



Gender in the Workplace

Training Option 1 – Gender in the Organization³³

Learner Objectives By the end of the session, participants will be able to

1. Understand the impact of being “labelled”
2. Describe their organization’s culture and gender attitudes
3. Develop strategies for building gender equity and sensitivity in their organization’s behaviors, practices, and policies

Time 3 hours, 30 minutes

Session Overview

- A. Labelling in the Workplace 1 hour
- B. Organizational Culture 1 hour
- C. Planning for Gender-Equitable Organizations1 hour, 30 minutes

Materials Index cards (7"x12")
 Flipcharts
 Markers, pens, and pencils

Handouts 6A Organizational Culture
 6B Force-Field Analysis Guidelines and Worksheet

Special Preparation Prepare the following name tents. Write on one side of the tent only.

Male	Pretty face—patronize/humor me
Boss—obey me	Stupid female—put me in my place
Male expert—seek my advice	Insignificant male—ignore me
Comedian—laugh at me	Blank name tag
Incompetent female—don't let me do anything	

³³ Source: CEDPA Gender and Development Training Manual

PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

This session explores both personal and organizational issues related to gender in the workplace. Participants reflect on “labelling” and the effect of labelling on an individual’s self-esteem and effectiveness. Gender-related labelling is highlighted in the discussion. Participants then discuss organizational culture, and how an organizational culture can or cannot be gender-sensitive. Working in groups, participants use force-field analysis to develop plans for creating gender-equitable organizations.

A. Labelling in the Workplace (1 hour)

Step 1 Ask for nine volunteers to participate in a workplace simulation. Have the volunteers sit around a small conference table, as if they were holding a meeting. Instruct them to shut their eyes while you place the name tents in front of them. The volunteers should not look at their own name tents, but should look at the name tents of all other volunteers.

Step 2 Explain to the volunteers that they represent the chief officers and heads of departments of a medium-sized organization. They are having a meeting to discuss the following:

There is growing concern within your organization about the lack of promotion of women. Informal data collected by an employee committee has indicated that women feel shut out of the decision-making process in several departments. As a result, the board has asked you, the chief officers and heads of departments, to convene and determine if indeed there is a problem and develop a series of recommendations. You have 15 minutes to discuss this problem.

Explain to the volunteers that they should behave towards each other as directed by the name tents, but that they should not read aloud what is written on anybody’s name tent.

Step 3 After the simulation, discuss what happened using the following questions:

- How did the meeting go?
- How did you feel about your role?
- How effective were you? What influenced your effectiveness?

- What would you like to change about your role?
- What did the observers notice?
- What happens when people label you? How does it affect your self-esteem?
- What happens to people when you label them?

Step 4

Discuss how this simulation relates to gender in the workplace.

We often label people based upon their gender. In the workplace, women may be labelled as emotional, less competent than men, not to be taken seriously, etc. We then behave towards people according to these labels. Labelling can affect an individual's ability to perform his or her work effectively.

B. Organizational Culture (1 hour)

Step 1

Explain to participants that in the next part of the session they will try to assess the gender-sensitivity of different aspects of their organization's culture. Ask participants the following:

- How do you define culture?
- Do you think an organization has its own culture? In what way?
- How is an organization's culture similar to the culture of a society?
- What kind of culture does your organization have?

Step 2

Distribute Handout 6A, Organizational Culture. Ask questions to ensure that everyone understands the concept and explain further if necessary.

Step 3

Divide participants into small groups of four to six members. Assign the following task: