“Maximising Benefits”

Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

SRI LANKA
“Maximising Benefits”

Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

SRI LANKA
“Maximising Benefits”

Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

SRI LANKA

2013
Introduction

This document “Maximizing Benefits: Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development” is about gender equality in the workplace.

It provides a practical framework for business establishments in the private sector in Sri Lanka to commit towards promoting gender equality in the workplace. It includes a framework of guidelines and steps for developing a Gender Policy as well as a Model Gender Policy that can be adapted and adopted by private sector companies and institutions as a component of the entity’s comprehensive Human Resource Development Policy.

This Model Gender Policy and Guidelines for arriving at the Gender Policy for the private employment sector in Sri Lanka is expected to be a practical guide to employers to promote gender equality in their places of work. This Model Policy should be read with “Guidelines for Company Policy on Gender Equity/Equality” developed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Employer’s Federation of Ceylon (EFC) which sets out broad guidelines to support the promotion of gender equality in the workplace.

The Model Policy strives to simplify theoretical and conceptual issues of gender equality in the workplace. Having set the conceptual approach in place, the Model Policy provides options, and strategic and gradual steps for employers to commit to gender equality in their workplace. Starting from a ‘good business’ perspective, these steps will take an employer towards embracing gender equality as a commitment to promoting basic human rights of all employees.

This document comprises the following sections:
Section 1: The Importance of the workplace Gender Policy
Section 2: The Rationale for adopting a workplace Gender Policy
Section 3: “Gender” in the world of work
Section 4: Understanding Sri Lanka’s commitment to gender equality
Section 5: The Foundation for a Model Gender Policy
Section 6: Working towards adopting a Workplace Gender Policy
Section 7: Seven Steps to Gender Equality in the Workplace
Section 8: A Model Workplace Gender Equality Policy
Annex 1: Concepts important to ensuring gender equality
Annex 2: Terms important to ensuring gender equality

Why is a Gender Policy important to a workplace?

Gender and Gender Equality is an intrinsic component in an institution’s Human Resource Development Policy, and a Gender Policy is a vital document for an institution committed to promoting gender equality. A Gender Policy enables an institution to articulate its commitment to promoting gender equality and set in place processes to achieve this commitment. It describes an institution’s gender equality goals and objectives, and explains the processes in which the institution will work towards ensuring that women and men have equal access to power, authority and resources.

Gender equality is not just the number of women working in an institution or the number of women in the management strata of an institution. It is not the number of projects and activities directed towards women’s empowerment. Gender is the
understanding of how women and men interact within the institution as well as how the institution impacts on men and women through its work. It is also an understanding of inequalities that exist between women and men placing one sex in an inferior or disadvantaged position in comparison with the other. Gender aspects can also be found in the way in which decisions are taken, in the choice of external partners and business contacts, in the manner the institution is managed and run, and in the way the private lives of the staff are taken into account, in the way social and cultural roles and issues that affect men and women are identified, noted and integrated into institutional decisions. Thus a Gender Policy affects the whole institution and all the men and women who make up an institution.

Understanding 'gender' and 'gender relations' is essential to promoting gender equality. Gender equality results in placing women and men on an equal and equitable status.

To adopt a Gender Policy in order to promote gender equality in the workplace through gender equitable decisions, processes and actions, it is important to carry out a gender analysis of the institution. A gender analysis looks at an institution’s internal policy as well as external policy and provides an understanding of gender issues in the workplace including discrimination against women or men. There are steps and procedures to conduct a gender analysis, and a good gender analysis will provide a wealth of information to work with.

A Gender Policy is drawn up on the basis of a gender analysis. A Gender Policy will include a number of components: the goal (long term and short term), objectives, processes, measures to achieve envisaged results, responsibilities, budget, timeframe, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

For a Gender Policy to be effectively implemented there must be commitment among the leadership of an institution. There must also be a "pioneer" or ‘focal point’ for the Gender Policy with sufficient status, influence, expertise, practical yet strategic insight and unwavering commitment. The institution must identify realistic attainable goals, create space to further detail (in a participatory manner) aims and measures to achieve and ensure gender equality, and make an institutional commitment and foster interest that is visible to and felt by all levels of staff. There must also be participation and support within the institution, and progress reporting on the basis of concrete results and figures. The successes must necessarily be made visible.

The Rationale for adopting a Gender Policy

Gender Equality: It’s Your Business

There are strong commitments made by national level institutions to ensuring gender equality in the workplace. The commitments show the importance placed on actively promoting equality between women and men in the workplace.

Gender equality in the workplace is not simply good business; it is a commitment to upholding the rights of workers.

The Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations in Sri Lanka upholds this commitment to ensuring a world of work that is free of gender discrimination and gender based violence. This commitment is endorsed by the Employers’ Federation of Ceylon. This represents the private sector thus voicing an undertaking by the world of private sector work to promoting gender equality.

“Gender Equality ensures equal opportunities for women and men to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute productively to the world of work and to enjoy
all benefits and results equally” – Gender Policy of the Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, Sri Lanka ¹

“In today’s environment where women along with men play an equally important role in business, gender justice at the workplace is of crucial significance to facilitate a motivates and productive workforce” – Employers’ Federation of Ceylon


The Sri Lanka National Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights commits to formulating a policy for the private sector which addresses gender based discrimination in the workplace and adheres to the principle of non-discrimination.


Why commit to gender equality in the workplace?

1. Good business, which involves ethical business practices in furthering a goal of profitable business, and better organisational performance, is grounded in equal opportunities and treatment of men and women.

