

Let's make trade unions more gender just

Booklet 1: Gender just trade union policies and structures



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Foreword

Historically, trade unions have been seen as “organisations of brotherhood”. But today more than 40 per cent of the global labour force is female. It is of strategic importance for unions to seriously include women and their interests, not only to build their membership base, but also to consolidate their societal influence, especially in a changing world of work.

For us at FES, trade unions are one of our most important partners in supporting democracy and social justice worldwide. Therefore, in 2021, we set out to learn more about trade unions’ practices in supporting change towards gender equality. Consequently, we published the handbook [“Transformative Strategies towards Gender Equality in Trade Unions: A Handbook”](#) that explores strategies, ideas, and method to address gender equality within unions.

Along the way, we felt the need to distill complex concepts of the handbook into a clear actionable format that could be used by our trade union partners into their day-to-day operations and policymaking. Together with the authors, Melisa R. Serrano and Verna Dinah Q. Viajar, we developed the action-oriented booklet series, **Let’s Make Trade Unions More Gender Just**. We extend our deepest gratitude to Melisa and Verna, who have dedicated their expertise and passion to this essential work. Their commitment has been instrumental in transforming a comprehensive handbook into a practical resource.

The booklet series consists of two parts – Booklet 1: Gender Just Policies and Structures and Booklet 2: Spaces and Strategies for Gender Just Transformation in Core Union Activities.

Each booklet offers practical steps, concrete world examples, and recommendations that can be seamlessly integrated into the day-to-day operations and policies of trade unions.

Booklet 1 addresses the need for inclusive practices and policies, fostering an environment where every member—regardless of gender—feels valued, heard, and empowered. By providing clear guidelines and actionable strategies, we are not just advocating for change; we are equipping trade unionists with the tools needed to drive that change effectively.

As you explore these booklets, we invite you to approach them with an open mind and a willingness to consider new perspectives. Embrace the strategies outlined within these pages, and allow them support your efforts in creating a more equitable and just trade union environment. The journey towards gender justice is ongoing, but with these resources in hand, we are taking significant strides towards a more inclusive future. Together, we can make our unions more gender just and contribute as a changemaker for a gender just world of work and society as a whole.

Natalia Figge and Priyanka Kapar

FES Regional Gender Justice Project in Asia

About the booklet



This booklet is derived from an earlier publication titled [**Transformative Strategies towards Gender Equality in Trade Unions: A Handbook. This handbook**](#), released in 2022, includes featured conversations with women and men from international and national trade unions about their experiences in advancing gender equality in their fields, along with relevant resources shared by the interviewees.



scan for the handbook

The present booklet is a “how-to” guide for the practical application of the contents of the handbook, catering to union-specific needs. Specifically, the booklet can be used for:

- developing and implementing policies and structures to transform unions into gender just organizations,
- formulating strategies that trade unions at all levels can use to integrate gender equality and women members into core programmes and day-to-day activities and operations, and
- mainstreaming gender equality in union policies, programmes, and activities at all levels.

The booklet consists of two parts:

Booklet 1: Gender just policies and structures

Booklet 2: Spaces and strategies for gender just transformation in core union activities.

Both booklets are relevant for anyone working with or for unions. However, Booklet 1 is specifically designed for trade union leaders (local and national levels), labour educators, organizers and influencers or activists within the trade unions. Booklet 2 is aimed at sectoral unions, local and shop floor¹ levels, who are involved in the day-to-day operations of the labour organization.

This booklet (Part I) provides practical information on transforming trade unions into a more gender just organizations through the development and implementation of union policies and structures. Specifically, the booklet provides:

Reasons for the need for union policies and structures on gender equality;

Specific **examples and steps** followed by several trade unions in formulating policies and creating structures that are aimed at making the unions more gender just;

Specific **types of policies** and structures that can be used for integrating gender equality in trade unions;

Concrete examples of content of policies that promote gender equality; and

The functions of **structures** that promote gender equality.

Gender justice is the freedom to choose different ways of being and living based on equal distribution of resources, equal possibilities to exert influence and equal respect regardless of gender.

¹ "Shop floor" historically refers to the area of an industrial facility where production takes place; in a union context the term is used more widely to designate employees outside management levels.

1. Introduction

How union policies shape the gender justice landscape



Mao Zedong was right when he said, “Women hold up half the sky”. Women and girls make up about half (49.7 per cent) of the global population. However, globally, less than half of women participate in the labour force. Women’s employment has been consistently lower than men’s, with COVID-19 and other crises widening this gap. In 2019, 45.2 per cent of women were employed compared to 69.4 per cent of men. By 2022, these figures declined to 43.8 per cent and 67.9 per cent respectively (International Labour Organization, 2022).

Even if women secure employment, **they often face low wages, long working hours, limited career advancement, and occupational risks including violence and harassment.** Women are also overrepresented in informal employment. Since 2020, **four out of every five jobs created for women are in the informal economy, compared to two out of three for men** (World Economic Forum, 2023). **The gender pay gap persists, with women earning 16 per cent to 22 per cent less than men for the same amount and nature of work** (ILO, 2018). In addition, workplaces are often unsafe for women compared to men. A 2022 survey revealed the following:

- Women are more exposed to sexual violence and harassment at work, with 8.2 per cent of women reporting such experiences compared to 5 per cent of men.
- Young women are twice as likely as young men to experience sexual violence and harassment, and migrant women face nearly double the risk compared to non-migrant women.
- Nearly 50 per cent of those who faced gender-based discrimination also faced violence and harassment at work, compared to 20 per cent of those without such discrimination. (ILO et al., 2022).

Women also bear the brunt of unpaid domestic work, doing nearly three times as much as men. Globally, 606 million women provide full-time unpaid care compared to 41 million men (UN Women, 2020).


All these factors perpetuate a vicious cycle of injustices for women. If women “hold up half the sky”, their experiences and needs must be heard and acknowledged. Trade unions are relevant here as they play a crucial role in promoting gender justice in workplaces and society as a whole. **By establishing themselves as gender just organizations, trade unions can influence societal norms and catalyse wider policy reforms.**

Policies at union level act as a driver for transformation in several ways. There are trade union policies on organizing, collective bargaining, education and training, campaigning, building coalitions, etc. Unions’ policies also describe how they want to be perceived by union members, workers, employers, the government, and other organizations. In some trade unions, policies include a general procedure for implementing programmes and actions. Due to changing contexts, organizational membership, issues and interests, and policies need to be adapted from time to time.

Gender justice is important for trade union policies to address because:

- **gender just trade unions attract more women towards unionization**, thereby strengthening organizational and associational power,
- social justice is at the core of the union agenda, **and there is no social justice without gender justice**,
- **gender just organizations are inclusive and intersectional**, and hence boosts organizational innovation and open-mindedness, and
- **women’s skills are unions’ skills!**

Union policies considered effective in promoting gender justice include:

1. Policy on **establishing institutional structures** to promote gender justice
 2. Policy on **reserved leadership positions** for women
 3. Policy on **quotas** to ensure women’s representation in leadership and union structures
 4. Policy on **designated budget** for gender-equality programmes
 5. **Anti-sexual harassment policies** to ensure trade unions are violence and discrimination free
 6. Policies to **ensure gender just working environment**
 7. Policies on **mainstreaming gender** into other trade union activities
- 

2. Policy formulation process in trade unions

Getting unions to adopt the policies enumerated above is a long and often arduous process. Why is this so? In trade unions, **the decision-making process consists of two intertwined components: policy-making, and implementation.**

The trade union general assembly is the highest decision-making body in the union structure. Between general assemblies, the elected and appointed union officials or the executive board/committee/council implement the union decisions and enforce the rules or policies of the organization.

