A Gender Equity Conversation Guide for Male Management

Prepared by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) | February 2024

A Conversation Guide to Advancing Gender Equity in the Garment Industry

A Gender Equity Conversation Guide For Male Management

Prepared by ICRW | February 2024
A Conversation Guide to Advancing Gender Equity in the Garment Industry

About Us

The International Center for Research for Women (ICRW) is a global research institute, with regional hubs in Washington D.C., United States; New Delhi, India; Kampala, Uganda; and Nairobi, Kenya. Established in 1976, ICRW has set the global agenda for gender equity, inclusion, and shared prosperity with action-oriented research and solutions. Our global experts generate ground-breaking insights and develop gender transformative strategies on topics like economic opportunity and security, health and reproductive rights, gender norms, and climate action.

ICRW Asia works in India and several countries in Asia on a range of issues such as inadequate access to education and livelihoods, adolescent empowerment, gender-based violence (GBV), masculinities, gender inequitable attitudes, HIV, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and women-led climate action.

About Primark

Primark is an international fashion retailer employing more than 80,000 colleagues across 17 countries in Europe and the US. Founded in Ireland in 1969 under the Penneys brand, Primark aims to provide affordable choices for everyone, from great quality everyday essentials to stand-out style across women's, men's and kids, as well as beauty, homeware and accessories. With a focus on creating great retail experiences, Primark has over 440 stores globally and continues to expand with the aim of reaching 530 stores by the end of 2026.

Primark is working to make more sustainable fashion affordable for everyone through its Primark Cares strategy, a multi-year programme that focuses on giving clothing a longer life, protecting life on the planet and supporting the livelihoods of the people who make Primark clothes. As part of this, Primark unveiled nine commitments it is working to achieve by 2030. These commitments include making all of its clothes from recycled or more sustainably sourced materials by 2030, halving carbon emissions across its value chain and pursuing a living wage for workers in its supply chain. More information can be found here: www.primark.com/en-gb/primark-cares.

Authors and Acknowledgments

Suggested Citation

Disclaimer

The conversation guide is prepared by the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Primark.

Publication Rights

The conversation guide has been developed as part of a study undertaken by ICRW, Male Management Attitudes towards Gender Equity, and supported by Primark. The facts and information in this conversation guide may be reproduced/quoted/cited only for non-commercial use and with appropriate attribution.

Table of Contents

1. About this Conversation Guide

The focus of this conversation guide is to enable male managers in garment factories to gain a deeper understanding of gender equity topics and to challenge any of their previously held biases or attitudes that may be harmful towards women workers. The ultimate goal we hope to achieve with this guide is to help advance gender equity at work, particularly in factory settings. This guide is intended to serve as a gender equity resource for brands and suppliers and to be **facilitated by an external expert with knowledge about gender topics**. It can be used on its own or used alongside additional gender equity programming efforts that have been implemented by the brand or supplier. It is important to also note that this guide has been designed and developed for a primarily male audience.

1.1. Objectives of this Guide

1. To help male factory management initiate open and honest conversations about gender equity in the workplace.
2. To dispel harmful gender stereotypes and promote positive attitudes among male factory management towards women workers.
3. To identify concrete steps for suppliers to support women workers and build a more inclusive workplace.

This conversation guide outlines key messages, thought-provoking and reflective questions, and resources for users of this guide to engage in honest conversations about gender equity at work.

Why improving gender equity within factories is important:

✓ **Corporate Accountability:** Corporations are increasingly taking major initiatives and steps to strengthen gender equality and inclusion within their factories and in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Improving gender equity efforts supports SDG 5, which focuses on gender equality and women's empowerments and recognizes gender equality as an important human right.
✓ **Improved financial performance**: Improved working conditions and gender equity in factories can contribute to up to a 22% increase in productivity and 25% increase in profitability.[1]
✓ **Aids talent attraction, retention, and development**: Having female senior leaders creates less gender discrimination in recruitment, promotion, and retention.[2] This gives a business a better chance of hiring and keeping the most qualified people. Having more gender-equitable policies and practices can increase retention and reduce employee turnover and absenteeism.[3]
✓ **Correlated with robust business performance:** Where women account for the majority in top management, businesses show superior sales growth, higher cash flow returns on investments and lower leverage.[4]

1.2. How to Use this Guide

When facilitating the contents of this guide, it is recommended to facilitate all sessions in one sitting, maximum of three hours or a half-day is recommended to ensure that participants are focused and are able to get a break in between sessions. Some helpful tips for scheduling:

✓ Schedule approximately 120 minutes for the conversation. 20 minutes for each session and leave about 30 minutes to an hour for a break halfway through.

[1] ILO and IFC (2016). *Progress and potential: How Better Work is improving garment workers' lives and boosting factory competitiveness.* https://betterwork.org/blog/portfolio/impact-assessment/
[2] ILO and IFC (2016). *Progress and potential: How Better Work is improving garment workers' lives and boosting factory competitiveness.* https://betterwork.org/blog/portfolio/impact-assessment/
IFC (2013). *Investing in women's employment: Good for business, good for development.* https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16257
Tufts University Labor Lab (2018). *Women in factories foundational training: Central America endline report.* https://sites.tufts.edu/laborlab/projects/wif/
[3] Population Council (2016). *Managing health at the workplace: A guidebook.* http://evidenceproject.popcouncil.org/resource/managing-health-at-the-workplace-a-guidebook/
[4] Hunt, V., Layton, D. & Prince, S. (2017). *Why Diversity Matters*. McKinsey & Company. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters.
Hunt, V., Prince, S., Dixon-Fyle, S., & Yee, L. (2018). *Delivering through Diversity.* McKinsey & Company. Available at:
https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx

A Gender Equity Conversation Guide for Male Management

- ✓ Ensure that there are between 10 to 12 participants per group size to allow for more intimate conversations.

When using the guide, it is important to do the following:

- **Ensure Ownership & Accountability:** Define and assign clear roles and responsibilities to person(s)-in-charge and hold management and key stakeholders accountable throughout the entire process.
- **Build Consensus with Stakeholders:** Have aligned values and priorities with involved stakeholders. Gain support and alignment from group-level leadership and stay connected during the entire process. Catalyse the learning and practices among sister factories under the same group by sharing throughout the process. Partner with brands in your network to strengthen capacity-building across the industry.
- **Maximize Gender Equity Benefits:** Link gender equity values to business needs to build support and incentivize relevant stakeholders.

2. Preliminary Section

In this section, we provide information on structure and facilitating group sessions and provide some useful general tips to use in your sessions.

Who Can be a Facilitator?

Reflect on whether these statements apply to you.

- I am a good listener.
- I can stop talking and encourage others to talk openly.
- I have experience in working with communities, in particular men and boys.
- I have a foundational understanding of the concept of "gender," as well as of important social issues that affect men and women.
- I can create a safe, open, and respectful environment in which people feel comfortable to speak about their issues and concerns, learn from their experiences, and challenge their long-held beliefs about women, gender roles and masculinity.
- I am comfortable working with other people's personal qualities and life experiences.
- I have the skills to manage conflicts that may arise.
- I am prepared to go through a process of self-reflection, looking at my own experiences and concerns about gender and masculinity.
- I am prepared to discuss these issues in a calm and open manner with others.

Facilitator Pre-Work

If you have been selected to facilitate the conversation in this guide, it is important to familiarize yourself with its contents. As a facilitator, you have the responsibility of ensuring that everyone is comfortable with discussing the topics outlined in this guide and that you can create a space that is safe enough for everyone to contribute. Remember, the goals and objectives of this guide is for participants to deepen their understanding of gender equity issues, and to challenge their biased beliefs and attitudes about women in the workplace. Remember that this guide has been designed and developed for a male audience.

Facilitating the Conversation

Introduce yourself and the purpose of this conversation: to explore concepts of gender equity and to engage men as social change agents at the workplace. Share with participants the purpose of the conversation is to discuss people's attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs including biases about gender equity, especially related to women at the workplace. Discuss the need for group agreements to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all participants.

The next step is to lay the ground rules. Since the topic of gender equity can be uncomfortable for some and perhaps new for others, share with participants that it is important for everyone engaging with the content to have an open mind throughout the conversation.

Ask the participants to agree that personal information shared during the conversation will be confidential and that participants should not disclose any information about other people by using names or other identifying information. Feel free to ask the participants what other agreements they feel they would need to create a safe space for themselves and their peers. Remind them to only share what they are comfortable sharing. Ask participants to show agreement by raising their hand or signing a large paper agreement. Be sure to give participants the opportunity to state a preferred gender pronoun or not disclose gender. Develop the agreements collaboratively with the participants. This will help ensure that everyone feels invested in upholding them. Keep the agreements clear, concise, and easy to remember.

