

## **Contribution of *Soteria international* to session 7: equal opportunity for women and men**

Soteria international is an organization that works with Spiritual Human rights and in integrating spiritual values in the society.

In our opinion, the approach which is most common used in society today for promoting equal rights and opportunities for women is in fact counter-productive for this goal and is not helping to assure the rights and opportunities for women.

We refer to this common approach as "Unisex" – this approach considers women and men as being the same in every way, and therefore it considers that men and women are competing for the same roles and in the same manner.

We propose another approach – an approach that we refer to as complementarity, or equality through the differences.

According to this approach, women and men are considered to be distinct and different from each other. And of course we know that they are different. Men and Women have different parts of their brain which are predominantly active, there are distinct psychological differences, men think more analytically and women more synthetically. There are many scientific researches proving this fact, yet they are not given much publicity because it is not considered to be politically correct. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, and some men have some feminine traits and visa versa, still, as a general rule, we can definitely talk about a typical masculine approach and a feminine approach.

Both these approaches, the masculine and the feminine, are equally needed. Both are necessary – for they are completing each other.

A good example for this is this hall – it is clearly designed by a man, since it is made very practically, but it ignores some aspect of esthetics and atmosphere which are having an important impact upon the people in the room. If this room would have been built combining both the masculine and the feminine approach – then it would be perfect.

The approach if unisex is actually not just saying that men and women are the same, it is saying that women have to be the same as man, because it is making the women comply with the existing system which is made by men according to masculine perspectives. Therefore, the women have to adopt the masculine standards, to succeed in this system.

As a result of this, women have to give up their specific feminine characteristics – which is a violation of their rights as women.

Women also have to compete with men, being measures by masculine standards, and therefore they are underprivileged in this competition

Another result of this situation is that even when women are promoted, whether in the private sector or the public sector, they are done so by complying to the male standards and so the feminine values and perspectives are not promoted in the society. We can see examples to this in the persons of Britain's Margaret Thatcher and Israel's Golda Meir – who were refereed to as the ladies of steel.

In fact, it is very important for the society to integrate also the feminine perspectives. If the feminine values were applied in the society together with the masculine values, which are already ruling, then many of the problems with the wars, violation of human rights and the ecological crisis will be resolved.

This problem cannot be solved by administrative means. The problem begins with education and that is where also the solution is.

By promoting through education the understanding of the necessity of the complementary roles of masculinity and femininity – people will learn to value also the feminine role and perspective. This will spontaneously bring about the promotion of women as individuals, respecting their rights and opportunities, and will create a much more harmonious and balanced society.

All these elements stated here are resting on a spiritual principle we call "polarity". This principle is common to all the traditions of this planet and is also supported by modern science. This principle simply implies that the progress and force arise not from the canceling of the differences

between people of various sections of the population – and in this case between the two Genders – but from their complementary interaction and a productive tension.

**Practical recommendations:**

That in all OSCE participating countries will be promoted through the education system the understanding of the necessity to integrate both the masculine perspectives and the feminine perspectives. Special attention should be given to draw awareness to the importance of the feminine values, as these are particularly neglected today. By giving the feminine values and perspective their due attention, instead of ignoring them as it is today, people will give them their appropriate respect and will value them – thus promoting these values in society and promoting their best ambassadors – the women.