Before any new or changed policy can be implemented, it is important to understand the policy-making process. In general, policy-making involves various stages: policy formulation, consultations with stakeholders, policy proposal, policy review, and policy change.

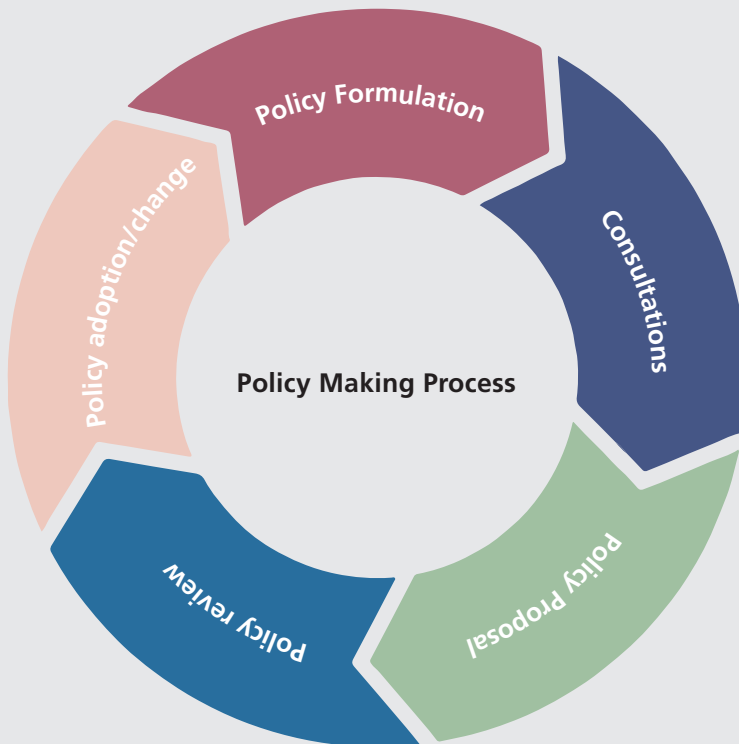


Figure 1: The policy-making process

a. **Policy formulation** involves discussion of initial ideas on what kind of policies to recommend. This may take place in various leadership structures and committees of a union. At this initial stage, **research** is crucial in discussing the pros and cons and in justifying any change. **A gender audit or gender gap analysis** may also be used to justify the policy that is being proposed. A gender audit or gender gap analysis is a commonly used tool to assess institutional gender mainstreaming and explore the ways to make unions more gender just.

Trade unions may also devise their own methods of gender analysis, guided by the resources listed above. This would allow them to take into consideration their own context, given the realities on the ground

and the lived experiences of their women union members and leaders.

Formulating a gender-equality policy is often done by the women's committee, women's department or other women structures in the union. The output of the policy formulation stage is a set of policy recommendations. It is important that at this first stage of policy formulation, gender equality champions are identified and developed. **Gender equality champions are the people, both men and women, within or outside the trade union, who have the influence and commitment to advance and promote the proposed policy.** They are identified as champions because they can lead and defend the proposed policy changes.

There are many materials available online that provide detailed information on how to conduct a gender audit or gender gap analysis, including:

ITUC-AP Achieving Gender Equality:

A Trade Union Manual (2008)

Link: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/manuel_ENGOK.pdf

Provides a checklist on "Women in Trade Unions" in Part 2.

A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators: The ILO Participatory Gender Audit Methodology (2nd Edition) (2012)

Link: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/manual-gender-audit-facilitators-ilo-participatory-gender-audit-methodology-0>

Guides gender audit facilitators in conducting participatory gender audits at organization, unit or individual levels.

InterAction's The Gender Audit Handbook: A Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation (2010)

Link: https://www.fsnnetwork.org/sites/default/files/gender_audit_handbook_2010_copy.pdf

Provides a step-by-step guide on how to prepare for a gender audit process for organisations.

- b. Consultations** take place when the set of policy recommendations are subjected to discussions and dialogue with the most affected stakeholders. Here, consensus building is important. **Consensus building is about communicating to and convincing all stakeholders (people who are most affected), including key people involved in decision-making and those who are lukewarm or even opposed to the change, about the policy change.** It is a process of coming up with a common understanding of the need for the proposed policy and thus its acceptance. This step requires a critical mass of like-minded people that advances the change.

Convincing all stakeholders to accept a policy change requires building alliances within and outside the trade union (see figure 2). **A key factor in the transformation process is identifying feminist union leaders, our natural allies, who already prioritize gender justice.** Many global unions (e.g. Education International, UNI Global Union) and national union confederations and federations (e.g. Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation, SENTRO Philippines, Federation of Free Workers-Task Force 2 Philippines) have achieved notable progress towards gender justice with the efforts of such leaders.

These natural allies can provide “change incentives” (e.g. mentorship, networking opportunities, recognition and awards) to **engage those who remain neutral** (transactional allies). When natural and transactional allies together promote new narratives in policy discourses, the likelihood of policy adoption increases. If some spoilers (those indifferent to gender justice) can be converted into transformative allies, the policy implementation process will improve significantly.

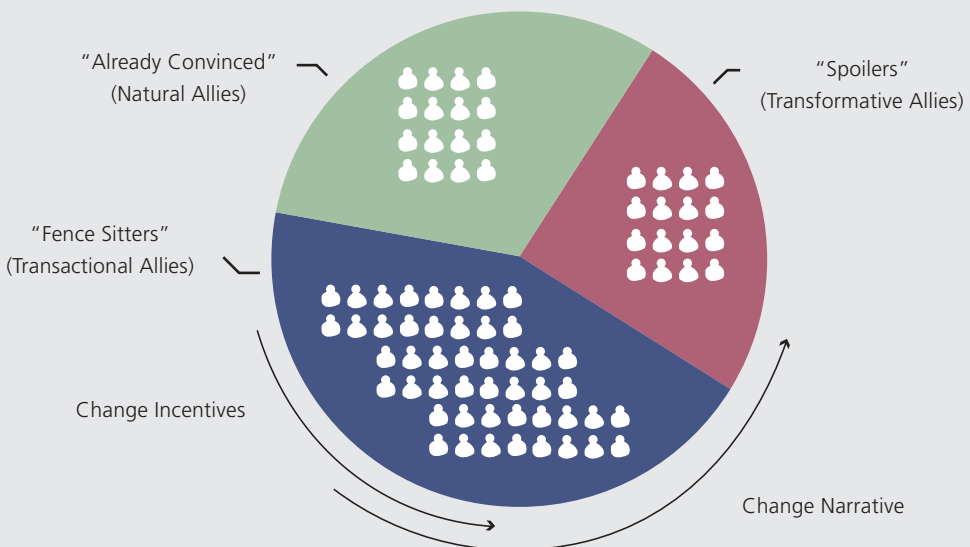


Figure 2: Building a transformative alliance (Saxer, 2017).