Examples of Group Agreements (ground rules) include the following:

Communication and Participation:

- ✓ Active listening: We will listen attentively to each other without interruption.
- ✓ Respectful communication: We will speak kindly and respectfully to one another, even when we disagree.
- ✓ Participation: We will all actively participate and contribute to the conversations.
- ✓ Hand raising: We will raise our hands to speak and wait for our turn to contribute.
- ✓ Mobile phones: We will silence our phones or put them away during the workshop to minimize distractions.

Learning and Openness:

- ✓ Openness to new ideas: We will be open to hearing new perspectives and learning from each other.
- ✓ Non-judgmental space: We will create a safe and non-judgmental space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

These are just a few examples, and you can adapt them to fit your specific needs and goals.

Helpful Facilitator Tips
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the contents of this guide thoroughly; be organized and ready to facilitate conversations without distractions.
- ✓ Be familiar with the cultural contexts in which you are facilitating this guide to keep the content relatable to the audience.
- ✓ Keep the conversation moving at a relaxed pace so people feel free to express themselves and get to know each other.
- ✓ Ensure that everyone has a chance to participate.
- ✓ If one participant dominates, ask for someone else's opinion. Or ask a new but related question, and specifically ask another participant to comment.
- ✓ Please feel free to customize the guide by omitting sections based on your time, capacity, and your audience group.

3. Conversation Guide & Discussion Prompts

Session I: Framing Gender Equity

About: This section introduces the concept of gender equity and allows users of the guide to reflect on their own understanding of the term as well as give examples of gender equity in practice based on their understanding. The aim is to set the tone for the rest of the contents of this guide.

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Before beginning this section, it is important to reflect on what you know or understand about gender equity. Ask yourself or other participants the questions below:
    *   What does the phrase or term "gender equity" or "gender equality" mean? Describe this term in your own words. Can you give one or two examples of gender equity at work?
    *   Why might a conversation on this topic be relevant to your work as factory managers or supervisors?

2. Once you have engaged with the prompts above, review the definition of gender equality using the information provided in the box below:

Gender equity addresses the different interests and needs of women and men when distributing resources or designing programs, processes, and practices.

An example of promoting gender equity at the factory level is providing leadership training to encourage women to pursue and hold higher ranking positions at work.

Another example is ensuring that women and men who hold the same types of jobs are paid equally without discrimination.

Gender equity is therefore important because it can help you to identify and address gender-based challenges, which can help you create a safe and productive work environment for all.

It is also important to note that gender equity is important for growing business performance, which is why this topic is also very relevant to supply chain activities. Gender equity contributes to improved productivity, higher retention of workers, and even increased profits for businesses. Suppliers can improve their business performance by designing gender-equitable workplace policies, practices, and programming that address the specific needs of all workers, especially women.

---

3. Once you have reviewed the content of the box above, you can proceed to the next section. The next section will focus on exploring gender biases and stereotypes, which can be obstacles when seeking to advance gender equity at the workplace.

Session II: Exploring Gender Stereotypes

Objectives: This section provides an overview of common gender stereotypes associated with women in the workplace especially in garment factories. It allows participants to share what types of beliefs they hold about women and what may have contributed to those beliefs or attitudes. Participants will be able to discuss the negative impact of these stereotypes on women's opportunities and experiences and allow participants to reflect on their own biases and assumptions about women.

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants the following:
   - According to you, what are the roles of men and women in this society?
     - I. In the family
     - II. In the community
     - III. At the workplace (reflect on experiences of being a male and female member in the workplace, including the challenges, opportunities, experiences)

     (Key examples include men as the primary breadwinners, women as the caretakers)

   - What are some potential harmful effects of gender norms on men? On women? What about specifically within the workplace?

