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BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES:

A GENDER INCLUSIVITY TOOLKIT FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

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Welcome to the Gender Inclusivity Toolkit

The Gender Inclusivity Toolkit is a comprehensive resource designed to equip young entrepreneurs with the knowledge and tools to promote gender equality and inclusivity within businesses. While promoting diversity within a business is crucial, it cannot lead to a sustainable increase in productivity, innovation, and better decision-making on its own. Diversity and inclusion must go hand in hand to ensure positive and lasting impacts for employees and the business. To create an inclusive workplace, employees must feel valued, respected, treated fairly, and empowered through inclusive business practices, organizational culture, and leadership. Inclusion is essential for achieving equal outcomes for employees from diverse backgrounds.[1]

This toolkit provides a pathway for driving transformative change in organizational structure and culture from a gender perspective, enabling businesses to cultivate an inclusive and equitable workplace that attracts, retains, and promotes a gender-diverse talent pool. In addition, it aims to raise awareness among young entrepreneurs on gender biases and discrimination that prevents workplace equality and practical measures for addressing them.

Whether you are just starting as an entrepreneur or have been in business for a while, this toolkit will provide you with the resources you need to identify opportunities for improvement from a gender perspective, design interventions for sustained progress on gender equality, and benchmark progress.

The objective of this toolkit is to:

- **Provide young entrepreneurs with the tools and resources to assess their current policies, procedures, and practices through a gender inclusivity lens.**
- **Identify practical strategies for implementing gender equality practices within the workplace and deliver gender-responsive products and services.**
- **Empower young entrepreneurs to design and implement a comprehension action plan for organizational change towards gender equality.**
- **Enable young entrepreneurs to learn and reflect on their gender inclusivity culture and continuously strive to improve.**

[1] ILO (2022). Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion

Why Gender Inclusivity Matters for Your Business

Gender equality is a fundamental principle that guarantees equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for all individuals, irrespective of their gender and intersecting social identities It recognises that achieving gender equality requires addressing the way in which gender identity and diverse social identities shapes the distribution of power between individuals and at all levels of society, combating harmful gender norms that affect individuals of all genders, and eliminating all forms of discrimination. Gender inclusivity complements this approach by fostering a culture that respects and values individuals of all identities. It goes beyond ensuring equal opportunities for all genders to actively promote a workplace culture where employees can bring their unique selves to work.

To achieve workplace equality, it is crucial to identify and address the unique challenges faced by individuals of different genders, especially in attaining leadership positions. Gender identities intersect with other social identities such as sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and disability, which can compound discrimination and unequal outcomes for individuals in the workplace. For example, women with disabilities are significantly more likely than other groups of women to have their judgment questioned in their area of expertise and to have colleagues get credit for their ideas.[2]

Despite progress, gender stereotypes and biases persist in many workplaces, presenting significant challenges for creating an inclusive culture that supports advancing women and gender minority groups. One research shows that for every 100 men promoted from entry-level to a manager, only 87 are women, and only 82 are women of colour.[3] This “broken rung” ripple effect results in disproportionately fewer women in subsequent higher levels of the organizational hierarchy, hampering diversity in senior leadership positions and an inclusive culture. Gender disparities in the workplace not only limit opportunities for talented individuals but also hinder business performance.

The business case for gender equality has been quantified and measured in numerous studies. Mounting evidence shows that businesses with a more diverse workforce perform better financially and are more innovative. In addition, better decision-making and improved business outcomes have been linked to the presence of a gender-diverse leadership team. For instance, enterprises with equal employment opportunity policies and gender-inclusive culture are over 60 percent more likely to have improved products and productivity, and they are nearly 60 percent more likely to experience enhanced reputation, greater ease in attracting and retaining talent, and greater creativity and innovation.[4]

In addition to the benefits for the business, a gender-diverse workforce can also be a critical pull factor in attracting and retaining top talent. One study found that 76 percent of job seekers and employees consider a diverse workforce a key factor when evaluating businesses and job offers.[5] In the evolving world of work, enterprises must make strategic decisions that promote gender equality and foster inclusive cultures where talented individuals of diverse gender identities want to join, grow, and thrive. By doing so, businesses can enhance their financial performance, attract and retain top talent, improve innovation, and build a positive reputation in their industry.

[2] Lean In (2022). Women in the Workplace 2022
[3] Mckinsey (2022). Women in the Workplace
[4] ILO (2019). Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change
[5] Glassdoor (2020). Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Survey

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Reduced inequality can boost the GDP

25 percent reduction in the global gender gap in the labour market by 2025 **= US$5.3 trillion added to the global GDP.**[6]

Attraction and retention of top talent

85 percent of women millennials consider an employer's policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion when deciding where to work.[10]

Innovation

When companies establish **inclusive business cultures and policies**, they are more likely to report a **59.1 percent increase in creativity, innovation, and openness, and a 37.9 percent better assessment of consumer interest and demand.**[11]

Increased productivity and financial performance

- Enterprises with **equal employment opportunity policies and gender-inclusive cultures** are **over 60 percent more likely to have improved profits and productivity.**[7]

- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were **25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability** than companies in the bottom quartile.[8]

- Work environments that are more **inclusive of persons with disabilities** have often been found to yield **improved productivity levels across the whole workforce.**[9]

Increased commitment

A study on understanding the organizational barriers to a more inclusive workplace shows that **workforce members who feel very included are nearly three times more likely than their peers to feel committed to their organizations** and more likely to pursue career development and promotion.[12]

[6] ILO (2017). Economic Impacts of Reducing the Gender Gap
[7] ILO (2019). Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change
[8] McKinsey (2020). Diversity Wins: How inclusion matters
[9] ILO (2022). Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion
[10] PWC. The female millennial: A new era of talent
[11] ILO (2019). Women in Business and Management: The Business Case for Change
[12] ILO (2022). Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion

How To Use This Toolkit

The toolkit aims to help young entrepreneurs to promote gender inclusivity within their businesses by guiding them to identify gender equality gaps in their policies, procedures, and practices and develop interventions for sustained progress on gender equality. You can either choose to read the toolkit from cover to cover or jump straight into the chapters relevant to your business.

The toolkit is divided into the following interlinked sections:

This toolkit covers eleven key pillars businesses must focus on to advance gender equality and inclusivity and move the needle towards progress:

Pillars for Promoting Workplace Equality

1

Leadership Commitment to Gender Equality

2

Equal Representation of All Gender Identities in the Workplace

3

Pay Equity

4

Training and Professional Development for All

5

Work-life Balance and Flexibility

6

Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence

7

Gender-Responsive Supply Chain Management

8

Gender-Inclusive Communications

Pillars for Delivering Gender-Inclusive Products and Services

9

Equitable Market Research

10

Product and Service Development for All

11

Gender-Inclusive Marketing

Within each key pillar of the toolkit, you will find:

- **An overview of the pillar**
- **Why it is essential to integrate a gender-inclusive approach for this pillar**
- **Practical strategies for entrepreneurs to incorporate gender-inclusivity into their business**
- **A worksheet designed to help entrepreneurs contextualise the issue within their specific business context**
- **A list of additional resources for further information (Annex)**

Creating a gender-inclusive workplace is a journey. As young entrepreneurs, embrace the process, learn from challenges, and adapt your interventions for progress. Maintain a growth mindset, listen, learn, and engage in dialogue. By taking active steps towards inclusivity, you are already contributing to an equitable and empowering workplace for all.

Things to consider when using the toolkit

GENDER IS NOT BINARY

Gender is not just limited to men and women. Gender is a diverse spectrum that encompasses a range of different identities and expressions. It is important to remember that individuals have different gender identities and expressions and businesses should strive to create inclusive workplaces that recognise and value all gender identities and expressions. Young entrepreneurs can apply the information and concrete action included in this toolkit to consider the needs of all genders. However, based on available research and resources, most of the examples and further reading resources will primarily focus on the disparities and gaps between men and women within businesses.

CONTEXT IS IMPORTANT

Each business operates within a unique context, including its industry, culture, and local community. Therefore, it is essential to tailor measures included in the toolkit and action plan to your specific context. Always engage with stakeholders, including employees and customers, to understand their needs and perspectives.

GENDER INCLUSIVITY THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

Embracing an intersectional approach to gender inclusivity acknowledges that individuals have multiple social identities––such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, and religious beliefs––that can overalp and create compounding experiences of discrimination. This approach recognises and addresses employees' unique challenges and experiences due to the intersection of gender with other social identities. By valuing and incorporating diverse experiences and identities, young entrepreneurs can foster an equitable and supportive workplace that promotes belonging and empowers all employees to succeed.

EQUITY IS A MEANS TO EQUALITY

Equity is a crucial means to achieve gender equality. While gender equality ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, has the same rights and opportunities, gender equity recognises that different individuals or groups may face unique challenges and barriers that need to be addressed to level the playing field. This toolkit is dedicated to addressing issues related to gender equity and gender equality, as promoting gender inclusivity requires recognising and addressing the unique challenges that different gender groups encounter. This ensures that everyone is valued and respected and that no one is excluded or discriminated against based on their gender.

Taking Stock: Assessing Your Business for Gender Inclusivity

This section of the toolkit aims to support you in assessing the level of gender inclusivity in your business. By examining your policies, procedures, and practices through a gender lens, you can identify areas where gender-based inequalities may exist. The self-assessment will provide a baseline for your business and inform the development of a comprehensive gender action plan.

Gender Equality Organizational Self-Assessment Checklist

This self-assessment tool will support young entrepreneurs in understanding the status of gender equality and inclusivity within their businesses. It covers critical pillars ranging from leadership and management to marketing and communication, and enables you to identify areas for improvement in promoting gender inclusivity. By using this tool, you can assess your progress and take meaningful action towards advancing gender equality within your business.

There are 30 questions across 11 key pillars to assess the level of gender integration across policies, procedures, practices, and the different levels of the business. For each question, answer “Yes” or “No” based on your understanding. Then, refer to the relevant pillar section to better understand how to design targeted action to address gender gaps within your business. A glossary of some commonly used terms in this diagnostic tool and the toolkit is provided in the Annex to aid in a better understanding of the questions.

While this self-assessment tool provides a basic framework for conducting a simple gender diagnostic assessment, it is not an exhaustive list, and businesses have the flexibility to supplement it with further in-depth questions to identify additional gender gaps relevant to their context. It is important to recognize that the journey towards gender transformation will vary for each business and may require considerable time. Therefore, an essential first step is gaining an understanding of the current status and subsequently taking tangible actions to progress to the next level.

KEY PILLARS	YES	NO
1. Leadership Commitment to Gender Equality		
Does your business have a gender diverse leadership team? (For example, management team, executive management team or board of directors or equivalent)		
Does your business have committees with equal representation of genders? (For example, HR Committee, Board Member etc.)		
Are gender diversity, equity, and inclusion communicated as one of the top priorities in your company, and is the progress regularly reported by leadership to all employees?		
Are leaders and management held accountable as role models for gender diversity and inclusion in their behaviours and actions?		
Are there policies and practices that ensure equal opportunities for career advancement and leadership positions for all genders within the organization?		
2. Pay Equity		
Does your business have a policy that ensures equal pay for equal work or work of equal value?		
Are pay and benefits packages transparent and communicated to all employees?		
3. Equal Representation of All Genders in the Workplace		
Does your business have a policy or practice to promote diversity and inclusivity in the recruitement process?		
Are job descriptions and requirements written in a gender-neutral and inclusive manner, including use of inclusive language and flexible work arrangement options, such as remote working, etc.?		
Have gender diverse hiring panels been established to ensure a range of perspectives and experiences in the evaluation and selection of candidates?		