- c. Policy proposal** formalizes the policy recommendations after the consultations with the most-affected stakeholders. The policy proposal incorporates information and views gathered from union members, union officers, and other stakeholders during the consultations. In this way, the policy proposal is framed not only based on the research conducted during the policy formulation stage but also on the perspectives and proposals of all affected stakeholders, thereby creating greater ownership. The formal and final proposal may be submitted to the policy-making body and scheduled for discussion.
- d. Policy review** involves both a discussion of the policy proposal as well as consultations with stakeholders. Resource persons or experts on the issue may be invited to the process to inform the debates or discussion. The policy proposal may be amended after the review.
- e. Policy adoption or policy change** happens when the revised policy proposal in the form of a resolution is approved by the union. This stage involves several steps:
- i. The first step involves getting the policy proposal on the agenda of the meeting of the union executive board or governing board or union executive council.
 - ii. To ensure that the policy proposal is passed or adopted, the committee representative needs to lobby for favourable votes from the policymakers. To get to this, there is a need for a group of natural allies that continuously follows up or “pesters” the top union leaders to get their support. In many unions, members of the women’s committee are also represented on the union executive board and governing board.
 - iii. The next step is preparing a motion for the general assembly. This is done by the women’s committee, women’s department or any other women structures in the union, together with the union executive board.
 - iv. Getting a constitutional mandate or adopting the motion in the general assembly follows. This involves formally proposing the resolution in the assembly and having it approved. A constitutional mandate or congress resolution is needed to secure a union’s total buy-in of the policy.
 - v. Policy change does not end with the adoption of a formal policy on gender equality; monitoring its implementation is important. For the implementation of the policy, the support of the union executive board and union board is crucial. Following through is arduous but essential work. This involves gathering and documenting support for and compliance with the policy through information and communication, dialogues, development and distribution of resource materials that present the benefits of such change, and building the movement for change. Periodic review of progress made are usually performed by the women’s committee or women’s department.

Representation matters!

Structure matters!

3. Gender just policies

The starter kit



Policies are not neutral. Gender biases and stereotypes can be embedded in trade union decision-making, risking exacerbating gender inequality and discrimination.

Gender just policies not only address equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and men but also mainstream gender equality across union actions and decisions. Therefore, gender just policies in trade unions address structural power relations and material resources and may include affirmative action to ensure that policies and programmes benefit women and men equally and transform trade unions into gender just organizations. **In this booklet, we identify seven trade union policies on gender justice.**

A. Policy on structures to promote gender justice

Different trade unions have different structures. Often, structures are formed to formalize practices over the years. Structures both shape and are shaped by people. As structures change, they affect practices, mindsets and norms. The key idea is making structures more democratic, inclusive and unbiased, thus, conducive for women and other genders to thrive. A democratic structure is less rigid, less hierarchical, and more efficient and responsive.

Union structures include designated committees or departments that deal with women and gender equality. The presence of women and gender just structures in the union organization not only embeds gender equality organizationally, but keeps the union focused and effective in achieving its long-term goal of transforming the union into a gender just organization.

Gender just structures are important for the following reasons:

- They **facilitate the development and implementation of gender-transformative programmes and activities.**
- They **track progress made on set goals** using a set of indicators.
- They **mainstream gender justice at all levels of the union organization and address unequal power relations between men and women.**
- Through these structures, **unions create and advocate for policies that benefit women in trade unions, in the economy, and in other decision-making bodies.**
- They **serve as spaces for women to develop their skills and capacity** to make decisions and lead.

Do you have any of the following in your union?

Women's committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women's desk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committee for women's concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women's department	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender equality department	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other similar structures	<input type="checkbox"/>

How do we create a gender committee or department?

In many trade unions, creating a women's or gender committee only requires an executive decision based on consensus among the members of the trade union executive board or general council.

Remember your natural allies!

Here is how you can create a gender committee/department:

1. Speak to a member of the executive board and draft a formal proposal.
2. Consult with other members and ensure their solidarity in consensus building.
3. Ensure that the policy for creating a gender committee incorporates a decentralization approach i.e. gender committees are established at local, national, regional and global levels.
4. After the decision is made, formulate a plan of action through both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

In Box 3, you can find an example of provision for a women's committee in the constitution of a global union. It outlines how a women's committee can be formed. In many national unions, members of the women's committee consist of the chairs of the women's committees of their affiliate local or enterprise unions. For global unions, the chairs of their affiliates' women's committees often comprise the former's women's committee or women's council. Where they exist, **these structures are often the mechanisms that implement and track progress on quota policies and women's activities.**

Box 3. Women's committee in ITUC-AP

The ITUC-AP Regional Constitution, as amended in 2019, includes a women's committee among the committees of its regional general council and stipulates that the chair of the women's committee shall be among the 9 ex-officio vice presidents of the regional general council.

"Article 25: Committees

(a) The Regional General Council shall establish a Women's Committee and a Youth Committee and determine their composition and terms of reference."

"Article 29: VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Regional General Council shall, immediately following its election by the Regional Conference, applying the principle of gender parity, elect 9 of its members as Vice-Presidents, two from each Electoral Area but one from the Electoral Area from which the President is elected. The Chairperson of the Women's Committee and the Chairperson of the Youth Committee shall be ex officio Vice-Presidents."

SOURCE: ITUC-AP Regional Constitution, Amended in October 2019, pp. 15 & 17.

A representative, often the chair or president of the women's committee at the federation, confederation, or global level, sits on the highest decision-making body of the union such as the national or general council, or governing board. Therefore, **through the women's committee, women get to participate in the decision-making processes of the union.**

In some national federations and global unions, a separate women's department may also exist. This structure is more of a staff function, which is to say, the union staff hired for this department assists and enables the work of the women's committee or council.

Women's committees or similar structures are present in the ITUC and the global union federations, and various notable programmes and projects for gender equality have been implemented over the years through these structures. However, not all national trade unions have these structures and, in some cases, these structures exist but remain inactive. This is particularly the case with enterprise unions. **Global trade unions and trade union solidarity support organizations (TUSSOs) have often played a key role in the establishment or reactivation of women and gender-equality structures among their affiliates.** Programmes and projects on women empowerment and gender equality, which are supported by these organizations, almost always require women and gender structures, whether formal or ad hoc.



Checklist 1: Women and gender equality structures in the union

In our union...	
There is a women's committee.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a committee for women's concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a women's desk.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a gender equality committee.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a women's network.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are gender equality officers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The chair or president of the women's committee/committee for women's concerns/women's network is a woman.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The majority of officers of the women's committee/committee for women's concerns/women's network are women.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are also men officers of the women's committee/committee for women's concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>
All women and gender concerns and issues are dealt with by the women's committee/committee for women's concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee educates the women of labour's position on local, state and national laws regarding women's issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee provides leadership and educational training for women members so that they may become more active in the local union and seek leadership positions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee informs all union members about women and family issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee encourages women members to become politically active.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee discusses problems of women workers in the workplace with the local union leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee actively works with other labour and women's organizations to promote labour's agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The women's committee supports the union's programme.	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Policy on reserved leadership positions for women

Adopting a policy that reserves leadership seats for women or identifying women-only leadership positions is another affirmative action towards integrating gender equality in trade unions. **This policy becomes more important in the absence of a quota system on gender equality.** At times, trade unions have created official executive or policymaking positions for women when needed, to broaden the representation of their membership. Most often in national trade unions, new official positions are created within the structure to accommodate representatives from different regional territories or due to an increasing membership demographic (e.g. young workers). This practice can also be extended to broaden representation of women, particularly increasing women workers in the labour market and membership of trade unions. **For some unions, the quota policy is complemented by the creation or allocation of leadership positions exclusively for women.** This is especially relevant when the quota policy is neither strictly enforced nor met.

