

Engaging Men in Gender Equality at the OSCE:

A Toolkit for OSCE Staff





WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT?

This practical toolkit was developed through the OSCE's extra-budgetary project “**WIN - Women and Men Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality**”. It is based on secondary research and a series of interviews with practitioners and subject matter experts. The **toolkit aims to inspire and guide the OSCE staff** at different executive structures in establishing Men for Gender Equality Groups which engage men in the organization to foster gender equality in the OSCE workplace.



WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is for **male OSCE staff** of all roles who are interested in male engagement, wish to learn more about men's role in advocating for gender equality, or speaking out against gender-related inequalities, or who would like to join or establish a **Men for Gender Equality Group at any OSCE mission** or field office. This toolkit is also for women, involved in women's advocacy groups at the OSCE - such as the **Working Group on Women and Gender Realities in the OSCE Region** - who would like to learn more about how to get men more involved in their activities.



HOW SHOULD THIS TOOLKIT BE USED?

The toolkit is designed to provide users with ideas to help members of the OSCE set up **Men for Gender Equality Groups**. The practical recommendations in this toolkit are based on the findings of a research report from the WIN project, entitled “**Engaging Men in Gender Equality at the OSCE**”. The research identified a number of OSCE and civil society lessons learned and best practices which can be implemented in establishing, mobilizing and managing groups of OSCE staff to create more inclusive work environments. Neither this toolkit, nor the Men for Gender Equality groups they promote are intended to create or strengthen informal male-only platforms and networks, which are often exclusive and counterproductive to gender equality outcomes. Instead, throughout this toolkit, you'll find **practical ideas and strategies**, organized into five key steps, to help you establish, manage and scale your **Men for Gender Equality Group** - from the reasoning to the actual management and activity implementation.

1

**THE PREMISE:**

Why do groups need to be set up?

2

**THE FOUNDATIONS:**

Crucial factors to consider

3

**THE LAUNCH:**

Starting a group

4

**THE COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION:**

Laying down the framework

5

**ACTIVITIES:**

Steps to consider

WHAT CAN OSCE MEN DO?

Our understanding of gender and gender inequality is changing. In response, gender equality programming has also evolved significantly in recent years. All around the world, men are increasingly reflecting on their own roles, responsibilities and privileges, declaring themselves allies and taking action to ensure that women and girls are afforded the same opportunities as men and boys in every arena. At the OSCE, male colleagues can play their part by reflecting on their own privileges, opinions and prejudices, and the structural and social power structures which exist in various settings. Men can also act as role models or commit to using their positions of influence to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, gender-based violence in homes and communities, to promote gender equality in everything they do at OSCE. By making visible the harmful effects of gender norms and structural inequalities, and by working together with feminist groups, men have the potential to play a vital role in achieving more equitable societies which, ultimately benefits everyone - men and women alike.



THE PREMISE:

Why set up a Men for Gender Equality Group at the OSCE?

DO

DON'T

Creating more inclusive and bias-free work cultures

- ✓ Emphasize that gender equitable organizations retain talent, have higher employee satisfaction and increased efficiencies.
- ✓ Emphasize the OSCE's important role in pursuing best practice, innovation and creating an inclusive workplace culture.

✗ Organize token or once-off events. Instead, consider this group as a long-term, process-driven initiative.

Creating better leaders

- ✓ Highlight that becoming gender-aware and informed about men's role in gender equality are modern leadership competencies.

✗ Just make speeches. Male leaders who provide declarative support without committing to introspection, action and role model behaviors can often establish false expectations and damage the reputation of other men who want to make a meaningful contribution.

Framing the gender equality discussion at the OSCE

- ✓ Ground early thinking and discussions on men's role in gender equality within the OSCE's Core Values of Commitment, Diversity, Integrity and Accountability.
- ✓ Emphasize that creating effective structures of consultations will normalize the discussion on gender, among men, and between men and women.
- ✓ Reflect on your own power and privilege as men, and how it has influenced your life and decisions.
- ✓ Articulate that the Group will be a space to have difficult conversations, to address the personal and institutional practices of men (and sometimes women) that impede gender equality.
- ✓ Consult your Gender Focal Points and/or the relevant Gender Advisor at the Secretariat to ensure that you are well-aligned with gender equality principles.
- ✓ Remember that men might be at different stages of engagement in this issue. Encourage frank and open conversations with colleagues about gender equality and within OSCE participating States.

✗ Categorize all men as "bad actors". Instead frame conversations within "patriarchy", stressing that patriarchy negatively affects everyone, including men, emphasizing that men have a role to play in ensuring everyone benefits from more gender-equal societies and workplaces.

✗ Forget that many Missions already have a Gender Action Plan (GAP). Ask your Gender Focal Person for a copy and consider aligning the Men for Gender Equality group with priorities identified by that document.

✗ Consider men as one homogeneous group. Men have an array of diverse experiences, opinions and beliefs and are the product of many intersectional influences.