2. Build off the answers provided and share the following points:

> There are expectations in our marriages, families, among peers, in our communities and our workplaces. Each of these place different pressures on us and provide us with different opportunities. This is linked to social norms around gender, and these vary across context and geography. There are usually gender values, norms, and stereotypes within a society—expectations of what men and women should be like and what they can do. Gender roles are learned and can vary widely within and among cultures depending on socio-economic factors, age, education, ethnicity, and religion.
>
> Every culture (and every workplace culture!) has gender-based norms about what is suitable behavior and what are suitable activities for men and women. While what it means to be a man in the workplace may vary, there are certain qualities that tend to define what it means to be a "normal" man. This is more pronounced in certain industries, especially those that have traditionally been dominated by men and are high paying (e.g., finance).
>
> These valued "masculine" qualities or traits include ambition, toughness, competence, rationality, outspokenness, individualism, business sense, competitiveness, stubbornness, aggressiveness, and hyper-heterosexuality.
>
> Traditionally valued "feminine' qualities or traits in the workplace include warmth, kindness, deference, communitarianism, gullibility, and naivety.
>
> **At the core, gender (and the associated norms, stereotypes, and expectations) is about power.** It is a way of ordering society that is enforced from individuals to the highest structural levels. However, gender norms can and do change! These are not set in stone. Workplace cultures are influenced by geography, industry, etc. It is important to be aware of how gender norms and potential discrimination based can seep into your organization's policies and practices.

Session III: Busting Myths about Gender Stereotypes at Work

Objectives: This session presents participants with key myths commonly associated with gender stereotypes at work.

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Tell participants to review the following statements and to say if they agree or disagree and their reasoning behind the same:

- Gender stereotypes do not exist anymore. Companies focus on qualifications, not gender.
- Men are naturally better at negotiation, so it is okay for them to be more assertive.
- Women just are not as ambitious as men, so less likely to reach leadership positions.
- Women are too emotional for high-pressure situations.
- It is okay to joke about gender stereotypes because it is just harmless fun.
- It is primarily women's responsibility to take care of the kids, men have no business doing household work.
- Women are naturally better at certain tasks, like caring for others, while men are better at others, like leading or making decisions.
- There is nothing we can do about gender stereotypes at work.
- Changing attitudes and behaviours towards gender stereotypes is difficult and takes too long.

2. Next, explain to participants that the statements above are myths and share the respective facts using the following table:

MYTHS	FACTS
• Gender stereotypes do not exist anymore. Companies focus on qualifications, not gender	• Implicit biases rooted in stereotypes still influence hiring decisions, promotions, and workplace experiences. Studies show unconscious bias even among well-intentioned individuals.
• Men are naturally better at negotiation, so it is okay for them to be more assertive.	• Negotiation skills are learned, not inherent to any gender. Since a young age, women are told to agree, follow and not questions. They carry the same behavior in adulthood. Encouraging women to negotiate confidently can level the playing field.
• Women just are not as ambitious as men, so less likely to reach leadership positions	• Women's ambition levels are equal to men's. However, gender-based barriers such as societal expectations, unpaid care work, lack of support structures, can limit their advancement opportunities.
• Women are too emotional for high-pressure situations.	• Emotions are natural human responses, and all individuals manage stress in different ways. Focusing on emotional intelligence skills fosters effective leadership for everyone.
• It is okay to joke about gender stereotypes because it is just harmless fun.	• Even casual jokes can reinforce harmful stereotypes, creating a hostile environment and perpetuating bias. A respectful and inclusive workplace values everyone's contributions.
• It is primarily women's responsibility to take care of the kids, men have no business doing household work.	• Studies have found many positive impacts of men's greater involvement in fatherhood and household management both for men and their families. Men's involvement in care has been found to be associated with improved physical and mental health for men. Studies have also found that when men are engaged in childcare, they develop deeper relationships with their children. And children who have more engaged fathers are likely to have higher self-esteem, fewer behavioural problems, better relationships with friends, and non-traditional attitudes regarding earning and childcare. Sons who see their fathers engaging in care work are more likely to contribute equally to care work themselves and daughters have stronger views about gender equality. Some evidence has also shown that when men are engaged in childcare, they may adopt more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours.
• Women are naturally better at certain tasks, like caring for others,	• These are generalizations that ignore the vast range of skills and talents individuals possess regardless of gender. Both men

[10]

while men are better at others, like leading or making decisions.	and women can be effective leaders, caregivers, problem-solvers, and more.
• There is nothing we can do about gender stereotypes at work.	• Challenging gender stereotypes requires conscious effort and commitment from individuals and organizations. By speaking up against discriminatory practices, promoting inclusive policies, and celebrating diversity, we can create a more welcoming and supportive work environment for all.
• Changing attitudes and behaviours towards gender stereotypes is difficult and takes too long.	• By promoting awareness, providing training, and implementing inclusive policies, workplaces can see positive changes in attitudes and behaviours over time.