2. Non discrimination in promotions and training results in higher returns to staff investment.

3. Sensitivity to personal rights and fairness, transparent organisational procedures, as well as gender based justice at the workplace will encourage overall employee goodwill and contentment.

4. Gender equality is good for business. Having a good balance of women and men at all levels of the workplace enables management to draw on the strengths of both groups for the advantage of the organisation.

5. Harnessing the diverse ideas, skills and talents from the widest possible human capital base will enhance competitiveness and increase production.

6. Good corporate governance and best business practices need to conform to standards of human resource management and this includes commitment to gender equality.

7. Gender equality promotes a positive image of the workplace.

8. The right to work and equality in all aspects of employment are inalienable rights, as stipulated in international standards, local laws and all policies and regulations that promote gender equality.

¹. The Gender Policy of the Ministry of Labour was developed in 2010 and implementation in ongoing. However the Gender Policy is yet to be accepted by the Cabinet as a formal policy document.

². The Human Rights Action Plan 2011-2016 was developed through consultation and co-operation involving both government and civil society. The Action Plan provides a detailed policy and legislative programme to realize the fundamental rights and freedoms provided for in the Constitution, and also look to expand these rights and freedoms.
Maximising Benefits

- From the Guidelines for Company Policy on Gender Equity / Equality developed by the ILO and the Employer's Federation of Ceylon (EFC).

Gender equality and gender equity at the workplace means...

- Eliminating discrimination in the workplace resulting in the employment of the best candidates for the jobs at hand
- An inclusive climate for women and men to work together
- Developing more productive human resource policies to enhance competitiveness
- Eliminating gender based conflict and harassment so as to increase worker morale and productivity
- Proactively addressing gender based barriers in work design, institutional policies, and traditional approaches as well as those due to mere lack of awareness
- Far reaching stages in the horizontal and vertical mobility of women and men by dismantling pre conceived notions and gender stereotypes in providing non traditional training and creating new ladders of advancement for dead end jobs
- Greater flexibility for both the enterprise and the employees by removing constraints dependent on the employee’s presence and by utilising the liberties of modern technology
- An improved corporate image that leads to greater business opportunities at local and international levels
- Sustained customer relationships

From the Guidelines for Company Policy on Gender Equity / Equality developed by the ILO and the Employer’s Federation of Ceylon (EFC)

“Gender” in the world of work

In Sri Lanka, men and women are an active part of the workforce. Women and men are employed in both private and government sector workplaces as well as in the informal sector. Despite visibility of both women and men in the workforce, Sri Lanka continues to record a considerable gap between the participation of women and men in the workforce. The participation of women, in terms of numbers, quality of employment, wages and under employment, is considerably low when compared with that of men.

Thus, the discussion on gender issues and promotion of gender equality in the workplace centres on the disparities between men and women in the workplace. It focuses on understanding workplace dynamics from a gender perspective which requires highlighting women’s position in the workforce and workplace which remains disadvantaged in comparison to that of males in the workforce and workplace.

The woman in the world of work in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka records a high literacy rate for both women and men. The literacy rate in Sri Lanka is 92.2 percent with the rate for men being 93.5 percent and for women, 91.1 percent. Women receive formal education on par with men, and women are

--

Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

...an active part of Sri Lanka’s economy. Equal wages for equal work is a statutory guarantee for women, and women receive benefits such as paid maternity leave. Further, there are no sweeping statutory, regulatory or administrative provisions that discriminate against women.

Despite this, women’s participation in the formal economy is far lower than that of Sri Lankan men and one of the lowest in the world. In 2012 women’s labor force participation was at 34 percent while the rate for men was 75 percent. Correspondingly, female unemployment was higher at 7 percent to male unemployment at 2.7 percent.

While women’s labour force participation rates are low, women who do decide to participate in the labor force face further disadvantages. In securing employment, women find that job opportunities available to them are limited and confined to a few sectors while males have a wider range to choose from. Rapidly growing sector such as construction, trade and transport are largely male dominated and social attitudes about what sorts of jobs are appropriate for women and issues of personal safety, transport and housing could be constraining women from taking up certain types of jobs, especially away from home.

Despite commitments to equal wages, women are often paid less than men even when they share the same productive characteristics. Women are further constrained by cultural and status related perceptions about the type of role they should play within the household and the gender division of household and care labour within the family unit. The lack of family-friendly policies in private institutions hinder women from seeking private sector employment and encourage women to seek work in the public sector which appears to be more family-friendly by default, rather than by policy, as work norms are less rigidly enforced in the public sector than in the private sector. This is further compounded by the legal framework in the private sector that imposes constraints that prevent women taking up night work or part time work in rapidly growing and socially accepted service sectors. Sri Lanka’s laws on maternity benefits are observed to discourage employers from hiring women as they have to bear the entire cost of such benefits.

But women’s labour force participation has risen over the years and a higher percentage of women workers continue to be in professional and clerical employment. Yet the “glass ceiling” still operates as 1.6 percent of the male labor force and only 0.6 percent of the female labour force is employed at senior administration or management level. There is bias against appointment of women to high-level decision making positions particularly in the private sector.

---


*5. Ibid*
The contradictory situation of women’s low participation in the labour force is that the highest income earning avenues for Sri Lanka are female dominated. Women’s dominant contribution as migrant domestic workers, factory workers in the garment producing factories, and plantation workers in Sri Lanka’s tea production process is crucial in the country’s export-oriented economy. These however are low skilled low paid employment opportunities with little or no space for advancement. Further women are often invisible contributors to the economy in their economic activities in the informal sector.