4. Professional Development for All		
Does your business provide targeted training and development programs based on identified gender-specific training needs?		
Does your business offer all employees equal access to training and professional development opportunities that prepare them to advance in their careers, especially to positions where a specific gender is underrepresented or challenges gender stereotypes?		
Does your business mainstream diverse gender perspectives across all training and development programs?		
5. Work-life Balance and Flexibility		
Does your business have policies or programs to support work-life balance for employees of all genders, such as paid leave policies?		
Does your business support childcare services (for example, childcare facilities in the company or financial subsidies for kindergartens etc.) and family-friendly policies(for example, paid parental leave, paid sick leave for parents caring for a child)?		
Does your business offer flexible work arrangements to give employees more flexibility over their work schedule?		
6. Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based		
Does your business have a written policy that clearly defines sexual harassment and gender-based violence and outlines the consequences for violators?		
Does your business have a redressal mechanism established to report and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence?		
Has your business conducted awareness-raising sessions to prevent harassment and discriminatory treatment in the organization?		
7. Gender-Responsive Supply Chain		
Does your business have policies or practices to ensure gender equality and inclusion in its supply chain, such as promoting equal pay and opportunities for all?		
Does your business actively seek out and support enterprises led by women and gender minority groups in its supply chain?		

8. Gender-Inclusive Communications		
Is gender-inclusive language consistently used in all written communication materials, including job descriptions, employee handbooks, and marketing materials?		
Are audiovisual communication materials, such as videos and presentations, inclusive of diverse gender identities and free from harmful gender stereotypes?		
Does your business communicate its commitment to gender equality to external audiences and clients?		
9. Equitable Market Research		
Does your business conduct market research to identify gender-specific needs and preferences of your target audience before a product or service development?		
Does your business analyse gender-disaggregated data in your market research to identify gender-specific trends or disparities?		
10. Product and Service Development for All		
Does your business integrate gender-specific needs and preferences in the design and development of products and services?		
Do you conduct user testing with individuals from diverse social identities, including women and gender minority groups, to identify potential biases or exclusions in your products or services?		
11. Gender-Inclusive Marketing		
Does your business have a marketing strategy that is inclusive of diverse gender identities?		
Does your business use gender-inclusive language and imagery in your marketing materials?		

Promoting Gender Inclusivity in the Workplace

Integrating a gender inclusivity lens across all levels of the business is crucial for advancing gender equality within organizations. This section of the toolkit will introduce you to essential pillars critical for promoting gender equality in the workplace. Each pillar will provide practical strategies to implement within your business and a worksheet to help contextualise the issues.

Leading the Way: Committing to Gender Equality at the Leadership Level

What it is

Commitment to gender equality at the leadership level is critical to creating an inclusive and equitable workplace for all employees irrespective of gender identity. This involves taking concrete actions to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of a business, including policies, procedures, and practices. Prioritising gender equity approaches, advocating for gender equality principles, and promoting a culture of respect and fair treatment towards all genders are critical components of effective business leadership and gender-inclusive work culture. Providing training and resources to support gender inclusivity, setting targets for gender diverse representation, and tracking progress towards these goals are also essential aspects of this approach. By leading the way in establishing a commitment to gender equality, businesses can create a more diverse and innovative workplace that benefits employees and the organization.

Why it is important

A gender-inclusive approach allows businesses to tap into the full potential of their diverse workforce and foster a culture of respect and inclusivity towards all gender identities. By recognising and addressing gender biases and stereotypes at the decision-making level, businesses can establish an equitable environment that provides equal opportunities for for all employees, regardless of gender identity. Initiatives to promote gender equality contribute towards higher business outcomes and feelings of employee inclusion, with research indicating a drop in turnover risk of 50 percent.[13]

[13] ILO (2019). Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to achieve gender-inclusive leadership:

- **Set a clear vision** and clearly communicate the vision and commitment to gender-inclusive leadership throughout the organization. Ensure that gender equity and equality are core values and priority for the business. This could include establishing a diversity and inclusion committee or an employee resource groups (ERGs), conducting regular gender pay gap audits, and setting specific gender diversity targets including for women and gender minority groups from diverse social identities in leadership positions.

- **Promote gender equity and diversity** in leadership positions, work teams and committees by implementing inclusive hiring practices and setting gender-diverse representation targets. Create safe spaces for all voices to be heard and pay attention to gendered experiences through an intersectional lens.

- **Foster a culture of gender advocacy and support** across all levels of leadership and management. Prioritize gender-based topics in high-level discussions and decision-making processes, ensuring that corporate social responsibility (CSR) investments align with gender equality goals and deliver positive outcomes. Establish a dedicated team of gender champions to drive transformative change, implement inclusive policies, and champion gender-related strategies throughout the organization.

- **Provide equitable policies and practices.** Review and ensure that policies and practices, such as pay, benefits, and promotions, are fair and free from gender bias and intersectional discrimination. In addition, develop a comprehensive Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy with a special emphasis on gender inclusivity. This policy should outline specific steps that the business will take to promote gender equity in the workplace and address gender-based discrimination and harassment.

- **Demonstrate commitment to a gender-inclusive culture** by investing in and building inclusive facilities that ensure accessibility,safety, and comfort for people of all genders. This includes providing gender-neutral restrooms,lactation rooms, accessible work spaces catering to the diverse needs of all employees.

- **Regularly evaluate decision-making processes** to identify and address unconscious gender bias and intersectional discrimination. This could involve providing specific training or tools to help identify and address such biases and discrimination in decision-making processes, such as unconscious bias training or gender impact assessments. Additionally, ensure equal input and feedback opportunities for all team members and consider the potential impact of decisions on different gender groups.

- **Provide leadership opportunities for all employees.** Ensure women and other underrepresented groups can access relevant training and professional development opportunities to build their skills and capabilities for leadership roles. Consider implementing a mentorship program within your business or partnering with an external organization to provide these opportunities.

- **Establish an Employee Resource Group endorsed by senior management.** This group can serve as a safe space for employees to discuss gender-related issues, provide feedback on company policies and initiatives, and suggest ways to improve gender inclusivity in the workplace. The employee resource groups can also be a valuable resource for mentorship and networking opportunities. Including the participation of members from the management team in the group can demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and inclusivity and signal that the business values diverse perspectives and experiences.

Did you know?

Gender bias refers to the unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on gender. Gender bias can have a significant impact on workplace equality. It can be conscious or unconscious, resulting in a wide range of negative outcomes, including women being passed over for promotions, receiving less pay for the same work as their counterparts who are men, or being excluded from essential projects or similar opportunities. It can also affect an organization's culture, talent retention, and productivity.

Conscious gender bias refers to explicit beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours intentionally directed towards certain gender groups. For example, a manager consistently promotes individuals who identify as a man over those who identify as a woman or non-binary, even when the woman or non-binary person is equally or more qualified for the position. This bias is based solely on the manager's belief that individuals who identify as man are more suited for leadership roles, and it disregards the qualifications and potential of other individuals who are just as capable of excelling in the role.

Unconscious bias refers to the unintentional and automatic mental associations based on gender stemming from traditions, norms, values, culture, and experience, which can influence their decision-making processes. These biases can significantly impact how individuals are perceived, treated, and evaluated in the workplace, ultimately leading to gender-based discrimination. For example, a manager who identifies as a man repeatedly interrupts an employee who identifies as a woman during meetings or disregards her ideas while giving colleagues who are men more opportunities to speak and be heard. This may be a result of the manager's preconceived notion that women are less knowledgeable or less capable of making significant contributions to the team. Despite being unintentional, this kind of bias can lead to women feeling undervalued and discouraged from participating in discussions, ultimately limiting their opportunities for career advancement.

Worksheet 1

Drafting a Terms of Reference for an Employee Resource Group

This worksheet can guide the development of an employee resource group focused on advancing gender inclusivity in the workplace. Refer to the guiding questions under each area to formulate your Terms of Reference (TOR), and you can write your responses in the comments column. Once you complete your TOR, share it with your colleagues and the management team to gain support and promote a collaborative approach towards advancing gender inclusivity in your workplace. You can find this worksheet with sample responses to the guiding questions in the Annex.

TERMS OF REFERENCE-KEY AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Introduction	✳ What is the purpose of the ERG? ✳ What is the group's vision and mission statement? ✳ Why is advancing gender equality through diversity, equity, and inclusion important for the business?	
Objectives	✳ What are the specific goals and objectives of the group? ✳ How will the ERG advance gender equality in the workplace?	
Membership	✳ Who can be a member of the group? ✳ How will members be recruited and selected?	
Roles and Responsibilities	✳ What are specific roles and responsibilities of the ERG leader and members?	
Activities and Events	✳ What activities and events will the group organise to advance gender equality in the workplace?	
Budget and Resources	✳ What kind of resources will be needed to achieve its goals and objectives? ✳ How will budget be allocated and managed?	

Reporting and Communication	✳ How will progress on activities be reported and communicated to all employees and stakeholders?	
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	✳ How will success be measured? ✳ How will feedback be collected and utilised to make continuous improvements?	

Building A Strong Team: Ensuring Equal Representation of All Genders in the Workplace

What it is

Recruiting and selecting the best talent for your business is essential to building a diverse and inclusive team. This involves ensuring the recruitment, selection and promotion process is free from gender-based and intersectional discrimination and that each candidate is assessed only on their skills, qualifications, and experience. This approach aims to level the playing field for all candidates, regardless of gender.

Why it is important

Gender biases and intersectional discrimination can impact the entire recruitment and selection process, from how job postings are written to how final hiring decisions are made. Processes that embed gender biases and intersectional discrimination can exclude talented and qualified candidates from consideration and reinforce harmful gender stereotypes. For example, avoid using language like “strong leadership skills” or “aggressive sale tactics” and instead use “collaborative team player” or “customer-focused approach” to attract a diverse pool of candidates.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to build a more inclusive recruitment and selection process:

- **Assess current policies and practices.** Review and evaluate human resource processes and practices, including recruitment and selection, to identify and address gender bias and intersectional discrimination. Implement a gender-inclusive promotion policy that ensures promotions are awarded based on merit and job performance, regardless of gender and intersecting social identites, and clearly communicate the promotion criteria to all employees.

- **Review job postings** using a gender-responsive lens. Assess the required qualifications, the language used in job postings, job titles, and flexible work arrangements offered. For example, include specific skills instead of increasing the years of experience required to apply for a post. Be mindful of phrases that could deter candidates of a particular gender.

- **Diversify the recruitment approach.** Use various methods, such as career fairs, community spaces, school announcement boards, and recruitment websites, to attract a more diverse pool of candidates.

- **Ensure a diverse hiring panel** that includes individuals from different genders and social identities, and strengthen their knowledge by providing relevant training, such as gender-sensitive recruitment approaches and unconscious bias awareness.

- **Standardise the recruitment processes** and document all stages of recruitment, selection and hiring based on qualifications, skills and experience. For example, use pre-defined selection criteria and blind resume screening to help reduce unconscious bias from the evaluation process.

