

Tool #2

From Theory to Action:
Gender and Waste Recycling

Awareness of gender relations – Ping-pong Activity

Objective:

Discuss the meaning of autonomy and what it represents in their own lives

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Any kind of string

During this activity, the women were asked to form a circle and answer the following question: "What is autonomy?" Once a participant responded, she would throw the ball of thread to another participant, who would then answer the same question. After everyone participated, a second round of questioning was initiated where the group had to answer the following question: "What is autonomy for you?"

These questions brought up a variety of different answers that would later set up the discussions in the next activity. In this activity, the facilitators filled a crucial role by encouraging the participants to speak and by establishing links between some of the women's remarks and general ideas about gender relations and women's autonomy. The facilitators should also pay attention to those who still have not participated and to avoid repetitive answers. At the end of the activity, the facilitators should briefly summarize the general ideas and examples that were given throughout the activity.



Workshop in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, May 2013. Photos: A.Oliveira

Many of the participants focused in on how autonomy should be exercised both at home and at work. Again, this reflected the initial idea of our method's design, which links back to the lived experiences of gender as discussed by the women. The answers varied from having economic autonomy to being free to make one's own decisions in life. Some of the answers showed how many of these women have, on some level, realized the negative effects of their gendered roles in different social settings.



Pictures from the workshops in Conselheiro Lafaiete, August 2013, and Itaúna, October 2013. Photos: A. C. Ogando

"I was able to survive without having to depend on a man ... [autonomy] is going without having to account for anything I do".

"It's positioning myself, knowing how to position myself at home with my kids, it's dealing with problems at home and at work".

"It's the right to work, to come and go as you please, it's being able to achieve things without depending on a man, defining my sexuality without".



"It's occupying more space in society, being represented in other areas".

"What we all need is to be in collective groups discussing autonomy, when we form a group, we can further advance our autonomy. We can get ideas on how to get more autonomy".

"It's speaking, it's [about] being heard and respected".

