Core Group Curriculum | Facilitators' Guide

Note for Facilitators

Before the training, facilitators are expected to become familiar with the training agenda, review and understand the key objectives, and prepare all necessary materials prior to the training.

Participants should be sitting in a circle or U-shape, with the exception of the group activities. Depending on the available training facilities, facilitators are expected to adapt the activities as needed.

As facilitators, your roles are to deliver information but more importantly, to actively facilitate and help participants reflect, discuss, and draw their own conclusions.

Facilitators should never tell a participant that "they are wrong" even if they perpetuate and reinforce harmful attitudes or myths, as they may further reinforce these thoughts otherwise. Ideally, the facilitators should allow the group to disagree and dispel the attitudes and myths themselves. If this does not happen, facilitators should challenge ideas in a supportive and constructive manner. In extreme cases, facilitators may acknowledge the participant's point and then request to continue the discussion after the training.

See Appendix 1 for the detailed guidance note to facilitators.

Who are the core group?

The core group will be responsible for the implementation of the strategy and action plan from WE Women. The core group may consist of:

- Section and department heads
- Compliance officers
- HR officers
- Welfare officers
- Production officers
- Finance managers
- Management representatives on Committees (including the PC)
- Other managers who are expected to implement the gender action plan

Because the structures of each factory may differ, it is advised to develop and agree *among the project team* and *with the factory management* on a common understanding of the hierarchy and who may qualify as part of the core group.

How to conduct a training with the core group?

To engage with the core group, the facilitators should put themselves in the shoes of the core group. They have been given a mammoth task of implementing WE Women, a long-term commitment to gender equality. As a facilitator, you should:

- Help clarify their roles and responsibilities under WE Women.
- Acknowledge their concerns, especially with the day-to-day operational challenges.
- Do not only focus on problems – brainstorm on solutions whenever challenges are raised.
- Focus on impacts and not the background details of the project.
- Look into the future, not the past.
- Avoid using idioms and development/NGO jargons.
- Be able to back up your claims.
- Get to the point.

TRAINING 3 – Building an inclusive workplace culture

Total participants: up to 30 (core group from one factory)

Venue: In factory

Duration: 6 hours

Objectives: The third and final training builds upon the discussion from the previous trainings to tackle one of the most perennial challenges for gender equality in the workplace – increasing women's presence in leadership and decision-making roles. The training will begin with awareness raising activities to understanding some of the root causes of women's underrepresentation in leadership positions: (1) the valuation of women and men's roles in the factory, (2) the uneven share of household responsibilities, (3) unequal access to skills training (either before joining the factory or within the workplace), and (4) lack of a supportive family, peers, and colleagues. After a deep dive into the challenges facing women's career progression in the workplace, the participants will first assess the current systems (policies, processes, and people) and identify areas of improvement as part of the action plan.

Afterwards, the participants will develop an action plan based on some of their planning over trainings two and three as well as the strategy developed by senior management.

Before concluding, the core group will practice communicating the importance of gender equality and WE Women across the factory.

Before starting the training (for facilitators): Ensure that senior management has completed a draft strategy. If possible, the core group should have an opportunity to review the strategy. Follow-up with the core group to ensure that they have completed both their homework on their consultation and initiatives.

Before starting the training (for participants): Participants are expected to complete their homework from the previous training on developing an initiative on either women's health or women's safety in the workplace. Participants are expected to present their group work on the initiatives at the beginning of training. They are also expected to have completed their consultation homework template to accompany their initiative.

If senior management has completed a first draft of the strategy, then the core group should review it before coming to the third training.

Materials needed:

- Flipcharts
- Markers
- VIPP cards
- Stickers
- A4 paper

Agenda

Activity	Time
Welcome back and recap	35 minutes
Supporting women leaders	130 minutes
Developing and tracking our gender action plan	85 minutes
Communicate WE Women across the factory	90 minutes
Conclusion and wrap-up	20 minutes

Section 1: Opening the training

Time: 35 minutes

Training objectives:

(1) Welcome the participants to the training and recap
(2) Presentation on gender equality initiatives (homework)
(3) Quick recap on consultation homework

1. Welcome back and recap (35 minutes)

Open the training by welcoming the participants back. Explain to the participants that we will begin the last training with a presentation of the different gender equality initiatives the group started preparing at the end of training two. Ask the groups to take turns presenting their initiative, including their consultation plan. After each presentation, ask if the other groups have any suggestions or feedback.