Looking at women in employment, it is clear that women’s highest participation is as contributing family workers. Women make up 32.3 percent of employees, only 10.5 percent of employers, 24 percent of self employed persons and 72.3 percent of contributing family workers.

“Sri Lanka like many other South Asian countries has strong social and cultural issues in relation to women in employment despite the fact that the position is ever changing in relation to developments in globalization. It is heartening to note that there are no formal barriers preventing women entering any fields of employment of their choice. Nevertheless, some employers prefer male employees when arduous or off-hour duties are involved in the job. Further, many other concessions enjoyed by female employees under the Statutes such as long leave related to maternal benefits, have also become discouraging factors as reckoned by some employers. On the other hand, many women seeking employment have developed their own preferences and choices, especially, in the professions of teaching, nursing care, and office work where their male rivals are disproportionately outnumbered.”

Women are further marginalised by overt and subtle forms of sexual harassment at the workplace. Sri Lanka recognises sexual harassment as a criminal offence. Resulting from this recognition, Sri Lanka has made diverse commitments to addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. However formal recognition and setting in place mechanisms to address the issue remain at a low level, especially in the private employment sector.

Understanding Sri Lanka's commitment to Gender Equality

Sri Lanka recognizes gender equality constitutionally as well as by ratifying international conventions, in legislation and in policy documents.

The Constitution of Sri Lanka states that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to the equal protection of the law, and that "no citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion, language, caste, sex, political opinion, place of birth or any such grounds". The fundamental right to equality is an explicit right and a proactive duty has been placed upon the State in relation to specific groups of its citizens. The Constitution provides that the right to equality shall not prevent "special provision being made, by law, subordinate legislation or executive action, for the advancement of women, children or disabled persons". This provision recognizes affirmative action where women, children or the disabled are in a disadvantaged position or requiring of greater protection. The Constitution thus permits the State to make any special provision necessary to implement its treaty obligations under international conventions for the rights of women.

---

7 Section 345 of the Penal Code
8 Article 12(1)
9 Article 12(2)
10 Article 12(4)
In relation to employment, the Constitution guarantees the citizen “the freedom to engage by himself or in association with others in any lawful occupation, profession, trade, business or enterprise”\(^1\). This provision places an obligation on the State to ensure that this freedom of choice is safeguarded for all people.

Sri Lanka ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1981. Sri Lanka is also signatory to a number of other international conventions including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which clearly distinguish discrimination on the grounds of sex as a violation of human rights. In 1993 Sri Lanka signed the Vienna Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) setting out the country’s focused commitment to fight against gender based violence. Sri Lanka has also ratified the ILO Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (C100) which recognizes the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value, the ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (C111) which addresses 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, and the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (C 103).

The Sri Lanka Women’s Charter was drafted and adopted by the State in March 1993 and is the main policy statement by the government, regarding the rights of women, expressing the States’ commitment to remove all forms of discrimination against women and address crucial areas relevant to women. The Charter stems from the CEDAW and DEVAW and aims at eradicating sex based discrimination and at achieving gender equality, and establishes standards to be observed in seven broad areas, political and civil rights, rights within the family, the right to education and training, the right to economic activity and benefits, the right to healthcare and nutrition, the right to protection from social discrimination and the right to protection from gender based violence.

The most significant introduction to State machinery to work towards the rights of women made by the Charter was the setting up of the National Committee on Women in 1994. The National Committee on Women (NCW), a Presidential Committee, is facilitated by the provisions of the Charter\(^2\) which enabled the establishment of a fifteen member Committee to monitor the rights under the Charter. The members of the Committee are persons competent in several areas which are of particular concern to women, such as law, health, economic development, education, science and technology, and the environment, as well as persons who have distinguished themselves in voluntary organizations or in the sphere of women’s activities.

The National Plan of Action for Women (NPA) was adopted by Sri Lanka in May 1996 following the 1995 World Conference on Women, and has been developed based on the Global Platform for Action on Women. The NPA is a collaborative effort between the government and the NGO sector in Sri Lanka and encompasses the following sectors: Violence Against Women, women and human rights, women and armed conflict, education and training, economic activities and poverty, health, environment, decision making, the girl child and the media. The NPA was updated in 2012 through a collaborative effort of the government, NGOs, researches and academics.

---

1. Article 14(1)(g)
2. Articles 17 - 23
The National Policy for Decent Work and the National Plan of Action for Decent Work is the overarching policy on labour and employment. The Decent Work Policy and Plan address gender equality explicitly and substantively. The four components of decent work: jobs of acceptable quality, rights at work according to international labor standards, participatory social dialogue, and adequate social protection for the unemployed, the sick, and the elderly, specifically address areas where the gender gap remains wide. A comprehensive plan for its implementation has been developed by the Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower.

In diverse sectors of employment, Sri Lanka’s approach to gender equality is recognized in the National Action Plan for Social Security, the National Policy for Migration, and the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, and the National Human Resource and Employment Policy.

In 2010 the Ministry of Labour formulated its own Gender Policy which recognizes the importance of accelerating quality employment generation for Sri Lanka’s future growth and development, and to ensure women and men have equal access to quality employment.

The Policy includes a clear Gender Equity Policy Statement which comprises a vision, mission and objectives of the gender policy. The Vision is articulated as "A Ministry that upholds the principles of gender equality and translates government commitment on gender equality into reality by creating an enabling policy environment to transform gender relations in all aspects of work". The Mission reads as "To uphold the principles of gender equality in the world of work by ensuring effective gender integration and mainstreaming into all aspects of policy, programmes, structures, mechanism and activities".

