are not allowed to live with your husband in the city, where he works.**
STAY WHERE YOU ARE

It's the 1930s
You are married, **Congratulations!**
However, as a woman, **your husband has power to control your money, property and dictate to you and your children on all matters.**
MOVE BACK 3 SPACES

It's the 1950s
As a woman of colour, you are not allowed by law and custom to own, inherit or sell property.
MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

It's April 1954
The Women's Charter is formed **to secure full equality of opportunity for all women.**
MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 9 August 1956
You are one of the 20 000 women who march **against the imposition of pass laws on women**, a campaign organised by The Federation of South African Women.
MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 1950
Under the Immorality Act, **the law prohibits you from having inter-racial sexual relations.**
MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

It's the 1960s
You are a woman working as teacher **but your pay and promotion chances are less than your male colleagues doing the same work.**
STAY WHERE YOU ARE

It's 1984
Marital power is abolished. **You are no longer a legal minor under your husband's guardianship.**
MOVE FORWARD 1 SPACE

It's the 1990s
As a woman in South Africa you are free to **pursue a career in science and technology, politics, commerce, and self-employment of your choice.**
MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 1994
The South African Constitution grants equality of opportunity to all people regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability and gender. **As a woman you are protected by the Constitution.**
MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's the 1990s

As a woman of colour, you are **free to attend any tertiary institution of your choice.**

MOVE AHEAD 1 SPACE

It's 1995

South Africa ratifies the 16 Articles of the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) from the Beijing Conference.** As a woman you can benefit from South Africa's commitment to end discrimination against women.

MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 1994

As a South African woman you **can open your own bank account and obtain loans without your husband's permission.**

MOVE AHEAD 3 SPACES

It's 1998

You are a single mother, but you can **apply for a maintenance order that forces the children's father to contribute financially in terms of the Maintenance Act 99 of 1998.**

MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 1998

Under the new Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 **you can apply for an interdict against an abusive partner.**

MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 1999

25 November is designated as the international day for **the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the start of 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children** (15 November – 10 December). **As a woman your protection from violence is internationally recognised.**

MOVE AHEAD 3 SPACES

It's 1999

You have a maintenance order from the Court saying that your husband must pay maintenance for your children, **but in the year since the order was granted, he has not paid once.** There doesn't seem to be any way to make him pay.

MOVE BACK 3 SPACES

It's 2006

You are a South African woman in a same sex relationship, and **South Africa is the first African country to legalise same sex marriages under the Civil Union Act.**

MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 2004

Women have gained access to political power in local, provincial and national government departments in the ten years since 1994.

MOVE AHEAD 5 SPACES

It's 2011

You are a woman living in South Africa. Despite the promotion of Constitutional Rights such as the right to adequate housing, healthcare, food and social support grants, **poverty still affects women disproportionately to men (because of power imbalances between men and women).**

MOVE BACK 3 SPACES

It's 2010

You are a South African woman living in the rural areas, **you still struggle to own land due to traditional laws and customs that place women in positions of subordination.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

It's 2013

The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities have just introduced the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill **which can protect you as a woman against unfair discrimination in all spheres. The bill is not yet passed into law. We will have to wait to find out what happens.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

It's 2012

Women make up more than half of the South African population (51%, 2011 Census). **Yet, as at January 2012, there were 67 female judges compared with 170 males, and women still hold only 2 of the 11 seats on the Constitutional Court.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Present Day

You are a woman living in South Africa. Despite improved access to ARVs, **HIV /AIDS affects women disproportionately because many male partners still control women's sexual and reproductive health, for example, by refusing to use condoms.**

MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

It's 2013

Despite widespread criticism of the Bill's effects on women's rights, the **Traditional Courts Bill** is back for further consultation in parliament. This Bill would reinforce male privileges by, for example, not allowing women to represent themselves in traditional courts (representation instead by male relatives).

MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

Present Day

You are a woman heading a household in South Africa, your household income is considerably less than that of a comparable male headed household. The **annual average income of a female headed household** in 2011 was less than the 2001 annual average of maleheaded households.

MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

Present Day

You are a woman who is living with a disability. **You still struggle to find equal career opportunities despite South Africa's Employment Equity policy.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Present Day

You are a South African woman in a same-sex relationship. **You feel unsafe and vulnerable to physical, verbal, sexual and other forms of violence.**

MOVE BACK 2 SPACES

Present Day

You are a refugee woman or asylum seeker in South Africa. **You don't have anyone to look after your children while you stand in long queues to get a work permit, so you lock them up in your house while you are away.**

MOVE BEHIND 3 SPACES

Present Day

Although the law says otherwise, as a teenage girl in South Africa, **you may be expelled from your school or will have to take a leave of absence if you become pregnant.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Present Day

Women make up more than half of the South African population, **yet women constitute less than 10% of Chief Executive Officers (in JSE-listed companies); hold less than 16% of directorships and less than 21% of executive management positions.**

STAY WHERE YOU ARE

Present day

You are a woman in South Africa, **you live in constant fear of being violated physically, emotionally, sexually and/or verbally.**

MOVE BACK 5 SPACES

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S FREEDOM FROM PATRIARCHY IN SOUTH AFRICA (GAME)