- **Foster a diverse talent pool** by providing appropriate accommodations for individuals with intersectional identities. This includes ensuring accessible application forms and interviewing offices for persons with disabilities, preemptively discussing interview requirements to accommodate persons with disabilities (e.g., providing alternative formats for written tests for blind applicants)

- **Create inclusive workspaces.** Ensure workspaces are adapted to fit the needs of all employees, including sanitary facilities for all genders, workplace adaptations for employees with disabilities, and gender-inclusive lactation rooms.

- **Track progress.** Regularly analyse data to identify and address any disparities in gender representation throughout the candidate evaluation and selection process, as well as in promotion rates. In addition, seek feedback from current employees to ensure that their voices are heard, and that the organization is continuously improving its practices.

Practical Tip

- Use tools such as Gender Decoder to check job descriptions for unconscious gender bias and gender-discriminatory language.

- Avoid using gendered words such as “he” or “she” and instead use gender-neutral language such as “they” or “the applicant”.

- Offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible schedules, to all employees, regardless of gender. It can facilitate equal sharing of household care work and help dismantle gender stereotypes. These arrangements can also give women, who currently bear the disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities, more opportunities to participate in the workforce.

- Use tools such as Accessibility Checker to check whether your company’s website is accessibke to persons with disabilities.

Worksheet 2

Drafting a Gender-Inclusive Job Description

Writing a gender-inclusive job description is essential to attract diverse candidates. Refer to the guiding questions in this worksheet and write down your reflections in the comments column to help make your job descrition more inclusive.

JOB DESCRIPTION-SECTIONS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Job Title	✳ Is the job title gender-neutral and inclusive? (For example, chairperson instead of chairman or referring to the applicant as “they” instead of “he/she”). ✳ Does it accurately describe the role and responsibilities of the position?	
Job Objective	✳ Is the language used in the job description free from gender bias and inclusive? ✳ Are there any words or phrases in the job description that could discourage specific groups of people from applying for this job?	
Key Responsibilities	✳ Are all responsibilities listed essential for the role? ✳ Are they clearly defined and described in gender-neutral language?	

Required Qualifications	✳ Are the required qualifications relevant to the job and free of gender bias? (For example, instead of requiring “strong leadership skills”, consider including “collaborative team player”.) ✳ Are there any qualifications that could unnecessarily exclude certain groups of people? (For example, consider the minimum number of years of experience required as it may exclude those who took career breaks for various reasons including unpaid care work.)	
Flexible arrangements	✳ Are flexible work arrangements offered to ensure equal opportunities for all applicants regardless of gender and family status?	
Salary and benefits	✳ Is the salary and benefit information listed transparently and objectively? ✳ Are the salary and benefits packages offered for this position based on objective criteria such as skills, experience, and qualifications rather than subjective factors such as gender and other social indentities?	
Selection criteria	Have the selection criteria been established based on the job requirements and without bias or stereotypes?	

Bridging The Divide: Detecting and Eliminating Gender-Based Pay Gaps

What it is

Remuneration is the overall process of compensating employees for their work, including salaries and benefits. The gender pay gap is the difference in average earnings between men and women for the same job or work of equal value. For example, for every dollar men earn, women earn 77 cents.[14] The gender wage gap is further exacerbated by intersectional discrimination, as women of colour and persons with disabilities face additional inequalities in earnings. This persistent pay gap perpetuates discrimination, limiting women's economic empowerment and financial security. At the current rate, it is estimated that it will take 257 years to close the global gender pay gap.[15]

Why it is important

By implementing an equal pay policy and establishing transparent compensation systems, businesses can ensure that all employees receive equal remuneration for work of equal value. In addition, promoting equality through gender-equal pay can contribute towards greater employee retention and attract a higher talent pool of applicants. Pay equality could be the difference that sets your business apart from other competing businesses for potential candidates.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to promote equal pay for equal work:

- **Conduct a salary gap analysis.** Review employee salaries and compensation packages to identify and address any gender-based differences through an intersectional approach.
- **Establish a transparent compensation system.** Outline criteria for setting salaries, bonuses, and other forms of compensation based on job requirements and qualifications.
- **Draft and implement equal pay for equal work policy.** Ensure all employees who perform similar job functions receive equal pay, regardless of gender.
- **Encourage open communication.** Create a culture that encourages employees to discuss pay and compensation-related concerns openly. This approach can help identify and address any pay disparities.
- **Invest in training and development.** Provide training and development opportunities to support employees in improving their skills and career advancement. This can help ensure that all employees have the opportunity to advance in their careers and earn higher salaries.
- **Track progress.** Conduct salary gap analysis annually and monitor progress to ensure that pay disparities are addressed promptly. In addition, regularly communicate progress to employees to help build trust and accountability in the process.

[14] UN (2022). Closing the Gender Gap is More Important Than Ever
[15] Ibid.

Worksheet 3

Developing an Equal Pay for Equal Work Policy

This worksheet serves as a framework for developing an equal pay for equal work policy in your business. Use the guiding questions to draft the key areas of the policy to ensure transparency and consistency in compensation decisions and processes. You can use the comments column to write your key points and reflections. You can find this worksheet with sample responses to the guiding questions in the Annex.

POLICY AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Clearly define equal pay for equal work	✳ How do you define "equal pay for equal work" in your organization? ✳ What compensation components should be included in the definitions? (For example, base salary, bonuses, benefits, etc.)	
Prohibit discrimination	✳ How will the policy outline and prohibit any form of discrimination in pay and benefits. (For example, discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, disability, and other social identities.) ✳ How will the policy be consistently applied across all levels of the business?	
Foster transparency	✳ How will the pay scale and compensation decisions be communicated to all employees?	
Evaluate job roles and responsibilities	✳ What systems will be established to evaluate job roles and responsibilities to determine pay equity? (For example, external benchmarking compares pay levels to similar businesses in the same industry and location.)	
Encourage reporting of employee concerns	✳ What mechanisms will be established for employees to report concerns about pay disparities without fear of retaliation?	

Address pay disparities	✳ What process will be developed for analyzing and addressing pay disparities? ✳ How will salaries be adjusted, and training opportunities be provided, if necessary?	
Regular policy review	✳ How often will the policy be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness?	
Provide employee training	✳ What kind of knowledge sessions will the management provide all employees on the equal pay for equal work policy?	
Ensure management commitment	✳ How will the management be held accountable for the policy's implementation?	

Finding Equilibrium: Strategies for Work-Life Balance

What it is

Flexible work practices and policies can play a significant role in attracting a gender-diverse workforce and harnessing the full potential of employees' diverse strengths within their work and teams. Work-life balance is the ability of employees to balance their professional responsibilities and personal life. Gender-inclusive flexible work strategies recognise that employees, regardless of gender, may have caregiving responsibilities, family commitments, or personal obligations that affect their work-life balance. This approach recognises that employees have different responsibilities outside of work and aims to support them in creating a healthy work-life balance.

Why it is important

Gender-responsive work-life balance and flexible work strategies such as parental leave and family care leave policies can contribute towards dismantling traditional gender roles and redistributing the disproportionate burden of care, which is still primarily carried out by women. For example, across the world, 21.7 percent of women perform unpaid care work on a full-time basis, compared to just 1.5 percent of men.[16] Family-friendly policies and practices also help increase the retention of employees, specifically working mothers and those returning to work after parental leave, who might otherwise leave the business. These strategies are also a critical enabler for those with caring responsibilities to advance to senior management and decision-making positions. Research also shows that only 1 in 10 women want to work primarily on-site, and many women point to remote and hybrid work options as a critical reason to join or stay with an organization.[17] By applying such strategies, businesses can attract and retain a more diverse workforce, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and contribute towards increased productivity.

[16]

[17] Lean In (2022). Women in the Workplace

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to strengthen work-life balance through flexible strategies:

- **Offer employees flexible work arrangements** such as telecommuting, job sharing, part-time work, flexible schedules, and compressed work weeks.
- **Develop paid leave policies.** Draft and implement policies such as parental, sick, and family care leave that are gender-responsive and inclusive of all employees. Additionally, consider implementing family-friendly policies such as financial subsidies for childcare facilities or on-site childcare facilities to support employees with family responsibilities.
- **Set realistic workload and performance expectations.** Ensure that workload and performance expectations are realistic and aligned with flexible work strategies and policies.
- **Train and educate.** Offer training sessions for managers and all employees on the benefits and best practices of work-life balance and flexible strategies.
- **Assess the effectiveness of strategies:** Conduct and analyse findings from employee surveys and one-on-one meetings with employees. Feedback obtained through these processes should be used to make necessary adjustments to policies and practices to ensure they remain effective and responsive to employee needs.

Worksheet 4

Developing a Guideline for Flexible Work Arrangement

This worksheet is designed to help you establish clear communication guidelines among team members who use flexible work arrangements. First, review the guideline components and guiding questions in the table and consider how they apply to your team's needs. Then, you can use the comments column to write down your reflections and responses. Remember to document your agreed expectations in a clear and accessible format, such as a team handbook or shared document, and review them regularly to ensure they continue to meet your team's needs.

GUIDELINE FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT-KEY AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Define the communication channels to be used	✳ What channels are most effective for different types of communication? ✳ Are there specific situations where employees should use certain channels?	
Establish guidelines for scheduling and attending meetings	✳ What tools or platforms will be used by employees for virtual meetings? ✳ Are there agreed core hours when the team is expected to be available for meetings?	
Clarify the expectations for work hours and availability	✳ Are team members expected to work specific hours, or are they free to set their own schedule? ✳ Are there specific times of day when team members are expected to be available for communication? ✳ How will availability and work hours be communicated to the team? ✳ Are there specific deadlines or time-sensitive tasks that require team members to be available at certain times?	

Determine equipment and network access	✳ Will employees be provided with the necessary equipment (e.g., laptop, phone etc.) to work from home? ✳ What options are available for providing remote employees Wi-FI or internet connectivity support?	

Developing Talent: Training and Professional Development for All

What it is

Inclusive training and professional development are essential pillars of any business. It offers employees equal opportunities to acquire new skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve their job performance and career advancement prospects. In addition, applying a gender-responsive lens to training and development can help identify gendered barriers preventing men, women and gender minority groups from advancing in their careers, such as unconscious bias or lack of mentorship opportunities.

Why it is important

Gender-responsive training and professional development can help close the gender gap in skills and knowledge and increase business competitiveness. It can provide career advancement opportunities for all employees regardless of gender and contribute towards achieving gender parity at senior management and leadership levels. Training and development opportunities can also address occupational segregation by allowing employees to gain new skills and access to career paths typically dominated by one gender. For example, in an enterprise where men dominate the technology department, providing training and development opportunities for women to gain coding, software development, or cybersecurity skills can help break down the barriers contributing to occupational segregation.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to ensure that their training and professional development approaches are gender-responsive:

- **Conduct a skills gap analysis.** Identify skills gaps and specific areas where employees may need further training or learning opportunities disaggregated by gender.
- **Incorporate gender-specific context.** Ensure that all programmes are designed and delivered through a gender-responsive lens. For example, outlining and addressing unique challenges and biases faced by individuals of different genders in a leadership training session. Consider the diverse experience, needs and perspectives of different genders in designing and delivering all training sessions.
- **Implement flexibility in learning.** Offer flexible learning and development opportunities, including virtual education and self-paced training, to accommodate the different needs of all employees.
- **Offer unconscious bias training.** Train all employees on unconscious bias and its impact on gender inequality in the workplace.
- **Create mentorship programmes.** Establish mentorship programmes to provide underrepresented groups at all levels within the business with guidance, support, and networking opportunities to help advance their career.
- **Track progress:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of gender-responsive training and professional development initiatives through gender-disaggregated participation rates, learning outcomes, and employee feedback to ensure ongoing improvement and accountability.