Thank the participants for sharing. Ask the participants: *What are the key takeaways you have from designing an initiative and a consultation plan with your groups?*

Say that today is the third and last training as part of the capacity-building component of WE Women. Explain that we will begin today's training by talking about another issue of gender equality in the workplace, which is increasing women's presence in leadership position. Explain that because this is a complex issue, we will be drawing together all the learnings and reflections from the last two trainings. We will follow the same format as training two, starting with understanding the issue, reflecting on our current performance (given the factory policies, processes, and people), followed by action planning.

Afterwards, we will have an opportunity to build a draft action plan based on the action planning across the thematic issues (health, safety, women's leadership) and the strategy that has been developed by senior management. As well, we will talk about how we can track progress in implementing our action plan.

Before concluding, we will engage in some fun and creative activities on how to communicate WE Women across the factory.

Section 2: Supporting women leaders

Time: 130 minutes

Training objectives: This section will raise awareness on some of the root causes of women's underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making roles: (1) the valuation of women and men's roles in the factory, (2) the uneven share of household responsibilities, (3) unequal access to skills training (either before joining the factory or within the workplace), and (4) lack of a supportive culture. This section will also identify practical solutions to help challenge some of these root causes.

Note to facilitators: Be sure to refer back to the indicators (especially during activities 4 and 5. The indicators that should be discussed in the action planning component of this section are: 5 (pay gap)[1], 6 (maternity and paternity leave), 7 (career progression targets), 8 (initiatives to promote women), 10 (ECD services), 13 (work-family balance), 14 (gender sensitization training), 15 (skills training), and 16 (peer network and career counselling).

2. Reality Check: Where are our women leaders and why do we need women leaders? (15 minutes)

Begin by asking the participants: *how many female managers do you have in the factory? How many female supervisors? In the last year, how many female workers have been promoted? What about the number of promotions for male workers?*

Thank the participants for sharing.

Explain that this is an issue that is common across factories in Bangladesh. Despite the fact that the majority of the garment workforce are women-driven (more than two in three workers are female), only 1 in 20 supervisors are women.

Explain that businesses that have more women in leadership positions are more likely to see better business performance:

- Looking at Fortune 500 companies, **companies with the highest representation of women board directors outperform those with lower representation** on return on equity (53%), sales (42%), and invested capital (66%).
- **Gender diverse companies are 15% more likely to have higher financial returns** than the national industry medians.
- Companies that have **at least one female board member had better share performance by 26%** when compared to companies without women on board.

[1] Please note that gender pay gap is a highly technical topic. A training on gender pay gap assessment and neutral evaluation can take one full day. Because of this, we will only touch upon the issue in passing as part of the activity on valuation of skills (activity 3).

Aside from the business benefits data collected from other industries and workplaces, there are additional benefits to promoting women:

- **Benefits of promoting women operators and helpers:** Workplaces should consider promoting women operators and helpers, as they have a firsthand understanding of working as operators and helpers. As such, when they are in a supervisory role, they are more likely to understand some of the challenges faced by operators and helpers. They may also be able to provide suggestions based on their experiences as operators and helpers.
- **The prospects of promotions encourage hard work:** If there is a prospect for promotions, operators and helpers who are interested in a career in the factory will be motivated to work hard, as they see a potential reward.
- **A role model for other employee:** Having women leaders in the factory can have a cascading effect on other female employees in the workplace. They can inspire other women. Other women employees may see leadership positions as attainable if they see women in leadership positions in the factory.
- **More women leaders mean greater gender equality.** The more exposure male workers and managers have with women leaders, the more likely they are to accept women in leadership positions in the future.

Despite the benefits of having women in leadership position, this remains one of the biggest challenges for most workplaces. Although this may appear to be a daunting task, the participants in this room are HERproject alumni factories. This means that your factories have already invested time and resources in building up a group of women leaders in the factory. Ask the participants: *Are there any peer educators that stand out as leaders among their peers? If so, can you share why that is the case?*

Thank the participants for sharing – provide encouragement to the participants in that they already have taken a step towards supporting women in leadership roles in the factory.

Explain that now we will engage in two activities that may further help increase the presence of female leaders in the workplace.

3. Icebreaker on women's leadership: What do we value in an employee? (see Star Employee) (35 minutes)

Begin by dividing the participants into groups of four. Explain that the groups are responsible for filling in the template to build the "star employee". This is someone who is either the perfect supervisor or manager – two groups will work on the star supervisor and the other two will be the star manager.

Each group will think about the behaviours, skills, attitudes, and accomplishments that the star employee should have.

After the groups finish describing the star employee, the groups will be asked to present. After the presentations, ask the groups the following:

- Are these traits more common among female or male employees?
- Why do you think that some of these attributes we value are more commonly found among male employees?
- How does this affect our workplace in terms of hiring, job assessment, and promotion processes?