The Gender Policy aims to promote equality and equity in tasks, responsibilities, decision making and leadership, to promote just and equitable work conditions, practices and ethics, to eliminate gender based discrimination from all processes; from the functional to the strategic management, to enhance women’s participation and contribution at all levels through an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women and the achievement of gender equality, to promote equal terms and conditions in recruitment, training, career development and terminations and to promote gender equality principles in the world of work.

The Gender Policy also sets out the Institutional Framework for gender equality focusing on the prevention of sexual harassment in the Ministry and includes a grievance mechanism to address sexual harassment.

The Strategic Approach of the Gender Policy considers gender mainstreaming for gender equality and looks at three distinct spheres within the Ministry. In each sphere, the Policy identifies a sub objectives, key issues related to a series of policy responses and activities.

---

13 Yet to be accepted by Cabinet.
The Foundation of the Model Policy on Gender Equality in the World of Work


The Women’s Empowerment Principles are a set of principles for business. They offer guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact.

Women’s Empowerment Principles

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work—respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.
The main aim of this document is to provide a framework for private sector workplaces to be encouraged to see the value and benefit of adopting a Gender Policy.

Working in environments in Sri Lanka that have not considered gender equality beyond implementing women specific projects can be difficult. Many institutions in Sri Lanka implement women specific empowerment projects or initiatives. Gender equality, however, is more than that. Promoting gender equality requires an institution to look at how women and men work and interact within the institution and how the organisation approaches equal benefits and equal services not only for women but for men as well.

For many institutions, promoting gender equality from within and in its external work requires a gradual process. A process that looks critically at how gender, gender identities and gender relations as well as perceptions and attitudes on gender equality plays out in the institution is essential for an institution when initiating a process that commits seriously to promoting gender equality. This is achieved through a critical gender analysis of the institution. Following this, it is essential that all personnel, from top management to support staff accept the principle and commit to promoting gender equality. This can be handled in a multitude of ways; all involving raising awareness, honest and open discussion and adopting a realistic and practical plan for the institution. This plan can and will differ from institution to institution and it is important to select an approach that is suitable to the individual institution than adopting generic guidelines, approaches and activities for promoting gender equality that may or may not be successful. But however different the approaches maybe, the underlying principles of accepting equality between men and women and addressing gaps where there is no equality will always be the same. The process so undertaken is known as a gender equitable process; the path to achieving gender equality.

This document sets out seven steps that an institution can consider in fulfilling its commitment to promoting gender equality. The steps have been identified through work done on policy development and practical gender sensitisation and gender training work carried out by gender experts in Sri Lanka and should be seen as Sri Lanka specific. These steps are suitable for working towards developing an organisational Gender Policy in private sector organisations in Sri Lanka. The steps are adaptable to that an individual institution can decide for itself at which step it should start its work. For example if an institution feels that the space had been already created, within the institution, space for discussion and dialogue on promoting gender equality (Step 1) and that such discussion and dialogue has already take place, it can start at Step 2. Similarly if the institution already has a Gender Policy in place but it is not being implemented, the institution could start at Step 1 and Step 7 would be modified as ‘implement the Gender Policy’.

The seven steps are described in detail below and provide an understanding of their purpose, aims and examples of activities.

**Seven Steps to**
Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

Gender Equality in the Workplace

Commitments and Actions

The ideal approach to committing to and ensuring gender equality in the workplace is to actively and publicly accept gender equality as a human right of all workers.

This requires moving beyond smart economics for good business sense.

It requires the explicit acceptance of equal rights of women and men in all aspects of the world of work.

It is a commitment to upholding one of the fundamental and basic human rights.

Accepting gender equality in the workplace is about conceptual commitment leading to an active display of commitment. This means that decision makers in the workplace explicitly commit to ensuring gender equality and follow up this commitment with different expressions and manifestations of promoting this commitment at different layers and aspects in the world of work.

Conceptually, it is easy for business establishments to commit to gender equality. It is a natural process of upholding human rights, respecting policy and legal commitments to gender equality placed on a foundation of promoting justice and fairness to all members of the workplace without discrimination. For the profit making private sector, it can be couched in 'smart business' concepts.

Practically, commitments to gender equality require a dedicated practical approach that translates words into actions and tangible results.

A workplace commitment to gender equality can be done in a seven (7) step process.

These steps must necessarily lead to the final goal of a clearly articulated and publicised commitment to ensuring equality between women and men workers in the form of a Workplace Gender Policy.

Seven Steps to Gender Equality in the Workplace

Step 7: Adoption and Implementation of a Gender Policy

Step 6: Articulating organisational objectives and actions to promote gender equality
### Step 1: Creating space for discussion and dialogue on promoting gender equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating space for discussion and dialogue on promoting gender equality</td>
<td>To create a positive space for discussion and dialogue as well as to accommodate and dispel negative perceptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What this means in practice**

1. To create an environment comfortable for people to express their views.
2. To provide a space where negative, discriminatory or stereotyped views can be challenged, analysed and explained starting a process of attitude change.
3. To provide a space for gaining knowledge and accessing information on gender equality and its surrounding issues at the workplace.
4. To clearly establish the management’s commitment to promoting gender equality.