✗ Permit discrimination, bigotry or misogyny in any form, even in a "safe space".



THE FOUNDATIONS:

What to consider when setting up a Men for Gender Equality Group?



DO



DON'T

Assessing readiness

- ✓ Align the work and mission of the Men for Gender Equality Group on the strategic objectives and instruments of the OSCE, such as fostering gender equality at the workplace, or enhancing core and managerial competencies.
- ✓ Measure the readiness (level of interest) of your office (mission) for the establishment of such a group with a survey, focus group or targeted interview.
- ✓ Host an initial event with women and men to discuss the idea of establishing a Men for Gender Equality Group.

- ✗ Undervalue the power of informal conversations with key influencers or keyholders at your mission or institution. They may provide valuable insight and ideas to the creation of the group.
- ✗ Assume that the assigned Gender Focal Point should be the person to lead this group by default. These groups can be led by anyone with the interest, character and capacity to do so.

Consulting with internal stakeholders

- ✓ Consult existing women's groups or platforms and female leaders at OSCE.
- ✓ Check-in with these people and platforms regularly to ensure the group remains accountable.

- ✗ In your consultation process, don't overlook other men networks, such as the OSCE Men Engage Network - a group of very committed and experienced ambassadors and military advisors - within the OSCE structure.

Building the membership

- ✓ Consider asking women to suggest male colleagues to become members of the group.
- ✓ Run an informal, light-hearted and anonymous online poll to assess the knowledge, attitudes, expectations and motivation of the members.

- ✗ Forget to enlist members through creating an online portal, or joint email address. Collect their biographical information, such as age, position, motivation, the field of their interest or contact details. Stay in touch with the membership through a mailing list, newsletter, group chat or closed social media groups.



THE LAUNCH:

How to start a Men for Gender Equality Group?

DO

DON'T

Starting the group

- ✓ Organize a kick-off event where messaging, membership or leadership questions can be clarified. Invite a guest speaker and subject matter expert to draw attention to the event.
- ✗ Start too soon. It's better to ensure that the group and its start are well planned and accountable prior to launch, rather than creating a poorly-conceived space for men.
- ✗ If possible, don't organize an online launch. It's important for group dynamics and identity to have an in-person launch if possible.

Creating the key messages

- ✓ Clarify and agree on the messaging, such as the mission statement, vision or core values of the group. Emphasize the differences between male allyship and men's rights early.
- ✓ Carefully review the language your group uses and permits to ensure understanding and that it is aligned with the latest best practices of gender diversity and gender equality.
- ✗ Undervalue the role of choosing the right name for the group. Words used such as network, group, alliance, partnership, advocacy etc. are all good places to start as they announce a sense of unity with women's rights and emphasize the key role that men have in promoting gender equality.
- ✗ Focus your attention solely on sexual harassment and similar, policy-level issues. Broaden the conversation to other professional development, and work/life balance issues.



COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION:

How to lay down the framework?

DO

DON'T

Coordinating the group (leadership)

- ✓ Given the sensitivity and complexity of the issue, identify inaugural leaders who are knowledgeable about gender issues and have the vision and capacity to contribute. Coordinating the work of such a group takes a considerable effort, thus group coordinators must have the necessary bandwidth in their schedule.
- ✓ Consider selecting co-chairs for the leadership of the group, as well as a focal point who will be able to perform more communicative and administrative support roles.
- ✓ Advocate for the leadership skills gained and developed through the coordination of the group to be recognized in performance reviews.
- ✗ Forget that male allyship must be detached from the influence of their founders, or influential group members. This will enhance the group's ability to continue its activities for the long term.
- ✗ Undervalue the importance of diversity within the group as it will signal other men - coming from different backgrounds, sexual identity or positions within the OSCE - to join the group.

Participating in the group (membership)

- ✓ Consider the application process for male colleagues to become a member of the group.

Do: Run confidential, safe space discussion meetings on issues which affect your members and emphasize the role they play in gender equality.

Carry out recruitment campaigns or events, where, for example, every member is asked to bring a male colleague.

Once established, consider inviting occasional female guest speakers to hear their perspectives and include their experiences.

- ✗ Fail to remember the importance of clarifying the membership model. It is a best practice to require interested men to sign up through a formal (online) membership form.

Make the group compulsory, or part of an

- ✗ individual's KPIs.

Sustaining and continuing the work of the group

- ✓ Given the risk of staff turnover, it is important that group leaders consider succession planning right from the beginning. Include national staff in succession plans wherever possible. For this, consider mentoring between the members of the group, or dedicate resources to develop future leaders.

- ✗ Get too large. Instead, consider creating another group based on location or theme.

Miss out on your chance to be visible early and often. Onboarding new OSCE colleagues is a critical time for the group to focus on

- ✗ outreach. Make sure that information about the group is available in OSCE onboarding materials or training.