In the German Trade Union Confederation (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* or DGB), the vice-president position at the national/central,

district and regional levels is reserved exclusively for women. Similarly, the Federation of Free Workers (Philippines) created a position for women, namely vice-president for women, which is in charge of internal and external activities or programmes for women. This is the case as well in the Korean Federation of Construction Industry Trade Unions (KFCITU), which requires each of its affiliated unions to include the position of women vice-president among the leadership positions. In the Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation, the presidency of the Gender Committee is reserved for women. In SENTRO (*Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa*, Philippines), the position of director for women is for women only, which also comes with a reserved seat on the Executive Committee.

The Regional Constitution of the ITUC-AP stipulates that the chairs of women and youth committees shall be ex-officio members of the Regional General Council with the right to vote. The chair of the Women's Committee and the chair of the Youth Committee shall be among the nine ex-officio vice-presidents of the Council.

How does reserved leadership position for women help trade unions become more gender just?

- It **ensures women are represented at decision-making levels** in workplaces where men significantly outnumber women.
- It **mandates unions to provide necessary conditions and interventions to capacitate women** to assume leadership roles.
- It **reinforces union's commitment** to gender justice, inclusivity and diversity.
- It **empowers women within the union**, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies and practices.
- It **allows women leaders to serve as role models and inspire others to aspire for leadership roles**, encouraging greater participation and enhancing unions' associational, institutional and societal power.

As one Cambodian woman leader of the Independent Democratic Association of Informal Economy Association (IDEA) remarked: "In our society and in many trade unions, women are perceived as weak. They cannot hold high position because they are not capable of managing union work." Her organization has a policy that allocates some leadership and management positions for women. She further added: "As women union leaders, we are trying to be role models for other organizations that always underestimate the value of women. By doing so, we think we do not only change society, but we also change perception among women in our workplaces."

Reserved leadership seats for women can also be used to formulate and adopt a quota policy. However, for leadership positions within the appointive authority of the governing board or executive board, the policy can also take the form of a straightforward executive action or decision. For example, the action of appointing a woman as the chair or president of the gender committee can be a decision or action of the governing board or executive board.

While reserving positions is effective in putting women in leadership roles, a common pitfall to avoid is stereotyping the leadership position

that is reserved for women. In many cases, such policies are adopted as an act of tokenism. Leadership positions reserved for women often mirror gendered roles such as vice president, secretary, treasurer, or auditor. Higher and key decision-making positions (e.g. president, general secretary) are in most cases occupied by men. An effective way to avoid this pitfall is adopting and implementing the other policy areas for gender justice that are identified in this booklet and the strategies for gender just transformation in core union activities and operations discussed in Booklet 2.

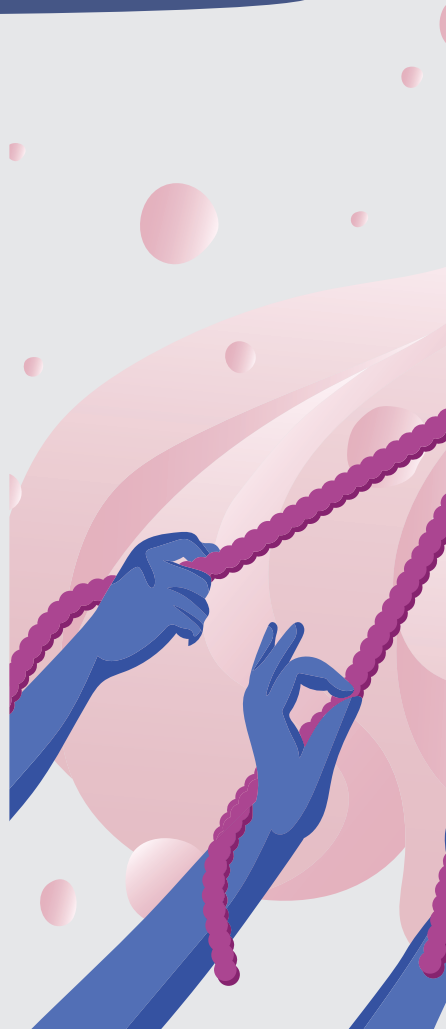


C. Policy on quotas to ensure women's representation in leadership and union structures

A quota policy can be formulated for women's share in union leadership and for women's representation in union congresses, conferences, training activities, and other events. **It mandates a minimum number or proportion of women holding leadership positions, whether elected or appointed, in union leadership and decision-making structures** (e.g., union board, national council, executive committee). It also ensures representation in various union committees and departments such as education and training, collective bargaining, election, members' welfare, grievance handling, and youth. A quota for women's representation can be adopted across a union's leadership structures.

Trade unions have to date adopted various gender quotas. They range from a minimum threshold of 30 per cent (e.g. SENTRO in the Philippines and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor in Viet Nam) to as much as 50 per cent (e.g. International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific, Public Services International). The same principle holds for women's representation in union committees, congresses, conferences, and other union events. In terms of women's representation in training activities, quotas can be applied to the number of participants. For example, SENTRO's Policy Towards Women's Emancipation and Gender Equity specifically mentions pushing for greater equality in the representation between men and women participants in trainings and seminars among the measures to address the gender gap in union leadership. IDEA in Cambodia has a policy that women members comprise at least 20 per cent of the participants of its training programmes.

A quota policy for women can also be adopted progressively. For example, the Regional Constitution and Standing Orders of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Asia Pacific, as amended in the 4th ITUC-AP Regional Conference on 7–9 October 2019 in Tokyo, mentions the active promotion of gender parity, with a progressive target starting at a minimum 40 per cent for women's membership on the Regional General Council. ITUC reached gender parity for the first time in the 2019–2023 Regional General Council (40 per cent in titular, 43 per cent in first substitute, 67 per cent in second substitute), an increase of 3–4 percentage points from the 2015 Conference.





Some trade unions adopt a strict quota policy on women's representation in union leadership because they have experienced that a policy that is not strictly followed did not work, that is, it failed to put the desired proportion of women in union leadership positions. This was the experience of Germany's DGB, which adopted a strict quota policy on the representation of women in the leadership at the district and regional levels. The quota at DGB depends on women's share in union membership. At the time of writing, women's share in membership has gone up to 34 per cent, so each of the districts should have four women among its 12 leaders.

For trade unions, whether at the enterprise level, national level or global level, quotas and other gender policies adopted at union congresses are usually included in the union's constitution and by-laws, and/or their amendments. This is the case for ITUC-Asia Pacific, which amended its Regional Constitution in October 2019 to include policies on women's share in union leadership and structures and in union conferences and congresses. Article 18 of the amended Regional Constitution stipulates a progressive target starting at 40 per cent for minimum women's membership on the Regional General Council, and with the aim to actively promote gender parity. Article 10 meanwhile mandates that women constitute half of the delegations of organizations having two or more delegates. [See Box 1 in Collections section.]

The UNI Equal Opportunities Department, meanwhile, pushed for the adoption of the 40for40 campaign on gender equality in UNI Nagasaki World Congress in 2010. The campaign aimed at increasing women's representation in trade unions to 40 per cent at all levels and in every committee meeting and conference at all levels (global, regional, national). To address confusion stemming from multiple interpretations of the 40 per cent rule, the UNI World Women's Committee Meeting adopted a procedure for the implementation of the 40 per cent in all delegations. The procedure was adopted by the UNI World Executive Board in November 2016. In the 5th UNI World Congress in Liverpool in March 2018, the 40 per cent rule on women's representation in all delegations was likewise implemented. [See Box 3 in Collections section.]

The experiences of trade unions that have a quota policy for women's share in union leadership highlight the importance of several **factors that facilitated the adoption and implementation of the policy:**

- Firstly, women leaders, most of whom are feminists or gender-equality champions, or who have links with feminist and women's organizations, are the prime movers for the initiation, adoption and implementation of quota policies.
- Secondly, support from top union leaders (e.g. general secretary), including male leaders who are gender-equality champions, is important to getting a quota policy off the ground.
- Thirdly, if women comprise a significant share of union membership (e.g. 30 percent), it is more likely that a quota policy will be initiated.
- Fourthly, celebrating gains by posting on social media and other communication channels success stories or good practices on gender equality achieved by unions not only spotlights that the quota policy works, but to some extent puts pressure on other unions to follow suit.
- Fifthly, necessary structures (e.g. women's committees) populated by committed women and male members and leaders, along with a dedicated regular budget for women, are necessary for smooth implementation of the quota policy.
- Finally, bringing women and men together to drive the quota policy is another effective way to generate a broader buy-in.

Checklist 3: Assessing the need for a quota policy

In our workplace/company/organization...	
There are more female than male workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of women: _____ Number of men: _____	
In our union...	
There are fewer women members compared to men members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of women members: _____ Number of men members: _____	
There are fewer women who are organizers compared to men organizers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are fewer women who hold leadership positions compared to men leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women members who are not in leadership positions but they have the capacity to become leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women who aspire to become leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>

There are women members and leaders who would like to have a policy indicating the minimum share of women in union leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women members and leaders who would like to have a policy indicating the minimum share of women among participants of union programmes, activities, and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women members and leaders who would like to have a policy indicating the minimum share of women among the delegates to union congresses and conferences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a formal (written) policy that allocates women's share in leadership positions that are subject to elections.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is an informal (unwritten) policy or practice that allocates women's share in leadership positions that are subject to election.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a formal (written) policy that allocates women's share in leadership positions that are appointed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is an informal (unwritten) policy or practice that allocates women's share in leadership positions that are appointed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a policy mandating women's representation in delegations that attend union congresses and conferences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a policy mandating women's representation in union programmes, activities and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a plan to have a policy on women's representation in union leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a plan to have a policy on women's representation in the delegation to union congresses and union conferences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is a plan to have a policy on women's representation/participation in union programmes and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women who are willing to work to have a union policy mandating women's share or representation or share in union leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women who are willing to work to have a union policy mandating women's representation or share among the delegates to union congresses and conferences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are women who are willing to work to have a union policy mandating women's representation or share among participants to union programmes, activities and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are men leaders who are willing to support the adoption of a quota policy for women's representation in union leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/>

D. Policy on designated budget for programmes on gender justice

Programmes, projects and activities that aim to increase opportunities for women's participation in union work and building women's capacity and confidence to assume a leadership role requires dedicated and sustained funding. Resources are key in facilitating change and therefore proponents of gender equality need to secure these. One key indicator to show that unions are serious about gender equality is when a budget is regularly allocated for programmes and activities for this purpose.

Many trade unions have increasingly **adopted a policy allocating a women's budget within their annual budget**. A trade union confederation in the Philippines allocates 5 per cent of its annual budget for women's programmes and activities. Across three federations in Cambodia, this budget accounts for 20 to 30 per cent of their annual budget. This budget is used for various women's

activities, including training and seminars, gender campaigns, and research.

Funds for women and gender-equality programmes and activities are also sourced externally. In fact, for many unions, the bulk of funding for women activities comes from global unions, TUSOs, and the international and solidarity programmes of national confederations in developed countries. In many cases, **access to external funding is conditional on having well-thought-through women's programmes in which women are meaningfully included in the design and implementation, and are provided with the necessary resources and opportunities for this.**

Coming up with a women's budget policy may also follow the same process as the formulation and adoption of a quota policy.



Checklist 4: Policies and measures that support gender just programmes

In our union...	
There is a specific budget share of the annual budget that is allocated for women-related and gender-equality programmes and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the proportion (%): _____	
Please indicate the amount of the annual budget: _____	
There is a formal policy that mandates the allocation of this budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget for women and gender-equality programmes and activities are allocated as the need arises.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget for women and gender-equality programmes and activities are sourced externally, particularly from global union federations, trade union solidarity support organizations, trade unions from other countries, non-government organizations, government organizations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is no budget allocation for women and gender-equality programmes and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the union follow gender-responsive budgeting as a principle tool for gender mainstreaming budget and finances?	<input type="checkbox"/>

E. Anti-sexual harassment policies to ensure trade unions are violence and discrimination free

Violence and harassment at work include physical violence, bullying or psychological violence, and discrimination of one group by another group or individuals. Physical violence and harassment are frequently reported in occupations where workers deal with the public, including in education, health care and social work, which are care-related and female-dominated. Moreover, gender discrimination at work persists even after decades of fighting against it. Women are still the most discriminated sector in the workplace in terms of the persistent ‘glass ceiling’ and gender pay gap. The Convention covers discrimination in all aspects of employment and occupation, such as job tenure, equal remuneration for work of equal value, career advancement, and social security measures and welfare facilities and benefits provided in connection with employment.

The pervasiveness of harassment and violence in the world of work has led to the development of another ILO instrument. **ILO Convention No. 190 (Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019) is a landmark instrument as it is the first International Labour Standard to address violence and harassment in the world of work.** The Convention affirms that everyone has the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment. It defines violence and harassment, including gender-based violence, in the world of work as **“behaviours, practices or threats that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm.”** In addition, the Convention defines **“gender-based violence and harassment”** as **“violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or**

gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment”.

Trade unions need to build an inclusive organizational culture and environment to attract more women to join and stay in the union, nurture their participation in union activities, and support their development for leadership roles. Therefore, there is a need for policies that are aimed at changing attitudes and norms among union members and in union structures. Moreover, adopting an effective anti-sexual harassment and discrimination policy is a step towards building an inclusive organizational culture and environment.

A review of the anti-sexual harassment policies of some global union federations available online found the following widespread components:

1. Statement of principles/Preamble

In this part, the union expresses its commitment in providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment or in creating and maintaining work environments based on dignity and mutual respect. An example is IndustriALL’s Statement of Principles:

Sexual harassment is a violation of human and trade union rights and dignity. IndustriALL Global Union is committed to provide a safe environment free of any form of sexual harassment during activities and meetings that it organizes, regardless of an individual’s gender, gender identity

*and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, colour, nationality, age or religion*².

2. Scope of the policy

In some trade unions, this section is included in the statement of principles while in others it is a separate section. In the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), the former is the case. The scope of the policy mentions the people in the union who are covered by the policy (all leaders, members, participants, delegates, and employees of BWI), the union activities and events and where they take place, union levels and structures (global, regional, sub-regional, project offices, affiliates' offices, field activities or locations).