**Step 1: Creating space for and carry out discussion and dialogue on promoting gender equality**
| Steps, tools and mechanisms | 1. The Management publicly commits to gender equality and diversity in their agendas |
| | 2. Appoint a dedicated senior staff officer to lead the process of ensuring gender equality in the workplace. This Senior Staff Officer should be assisted by a mid management level officer (Assistant). |
| | 3. The Senior Staff Officer and the Assistant can seek guidance from organisations like the Employers Federation and the ILO to start the process of prompting gender equality in the workplace. |
| | 4. As initial activities to introduce the concept of gender equality, posters, handbills, video clips and guest lecturers can be used. Making available gender equality related audio visual material for interested staff to borrow will also create an interest. Staff meetings could also be used to touch upon the issues. |
| | 5. Once the interest is created, the management should draw up a plan to provide gender sensitisation opportunities for different layers of staff. This can be done with assistance from external gender experts. This plan should be systematic, target different layers of staff cadre with different types of programmes and approaches. For example senior staff could be reached with a series of brief lectures by recognised gender experts, middle management staff could participate in a series of participatory sessions while support staff could be reached with film discussions or simple interactive sessions. It is important these initiatives do not take up too much time from a day’s work and do not happen too frequently. However if these sessions are held while continuous efforts (like posters, handbills etc) take place, the issue will always be discussed in the workplace. |
| | 6. Allocate reasonable material and financial resources to achieve the above activities. |
STEP 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting a Gender Audit or Gender Assessment to examine gender equality issues and current practices</td>
<td>To provide the workplace with a comprehensive idea about gender inequalities, discriminatory rules, regulations and processes, incidences of and views on sexual harassment and staff expectations of gender equality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What this means in practice

Once the workplace is aware of gender equality issues and there is discussion taking place, it is time to take stock of the workplace. A Gender Analysis, Gender Audit or Gender Assessment at the workplace will help explore gender equality issues and current workplace practices and provide insights and recommendations to making the workplace a model institution in terms of respecting and promoting gender equality. A gender audit or assessment can be done in a rapid manner without extensive cost. Ideally it should be done by an external gender experts partnering with a selected staff member (Assistant selected under Step 1).

A Gender Analysis, Gender Audit or Gender Assessment will provide the workplace with a comprehensive idea about gender inequalities, discriminatory rules, regulations and processes, incidences of and views on sexual harassment and staff expectations of gender equality.

Steps, tools and mechanisms

1. Allocate resources to take conduct the analysis, audit or assessment and to share findings of such.
2. Engage an external expert to conduct a rapid Gender Analysis, Gender Audit or Gender Assessment.
3. An officer from the workplace (Assistant) should ideally partner this external expert.
4. Share the findings of the analysis, audit or assessment in strategic meetings with management and decision makers (heads of departments).
5. Develop a plan of action plan with a timeline to remedy the gaps identified by the analysis, audit or assessment and also to highlight positive findings.
6. Share the findings of the analysis, audit or assessment along with explanations of bow different approaches can be used to address the gaps identified. This sharing can be done in different ways - at a special meeting, integrated into staff meetings or staff gatherings, through newsletters or handouts, through small meetings (management unit or department based).
### STEP 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Organizing events and programmes to promote Gender Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To raise awareness and consciousness about promotion of women’s equality in the workplace and about understanding women’s position and promoting women’s rights as an integral part of promoting gender equality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What this means in practice | To raise awareness and consciousness about promotion of women’s equality in the workplace and about understanding women’s position and promoting women’s rights as an integral part of promoting gender equality.  
Steps 1 and 2 will take time. After step 1 and while step 2 is being done, it is beneficial to organise some specific events and programmes to keep the discussion alive in the workplace. |
| Steps, tools and mechanisms | 1. Events and programmes to promote gender equality in the workplace can include a range of activities from subject specific training programmes, networking events, awareness raising presentations, film shows, and ceremonies to mark special events like women’s day.  
2. The subjects of these events could include equality between men and women, gender roles and norms which impact on work, gender stereotypes that can cause inequality in the workplace, gender equality … (anything missing?)promoting better business, status of women in Sri Lanka, laws that promote rights of men and women in Sri Lanka, working fathers and working mothers, Work-life balance for women and men (I have included this separately, since not all employees are parents)men and boys against violence, and positive role models for promoting gender equality. |
**STEP 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Adopting and publicising A Gender Equality Pledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To enable a workplace to make a public commitment to ensuring gender equality in their workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What this means in practice</td>
<td>To enable a workplace to make a public commitment to ensuring gender equality in their workplace. This will help set the tone to creating workplaces that are committed to gender equality and possibly set a trend in good and decent business practices. This will be achieved by publicly accepting A Gender Equality Pledge. This should be done at a public event in which the entire organisation participates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Steps, tools and mechanisms | 1. A Pledge to commit to gender equality can be accepted ceremoniously by the management and senior decision makers.  
2. This Pledge should be displayed prominently in the workplace.  
3. Beside the Pledge, a suggestions/complaints box can be placed where employees would be encouraged to drop in suggestions and complaints relating to gender equality issues. |

---

**Gender Equality Pledge**

Our establishment commits to recognising, upholding and promoting the equal rights of all women and men employees in our workplace.