3. Conclude with the following points:

Men play many roles—often guided by highly gendered norms and expectations—in the community as religious or cultural leaders; in the market as traders, bosses, employees, or bankers; as political representatives; as teachers, doctors, and other professionals; and as defence and security personnel.
It is important to talk about who has control in society, so that we can make things fairer for everyone. This means empowering women, and also helping men understand how their actions affect others.

When men realize that they have unfair advantages in society, they can start to change things for the better. This means getting rid of unfair rules and expectations that hold people back.

It is important to remember that gender stereotypes are harmful because:
- They are inaccurate and unfair: They do not reflect the diverse capabilities and experiences of individuals.
- They limit opportunities: They can prevent people from pursuing careers or roles for which they are qualified.
- They create a hostile work environment: They can lead to discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

It is everyone's responsibility to challenge these stereotypes: By speaking up and promoting equality, we can create a more inclusive workplace for everyone.

Session IV: Mitigating Sexual Harassment at Work

Objectives: This section introduces the topic of sexual harassment and gender-based violence to participants. This session builds from the previous session because harmful gender stereotypes against women contribute to sexual harassment by objectifying them, creating power imbalances, and undermining their voices. These stereotypes make unwanted advances seem normal, discourage victims from speaking up, and foster a hostile environment where harassment is often tolerated and excused.

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Introduce a true/false activity to begin the discussion on sexual harassment. Use the following talking points:

Today we will talk about sexual harassment, sexual assault, and violence. But before we dive into talking about these topics and how to identify them, we are going to do an introductory activity to address some common misconceptions about sexual harassment.

2. Next, read the following statements aloud, pausing after each to allow participants to decide on their answer. If participants think the statement is true, they should stand up. If they think the statement is false, they should stay seated. After participants have shared their answer, share with them the correct answer, and ask a participant who answered correctly to share their reasoning:

- **Statement:** Sexual harassment is only ever physical. **Answer:** False.
- **Statement:** A supervisor gives a worker a warning about not wearing a safety scarf or helmet. Is this sexual harassment? **Answer:** False.
- **Statement:** Verbal sexual harassment is hardly ever serious and is mostly just joking. **Answer:** False.
- **Statement:** Women mostly invite any sexual harassment or sexual assault that happens to them. **Answer:** False.
- **Statement:** This factory has a specific policy that sets out a process for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment. **Answer:** True.
- **Statement:** Sexual harassment, sexual assault and violence are not about love. They are about power and feeling a sense of privilege. **Answer:** True.
- **Statement:** Bystanders can also report incidents of harassment or violence, not just people who are experiencing it themselves. **Answer:** True.

3. Conclude the activity with the following point:

If you did not know the answer or got a few answers wrong in this activity, that is completely fine. Sexual harassment and assault are confusing topics and are made even more complicated if they occur in the workplace.

4. Next, ask participants:
    - What do you think sexual harassment is? If you had to define it, how would you define sexual harassment?

5. After a few participants have shared, review the definition of sexual harassment:

There are a number of behaviours and actions that constitute sexual harassment, but generally we can think of sexual harassment as unwanted, unwelcome, and offensive conduct of a sexual nature that may make the individual receiving the conduct feel humiliated, intimidated, or uncomfortable.

Harassment often involves power imbalances in which one person abuses their power. This means that usually the person who is committing the sexual harassment (the perpetrator) has more power than the person who experiences the sexual harassment, often called a survivor. Perhaps the perpetrator has a higher seniority at work, has a higher leadership standing in the community, or has more power in other ways. Survivors may experience difficulties in defending themselves, partly due to having less power than the perpetrator.

It is important to acknowledge that **both men and women experience sexual harassment** around the world. However, women are the primary targets for sexual harassment.

6. Next, introduce three forms that sexual harassment behaviours can take:

- Sexual harassment behaviours can take three forms: physical, verbal, or non-verbal.
- Physical harassment is any unwanted touching of a sexual manner. This can include kissing, patting, pinching, or grabbing.