Worksheet 5

Developing a Training and Professional Development Plan

Use the worksheet to guide the development of your training and professional development plan. The guiding questions will help you think through the current strengths and weakness in your training and professional development programme, specific training needed to support underrepresented groups to advance in their career, and how to track progress so that the training content is adapted based on employee feedback. You can use the comments column to write down your responses and reflections.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - KEY AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Current opportunities	✳ Is the current training content and professional development opportunities developing the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary to promote gender inclusivity in the workplace and create a gender-inclusive culture?	
Communication	✳ How are the training and professional development opportunities communicated to employees?	
Identifying specific training needs	✳ What are the specific areas where employees may need further training or development opportunities disaggregated by gender? You can conduct an analysis of the skills and competencies required for different job roles within the business through a gender lens.	
Incorporating gender-specific topics	✳ How can you incorporate gender-specific topics into your training and professional development programs?	
Flexibility in learning	✳ What strategies can you implement to offer flexibility in learning and development opportunities?	

Unconscious bias training	✳ How can you ensure that all employees undertake unconscious bias training?	
Mentorship programs	✳ How can you establish a mentorship programme to provide underrepresented groups within all levels of the business with guidance and networking opportunities to help advance their career?	
Leadership development	✳ How can you incorporate leadership development opportunities to support underrepresented groups in advancing their careers?	
Leadership development	✳ What strategies can you use to track progress and evaluate the effectiveness of your training and professional development program? ✳ How can you continuously improve your training and professional development programs to remain relevant, effective, and inclusive?	

Safe and Respectful: Preventing and Addressing Gender Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

What it is

Preventing and addressing gender-based violence and sexual harrassment is crucial for creating a safe and respectful work environment. Within the workplace, employees may experience gender-based violence or harassment from a co-worker, supervisor, or employer. It is often based on abuse of power and reported cases are usually committed against women and perpetrated by men.[18] All businesses should have clear policies and procedures that outline what constitutes gender-based violence and sexual harassment, as well as the process for reporting incidents and investigating complaints to demonstrate a strong commitment to preventing and addressing these issues.

Why it is important

Addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment is crucial in promoting workplace equality. These issues can create higher barriers to achieving a work environment that is fair and inclusive for all employees. Gender-based violence and sexual harrassment negatively affect individuals' mental and physical health, career progression, and working conditions. They can be a decisive factor in women's decision to remain in, enter, or leave the workforce. Although anyone can experience sexual harassment, it disproportionately affects women and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes. Research shows that young women are twice as likely as young men to face sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women are twice as likely as non-migrant women to report sexual violence and harassment.[19] By addressing these issues, workplaces can ensure that all employees are valued and respected, and that everyone has equal opportunities for success and advancement.

[18] ILO. Sexual Harrasment in the World of Work

[19] ILO (2022). Experience of Violence and Harassment at Work: A First Global Survey

Gender-Inclusive Workplace Champions

MommyKidz, a social enterprise dedicated to providing essential healthcare information to women, mothers, and parents, is leading the way in promoting a more inclusive and equitable workplace. The business has a clear policy on preventing and addressing gender-based violence and harassment, provides training to all employees, and has established an easy and confidential reporting mechanism to report incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps that businesses can implement to create a culture of zero tolerance gender-based violence and sexual harassment:

- **Develop relevant policies and procedures.** Draft and implement clear policies and procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. These policies should define sexual harassment and gender-based violence and the process for reporting incidents and investigating complaints.

- **Implement regular training and knowledge sessions.** Conduct sessions for all employees on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, their impact, and the actions that will be taken for those who violate the policies.

- **Establish reporting mechanisms.** Implement an accessible, confidential process for employees to report incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence, such as hotlines.

- **Conduct prompt and thorough investigations** into allegations of sexual harassment and gender-based violence and ensure accountability for violating the organization's policy. For example, establish a confidential internal committee as part of the grievance redressal system (GRS) with trained internal and external members to investigate any allegations of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

- **Monitor and review** the implementation of policies and practices related to sexual harassment and gender-based violence through surveys and team discussions. Take prompt action to address any identified areas for improvement.

Worksheet 6

Developing a Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence

Use the worksheet to guide the development of your training and professional development plan. The guiding questions will help you think through the current strengths and weakness in your training and professional development programme, specific training needed to support underrepresented groups to advance in their career, and how to track progress so that the training content is adapted based on employee feedback. You can use the comments column to write down your responses and reflections.

POLICY ON PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE- KEY SECTIONS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Policy objective	✳ What is the aim of this policy? ✳ Who is the policy aimed at?	
Definition	✳ Is there a clear definition of sexual harassment and gender-based violence included in the policy?	
Reporting process	✳ What are the multiple channels for employees to report incidents, such as a dedicated hotline, email address, or an online form? ✳ How does this mechanism ensure confidentiality and easy access for all employees?	
Investigating process	✳ Who is the designated person or team to receive, investigate, and respond to complaints? The process should be quick, fair, impartial, and led by someone trained to conduct such investigations.	

Support for employees	✳ What are the types of support and resources available for employees who have experienced harassment or discrimination, including counselling services and legal support? Also, does the policy provide information on how to access these services.	
Consequences for violators	✳ What are the consequences for violators of this policy, including disciplinary action	
Communication and Education	✳ What is the mechanism for training all employees on the policies and procedures related to sexual harassment and gender-based violence? ✳ What steps will the business take to identify and address systemic or cultural factors contributing to sexual harassment and gender-based violence? ✳ How will the business commitment to zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender-based violence be communicated to employees, customers, supply chain and stakeholders?	
Review and update	✳ How often will this policy be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance? ✳ How will any necessary revisions to the policy be communicated to employees?	

Stronger Together: Building a Gender-Responsive Supply Chain

What it is

Ensuring all individuals in the supply chain have equal opportunities and resource access is critical to building a sustainable and equitable supply chain. A gender-responsive supply chain refers to the integration of gender equality consideration throughout the entire supply chain process, from sourcing raw materials to delivering the final products or services. This involves considering the different roles and needs of men, women, and gender minoritiy groups at each stage of the supply chain and working with suppliers to address gender-based barriers. For example, a business could require suppliers to have a certain percentage of women in supervisory or management roles.

Why it is important

Gender-responsive supply chain management can improve the business's reputation and social impact, as customers and stakeholders increasingly expect companies to demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental responsibility. Studies show that when women are aware that a company is committed to gender equality and supports women-owned businesses, 78 percent will try the company's products or services, 80 percent will show increased brand loyalty, and 50 percent will give the company a second chance if the product or service falls short of initial expectations.[20]Additionally, by diversifying the supplier base through a gender-responsive lens, businesses can tap into a wider group of suppliers and gain advantages including increased exposure to large consumer groups represented by women.

[20] UN WOMEN (2022). Procurement's Strategic Value

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to promote gender equality in the supply chain:

- **Develop a supplier code of conduct.** Establish a code of conduct that outlines suppliers' expectations regarding gender equality, human rights, and labour practices. Communicate the code of conduct to all suppliers and enforce it through regular monitoring and evaluation.

- **Provide training and capacity building.** Design and deliver training for suppliers to build their capacity and knowledge to integrate gender equality into their operations.

- **Support minority-led businesses,** including businesses led by women and gender minority groups, within the supply chain. Ensure inclusive engagement and recruitment processes to provide opportunities for these businesses as suppliers. This can include actively seeking and supporting businesses led by women and gender minority groups as potential suppliers and providing mentorship and networking opportunities.

- **Establish gender-responsive e-procurement systems.** Simplify suppliers' ability to find bidding information. Increased transparency facilitates planning, saves time and costs for potential suppliers, and increases bid quality. Additionally, include the option for physical submission alongside e-submission in the bidding information.

- **Engage in collaborative initiatives.** Build partnerships with other businesses and government agencies to promote gender equality in the supply chain. This can involve joining industry-wide initiatives, participating in multi-stakeholder forums and sharing best practices.

Worksheet 7

Developing a Gender-Responsive Supplier Code of Conduct

This worksheet will guide you in developing a gender-responsive supplier code of conduct that aligns with your business values and goals. The guiding questions will help you consider key elements when developing a code of conduct sensitive to gender issues. Use this worksheet to write your responses and reflections in the comments section. You can find this worksheet with sample responses to the guiding questions in the Annex.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT -KEY SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Purpose and Scope	✳ What is the purpose and scope of the code of conduct? ✳ How does it align with your business values and goals related to gender equality?	
Key Principles	✳ What fundamental principles should be framed in the code of conduct? ✳ How do these principles promote gender equality and inclusivity in the supply chain?	
Diversity and Inclusion	✳ What measures should suppliers take to foster an inclusive workplace?	
Consequences of Non-Compliance	✳ What are the consequences of non-compliance with the code of conduct?	
Monitoring and Evaluation	✳ How will your business monitor and evaluate suppliers' compliance with the code of conduct?	
Communication	✳ How will the code of conduct be communicated?	

Capacity Building	✳ How will your business support suppliers in building their capacity to promote gender equality?	
Collaboration and Partnerships	✳ How will your business collaborate with other stakeholders to promote gender equality in the supply chain?	

Amplifying All Voices: Promoting Gender-Inclusive Communication Strategies

What it is

An inclusive approach to communication involves taking action to ensure that every employee, customer, and stakeholder feels equally valued and respected. It means focusing on the messaging, language, and images that are inclusive and respectful of all genders. Effective and inclusive communication is critical for successful teamwork and businesses.

Why it is important

Gender-inclusive communication is critical for advancing gender equality, as it can dismantle gender stereotypes, transform attitudes and social norms, and create a more inclusive workplace culture. Language and images can influence behaviours and perceptions, making it essential for businesses to review their language to avoid excluding potential customers, employees, or stakeholders. Businesses prioritising gender-inclusive communication can benefit from improved employee retention, attract a more diverse pool of job candidates, and build a stronger company reputation.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to help advance gender equality through effective communication:

- **Develop a gender-inclusive communication strategy.** Create a communication strategy that uses inclusive language and images to represent diverse perspectives and gender identities and experiences, including women employees from diverse social identities, and their professional achievements.

- **Provide training and education.** Offer training sessions or workshops to employees on gender-inclusive communication, covering topics such as unconscious bias, respectful language, and inclusive imagery.

- **Use communication channels to promote gender equality.** Utilise various communication channels such as social media, radio, press releases, and public events to communicate the business's commitment to gender equality. Ensure the company website clearly communicates gender equality as a company values, describes the gender equity approaches that the organization is taking and highlights partnerships with women-led businesses.