*We pledge:*  
1. To promote equality and equity in tasks, responsibilities, decision making and leadership.  
2. To promote just and equitable work conditions, practices and ethics.  
3. To eliminate gender based discrimination from all processes; from the functional to the strategic management.  
4. To enhance women’s participation and contribution at all levels through an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women and the achievement of gender equality.  
5. To promote equal terms and conditions in recruitment, training, career development and terminations.  
6. To promote gender equality principles in the world of work.
## STEP 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Drafting a Gender Equality Action Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To commence concrete action on remedying gender gaps and discriminatory action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What this means in practice</td>
<td>To commence concrete action on remedying gender gaps and discriminatory action identified by the gender audit or assessment, through the various events, programmes and actions and the suggestions/complaints box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Steps, tools and mechanisms | 1. Led by the Senior Officer, develop an Action Plan and Timeline to address issues. It would be ideal if this is done in a participatory manner in which all levels of staff join in. However it is more practical for the management to develop the action plan and time line to implement the action plan based on the level of commitment the workplace is willing to make to promote gender equality.  
2. Once developed, share this action plan and timeline with all layers of staff. This sharing can be done in different ways - at a special meeting, integrated into staff meetings or staff gatherings, through newsletters or handouts, through small meetings (management unit or department based).  
3. Allocate resources to support the development and implementation of the Action Plan. |
### STEP 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulating organisational objectives and actions to promote gender equality</td>
<td>To agree upon and commit to promoting gender equality at a level and intensity that the organisation is comfortable with. However this commitment must necessarily meet minimum standards and articulate objectives and actions that can make a genuine difference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### What this means in practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step, tools and mechanisms</th>
<th>1. Within the institution and with external assistance (from the EFC, Ministry of Labour or ILO) develop and publicise organisational objectives and actions to promote gender equality.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

It must be noted that this step is a reaffirming of Steps 4 and 5. Where Steps 4 and 5 have been detailed and followed comprehensively, this Step can be omitted.
ENSURING EQUALITY IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**STEP 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Step</strong></th>
<th><strong>Adoption and Implementation of a Gender Policy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>To make the firm accepted commitment to promoting gender equality in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What this means in practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To make the firm accepted commitment to promoting gender equality in the workplace, drafting, adopting and implementing a Gender Policy is the ideal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Policy document affirms the full commitment of management and all employees to safeguarding the rights and privileges of men and women employees in an environment of decent, safe and productive employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Gender Policy will convey the organisation’s commitment to gender equality and will be articulated as part of its ‘best business practices’ and ‘human resources development’ policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementing the provisions in the Gender Policy is important as promoting gender equality needs to move beyond verbal and written commitment immediately after a conceptual assurance is made at decision making level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steps, tools and mechanisms</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Draft a Gender Policy for the institution complete with gap identification, commitments, action plans, human, material and financial resource allocation and a system of monitoring and reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Share a draft Gender Policy with all levels of staff and incorporate comments and suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Formally adopt the Gender Policy as a guiding principle and a component of the institution’s Human Resource Development plan, codes of ethics, employee management guides or any other policy document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Model Workplace

Gender Equality Policy

This is a template for a workplace gender equality policy which can be modified and adapted to suit specific organisations.

Cover
Gender Policy of the xxxx (Company/Institution name)
Date

Page 1 -
Introduction
This should include a description of the institution (Company/Institution) in terms of what it does, staff strength, details of the human resource development policy and any gender equality related information, if available. The introduction could include the findings of a Gender Assessment or Analysis or Gender Assessment if such was conducted prior to formulating the Gender Policy.

Page 2
Preamble
We believe in equality of opportunity and treatment at work between men and women and adopt this policy because it is just and fair and promotes good business and better performance.

It also helps us in drawing upon talents from a wider and diverse human capital base and benefiting there from. We recognise that equality at work between men and women means not letting discrimination be an obstacle to getting the best candidates for the jobs at hand; enhanced competitiveness through developing more productive human resource policies; more flexibility for both the enterprise and its workers, especially now that new technology has removed many of the constraints placed on mothers who wish to participate in the labour market; addressing proactively possible gender-related barriers at all levels, institutional policies, traditional approaches or even mere lack of awareness; equality of opportunity in providing challenging assignments and vertical mobility based on candidate’s merit and choice rather than managerial preconceived notions arising from sex-typed division of labour.

We shall consciously strive to create an inclusive climate for men and women to work together in harmony on the basis of equality and equal opportunity harnessing and enhancing their talents and contributions for optimal performance and well being at work and in family.

We shall prohibit discrimination on grounds of gender. We shall also prevent any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of marital status or family responsibilities, and prevent all forms of gender based violence in the workplace.

This Gender Policy is created on the Guiding Principles of -

Gender Equality and Gender Equity are human rights: In recognition that gender equality and gender equity are integral to human rights and that women and men experience differences in exercising their socio economic and political rights because of structural inequities and unequal power relations in society.
Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

Gender Equality and Good Governance: In recognition that gender equality and gender equity, through the empowerment of women and men, is critical for good governance and sustainable development. Gender equality and gender equity are preconditions for equal access to resources, opportunities, decision making, social protection as well as equal sharing of household responsibilities, all of which are essential for sustainable development.

Gender Equality and Gender Equity is Decent Work: In recognition that gender equality is at the heart of Decent Work and gender mainstreaming forms an important strategy of achieving equal employment opportunities.

Commitment to Women’s Empowerment: Committing to women’s empowerment in the workplace described in the Women’s Empowerment Principles to promote women’s corporate leadership, to create just, fair and safe work environments that respect and promote human rights and non discrimination and to ensure equal and equitable access and enjoyment of all work related benefits.