3. Definitions

In this section, important terms are defined such as sexual harassment and unacceptable behaviour. The ITF defines sexual harassment as "an unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature which is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating and may affect an employee's work performance, health or employment".³ For IndustriALL, sexual harassment is an "unwanted, unwelcome, and un-asked verbal, non-verbal or bodily behavior of a sexual nature. Sexual

harassment is a display of power which can intimidate, coerce or degrade another person".⁴ The definitions section may also include examples of sexual harassment, as seen in those of IndustriALL and ITUC: Inappropriate touching; leering; whistling; making homophobic comments; making sexually suggestive signals; sending unwanted e-mails/text messages of a sexual nature; physical assault; making sexual comments or innuendos; telling sexual jokes; making insults based on a person's sex or rating their sexuality; requests for sexual favours; and displaying pictures or other sexually explicit materials. The ITUC's trade union guide on Stopping Sexual Harassment at Work adds forcing women to work unsociable hours, which could make travel to work dangerous, as a form of sexual harassment.⁵

Similarly, BWI defines unacceptable behaviour by enumerating many of the examples enumerated by the anti-sexual harassment policy of IndustriALL and ITUC. The examples further include cyber bullying and cyber harassment and "attempts or promises to provide a job or to influence the process of employment, promotion, training, discipline, dismissal, salary increment or other benefits of an employee or job applicant, in exchange for sexual favours".⁶

² IndustriALL Global Union Policy on Sexual Harassment in Meetings and Activities.

https://www.industriall-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/SexualHarassmentPolicy/eng_sex-hrrsm-polc.pdf

³ ITF Policy Guidelines on Harassment and Bullying.

<https://www.itfglobal.org/sites/default/files/node/page/files/bullying-and-harassment-itf-policy.pdf>

⁴ IndustriALL Global Union Policy on Sexual Harassment in Meetings and Activities.

https://www.industriall-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/SexualHarassmentPolicy/eng_sex-hrrsm-polc.pdf

⁵ ITUC (2008). Stopping Sexual Harassment at Work: A Trade Union Guide. Brussels: ITUC, p. 3.

⁶ BWI Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment.

https://www.bwint.org/web/content/cms.media/2412/datas/EN_05.0_2020_IWC_BWI_Policy_HD.pdf

4. Complaint/redress mechanism

This section details the procedure in filing a complaint. BWI's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy provides a good example of a complaints procedure which is comprised of the following: (a) submitting a complaint; (b) investigation committee convenes; (c) suspension of alleged perpetrator from BWI-sponsored event; (d) investigation of the complaint; and e) communication of the decision.⁷ In BWI, the investigation committees are the World and Regional Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Investigation Committees, which report to the World Board or the respective Regional Committee. Each Investigation Committee is comprised of a member of the International or Regional Women's Committee, selected from among themselves, a member of the BWI World Board and a member of BWI staff, and the relevant contact person ensuring that both genders are represented on the Committee.

5. Contact person

This is the person named by the union staff member responsible for organizing an event, in consultation with the host affiliate(s), to whom any complaints of discrimination or harassment can be reported. In BWI, a confidential email address where complaints may be submitted is also created.

The responsibilities of the BWI contact person include receiving the complaint

and acknowledging receipt within 24 hours and submitting the complaint to the relevant regional or global investigation committee.

6. Communication of the decision

This mechanism relates to the decision of the Investigation Committee or any other similar body created by the union. Here, we take the process followed by BWI.

Both parties to the complaint will be advised in writing, and if possible, verbally as well, of the decision of the Investigation Committee. If the case is upheld, the perpetrator will be excluded from all BWI-sponsored events for the next 12 months. Where applicable, the report of the investigation will be submitted to the perpetrator's organization with recommendations for any potential additional disciplinary actions, appropriate training or other forms of support. If a complainant is found to have made false allegations maliciously, with intent to harm the alleged perpetrator, the report of the investigation will be submitted to the complainant's organization with recommendations for any potential disciplinary action.

7. Appeal mechanism

This component is not always included in the anti-sexual harassment policy. In some unions, this forms part of the communication of the decision, which is the case in BWI. Accordingly, the perpetrator who is found guilty will have

⁷ For details of BWI's complaints procedure, see BWI Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment, pp. 2-3. https://www.bwint.org/web/content/cms_media/2412/datas/EN_05.0_2020_IWC_BWI_Policy_HD.pdf.

⁸ BWI Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment, p. 4.

https://www.bwint.org/web/content/cms_media/2412/datas/EN_05.0_2020_IWC_BWI_Policy_HD.pdf.

the right to appeal to the BWI World Board which holds the final binding and executive decision-making power. In the case of a repeated offence, the Investigation Committee may recommend that the perpetrator be excluded from all BWI-sponsored events in perpetuity”.⁸

Global union federations like the International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) have globalized their fight against sexual harassment by concluding global agreements with multinational corporations. As of February 2024, IUF has concluded seven anti-sexual harassment agreements with global corporations that cover workers in 54 countries. The corporations include AccorInvest, Arla, Chiquita, Melia, RIU Hotels, Sodexo, and Unilever.⁹ What is interesting about these agreements is that it not only covers the headquarters of the global corporation but also its subsidiaries in other countries. The contents of these agreements basically include the components of an anti-sexual harassment policy that are discussed in this booklet: Preamble; Declaration of Intent; Principles, Procedures and Processes for Putting an End to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace; and Next Steps.

At the national level, an example of a formal policy on sexual harassment adopted by a union confederation is the one from SENTRO in the Philippines. The policy was adopted in 2015. What is interesting about this policy is the creation of a decorum committee within all of its affiliates, at the workplace, in the community, and other places of work. This committee is tasked with handling and reviewing sexual harassment complaints and deciding on remedies (e.g. counselling, reprimand, exclusion from the congress, exclusion of the respondent from future activities without prejudice). [See Box 4 in Collections section.]

In some unions, rules that prohibit discrimination and harassment are informal and are always iterated verbally before and during union meetings and events.

Women leaders who perform union work side-by-side with men on a daily basis can also verbally call out unwelcome behaviour of men towards women. This practice sensitizes men, so that over time men might stop making sexist remarks, are more conscious of their behaviour towards women, and become more gender sensitive. These verbal iterations, whenever needed, put into practice union policies against harassment in trade unions.

⁹ The seven agreements can be downloaded at <https://www.iuf.org/what-we-do/fighting-against-sexual-harassment/>.

F. Policies to ensure a gender just working environment

Building an inclusive organizational culture and environment for women also means addressing barriers and challenges that hold back women's more meaningful participation in trade unions. These barriers include women's care work and multiple burdens; gender bias stemming from a

culture of machismo/patriarchy; lack of or low prioritization of women's issues in union work and activities; and resistance to affirmative actions and gender equality policies.

Below are some examples of policy statements and measures taken from various trade unions that ensure a gender just working environment:

- Increase women's participation as leaders and activists and make structural changes to encourage women to join the union and participate in larger **numbers by providing childcare, holding meetings at times when women can attend and in environments safe for children so women can bring them.**
- **Provide childcare and elderly facilities,** support for domestic work, and women-friendly scheduling of activities.
- **Provide an allowance for female union members who attended a one-day meeting.** This allowance can be used for buying cooked food for the family or for compensating a relative who looks after young children while the woman attends a union activity.
- **Push for the establishment of public laundry stations in the union or in the community where most workers of a company live.** Trade unions may negotiate with employers, local governments, and national government over these measures.
- **Promote work-life balance and change the culture towards shared care work in the family.** Ensure that union meetings do not take place after normal working hours so that male and female workers can still go home for their family duties.
- **Avoid scheduling union meetings late at night** or in distant locations.
- **Consider weekends as family and rest days,** and allow family members to accompany women members to the union activities.
- **Negotiate for additional parental leave for male and female workers** to attend to family duties.