- **Encourage feedback and dialogue.** Create opportunities for stakeholders, including customers and employees, to provide feedback on the business's communication strategies and practices and adapt messages accordingly. This can include conducting surveys and providing feedback forms.

- **Monitor and measure progress.** Establish indicators to track the progress of gender-inclusive communication efforts over time. In addition, regularly review and evaluate communication materials and practices from a gender lens.

Worksheet 8

Gender Inclusive Communication Checklist

Use the checklist below to ensure gender inclusivity in your written and audiovisual communication material and note down areas for improvement in the comments section. Remember to consider gender identities along with other social identities such as age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and more.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	COMMENTS
Use gender-neutral language in all written materials, including policies, guidelines, and documents that do not exclude or reinforce gender norms. (For example, instead of “Each employee should submit his or her report by Friday,” use “All employees should submit their reports by Friday”.)	
Challenge gender stereotypes and avoid perpetuating harmful assumptions about gender in all written communication, including emails, newsletters, reports, and presentations.	
Promote diversity and representation in written communication by including diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices from individuals of different genders and social identities. (For example, a monthly newsletter focusing on workplace culture includes quotes and stories from employees of different genders, races, and backgrounds.)	
Ensure that all written materials, whether printed or web-based have been communicated in alternative formats (For example, braille, large print) to ensure they are accessible to all including persons with disabilities.)	

AUDIOVISUAL REPRESENTATION	COMMENTS
Use diverse and inclusive imagery in all audiovisual communication materials, such as images, graphics, and videos, to represent different gender identities, races, ethnicities, ages, etc.	
Consider posture, expressions, positioning, and clothing in a picture or image to convey balance, equal status and authority. (For example, if you are working on an image for the company website which sells technology products, use pictures of men and women using the products in different settings.)	
Consider intersectionality in all audiovisual representation (For example, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc).	
Ensure that audiovisual communication materials are accessible to all individuals, including persons with disabilities, by providing alternative formats (for example, providing alternative text for images, using closed captions for videos, etc).	

Gender-Inclusive Products and Service Development

This section of the toolkit will introduce you to key pillars critical for delivering gender-responsive products and services. By understanding the unique needs and experiences of different genders, you can design products and services that better meet your customers' needs. Each pillar will provide practical strategies you can implement within your business for the design and development of gender-inclusive products and services, along with a worksheet designed to help you contextualise the issues.

Meeting the Need: Conducting Gender-Inclusive Market Research

What it is

Gender-inclusive market research expands beyond traditional gender binary categories to consider the diversity of gender identities. It involves using research methods that collect and analyse data from a diverse range of potential customers to understand their unique needs, preferences, and experience with products and services. This approach recognises and respects the diversity of gender identities and aims to capture key insights that may be missed by traditional gender categorization.

Why it is important

Gender-inclusive market research supports businesses in understanding their potential customers' diverse needs and developing products and services that reflect this diversity. By considering the unique needs and preferences of different gender identities, businesses can integrate gender-inclusive design features into products and services and cater to the diverse needs of all customers. This approach can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty and support businesses to reach new markets and increase their competitiveness by tapping into previously untapped customer segments.

Did you know?

Speech-recognition software is often trained on datasets dominated by recordings of voices of men, which can result in potential biases and limitations in accurately understanding and responding to voices of women. For example, Google's version is **70 percent** more likely to understand a man.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to integrate a gender lens into market research:

- **Include diverse representation in the research sample.** Ensure that your research includes diverse participants, including women and gender minority groups from multiple social identities. This can help identify specific needs, preferences and concerns of potential customer groups.

- **Use gender-inclusive language** in surveys, questionnaires, and other research tools to ensure questions are inclusive and recognise the diversity of gender identities. For example, avoid providing binary gender categories when drafting survey questions and provide an option that allows respondents to self-identify their gender.

- **Ask specific research questions related to gender** to gain insights into the experience and challenges different genders face. For example, ask about challenges individuals face in accessing similar products or services including mobility and financial resource constraints.

- **Build partnerships.** Collaborate with local organizations focusing on gender equality or women's empowerment to leverage their expertise in outreach efforts. These organizations may have valuable insights into the needs and preferences of the populations they serve, which can inform market research.

- **Collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data** from qualitative and quantitative market research to understand the unique needs, preferences, and experiences of different gender identities. A gender-responsivesensitive approach can provide unique insights into gender biases and inequalities in a specific market.

Practical tips

- Be aware of cultural differences, including the local customs, beliefs, and attitudes towards different genders. For example, consider the gender of the interviewer, as this may play an essential role in making the interviewee comfortable depending on the cultural context.

- Pay attention to the barriers that limit women's ability to participate in your market research, including household responsibilities and lack of access to transportation.

- Avoid hypothetical questions such as "Do you think you will buy or does this product fit your needs?" Instead, ask about their past experiences and emotions.

- When conducting market research, be mindful of respecting all participants' privacy and dignity while also considering potential power imbalances and cultural differences related to gender.

- Ensure equal access and inclusivity by proactively identifying and meeting the diverse accommodation needs of persons with disabilities, such as providing sign language interpretation for surveys.

Worksheet 9

Gender-Responsive User Persona

Designing gender-responsive research is essential to understanding the diverse experiences and needs of your potential customers. You can develop a User Persona to reflect on potential customer responses from your market research. User Persona are fictional characters you create based on your research to represent the potential customers that might use your service or product. You can use this worksheet to identify touchpoints with your product or service by potential customers and consider the pain points and opportunities at each touchpoint. You can find this worksheet with sample responses in the Annex.

CREATING PERSONA

1) Collect rich and extensive data on your target group of users about their age, gender, occupation, location, preferences, education level, marital status, spending habits, disability, etc.

2) Using the data above, choose three to five characteristics of your typical user, ensuring gender diversity and give them a fictional name. For example, Mai, a 25-year-old woman working in a bank, prefers online shopping and is environmentally conscious.

3) Give this persona a photo (optional, but having a fictional picture helps to empathise better with the target group).

GENDER	AGE	JOURNEY STAGE Are they aware of the product? Are they considering purchasing the product? Have they purchased a similar product?	TOUCHPOINT List the different points of interaction that a customer may have with a product or service.	NEEDS AND PAIN POINTS Identify the specific needs and pain points for each gender group.	GENDER-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS Consider gender-specific factors affecting the customer's experience, such as accessibility or cultural norms.	OPPORTUNITIES Identify any opportunities to create a more gender-responsive experience at each touchpoint.	ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS What could be accessibility barriers that users may face?
	○						
	○						
	○						
	○						

Designing for All: Product and Service Development

What it is

Inclusive design and development of products or services consider the diverse needs, experiences, and perspectives of all potential customers. Integrating a gender lens into this process ensures that the final products and services are accessible and user-friendly for all potential customers and considers the specific needs of different genders, including women and gender minority groups from multiple social identities.

Why it is important

By adopting gender-inclusive design practices, businesses can widen their market reach, strengthen customer satisfaction, and foster brand loyalty amongst diverse customer segments. It also helps businesses to identify and address any potential biases in products and services from a gender perspective, leading to more successful and sustainable businesses that are responsive to the needs of all customers.

Gender-Inclusive Workplace Champions

Behchlo.pk is an online marketplace that sells pre-loved and brand-new items. The enterprise strongly emphasises open communication with its customers and sellers by regularly sending feedback messages through voice notes to accommodate those who may have difficulty reading or texting. In addition, customers can easily provide feedback through various channels such as phone, email, or social media, and the leadership team reviews all queries for product and service improvement.

Recently, Behclo.pk conducted a customer survey to identify key areas for improvement. Based on the findings, the company will provide a concierge service for sellers and expand its section of beauty products.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to adopt an inclusive approach to design and development:

- **Train and educate the design and development teams** on gender-responsive and inclusive design practices, unconscious biases, and cultural considerations to enhance their awareness and skills in creating inclusive products or services.

- **Incorporate inclusive design principles** through a gender-centric lens into the product or service development process. This can include utilising human-centric design thinking, user interface (UI) or user experience (UX) design approaches.

- **Conduct user testing with diverse participants.** Test your products and services with diverse participants, including women and gender minority groups, to analyse any barriers to accessibility and usability.

- **Continuously evaluate and iterate** on the design and development process to ensure sustained inclusivity. Regularly review and update your design and development practices to incorporate new research, best practices, and user feedback to create products and services that are consistently inclusive and relevant to a diverse customer base.

Practical tips

- Consider the physical differences among individuals of different genders and diverse gender identities when designing products, ensuring accommodation of these differences.
- Design products and services that are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Recognise that gender can intersect with other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability, and design products that are inclusive of these intersections.
- Be mindful of how societal and cultural norms shape the way different gender identities interact with your product or service.

Worksheet 10

Gender Inclusivity Checklist for Product and Service Design and Development

Use this checklist to integrate a gender-inclusive perspective in your product or service design and development stage. Answer 'yes' or 'no' to each question to ensure that you have considered gender-specific needs and preferences, accessibility and usability concerns, cultural factors, and the intersectionality of gender with other social identities.

GENDER INCLUSIVITY CHECKLIST	YES	NO
Have you conducted market research to understand the needs and preferences of all potential customers, including women and gender minority groups?		
Have you conducted training sessions with your design and development teams on gender inclusivity and unconscious bias?		
Have you considered the physical differences of different gender groups and its potential impact while designing the product or service?		
Is your designed product and service accessible to persons with disabilities and consider inclusive design features such as adjustable settings, clear and concise instructions, and compatibility with assistive technologies?		
Have you considered the product or service's impact on diverse gender identities and addressed potential gender biases or stereotypes? (For example, if introducing a new clothing line, have you included different sizes and designs for all genders?)		
Have you intentionally considered how gender can intersect with other social identities factors such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability during the design and development process and taken steps to ensure that your products or services are inclusive of these intersections?		
(For example, when developing a health app that targets women, consider how factors such as race, ethnicity, age, and disability may intersect with gender.)		
Have you conducted user testing with participants from multiple social identities, including women and gender minority groups, to identify any barriers or challenges to accessibility and usability?		

Breaking Barriers: Gender Diversity in Product and Service Marketing

What it is

Gender-inclusive marketing strategies focus on understanding the unique needs and preferences of different gender identities and communicating messages based on these preferences. This approach eliminates gender biases and stereotypes to create a more equitable and diverse representation of the customer base in marketing messages and campaigns.

Why it is important

Gender-inclusive marketing is essential for promoting inclusive products and services that meet the needs of diverse customers in the market. Gender-inclusive messaging can be leveraged to build a strong brand identity, stronger relationships with customers, and drive business growth. It can also help to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and promote gender equality in society.

Did you know?

Procter & Gamble (P&G) created the **Gillette Venus** razor in response to market research that identified a need for a razor designed specifically for women. P&G's **'My Skin, My Way'** Campaign aimed to showcase diverse women who use their product and to challenge gender stereotypes surrounding what constitutes beautiful skin.

How to implement it

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to implement gender-inclusive marketing strategies:

- **Review the marketing strategy.** Conduct a Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, and Challenge (SWOC) analysis of your marketing plan to help identify opportunities and challenges through a gender inclusivity lens and identify entry points to address the identified barriers.

- **Understanding Gender Diversity.** Provide informative sessions for the marketing team on gender identities and experiences. Stay informed about current research, trends, and best practices related to gender diversity to inform your marketing strategies effectively.