[12]

- Verbal harassment is any unwelcome comment or joke about the individual's private life, body, or appearance, especially if it is sexually suggestive. This can include commenting in-person or over the phone, email, SMS, or apps.
- Non-verbal harassment includes sexually suggestive body language or gestures, such as repeated winks, licking lips or intense staring with lust, in addition to displaying or sharing vulgar images or videos.
- *Include country-specific information to ensure cultural relevance.* For example, if facilitating this guide in India, you can include information reflective of Indian society. E.g., as per Indian law, it includes physical contact and advances; or a demand or request for sexual favours; or making sexually coloured remarks; or showing pornography; or any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature[5].

7. Explain the difference between sexual harassment and sexual assault:

Remember that **sexual harassment** means unwanted, inappropriate sexual advances, including suggestive gestures, language or touching. Often, it is used to humiliate, insult, or degrade someone, and by someone who has more power over you – like a boss, someone older, a teacher or someone else who has more power than you.

This is different from **sexual assault.** Sexual assault is the use of force, coercion, or an imbalance of power to make a person engage in sexual activity without their consent. Rape or attempted rape is one form of sexual assault, but can include forced kissing, touching, and groping too. Sexual assault is also sometimes called sexual abuse.

8. Ask participants:
   - Do you think garment industry is especially prone to incidents of sexual harassment or assault? Why or why not?

9. After a few participants have shared, discuss the global prevalence of sexual harassment and assault in garment factories:

The garment sector is especially prone to incidents of sexual harassment and assault because of a large number of women workers who are usually under the supervision of a few men, high unemployment and perception that women are low skilled or replaceable, leading to abusive disciplinary practices, and isolation of workers (especially those who are migrants) due to a lack of a shared language and culture.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has found that sexual harassment happens in factories in around the world. The ILO spoke with women workers in a garment factory about sexual harassment to get a better understanding of the problem.

Many of the interviewed garment workers said they did not understand well what sexual harassment is. Some did not see the differences between sexual relations, sexual harassment and sexual assault, or the differences between consensual and coerced sexual relationships. To be coerced means to be persuaded to do something through force or threats.

Some workers said that they are often subjected to sexual harassment outside the workplace, both on the way home from work and during trips to towns near the industrial zones. This harassment usually takes the form of strangers touching the workers on their backs and breasts.

ICRW also spoke with male managers and supervisors across 4 factories in India to understand their beliefs about sexual harassment and several of them noted its lack of existence, which contradicts the evidence on the

---

[5] The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

topic. This highlights the need for men to also participate in awareness-training programs on prevention of sexual harassment and assault, as well as learn more about the laws and regulations relating to sexual harassment in the workplace, so that they can do their part to reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment in factories.

Beyond policies, grievance mechanisms, and trainings, effectively addressing harassment and abuse requires working deeply to understand and address its root causes. Policies and targeted initiatives for harassment and abuse help set the stage for action, but long-term solutions to prevent harassment from occurring in the first place require broader activities to address gender equity.

Having a more gender equitable workplace environment can help to prevent harassment and abuse by creating an environment where workers are treated fairly and do not accept abusive behavior; it can also mitigate the impacts of harassment and abuse by establishing more transparency and accountability in reporting and investigation procedures.

Session V: Engaging Men to Transform Gender Attitudes in the Workplace

Objective: This section introduces the importance of engaging men as allies when it comes to transforming gender attitudes and dispelling harmful gender stereotypes at work, with the goal of promoting gender equity at work.

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Before getting into the topic, ask participants the following:
    - Do men have a role to play in challenging gender stereotypes about women? Why or why not?

2. Next, explain the importance of engaging men to challenge gender norms at work using the points in the box below:

In male-dominated societies, those in positions of power with the ability to impact gender equity in public policy and institutions are typically men.

Engaging both men and women in a reflective process that leads to robust commitment to more gender equitable beliefs—and to the course of actions that flow from such beliefs—will be good for society as a whole.

Progress on gender equity will be hampered if men see women's empowerment primarily as a zero-sum game in which men are giving something up in order for women to advance. Instead, the objective must be to reach a shared consensus across genders that through more gender-equitable beliefs and improved standards of gender equality, and through more gender-equal behaviours and institutional structures, all members of any society will flourish.

It is also important to acknowledge that while male engagement on its own will not ensure gender equity and that women-focused programming must continue, research shows that because men are part of the problem of gender inequality, they are therefore a crucial part of the solution.

3. Ask participants what can men do to transform workplace gender norms and attitudes? Ask for examples to elicit a discussion.