Advocating and mobilizing

- ✓ Spend time creating a group identity. Reiterate the group's vision. Encourage sharing and praise practical solutions, however small. Budget permitting, consider printing some t-shirts or other low-cost promotional materials, with positive messages.

Encourage your members and other senior managers to be active advocates about gender equality, especially when it comes to representation in teams, panels, agendas and speaking opportunities.

- ✗ Overlook the importance of organization-wide learning and development. Educate to create awareness through sharing recent research, reports, news or program documentation.

Exclude the rest of the organization. Instead,

- ✗ regularly invite other OSCE colleagues to collaborate and interact with the group to foster belonging and promote potential synergies.



ACTIVITIES OF THE MEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY GROUP:

What steps to consider?



DO



DON'T

Planning the activities of the Group

- ✓ Consider which member has the interest and availability to organize a specific event or take charge of an activity.
- ✓ Explore the various areas through which men at the OSCE can be engaged such as fatherhood, health and wellbeing, disability and inclusiveness, intersectionality, combatting violence against women.
- ✓ Use the 2004 OSCE Action Plan and other core documents to plan the activities of the group and relevant Ministerial Councils' decisions.
- ✗ Decentralize tools and resources. In addition to a committed coordination team, Men for Gender Equality Groups often benefit from organization-wide support in the form of HR resources for budgeting and planning or help with administration when executing events.
- ✗ Use a one-size-fits-all approach to the activities. Instead, plan your activities to be responsive to local contexts, issues and current events.

Implementing Group activities

- ✓ More than just talk. Keep members of the group engaged and active through any of the following activities: lunch and learn sessions, group meals, informal networking events, formal monthly meetings, conferences or online events. Offer a monthly short film or a reading list and engage with current affairs through a gender equality perspective. Conduct virtual conversations or storytelling sessions.
- ✓ Conduct fundraising for activities to combat gender-based violence in the OSCE area. Men for Gender Equality Groups may solicit donations among their members, fundraise in one of the buildings of the OSCE or through its intranet.
- ✓ Consider further contributing to the goals and success of the OSCE by becoming brand ambassadors for HeForShe, the White Ribbon Campaign, or the International Gender Ambassadors Program, or by participating in job fairs or other recruitment activities.
- ✓ Ensure you have a referral pathway established, in case a colleague needs additional services, such as counselling.
- ✗ Forget that Men for Gender Equality Groups can equally serve broader communities in the OSCE context. Ask yourself: What are the areas in which members of the group are passionate? Empower group members to organize activities that are aligned with the needs of the local communities.
- ✗ Underestimate the importance of properly assessing the impact and results of the activities of the group, by asking both men

Fundraising the group

- ✓ Clarify the processes, mechanisms or decision-making process of funding such a group with the OSCE structures.
- ✗ Underestimate what can be done on a limited or even no-budget.

Align your funding request with the objectives, mission or strategies of your field operation.

Encourage gender mainstreaming in all OSCE budgeting processes.

POSSIBLE CONVERSATION STARTERS:



AT WORK

- Men, women and office/organizational dynamics
- Reflecting on patriarchy, power and privilege
- More than a policy. Preventing sexual harassment at work.
- What women want at work, and why
- What is gender mainstreaming?
- Militarized Men: gender (in)equality in the security and defense sectors
- How will climate change affect gender equality?
- The nexus of economic development and gender equality.
- Gender equality as a prerequisite to human rights programming.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Masculinity and health-seeking behavior
- Money matters: Who makes financial decisions in our families?
- Share the Care: Roles and responsibilities at home and work
- Parental leave, family leave, paternity leave. What is it, why is it important and what needs to change?
- Under the hood: men and mental health
- Men's Health is Community Health - how our decisions affect everyone.
- Stress, pressure and anger management

GOOD LUCK IN ESTABLISHING YOUR MEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY GROUP!

As a final piece of advice as you start your journey: don't think that your initiative is too small or inconsequential. There's plenty of examples of such platforms and initiatives growing over time. You are taking an important first step towards creating a more equitable OSCE and society for men and women.

FURTHER READING

For those who want to learn more, there are plenty of resources to choose from. Here are just a few of most important and most recent:

ON GENDER EQUALITY:

[EIGE's Gender Equality Index, 2021](#)

[UNWomen's Gender Terms Glossary](#)

[The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, 2004](#)

ON VIOLENCE:

[ILO's Convention 190 \(on Violence and Harassment\), 2019](#)

[Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \("The Istanbul Convention"\)](#)

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS:

[Now and Men Podcast, 2021](#)

[X&Y Blog and Resource Database \(updated weekly\)](#)

[MenEngage Alliance Resources](#) (including guidance on men's accountability)

["Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women." Our Watch, 2019.](#)

[The OSCE's current Men for Gender Equality Group](#)

ON FATHERHOOD:

[State of the World's Fathers Report, 2021](#)