- **Avoid gender stereotypes.** Use inclusive imagery and language in marketing materials that represent and celebrate diverse gender identities. For example, portray women as professionals, leaders, or adventurers and men as caregivers. This can help to challenge gender stereotypes and make your products and services more appealing to a broader audience.

- **Highlight gender-responsive features.** Emphasise your products or services' unique features and benefits that address gender-specific needs and concerns in your marketing materials.

- **Partnerships and collaborations.** Engage with diverse influencers, organizations, or groups that promote gender inclusivity.

- **Track progress.** Collect and analyse data on the impact of marketing efforts, including social media engagement rates and customer feedback, to measure the effectiveness of gender-inclusive marketing strategies and make data-driven decisions.

Gender-Inclusive Workplace Champions

SELF is an organization dedicated to supporting socio-economically disadvantaged women and addressing service gaps that limit their economic empowerment, driving positive change. Their service offerings are designed to cater to the diverse backgrounds of women, considering intersecting social identities such as race, marital status, and education levels.

In their campaigns, SELF consistently portrays diversity, amplifies all voices and carters to the unique needs of women, irrespective of their social backgrounds. They use visual imagery that features women from various ethnicities, consciously avoiding stereotypes and respecting individual preferences. To gain insights into user preferences, SELF conducted an open call for women to share their feedback, to ensure their campaigns are truly representative and inclusive.

Worksheet 11

Marketing Plan

Use this marketing plan template to develop a gender-inclusive marketing strategy for your business. This worksheet is designed to help you identify and address the unique preferences of different gender identities and create a more diverse and inclusive representation of your customer base in your marketing messages and campaigns. The template covers key areas such as target audience, product benefits, communication channels, messaging, timeline, success metrics, and guiding questions to help you apply it to your business context and increase your visibility.

MARKETING PLAN	
Marketing Goal: What are the overall marketing goals for your product and service?	
Target Audience: Who are your target customers, and what are their needs and preferences?	
Product benefit: What are the key benefits of your product and service for each gender identity group?	**Product messaging:** How can you communicate product or service benefits in a way that resonates with different gender identities?

Communication channels: What channels are most effective in reaching your target audience, including social media, email, advertising, etc?	**Communication messages:** Write down specific messaging you will use to promote your gender-responsive product or services.	**Focal Point:** Who will be responsible for finalising and disseminating the messages for each of the channels?	**Timeline:** When will this activity take place?

Success:

- How will you measure the success of your marketing plan?
- What metrics will you use to measure the success of your marketing efforts, such as the number of likes and shares on social media posts or the increase in the number of women customers over a selected timeframe?

Developing a Plan for Gender-Inclusive Organizational Change

Developing a plan for gender-inclusive organizational change is crucial to advancing gender equality within your business. This section of the toolkit will guide you in creating a comprehensive gender action plan tailored to the specific needs of your business.

From Ideas to Action: Developing Your Gender-Inclusive Action Plan

A comprehensive gender action plan is essential for businesses dedicated to promoting gender equality. This plan serves multiple purposes, including providing an overview of the current status of gender equality within the organization and establishing a baseline for collective discussions on concrete actions that can be implemented to advance gender equality and inclusivity. Additionally, it fosters a participatory process that builds organizational ownership of gender equality initiatives and ongoing gender-focused actions.

Utilising the results of the gender equality organizational self-assessment

The results of the organizational self-assessment can be the framework for developing the gender action plan. It can provide insights into emerging patterns and current gaps where the business may need targeted intervention to progress towards gender equality and inclusivity.

Here are some actionable steps to help you create a gender action plan:

- **Identify areas for improvement.** Based on the results of the organizational self-assessment, identify key pillars and specific areas where targeted action is required to progress on gender equality.
- **Set SMART objectives.** Establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives for each key pillar in need of improvement. For example, if your business identified a lack of gender diversity in leadership positions as a critical area for improvement, a SMART objective could be to increase the representation of women in leadership roles by 30 percent within the next two years.
- **Develop strategies.** Identify concrete action steps to achieve each objective. This could include revising hiring policies, offering training opportunities or implementing flexible work arrangements.
- **Assign responsibilities.** Identify focal points for implementing each strategy.
- **Set timelines and track progress.** Coordinate with relevant focal points or teams to establish a realistic timeline and identify metrics for tracking progress for each strategy.
- **Learn and Improve.** The gender action plan provides businesses a roadmap towards implementing concrete actions to achieve a gender-responsive, inclusive, and diverse workforce. However, it is not a one-off exercise but allows the organization to learn from its implementation and continuously improve.

How to use the Gender Action Plan to track progress

Businesses should regularly review and assess the effectiveness of the Gender Action Plan to measure progress and evaluate impact. This includes monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives of the plan, gathering feedback from employees, and analyzing relevant data. Businesses should also adjust the plan as necessary to ensure its continued effectiveness.

Here are some actionable steps businesses can take to monitor progress against the strategic actions outlined in the gender action plan:

- **Collect and analyse data.** Use various tools and methods to collect and analyse data on key indicators related to gender equality in the workplace. The key pillars outlined in this toolkit can be a good starting point for collecting relevant and gender-disaggregated data. For example, use employee surveys or focus groups to gather gender-disaggregated information on the experiences and needs of all employees. You can also collect gender-disaggregated quantitative data on hiring, promotion rates, and remuneration to identify areas where gender inequality may exist.

- **Use data to inform decision-making.** Once you have collected and analysed the data, they can inform decision-making from a gender equity perspective and support the drafting of targeted actions linked to the strategic objectives outlined in the gender action plan. For example, if you find women underrepresented within your business, you may need to take concrete steps to revise hiring policies and practices. In addition, consider offering customised training and development opportunities to support all employees in building the skills and experience necessary for leadership roles.

- **Conduct regular assessments.** Organize periodic reviews to evaluate progress on the gender action plan. This could include conducting the organizational self-assessments annually or tracking progress on key indicators outlined in the gender action plan. For example, analyse the number of applicants and hired candidates disaggregated by gender.

- **Adjust your plan as needed.** The gender action plan can be adjusted based on collected and analysed data. This could include revising objectives and updating strategies. For example, if the analysis reveals that women are still underrepresented in leadership positions despite previous efforts to increase representation, it may be necessary to revise recruitment strategies by examining the placement of job vacancies.

- **Report back to staff and leadership.** It is crucial to report back to staff and leadership regularly on the progress and outcomes of the gender action plan. This could involve sharing updates and key findings from data analysis, highlighting successes, and outlining areas for improvement. Keeping staff and leadership informed and engaged can create a culture of transparency and accountability around gender equality initiatives.

Worksheet 12

Gender Action Plan Template

Use this template to create a roadmap to address gender inequality and promote diversity and inclusivity within your business. To get started, select the pillars that align with the gendered organizational self-assessment results and identify the critical areas for improvement. Then, use the guiding questions for each component of the gender action plan to develop a practical and collaborative approach to address gender disparities and promote an inclusive and respectful work environment. You can find this worksheet with sample responses in the Annex.

PILLAR	OBJECTIVE What specific gender inclusivity objective do you want to achieve under this pillar?	STRATEGIC ACTION What specific activities will you take to achieve this goal?	INDICATOR What metric(s) will you use to track progress towards this goal?	BASELINE What is the current status?	TARGET What is the target?	TIMELINE What is the timeframe to achieve this objective?	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES Who will be responsible for implementing these activities in your business?	BUDGET What resources do you need to allocate for these activities?

Annex

Glossary of Gender-Related Terms and Concepts

These definitions are provided to support young entrepreneurs in understanding the meaning of the gender terminologies and concepts used in the Toolkit.

Discrimination - Refers to any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation, as defined in the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

(Source. ILO, The Business Case for Change)

Diversity - In the context of the workplace, refers to the similarities and differences that exist between people and that can impact employment and business opportunities and outcomes. Diversity refers not only to similarities and differences linked to personal characteristics but also similarities and differences such as values, workstyles, caring responsibilities, hierarchical levels, and work roles. Each person has multiple groups they identify with, which can change over time, potentially influencing and shifting their employment opportunities and outcomes.

(Source. ILO, Transforming Enterprises through Diversity and Inclusion)

Equality - Ensuring every person can flourish at work and experience equal opportunities and treatment. That is, all persons, regardless of their personal characteristics, can participate and contribute according to their capacity without the interference of discrimination or bias. Equality recognises that each person has different circumstances, that historically some groups have experienced discrimination, and that reaching equal outcomes will not be achieved by treating everyone the same. Equality and reaching equal outcomes require resources and opportunities to be allocated according to circumstance and need.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender - Socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for individuals based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Gender is fluid and changes with time and culture; for example, what is considered masculine and feminine evolves.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender-based violence - Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of their sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women in public or private life. This includes all forms of violence, including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others that are experienced on the basis of gender.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Gender bias - Making decisions based on gender that result in favouring one gender over the other which often results in contexts that favour men and/or boys over women and/or girls.

(Source. UNICEF, Glossary of Terms and Concepts)

Glass ceiling - a metaphor that has often been used to describe invisible barriers ("glass") through which women can see elite positions, for example, in government or the private sector, but cannot reach them (coming up against the invisible "ceiling"). These barriers prevent large numbers of women and ethnic minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious, and highest-paying jobs in the workforce.

(Source. UN Women Training Centre, Gender Equality Glossary)

Gender disparities - Statistical differences (often referred to as "gaps") between men and women, boys and girls, that reflect inequality in some quantity.

(Source. UNICEF, Glossary of Terms and Concepts)

Gender diversity - Equitable representation of people of different genders. This includes cisgender and transgender, men and women, as well as non-binary persons and others with diverse gender identities.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender expression - A way in which a person expresses their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearances such as clothing, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronouns may also express their gender. Other people perceive a person's gender through these expressions. Like a person's gender identity, how a person expresses their gender is not related to their sexual orientation.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender gap - The disproportionate difference between men and women, and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in the attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

(Source. UNICEF, Glossary of Terms and Concepts)

Gender identity - Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth or the gender attributed to them by society. This includes the personal sense of one's body, which may or may not involve a desire for modification of appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means. A person's gender identity does not relate to their sexual orientation.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender-inclusive culture - The working environment values the individual and group differences that women and men bring to the workplace.

(Source. ILO, The Business Case for Change)

Gender-inclusive - This term refers to initiatives, activities or programmes that are open to both men and women but are designed to overcome any barriers to the full participation that one of the two sexes may experience. In most cases, it targets the increased participation of women and girls. Implementing gender-inclusive programmes is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias.

(Source. ILO, Gender-inclusive service provision: A quick guide for financial and business development providers)

Gender norms - Culturally defined set of roles, responsibilities, rights, entitlements, and obligations associated with being female or male, as well as the power relations between/among women and men, and boys and girls. Gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms within a range that defines a particular society, culture, and community at that point in time. Behaviours, activities, and attributes that are compatible with cultural expectations around masculinity and femininity are referred to as gender normative.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Gender parity - A term for equal representation of women and men in a given area, for example, gender parity in organizational leadership or higher education. Working toward gender parity (equal representation) is a key part of achieving gender equality and one of the twin strategies alongside gender mainstreaming.