A Gender Equity Conversation Guide for Male Management

4. Explain:

> We want to think about how to engage men as stakeholders and co-beneficiaries. This conceptualizes men as participants and promoters in the process of creating progressively increasing standards of gender equality and equity. It also sees men as benefitting from this process through what they gain from more equitable families and societies.
>
> At the far end of the spectrum, and at the centre of the field, are gender-transformative approaches. These policies and programs focus on addressing gender-related norms and subject them to critical examination—particularly those norms associated with masculinity—while also reaching for the larger objectives of transforming norms and behaviours to become progressively more gender-equitable.
>
> Approaches that are gender-transformative intentionally set out to examine, question, and change entrenched gender norms and associated imbalances of power.
>
> Approaches that are gender transformative encourage critical awareness among men and boys, and women and girls, of prevailing gender roles and norms; promote the dignity of women and girls; push for a more equitable distribution of resources and allocation of duties between genders; and address the power relationships between women and men.
>
> Effective approaches that are gender transformative disrupt default social assumptions about what constitutes "appropriate" behavior for women, girls, men, and boys and compare these assumptions against principles of universal human dignity, gender equality, and fairness. This process exposes many unjustifiable, often deeply entrenched norms, such as the premise that men and boys are culturally entitled to control women and girls, thereby exposing women and girls to being vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual violence by men and boys.
>
> Changing such underlying cultural and societal norms entails interventions that are context-specific and culturally relevant, and that engage male participants in identifying and deconstructing the gendered norms that govern their societies. Norms are based on an assumption of agreement on certain beliefs and values. For instance, if a man makes a sexist remark in a room full of men, he likely believes that most men agree with him. If no one contradicts him, then he continues to believe that they agree with his remark, and the other men in the room continue to believe that their companions agree with the remark as well, even if they do not agree.

Session VI: Taking Action: Role of Male Managers and Supervisors

Objective: This session introduces participants to the robust checklist of policies and practices and provides an opportunity for them to partake in a role-play activity to understand the importance of managers in implementing the policies.

Materials: (1) Projector; (2) Flipchart and markers

Suggested Time: 20 minutes.

1. Divide participants into 2 or 3 groups.

2. Ask participants: What may be some ways to support gender equity in your organization? Have participants brainstorm and write opportunities to support gender equity in these three categories (focus on policies and/or practices – at least two ideas for each category):

   a. Recruitment
   b. Pay
   c. Promotion processes and employee evaluations

[15]

3. Have each group share and write them on the flipchart. Ask participants if any of them currently implement any of these policies and/or practices. Have them share if so.

4. Tell participants it is important that gender discrimination is not prevalent or possible through existing policies and practices related to recruitment, pay and promotion. Beyond this, there are key categories where gender is quite relevant and there are opportunities to support gender equity. Have participants now think about the opportunities to support gender equity in the workplace through the following categories (focus on policies and practices – at least two ideas for each category):

    a. Flexible work

    b. Care and Parental leave

    c. Professional development & skill building

    d. Sexual harassment mitigation (both prevention and response)

5. Have each group share and write them on the flipchart. Ask participants if any of them currently implement any of these policies and/or practices. Have them share if so.

6. Ask participants:

    • Is there a particular area that is of interest to you that you would like this factory to focus on?

    • What other resources or support internally do you need?

7. Emphasize that it is important that managers and supervisors understand the policies, as they ultimately dictate if and how they are implemented.

8. Conclude with the following points:

Gender equality concerns women and men, and it involves working with men and boys, women, and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviours, roles, and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, and in the community. Genuine equality means more than parity in numbers or laws on the books; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for males or females.

Women empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures societies and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment.

Gender integration involves identifying, and then addressing, gender inequalities [in performing our work]. Since roles and power relations between men and women affect how an activity is implemented, it is essential that we address these issues on an ongoing basis.

Gender equality, female empowerment, and gender inclusion are advantageous to us all as a society and for business growth.

An equitable workplace takes into consideration the diversity of all people across all genders and identities—providing support and services not despite their gender, but in response to their gender. By taking actions to promote gender equity, workplaces can address the structural, underlying causes of harassment and abuse – power dynamics, gender norms, bias, and stereotypes.

---

9. Congratulate participants in engaging with the contents of this guide and thank them for their time.

ICRW INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

A Gender Equity Conversation Guide for Male Management