

Six-step process: Promoting gender equity and tackling GBVH

Women Working Worldwide has over 30 years' experience supporting women in global supply chains and has worked with many suppliers, brands and retailers on gender equity. Our learnings from these projects have been developed into a simplified Six-step process: Promoting gender equity and tackling GBVH. This is offered not as a set of recommendations, but in the spirit of making available the benefit of our many years of experience in this field. Those who work in global supply chains may choose to follow these steps, build on them or use them as a guide for action planning. If needed we are available to help guide you through this process, our details are at the end.

Goal: To achieve gender equity, empower women and tackle GBVH in global supply chains.

Assumptions and risks:

- **Assumption:** Women's empowerment and engagement leads to improved working conditions, reduction in GBVH and improved sustainability.
- **Assumption:** Increased awareness and understanding of the impact of sexual harassment and gender-based violence will lead to a change in attitudes and behaviours.
- **Assumption:** Strengthened legal framework and enforcement will deter perpetrators and provide justice to survivors.
- **Risk:** Resistance from some growers, owners or managers to address the issue due to existing power dynamics or lack of awareness.
- **Risk:** Limited resources and funding for implementing comprehensive interventions
- **Risk:** Lack of understanding of root causes means that an enabling environment that challenges power imbalances, amplifies women's voice, and increases participation and leadership is not implemented.

Step 1: Data to Raise Awareness and Understanding

- Analyse the existing policies, laws, and regulations in-country related to gender equality, sexual harassment and gender-based violence.
- Engage key stakeholders, including other companies, industry associations, government agencies, and civil society organisations, and use data and case studies to promote understanding and support for gender equality and equity.
- Conduct research and collect data on gender disparities in your company/industry.
- Identify and understand the prevailing cultural (both local and sector), social, and economic factors that underpin gender inequality and contribute to sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Identify what opportunities there are within that industry and culture to protect against sexual harassment etc.
- Engage with workers, women and men and the wider community, to co-create educational campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of gender equity and equality.

Step 2: Develop Gender Responsive Policies and Standards

- Collaborate with industry associations, NGOs Unions and government agencies to develop and implement gender-responsive policies and standards.
- Develop a shared vision for an industry that is free from sexual harassment and gender-based violence, ensuring a safe and inclusive work environment for all workers.
- Encourage the adoption of gender-sensitive practices throughout the value chain.
- Establish guidelines for fair wages, safe working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement for women in the industry.

- Company owners/boards need to support and strengthen the capacity of managers to address and respond effectively to incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.
- Establish confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms, such as helplines or complaint boxes, to encourage victims to report incidents without fear of reprisal.
- Establish a supportive system for survivors, including access to legal aid, medical services, counselling, and other necessary support services.

Step 3: Capacity Building and Training

- Provide training and capacity-building programs for women in the industry, focusing on leadership, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and technical skills; building on their own strengths and knowledge of what will have the greatest impact and be most sustainable in their particular culture.
- Create mentorship programs that connect women to women as well as with women industry leaders and experts.
- Offer scholarships and apprenticeship opportunities to enhance women's access to education and training and to open up 'male only' jobs.
- Develop and implement comprehensive training programs on gender equality, human rights, and prevention of sexual harassment and gender-based violence for workers, supervisors and managers.

Step 4: Strengthen Women's Participation and Representation

- Advocate for the inclusion of women in decision-making processes at all levels of the industry, including boards, management, committees and trade unions, and provide capacity building on gender equity for those bodies.
- Support informal women's associations or networks within the industry, or, if they do not exist, support their formation to provide a platform for networking, sharing experiences, and advocating for their rights.
- Set targets and track progress on gender diversity, leadership and representation.

Step 5: Promote Gender-Inclusive Supply Chains

- Facilitate partnerships between your company and women-led or women-focused organisations to promote women's understanding of their rights and economic empowerment.
- Create opportunities for women to access financing, resources, and markets.
- Actively support the development of gender-inclusive supply chains that prioritise fair trade, social and environmental sustainability, and the empowerment of women farmers and workers.
- Collaborate with government agencies, trade unions, and civil society organisations to advocate for and enforce stronger laws and regulations on sexual harassment and gender-based violence in your industry.

Step 6: Monitor, Evaluate, Learn and Develop

- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress of gender equality initiatives in your industry, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments.
- Regularly collect and publish data on key gender indicators, such as women's participation, leadership positions, income levels, and job satisfaction.
- Use the data to inform and develop policy adjustments and identify good practice.
- Share lessons learned with other industries, companies, stakeholders working on similar issues to facilitate cross-industry learning and collaboration.

By implementing this 6 step change process, it is envisioned that your industry can foster a culture of respect, equality, and safety, reducing incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence while promoting the empowerment of women workers. For support implementing this process please contact: Women Working Worldwide, Caroline Downey, caroline@women-ww.org, 07947808710.