(Source. UN Women Training Centre, Gender Equality Glossary)

Gender pay gap - Measurable indicator of inequality, and it captures the difference in pay between men and women. Most governments have legislated to guarantee equality of treatment between men and women in remuneration.

(Source. ILO, Understanding the Gender Pay Gap)

Gender perspective/"gender lens" - A way of seeing or analyzing which looks at the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles, and interactions. This way of seeing is what enables one to carry out gender analysis and subsequently mainstream a gender perspective into any proposed program, policy, or organization.

(Source. UN Women Training Centre, Gender Equality Glossary)

Gender stereotypes - Simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of women and men. Stereotypical characteristics of men are that they are competitive, acquisitive, autonomous, independent, confrontational, and concerned about private goods. Parallel stereotypes of women hold that they are cooperative, nurturing, caring, connecting, group-oriented, and concerned about public goods. Stereotypes are often used to justify gender discrimination more broadly and can be reflected and reinforced by traditional and modern theories, laws, and institutional practices.

(Source. UN Women Training Centre, Gender Equality Glossary)

Gender transformative - seeks to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and challenge unequal power relations. It moves away from a focus on a deficit model that focuses entirely on individual empowerment and towards transforming the structures that reinforce gender inequality.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Equality

- **Formal equality-** concept that all people should be treated the same regardless of difference. However, this approach does not take systemic discrimination and individual difference into accountand can result in indirect discrimination (see below).

- **Substantive/de-facto equality-** Equality of outcomes and takes the effects of discrimination and difference into consideration. It recognises that rights, entitlements, opportunities and access are not equally distributed throughout society and a one size fits all approach will not achieve equality. It demands the redistribution of resources, power and structures and increased access to resources and participation for those marginalised.

- **Inclusive equality-** Defined as 'a substantive model of equality' that incorporates 'a) a fair redistributive dimension to address socioeconomic disadvantages; b) a recognition dimension to combat stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence and to recognise the dignity of human beings and their intersectionality; c) a participative dimension to reaffirm the social nature of people as members of social groups and the full recognition of humanity through inclusion in society; and d) an accommodating dimension to make space for difference as a matter of human dignity'.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Inclusion - Inclusion is relational. It refers to the experience people have in the workplace and the extent to which they feel valued for who they are, the skills and experience they bring, and the extent to which they have a strong sense of belonging with others at work. A person's feeling of inclusion at work is related to their identity, their own behaviour and that of others, and the environment they are in. Creating an inclusive workplace culture and environment enables diverse employees to thrive, increases employee engagement, and influences business performance.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Intersectionality - the term recognises that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships, and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and existing power structures, such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia, and racism. It is important to remember the transformative potential of intersectionality, which extends beyond merely a focus on the impact of intersecting identities.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Occupational gender segregation - The unequal distribution of women and men in certain occupations or industries or in organizational hierarchies. It manifests itself in two distinct ways: a) horizontal segregation is the under- or over-representation of women and men in certain occupations or industries; and b) vertical segregation is the imbalance between women and men in leadership and management jobs, with one gender having a disproportionate share.

(Source. ILO, The Business Case for Change)

Sex - The biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. While these sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as there are individuals who possess both, they tend to differentiate humans as males and females.

(Source. WHO, Gender & Human Rights)

Sexual harassment - Sex-based behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive to its recipient. Sexual harassment at the workplace may take two forms: a) when a job benefit––such as a pay rise, a promotion, or even continued employment––is made conditional on the victim acceding to demands to engage in some form of sexual behaviour, or b) hostile working environment in which the conduct creates conditions that are intimidating or humiliating for the victim. Behavior that qualifies as sexual harassment: a) physical (e.g., physical violence, touching, unnecessary close proximity), b) verbal (e.g. comments and questions about the appearance, lifestyle, sexual orientation, offensive phone calls) or c) non-verbal (whistling, sexually-suggestive gestures, display of sexual materials).

(Source. International Labour Organization, Sexual Harassment at Work)

Sexual orientation - Each person's enduring capacity for profound romantic, emotional and/or physical feelings for, or attraction to, other people. Encompasses hetero-, homo-, bi-, pan-and asexuality, as well as a wide range of other expressions. This term is preferred to sexual preference, sexual behaviour, lifestyle, and way of life when describing an individual's feelings for other people.

(Source. ILO, Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons in the world of work)

Social norms - The term refers to how people are expected to behave in a given situation or social group. They are different from individually held beliefs or attitudes. Social norms are grounded in the customs, traditions, and value systems that develop over time and vary across organizations, countries, and cultures. They are maintained by social influence, and those who challenge them may face backlash, such as losing power or status in a community. Social norms usually advantage those in the majority and keep the status quo, which allows some groups to dominate. They may also act as a brake or accelerator in a behaviour change process; hence they should be a critical consideration in inclusive development.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Structural discrimination - A form of discrimination resulting from policies, despite apparently being neutral, that have disproportionately negative effects on certain societal groups.

(Source. UNICEF, Glossary of Terms and Concepts)

Women's empowerment - The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Empowerment of women cannot be achieved in a vacuum; men must be brought along in the process of change. Empowerment should not be seen as a zero-sum game where gains for women automatically imply losses for men.

(Source. UN Women Training Centre, Gender Equality Glossary)

Unconscious biases - This term, also known as implicit biases, are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs and prejudice about various social and identity groups, and these are often incompatible with one's conscious values. We all apply these biases to all aspects of our lives, including our behaviour and decision-making. Common biases that impact decision-making include a) affinity bias which is a tendency to favour people who are similar to us, often resulting in groupthink; b) confirmation bias, when we seek to confirm our beliefs, preferences, or judgements with those like us; c) halo effect, when we like someone or share similar traits with someone and therefore are biased to think everything about that person is good; and d) social or likeability bias when we tend to agree with the majority or someone more senior than us to maintain harmony.

(Source. UN WOMEN, Intersectionality Resource Guide)

Further Reading Materials and References

Reading Materials for Key Pillars

Leading the Way: How Good Leadership Can Drive Gender Equality

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- UN Women and ILO (2019). Handbook: Addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work
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- Coursea. What is UI design. Definitions, Tips, Best Practices
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Selected Worksheets with Sample Responses

Worksheet 1 Terms of Reference for an Employee Resource Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE-KEY COMPONENTS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	SAMPLE RESPONSES
Introduction	✳ What is the purpose of the ERG? ✳ What is the group's vision and mission statement?	✳ This Employee Resource Group promotes gender equality and diversity within our business. ✳ Our vision is to create a workplace where all employees feel valued and included, regardless of gender identity and intersecting social indentities. ✳ Our mission is to advocate for policies and practices that promote gender equality and inclusivity.
Objectives	✳ What are the specific goals and objectives of the group? ✳ How will the ERG advance gender equality in the workplace?	✳ Our objectives include increasing the representation of women in leadership positions by 20% within the next three years, promoting equal pay for equal work by conducting a gender pay gap analysis and implementing a plan to close the gap, and eliminating gender-based discrimination and harassment by developing and implementing a zero-tolerance policy. ✳ We will also focus on creating a culture of inclusivity where all employees feel supported and valued by conducting an employee engagement survey and implementing actions to address areas for improvement.
Membership	✳ Who can be a member of the group? ✳ How will members be recruited and selected?	✳ Membership is open to all employees committed to advancing gender equality and diversity in the workplace. ✳ Members will be selected based on a finalised criteria emphasising gender diversity and representation from various social backgrounds and will be communicated to all employees.

Roles and Responsibilities	✳ What are specific roles and responsibilities of the ERG leader and members?	✳ The group's leadership will set the agenda, coordinate activities, and report progress. ✳ Members will be responsible for actively participating in the group's activities and contributing to the goals and objectives.
Activities and Events	✳ What activities and events will be organised to advance gender equality in the workplace?	✳ The group will organise trainings on unconscious bias and gender equal leadership, discussions on the benefits of gender inclusivity in the workplace, and networking events to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the workplace.
Budget and Resources	✳ What kind of resources will be needed to achieve its goals and objectives? ✳ How will budget be allocated and managed?	✳ The group will coordinate with the management to allocate financial resources for key activities.
Reporting and Communication	✳ How will progress on activities and activities be reported and communicated to all employees and stakeholders?	✳ The group will report on its activities and progress through a yearly report that will be shared with all employees and through regular updates to management. ✳ The group will communicate with employees and stakeholders about its work through newsletters, social media, and other communication channels.
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	✳ How will success be measured? ✳ How will feedback be collected and utilised to make continuous improvements?	✳ The group will evaluate its success by tracking progress towards its objectives and soliciting feedback from members,employees and other stakeholders. ✳ The group will use feedback to continuously improve by incorporating suggestions into its activities and revising it's terms of reference as needed to ensure it remains relevant and practical.

Worksheet 3 Developing an Equal Pay for Equal Work Policy

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK POLICY -KEY AREAS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Clearly define equal pay for equal work	✳ How do you define “equal pay for equal work” in your organization? ✳ What compensation components should be included in the definitions? (For example, base salary, bonuses, benefits, etc.)	✳ The organization defines “equal pay for equal work” to mean that all employees, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, disability or other social identities, are compensated equally for performing the same work or work of equal value. ✳ The compensation components included in this policy are base salary, bonuses, benefits, and overtime pay.
Prohibit discrimination	✳ How will the policy outline and prohibit any form of discrimination in pay and benefits. (For example, discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, disability, and other social identities.) ✳ How will the policy be consistently applied across all levels of the business?	✳ Discrimination based on any social identitiy markers, including but not limited to gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, and disability, is prohibited in all aspects of the organization’s pay and compensation policies. ✳ The policy will be consistently applied across all levels of the business by establishing clear guidelines for determining job duties and responsibilities, conducting regular salary reviews, and enforcing penalties for violations of the policy.
Foster transparency	✳ How will the pay scale and compensation decisions be communicated to all employees?	✳ The pay scale and compensation decisions will be communicated to all employees through regular salary reviews, job descriptions, and employee contracts. ✳ Salary and benefits reviews will be conducted on an annual basis to ensure that employees are compensated fairly and equitably.

Evaluate job roles and responsibilities	✳ What systems will be established to evaluate job roles and responsibilities to determine pay equity? (For example, external benchmarking compares pay levels to similar businesses in the same industry and location.)	✳ The system for evaluating job roles and responsibilities will consider internal and external factors, including job duties, performance metrics, and industry standards for pay and compensation.
Encourage reporting of employee concerns	✳ What mechanisms will be established for employees to report concerns about pay disparities without fear of retaliation?	✳ A confidential reporting system that allows employees to report concerns about pay disparities without fear of retaliation and ensure that all reports are thoroughly investigated and addressed.
Address pay disparities	✳ What process will be developed for analyzing and addressing pay disparities? ✳ How will salaries be adjusted, and training opportunities be provided, if necessary?	✳ The organization will conduct regular salary reviews, identify potential disparities, and take corrective action as necessary to ensure equal pay for equal work. ✳ Salaries will be adjusted based on the results of regular salary reviews and any identified pay disparities, and training opportunities will be provided to employees and management to ensure that the policy is understood and effectively implemented.
Regular policy review	✳ How often will the policy be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness?	✳ The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains effective and up-to-date with current industry standards and best practices.
Provide employee training	✳ What kind of knowledge sessions will the management provide all employees on the equal pay for equal work policy?	✳ Management will train all employees on the policy, including its definition, application, and reporting mechanisms.
Ensure management commitment	✳ How will the management be held accountable for the policy's implementation?	✳ Management will be held accountable for the policy's implementation through regular performance reviews, audits, and disciplinary action for violations of the policy.