G. Policies that mainstream gender justice

Mainstreaming gender justice is a strategy that ensures the concerns and experiences of all genders and sexual orientations are an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes of the union. Mainstreaming aims to benefits everyone.

Mainstreaming is a multi-dimensional process and is effective when it permeates the entire union organization and cuts across all aspects of union functions and activities that pertain to policy-making, membership, collective bargaining, organizational

structures, campaigns and advocacies, and resource generation and allocation. That said, mainstreaming gender justice requires a set of complementary policies.

The six policy areas discussed earlier in this booklet all aim to mainstream gender justice in the trade union. If properly and consistently implemented over time, these policies can result in behavioural change. Thus, these policies, especially when combined, can transform an organization's culture from one rooted in patriarchy to a culture of inclusiveness and gender justice.





3. Collections

This section provides some good examples and best practices.

Box 1. ITUC quota policy on women's representation in leadership

Policies on women's share in union leadership and union structures, as well as women's representation at union conferences and congresses, are integrated in the Regional Constitution of the International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific (ITUC-Asia Pacific), as amended in October 2019.

Article 4: Objections to Credentials

(d) Any delegation that is unable to comply with the Constitutional provision of Article 10(a) related to gender parity must provide an explanation to the Credentials Committee, which shall take such explanation into account in its report to the Regional Conference and make appropriate recommendations, based on guidelines drawn up by the Regional General Council.

Article 10: Delegations and Representatives

(a) Member organizations shall select their delegates taking into account the aim to actively promote and achieve gender parity in their leadership bodies and activities at all levels. Women shall constitute half of the delegations of organizations having 2 or more delegates. Any organization which has 50,000 members or less should designate a woman delegate, if women represent 50% or more of its membership.

(b) In the event that the overall composition of Regional Conference delegations is less than 50% women, the Credentials Committee shall accept all the nominations from organizations which nominate more than 50% women in their delegation.

REGIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL Article 18: Composition

- a. The Regional General Council, elected by Regional Conference, shall be composed as follows:
 - i. All titular members from affiliates of the ITUC - Asia Pacific on the ITUC General Council;
 - ii. 30 members to be elected by the Regional Conference including already represented in (i) above from the following Electoral Areas:

East Asia	7	Middle East	5
South East Asia	6	Pacific	5
South Asia	7		

Taking into account the aim to actively promote gender parity, with a progressive target starting at 40% for minimum women's membership on Regional General Council, the Regional Conference shall ensure that each Electoral Area contributes fairly to the achievement of this target. This

provision shall apply to titular as well as first and second substitute membership of the Regional General Council.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Article 29

The Regional General Council shall, immediately following its election by the Regional Conference, applying the principle of gender parity, elect 9 of its members as Vice-Presidents, two from each Electoral Area but one from the Electoral Area from which the President is elected. The Chairperson of the Women's Committee and the Chairperson of the Youth Committee shall be ex officio Vice-Presidents.

SOURCE: Extracted from the ITUC-AP Regional Constitution and Standing Orders, 3rd Amendment, 4th ITUC-AP Regional Conference, 7-9 October 2019, Tokyo, Japan.

Box 2. SENTRO Policy Towards Women's Emancipation and Gender Equity, RESOLUTION NO. 03-2023 (Adopted 27 August 2023)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that SENTRO, its affiliates, and Area Chapters shall craft internal policies towards gender equity within themselves.

RESOLVED, that to address the gender gap in leadership, SENTRO and its affiliates shall:

1. Develop and capacitate women organizers and educators by intensifying women's leadership formation, training, and mentorship within all levels of SENTRO;
2. Asserting that leaders and staff, especially women leaders, must undergo Gender Sensitivity Training;
3. Ensure that all SENTRO's activities would use sensitive language and methods to wear away internal misogynistic and patriarchal attitudes within our Union;
4. Conduct small group discussions to deepen understanding on the system of patriarchy and the imperative to develop feminist ideas among leaders;
5. Strengthening the SENTRO Women's Council in both its capacity and contribution, including having a woman representative in SENTRO's hiring committee;
6. Urging the Area Chapters and Affiliates to allocate resources to help the Women's Council in realizing its strategy of building a feminist socialist movement within the labor movement;
7. Encouraging local unions to allocate union leaves exclusively for the use of women leaders, so that they may increase their participation in union activities;
8. Conduct annual review of SENTRO's Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy;
9. Pushing for greater equality in the representation between men and women participants in trainings and seminars;
10. Prepare more women leaders to take on responsibilities as committee heads for Education, Organizing, Political Action, and other Committees;
11. As far as practicable, SENTRO's representatives in national and international fora should be equal between women and men;
12. The commitment to have women occupy an increasing number of leadership positions within SENTRO, holding at least 30% of leadership positions in SENTRO National and the Federations beginning 2024, and the same in the Area Chapters in the years following;
13. Creating organizing strategies to reach women workers from the Formal and Informal sector;
14. The consideration of women's needs and circumstances in the scheduling of activities or meetings, to curb their diminished participation in the same;
15. The development of child care programs that run parallel to union activities to allow parents to participate more freely; and
16. Annually allocating resources for SENTRO Women's initiatives and programs.

SOURCE: Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa.

Box 3. Policy formulation and implementation in practice: UNI's 40for40 campaign

In 2010, the UNI Equal Opportunities Department launched the 40for40 campaign on gender equality, which aimed at increasing women's representation in trade unions to 40% at all levels and in every committee meeting and conference at all levels (global, regional, national).

The campaign was initiated by a two-women team from the Equal Opportunities Department—Veronica Fernandez Mendez, Head of UNI Equal Opportunities, and Martha Ochoa, UNI Global Coordinator of Equal Opportunities. A succession of activities and actions were undertaken to get the campaign rolling. After the motion for 40% women's representation was unanimously adopted in UNI Nagasaki World Congress in 2010, the campaign was formally launched in May 2011. The launching involved several activities—issuance of the 40for40 declaration, social media campaign, mapping of women's leadership status among affiliates across the regions, and release the Booklet on Equality. In October of the same year, the Equal Opportunities team launched another booklet, Practical Guide to Establish Equality Policies in Unions. In December 2012, another resource material was released, the booklet Equality in Union Culture: Good Practices. By September 2015, 228 unions in 69 countries had signed the campaign, a significant increase from the 189 unions in November 2011.

To address confusion stemming from multiple interpretations of the 40% rule, the UNI World Women's Committee Meeting came up and adopted a procedure for the implementation of the 40% in all delegations. The procedure was likewise adopted by the UNI World Executive Board in November 2016. It was first implemented in the UNI Africa Regional Conference in March 2017. In the 5th UNI World Congress in Liverpool in March 2018, the 40% rule on women's representation in all delegations was likewise implemented.

To monitor compliance of affiliates with the 40% rule, a 'gender police' was designated. This monitoring action, which started in 2019, involved distributing letters to affiliates who did not comply with the 40% rule on their delegations, and asking them to explain the reasons for non-compliance. In effect, this monitoring system serves as a 'soft rule' to enhance compliance.