Gender Equality Policy Statement

Understanding that while a labour force has needs that are common to both sexes, there are needs that are distinct to women and men, which, in most part, are influenced by the prevailing gender norms, gender roles, responsibilities and relations;

Understanding that women and men have different perspectives, needs, interests, roles, status, relationships and resources;

Understanding that these differences are reinforced by class, ethnicity, and age and by organizational culture steeped in cultural norms, attitudes and practices which create unequal and inequitable situations between men and women;

Understanding that disregard for these differences has created gender based injustices in the world of work, and caused disadvantages to accumulate on one sex; namely women;

Thereby recognizing that equitable treatment is needed to unleash the full productive potential of women and men and enable them to contribute equally to the world of work.

Recognizing that good corporate governance requires organizational cultures, institutional procedures and work ethics that take into consideration the differing requirements, interests, commitments, experiences and values of women and men.

Recognizing that gender equality leads to empowerment of both women and men and can be achieved through mainstreaming gender equality in all aspects of the world of work thereby ensuring dignity of labour, respect for human rights and a violence free workplace for women and men.

The VISION of the Gender Policy

A business establishment that is mindful of broad corporate and social responsibilities; that is efficient and globally competitive; that can provide leadership in national development by achieving optimum benefits for shareholders and customers; in an environment where all workers are treated with equity, equality, dignity and respect, by adhering to international norms of gender justice.

The Objectives of the Gender Policy

To promote equality and equity in tasks, responsibilities, decision making and leadership

To promote just and equitable work conditions, practices and ethics
To eliminate gender based discrimination from all processes; from the functional to the strategic management.

To enhance women’s participation and contribution at all levels through an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women and the achievement of gender equality.

To promote equal terms and conditions in recruitment, training, career development and terminations.

To promote gender equality principles in the world of work.

Our Commitment to Gender Equality

1. The Institutional Framework (maximum 2 pages)
Describe the formal organisational set up to promote gender equality. It can be a description by way of a narrative or a flow chart/ organisational chart described by a short narrative. It should include, for example, the following:

- Appointment of a Senior Staff Officer and Assistant,
- Roles and responsibilities of departments and units in following of the 7 steps
- Other formal and structural commitments. e.g. Events and activities to promote gender equality
- Procedure to complain, inquire into and redress complaints of gender inequality
- Appointment of a Gender Equality Promotion Officer in the Human Resource department.

2. The Gender Equality Action Plan (maximum 4 pages)
This is an action plan to promote gender equality in the workplace by implementing the Gender Policy

This Gender Equality Action Plan should be developed through a participatory and consultative process involving staff at different levels. Once developed it becomes the operational tool for the implementation of the Gender Policy.

The implementation of this Gender Equality Action Plan requires the unfailing commitment, participation and contribution of every staff member. The implementation process will be led by the duly appointed Senior Staff Officer and Assistant with full management support. Periodically, the institution could bring in Gender Specialists to support implementation as well as monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Gender Policy.

Some suggestions to include in the Gender Equality Action Plan:

General

- Ensure active and public acceptance of the Gender Policy
- Allocate personnel and resources including a budget to ensure the effective implementation of the Gender Policy
- Develop the capacity of selected staff to mainstream gender

Business environment

- Ensure working conditions including work infrastructure takes into consideration the different needs of women and men

---

This is the same as envisaged in Step 5
Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

- Create a gender equality friendly and supportive outward environment (e.g. Use of posters, notices etc)
- Ensure all organizational communications are gender sensitive with no gender discriminatory language or overtones

Statutory requirements
- Ensure all gender specific statutory requirements are strictly followed. E.g. Maternity benefits, night work for women.
- Provide additional measures to ensure gender equality. E.g. Paternity leave, flexi timing and other family friendly options

Staffing
- Equal numbers of men and women at all levels of staff or a minimum percentage for the lesser represented sex (most often it will be women)
- Gender specific strategies to ensure equality in recruitment and selection
- Equal career development for women and men with special emphasis on the lesser represented sex (most often it will be women) accessing such opportunities where needed
- Equal opportunities in accessing training and development with special emphasis on the lesser represented sex (most often it will be women) accessing such opportunities where needed
- Specific measures to create a family-friendly and enabling working environment for all staff, both men and women.

Specific measures
- Ensure gender sensitivity in occupational health and safety measures
- Formulate measures to identify, prevent and redress sexual harassment (see Annex 1)
- Provision of services such as creches, play groups, counselling etc

3. Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting (maximum 2 pages)
The Gender Policy must set out in detail, the way in which the implementation of the Gender Policy will be monitored and evaluated. This should include monitoring and evaluation activities (such as observations, assessments etc.), persons in charge of ensuring monitoring and evaluation and a timeline setting out when periodic monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out.

The Gender Policy must further include details of the types of reports that will be produced to show how gender equality is promoted in the organisation and what results the process has achieved. This could by way of quarterly, biannual or annual reports, documentaries, booklets, slideshows etc.

4. Budget
The budget required to implement the provisions of the Gender Policy should detailed by the institution. The budget would include general administration costs including office space, overheads, stationery etc, salaries of dedicated staff, and professional fees for external resource persons and experts and costs of specific initiatives.
5. Timeline

The time frame required to implement the Gender Policy should be detailed by the institution. The timeline could be in three sections: short term setting out monthly activities; medium term setting out activities covering the next two years with no specific monthly timelines; and long term, being a five year period for achieving the vision of the Gender Policy.
Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

Concepts important to ensuring gender equality

Socialisation (Learning gender differences): The concept of socialization features in explanations of gender difference, where emphasis is given to the process of how individuals learn to become masculine or feminine in their identities, appearance, values and behaviour. The primary stage of socialization occurs during infancy and childhood, via interaction between adults (especially parents) and children. Socialization is, though, a lifelong process. As individuals grow up and older, they continually encounter new situations and experiences and so learn new aspects of femininity and masculinity throughout their lives. Different masculinity and femininity practices are adopted depending on situations and beliefs. People’s understandings of gender are dynamic, changing over time with maturity, experience and reflection. Thus people are active in constructing our own gender identities, influenced by the collective practices of institutions such as school, church, media and family, which construct and reinforce particular forms of masculinity and femininity.