Worksheet 6

Developing a Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence

POLICY ON PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE- KEY SECTIONS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Policy objective	✳ What is the aim of this policy? ✳ Who is the policy aimed at?	✳ This policy aims to prevent and address sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace. The policy is aimed at all employees, including management, contractors, vendors, customers, and anyone who has a direct business relationship with the organization
Definition	✳ Is there a clear definition of sexual harassment and gender-based violence included in the policy?	✳ Provide a clear definition of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. (For example, gender-based violence is any violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, including sexual harassment. Gender-based violence includes emotional, sexual, physical, economic abuse or discrimination.)
Reporting process	✳ What are the multiple channels for employees to report incidents, such as a dedicated hotline, email address, or an online form? ✳ How does this mechanism ensure confidentiality and easy access for all employees?	✳ The organization will establish multiple reporting channels, including a dedicated hotline, email address, and an online form. These mechanisms will ensure that employees can report incidents safely, confidentially, and without fear of retaliation.
Investigating process	✳ Who is the designated person or team to receive, investigate, and respond to complaints? The process should be quick, fair, impartial, and led by someone trained to conduct such investigations.	✳ The organization will designate a trained and impartial person or team as part of its grievance redress system to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The investigation process will be prompt, fair, and conducted with the highest level of confidentiality.

Support for employees	✳ What are the types of support and resources available for employees who have experienced harassment or discrimination, including counselling services and legal support? Also, does the policy provide information on how to access these services.	✳ A range of support and resources will be provided for employees who have experienced gender-based violence and or sexual harassment, or discrimination, including counselling services, legal support, and access to medical care. ✳ Guidance will also be provided to ensure that employees know how to access these services and resources.
Consequences for violators	✳ What are the consequences for violators of this policy, including disciplinary action	✳ Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee found to have violated the policy including termination of employment, legal action, or referral to law enforcement.
Communication and Education	✳ What is the mechanism for training all employees on the policies and procedures related to sexual harassment and gender-based violence? ✳ What steps will the business take to identify and address systemic or cultural factors contributing to sexual harassment and gender-based violence? ✳ How will the business commitment to zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender-based violence be communicated to employees, customers, supply chain and stakeholders?	✳ The organization will provide regular training to educate employees about the policies and procedures related to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence. In addition, concrete action will be taken to identify and address any social or cultural factors that may contribute to such behavior. ✳ The organization will communicate its commitment to zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender-based violence through internal and external communication and stakeholder engagement opportunities.
Review and update	How often will this policy be reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance? How will any necessary revisions to the policy be communicated to employees?	✳ The organization will review this policy annually to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary revisions to the policy will be communicated to all employees through internal communications and training programs.

Worksheet 7 Developing a Gender-Responsive Supplier Code of Conduct

GENDER-RESPONSIVE SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT -KEY SECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS	COMMENTS
Purpose and Scope	✳ What is the purpose and scope of the code of conduct? ✳ How does it align with your business values and goals related to gender equality?	✳ This code of conduct aims to ensure that all suppliers are committed to promoting gender equality and addressing any gender-based discrimination or biases in their operations. ✳ The scope of the code of conduct will apply to all suppliers that do business with our organization.
Key Principles	✳ What fundamental principles should be framed in the code of conduct? ✳ How do these principles promote gender equality and inclusivity in the supply chain?	✳ This code of conduct for suppliers is founded on the principles of equality and inclusivity. ✳ Discrimination or harassment based on gender, sexual orientation or any other social identity is prohibited. All genders, including women and gender minority groups, should have equal access to opportunities, resources, and benefits throughout the supply chain. ✳ It is the responsibility of all suppliers to provide safe and healthy working conditions for all workers, regardless of gender or any other social identity. Suppliers must provide parental leave and safe working conditions to women during pregnancy. ✳ Suppliers must pay all workers, regardless of gender identity, fair, and equal wages for the same work or work of equal value and must not employ forced or child labour. ✳ Suppliers should ensure that women and groups are represented at all levels of decision-making within their organization through concrete action.

Diversity and Inclusion	✳ What measures should suppliers take to foster an inclusive workplace?	✳ Suppliers should establish policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in their workforce, including gender diversity. This includes implementing recruitment and promotion practices that actively seek diverse talent, promoting diversity in leadership roles, providing diversity and inclusion training for employees and managers, and addressing unconscious biases that may negatively impact hiring, promotions, and other employment decisions. ✳ Suppliers should also establish mechanisms for employees to provide feedback and suggestions on diversity and inclusion initiatives and regularly review and update their policies and practices to ensure continuous improvement.
Consequences of Non-Compliance	✳ What are the consequences of non-compliance with the code of conduct?	✳ The consequences of non-compliance with the code of conduct may include termination of engagement with supplier. ✳ Suppliers will be given a reasonable period to address non-compliance issues before taking action.
Monitoring and Evaluation	✳ How will your business monitor and evaluate suppliers' compliance with the code of conduct?	✳ Suppliers should be required to regularly report on their compliance with the gender-responsive code of conduct, including their progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. ✳ Monitoring mechanisms may include assessments, surveys, and evaluations of suppliers' policies and practices.
Communication	✳ How will the code of conduct be communicated?	✳ The code of conduct will be communicated to all current and future suppliers through various channels, such as in-person meetings and organization website.
Capacity Building	✳ How will your business support suppliers in building their capacity to promote gender equality?	✳ The organization will provide training and resources to support suppliers in building their knowledge and skills on gender equality and inclusivity , including access to workshops and information on best practices.
Collaboration and Partnerships	✳ How will your business collaborate with other stakeholders to promote gender equality in the supply chain?	✳ The organization will closely collaborate with other stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, industry associations, and government agencies, to share best practices and collaborate on initiatives to promote gender equality in the supply chain.

Worksheet 9

Gender-Responsive User Persona

Creating Persona:

1. Collect rich and extensive data on your target group of users about their age, gender, occupation, location, preferences, education level, marital status, spending habits, disability, etc.
2. Using the data above, choose three to five characteristics of your typical user, ensuring gender diversity and give them a fictional name. For example, Mai, a 25-year-old woman working in a bank, prefers online shopping and is environmentally conscious.
3. Give this persona a photo (optional, but having a fictional picture helps to empathise better with the target group).

GENDER	AGE	JOURNEY STAGE Are they aware of the product? Are they considering purchasing the product? Have they purchased a similar product?	TOUCHPOINT List the different points of interaction that a customer may have with a product or service.	NEEDS AND PAIN POINTS Identify the specific needs and pain points for each gender group.	GENDER-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS Consider gender-specific factors affecting the customer's experience, such as accessibility or cultural norms.	OPPORTUNITIES Identify any opportunities to create a more gender-responsive experience at each touchpoint.	ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS What could be accessibility barriers that users may face?
Woman	25	Aware	Website	Too many clicks to find out the product information.	Design and size preferences for the product.	Easy access to detailed descriptions of products and services.	The website is not optimised for accessibility and lacks alt text for images.
			Website	Feels unable to identify with people endorsing the products.	Potential biases in influencer endorsements. For example, influencers who endorse fitness supplements, while women influencers endorse skincare products.	Seek diverse influencers to represent products and services in a manner that challenges gender stereotypes.	Limited accessibility to equipment or Wi-Fi networks to view social media platforms. Social media audiovisual materials lack closed captioning.

Worksheet 12

Gender Action Plan Template

PILLAR	OBJECTIVE What specific gender inclusivity objective do you want to achieve under this pillar?	STRATEGIC ACTION What specific activities will you take to achieve this goal?	INDICATOR What metric(s) will you use to track progress towards this goal?	BASELINE What is the current status?	TARGET What is the target?	TIMELINE What is the timeframe to achieve this objective?	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES Who will be responsible for implementing these activ-ities in your business?	BUDGET What resources do you need to allocate for these activities?
Leadership Commitment to Gender Equality	Increase gender diversity in the leadership team	Develop a gender inclusivity policy	Percentage of gender minority groups in leadership positions	5%	10%	12 months	Human Resource (HR) team and management	Budget for training and expert to develop policy
		Provide unconscious bias training to all managers	Percentage of managers completing unconscious bias training with a focus on gender diversity and inclusivity	0%	100%	12 months	Management team	Budget for training

Equal Representation of All Gender Identities in the Workplace	Ensure diversity and inclusivity in the hiring process	Review job descriptions and requirements for gender neutrality and inclusivity	Percentage of Gender minority groups hired	15%	30%	12 months	HR team	Budget for posting on different recruitment channels
		Develop and implement a blind screening process during the initial job evaluation stage, where identifiable information such as name, gender, age, and other demographic characteristics are removed from resumes and application materials	Percentage of job applicants who progressed to the interview stage after the blind screening, disaggregated by gender	Men - 35%, Women - 30%, Non-binary - 5%,	Men - 45%, Women - 40%, Non-binary - 10%,	6 months	HR team, Hiring Managers, Recruitment Team	

Prevention and Response to Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence	Prevent and address sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace	Develop a policy and reporting process for incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.	Percentage of employees who are aware of the policy and reporting process, disaggregated by gender	5%	100%	6 months	HR team	Budget for training and awareness campaigns
		Conduct training sessions on preventing sexual harassment and gender-based violence for all employees	Percentage of employees who have completed training on preventing sexual harassment and gender-based violence, disaggregated by gender	0%	100%	6 months	HR team	Budget for training and awareness campaigns
	Promote work-life balance and implement flexible strategies to effectively support employees of all genders in managing their personal and professional responsibilitie	Develop and implement a comprehensive work-life balance policy that includes provisions for flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, flexible hours, job sharing, and parental leave	Percentage of employees utilising flexible work arrangements, disaggregated by gender identity	10%	20%	12 months	HR Team, Senior Leadership, Managers	Budget for policy development and training sessions

Equitable Market Research	Conduct gender-specific market research to identify potential gender gaps in product offerings	Develop a survey with questions tailored to the specific gender demographics.	Percentage of survey questions that are tailored to specific gender demographics	0%	100%	8 months	Research team	Budget for survey software and analysis tools.
		Analyse customer feedback and market data to identify gender-related opportunities	Percentage of gender-related opportunities identified through customer feedback and market data analysis	10%	50%	8 months	Research team	
Product and Service Development for All	Incorporate gender-inclusive design principles in product development	Conduct user testing and review the product design process for gender inclusivity, incorporating feedback from diverse gender identities	The number of gender-inclusive design changes implemented in the product development process	0%	100%	12 months	Product development team	Budget for user testing, design process review, and implementation of gender-inclusive design principles based on feedback
Gender-Inclusive Marketing	Develop marketing campaigns that are inclusive and appeal to diverse gender identities	Incorporate images that are gender diverse and inclusive language in all marketing materials	Percentage increase in customer engagement with marketing materials that incorporate images that are gender diverse and inclusive language			6 months	Marketing team	Budget for diversity and inclusion expert to provide guidance and review the marketing campaigns before launching

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