Has the campaign been successful? In 2009, women comprised 17.3 per cent of UNI's World Executive Board. By 2018, eight years since the campaign started, women's share had increased markedly to 43%. At present, the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of UNI are both women.

SOURCE: Serrano and Viajar (2022: 55) based on UNI Equal Opportunities power point presentation on 40for40 campaign and interview via Zoom with Veronica Fernandez Mendez and Martha Ochoa, 14 September 2021.

Box 4. SENTRO Policy on Sexual Harassment

The SENTRO is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free from sexual harassment and all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation – an environment based on dignity and mutual respect.

SENTRO believes that “the struggle for equal rights extends not only in relation to social classes but also to gender. As a response to the long-standing issue of gender discrimination that was spawned by the patriarchal society, gender development should be an important agenda of the social movement unionism.” (SENTRO Constitution)

The struggle for gender development requires an uncompromising stance against all forms of violence against women, and sexual harassment is one of its most pernicious forms. It is an offensive expression of gender inequality at work and in society and a serious health and safety risk facing women.

Sexual harassment by its nature essentially affects women and children. It is a type of violence against women and arises from power relations rather than sexual interest. This form of humiliation does not occur among equals, and in the long term, therefore, equality at the workplace will eliminate this problem. For the present, however, other measure needs to be adopted to prevent such practices.

Thus in 2015, the 2nd Regular Congress adopted a resolution, which directed the SENTRO’s governing organs to reinforce membership education and policy development to combat this humiliating and discriminatory practice. In addition, the Congress instructed all its affiliates to create a committee on decorum in the workplace, in the community and other place of work.

SENTRO activists should be aware of their special responsibility to respect the dignity of others. Preventing and challenging sexual harassment where it occurs is union business. The SENTRO is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is free from sexual harassment and all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation – an environment based on dignity and mutual respect.

In all organizations there should always be vigilance to ensure that all participants feel they are able to function in an atmosphere in which they feel comfortable and safe. This shall apply to all SENTRO meetings, congress, activities and social gatherings.

The SENTRO calls on all persons involved in meetings and activities to:

- Treat everybody with respect and dignity
- Ensure that your own behavior does not cause offense or give rise to misunderstandings.

A brief and general definition of sexual harassment is:

Any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of sexual nature, which causes discomfort, embarrassment, or a feeling of insecurity or fear. It includes, but is not limited to, the following sexual offenses like peeping, wolf-whistling, fondling, lewd or obscene jokes that degrade women, and asking for sexual favors.

Sexual harassment of participants or staff will not be tolerated in any way in any SENTRO activity.

In all SENTRO activities, a SENTRO staff and a participant, preferably a woman shall be nominated as a point of first contact for anybody who feels that they have been sexually harassed in any way.

The process for the handling of a complaint shall be as follows:

1. The complainant (C) brings the complaint to the Contact Person (CP)
2. Once received, the complaint shall be handled in strict confidentiality
3. The CP having discussed the complaint with C shall meet with the respondent (R) to discuss the nature of the complaint.
4. Having reviewed the facts, the CP shall, if necessary, report to the SENTRO Committee on Decorum.

The SENTRO Committee on Decorum shall decide on the remedy, which may include but not be limited to, counseling, reprimand, exclusion from the Congress, or a report to the leadership of the union and possible exclusion of the respondent from future activities without prejudice to further action.

Both parties involved in a complaint shall be treated with utmost care and consideration and shall be afforded procedural fairness at all times.

For this activity, the contact persons are:

From the Secretariat: _____

From the Participants: _____

Thank you for your co-operation and assistance to ensure that all SENTRO activities are a positive, welcoming and useful experience for all.

SOURCE: Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO). Unpublished material.

Box 5. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION (ITF) POLICY ON MUTUAL RESPECT

At the ITF, we are committed to creating and maintaining a working environment based on equality, dignity and mutual respect.

We promote behaviour that fosters dignity and self-esteem that is positive for individuals and the wider working environment. We do not make unfair distinctions on the basis of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, nationality, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, parental and caring responsibilities.

The ITF's policy on Mutual Respect is set out below, including accompanying guidance and procedures for making, and responding to, complaints under this policy. This policy defines and prohibits various behaviours – in particular, harassment, bullying and victimisation. It explains the need for everyone across the ITF to contribute proactively to the creation of a culture of mutual respect and an environment in which everyone is treated equally and with dignity. The policy applies to everyone at the ITF (including affiliates and others who have a relationship with the ITF).

What we ask of you

As an organization, individual, company or group with a relationship to the ITF, you are expected to uphold our policy. It applies in ITF workplaces, ITF meetings and activities, and social events linked to the ITF wherever they may take place in the world.

The ITF policy

- Treat everybody equally with respect and dignity regardless of their status or role.
- Ensure that your behaviour is positive and does not cause offence or misunderstanding.
- Respect the wide and diverse background of ITF affiliates, staff and others linked to the ITF.
- Report behaviour which breaches the policy whether you are directly affected by it or are a witness or third party to it.

Examples of behaviour that is against the ethos of the ITF policy and could create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Jokes, banter, gossip, name calling or mimicry which could be taken as offensive
- Offensive, abusive or patronising language, insults and gestures
- Deliberate exclusion of an individual
- Misuse of power, position or authority (for example micro-management, over-burdening, inconsistent management)
- Unwanted physical contact
- Physical attack or assault
- Inappropriate remarks or propositions
- Intrusive questions or comments
- Unwelcome gifts

- Intrusion by pestering or stalking
- The display of pictures or images which could be considered offensive
- Threats or intimidation

The focus of this behaviour could be anything (for example, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, nationality, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, parental and caring responsibilities). In other cases, the behaviour may have no connection with any of the grounds listed above.

If the recipient (an individual or a group of people) feels their dignity has been violated then the behaviour is against the ethos of the ITF policy; do not forget that what you consider to be acceptable might not be to others. Alternatively, the behaviour may not be personally targeted at an individual or group, but instead may form part of a specific working environment or culture.

Behaviour which is against the ethos of the ITF policy could happen face-to face. It could also be by telephone or through electronic communications including email or social media.

Dealing with breaches of the ITF policy on mutual respect

If you are treated in a way which you consider to be in breach of the ITF policy, or you have witnessed or been told about behaviour which is of concern, report the incident to one of the following:

- Your ITF union representative
- The ITF human resources team
- The appointed ITF contact person if you are at an ITF meeting or activity.
- You should be told at the start of the event who this person is.

As an employer with legal and moral responsibility for protecting staff, the ITF will take action to investigate reports of incidents which are considered to be in breach of the ITF policy on mutual respect. After any investigation parties involved will be told about the outcome and next appropriate steps.

For example, if the complaint is against an ITF employee, the ITF's internal disciplinary rules may be invoked. If the complaint involves a representative or an employee of an affiliate, the case will be taken up with the affiliate to ensure that they are aware of the facts and are able to take any action which they deem appropriate in the circumstances. Any other situation involving visitors not coming from affiliates will be dealt with directly by the ITF as it deems appropriate.

At the ITF we work to uphold the trade union values of dignity, respect and solidarity for workers around the world. We believe those same values should be upheld within the ITF. This policy is a tool to help us do that.

SOURCE: ITF Mutual Respect Policy. <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/information/mutual-respect-policy>.

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