Stereotyping: Gender differences, definitions of masculinity and femininity become rooted in society. People’s ideas and expectations about the characteristics, abilities and behaviour of women and men define femininity and masculinity. Gender values and norms on femininity and masculinity in society define what men and women should be like. In many societies women are expected to be patient, kind and caring. Men are expected to be the primary income earners, strong and brave. These ideas create assumptions about the capabilities of women and men. It is often said that women are better carers of children and the elderly while men are better leaders and politicians. These are stereotypes that may sometimes be true but often proved false. Ideas on femininity and masculinity control and dictate the behaviours of men and women. These ideas restrict and limit the potential of both men and women. They are often not in line with reality and may not reflect the actual contributions that women and men make. Stereotyped ideas about men can prevent men from taking an active part in the lives of caring for their infants while stereotyped ideas about women can prevent them from being actively involved in employment.

The gender division of labour (what women and men in the target population do and why): The division of labour between men and women depends on the socio-economic and cultural context and may be analyzed by differentiating between productive, reproductive and community management and community politics roles. If little or no information is available on the gender division of labour within the target population, it is often useful to draw up an activity profile for men and women.

Productive roles refer to work undertaken by either men or women for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange value, and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production this includes work as independent farmers, peasants and wage workers.

Reproductive roles refer to child-bearing and the different activities carried out in caring for household members and the community. This includes domestic tasks done by women required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also fuel and water collection, food preparation, child care, education and health care.

Community management roles refer to activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. This is usually voluntary, unpaid work, undertaken in “free” time.
Community politics roles refer to activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, such as organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.

Activities carried out by women are sometimes unpaid or take place in the informal sector not covered by labour legislation. Thus women’s work is sometimes excluded from national employment and income statistics.

Relative access to and control over resources and benefits: To assess gender equality, it is important to look at resources and benefits that are available to men and women; whether both women and men have access to these resources or whether they have actual control over them (meaning they have the decision-making powers to determine the nature of the use of the resources) and what benefits they derive from access to or control over the resources.

Resources include anything which people need to carry out their activities. Among the important resources which poor women, in particular, often lack are time, paid jobs, and money. Resources can be capital (credit), appropriate technology, education and training, transportation, health and family planning services, information and market facilities.

Benefits: include anything which accrues to people. They can be tangible or non-tangible: food to be used for subsistence or sale; income to be used for reproductive or reproductive purposes; status, power and recognition.

Practical and strategic gender needs: Practical gender needs are the needs arising from the actual conditions women and men experience because of the roles assigned to them in society. These needs are often related to women’s roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs and men’s roles as heads of households and income earners. The needs so identified are often concerned with inadequacies in living and working conditions such as food, shelter, income, water provision, health care and employment. Meeting these practical needs improves living standards but does not, change factors which perpetuate women’s position as a disadvantaged group in their societies.

Strategic gender needs are the needs identified to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society and relate to the empowerment of women. They vary according to the particular social, economic and political context in which they are formulated. Usually they concern equality issues such as enabling women to have equal access to job opportunities and training, equal pay for work of equal value, rights to land and other capital assets, prevention of sexual harassment at work, violence against women, and freedom of choice over childbearing.

Terms important to ensuring gender equality

There are fundamental concepts and terms that are important to taking forward a commitment to gender equality. These concepts and terms include definitions of key words, descriptions of gender issues that arise in the lives of women and men due to social interactions including those at the workplace, and explanations of key concepts that can be used in understanding, internalizing and promoting gender equality.

Gender: Gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.
Ensuring Equality in Human Resource Development

ANNEX 2

Sex: Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive as there are individuals who possess both, but these characteristics generally differentiate humans as females and males.

Gender Equality: Gender equality describes the concept that all human beings, both women and men, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means that women and men are treated fairly according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

Gender Analysis: Gender analysis is a systematic examination of the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between women and men is not perpetuated.

Gender balance: is the equal and active participation of women and men in all areas of decision-making, and in access to and control over resources and services

Gender Neutral: Having no differential positive or negative impact for gender relations or equality between women and men

Gender gap: The gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, remuneration or benefits.

Gender discrimination: Any exclusion or restriction made on the basis of gender roles and relations that prevents a person from enjoying full human rights

Sexual harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work, including conduct of superiors and colleagues

Gender-based violence: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. This violence includes abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work.
Affirmative Action: Measures targeted at a particular group and intended to eliminate and prevent discrimination or to offset disadvantages arising from existing attitudes, behaviours and structures (sometimes referred to as positive discrimination).
References


Discussions with Saadya Hamdani, Gender Specialist, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South Asia. (15 September 2012)

Employers’ guide on promoting equal opportunity and treatment and preventing discrimination at work in China (2011). China Enterprise Confederation (CEC) and International Labour Office (ILO), Beijing and Bangkok.


K a t e r i n e L a n d u y t G e n d e r M a i n s t r e a m i n g : A H o w - T o M a n u a l http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asia/mtbmanila/gender/gnanx1.htm (accessed on 30 July 2012)