Explain that what we perceive to be attributes or competencies in managerial positions affect our hiring and promotion practices:

- Most of the leadership qualities we want in managers are displayed by men.
- Men may be more likely to showcase these qualities because this is what is expected of them. These are often considered "masculine traits".
- Women may not show these qualities even if they have them, because they are seen as masculine traits to have.

Ask the participants: *Are there any attributes that female employees are more likely to have? If so, why do we value this in supervisors and managers? Are these attributes the go-to qualities we look for in a leader? Why or why not? Can you identify any attributes that female employees are more likely to have, but we may not see as important immediately?*

Summarize the major discussions by saying that not only are we valuing attributes or competencies that men are more likely to have (or is more visible in men), some of the qualities that our female employees have are not valued in the same way as other qualities. As a consequence, we may overlook the contributions of our female employees, and this may affect their prospects in being promoted and even their pay (through job evaluations).

Ask the participants to reflect on the activity they did in training two on workplace culture. Explain that we reflected on what it means to have a positive working culture, where we talked about how we expect senior management to act and how we should act promote a happier work environment.

Another aspect of workplace culture relates to how we expect certain roles to be performed – this comes a culture that we may not explicitly and openly refer to, but it forms some of our expectations (think the participants, have they ever had the thought that this is just the way garment factories are run and set? That would be an example of culture, where it is hidden, it is not questioned, but it is always there, and it sets expectations of what is normal behaviour).

Ask the participants now to reflect back on the attributes that they said they valued in supervisors and managers in the beginning of this activity. *Where does this come from? How did they come to value these qualities?*

Conclude by saying that in the garment sector, workplaces generally are highly stressful, with reaching productivity targets as the primary target. Within the sector more generally, there are certain practices that are accepted and ingrained – for instance, supervisors are expected to be tough, and to motivate workers in certain ways (sometimes by raising their voice). Sometimes, these are attributes that we find more common male employees than female ones. So, in order to be more "gender neutral" in how we assess the qualities we look for in our employees, thinking about how our workplace culture shapes what we value in an employee is a first, but crucial, step.

4. Fostering women in leadership at work (60 minutes)

Going back to the question we had earlier on the number of women in leadership positions in the factory, ask the participants to reflect back on the activities from the first two trainings. Ask them: *what are some of the reasons that explain the lack of women in management and supervisory positions at work?* Joint down some of the responses on a flipchart: family responsibilities, gender norms, lack of support by employees, lack of skills, etc. [Probe in case these points are not brought up by the participants]

Thank the participants for sharing. Explain that currently, the IFC has a project on using training to help increase the presence of women in supervisory positions in factories in Bangladesh. They conducted research to understand some of the reasons that may explain the absence of women in leadership positions in factories. They found from the trainings that:

- **Female supervisors are more likely to rate themselves worse than the typical supervisor:** Women are more likely to be harsher on themselves when rating their skills. They found that male supervisors tend to rate themselves better, especially in being better at motivating workers and giving orders.
- **A female supervisor's past experience does not improve her standing or perceptions among operators:** It was found that operators, especially male operators, have perceptions of female supervisors that are not influenced by her past experience. This means that regardless of the experience she has, this does not affect their perceptions of working with a female supervisor (male operators tend to want to work with male supervisors).
- **Operators think that female supervisors are weakest in terms of machine knowledge.** However, this is not backed up by actual skill differences between female and male participants.
- **Although there may be small gaps in technical skills, the major challenge for female supervisors (or supervisors-to-be) would be their self-confidence:** They found that the biggest gaps between male and female supervisors and supervisors-to-be are not in actual differences in skills, but in terms of self-confidence.

Explain that the participants will work in groups and engage in roleplays that will help us brainstorm on some solutions to these challenges. Explain that they will be given a scenario related to one of the barriers facing women in leadership positions. The groups will be given approximately five minutes to develop characters in the roleplay to act out the problem and a solution (give the participants a bit more time if needed).

Remind the participants to think about the policies and business processes they have in place currently in their factories. *Would they be enough to help provide solutions to the scenario? Why or why not?*

Ask the participants to think about the gender initiatives they have designed and presented, *how would these initiatives help with the following scenarios? Can you expand on the existing initiatives you designed to provide support to women?*

The scenarios are as follows:

Scenario	**Facilitators to probe on the following points**
Unsupportive colleagues: Recently, a female worker was promoted to line supervisor. She has demonstrated the skills and aptitudes of a line supervisor. However, upon being promoted, she found that some of her former worker colleagues would refuse to listen to her. Even though they were cordial before, she found it extremely difficult to get their respect. She is thinking of returning to her role as a worker.	*Gender sensitization training for workers *Counselling for female line supervisor *Management skills upgrades for line supervisor *Mentoring from female manager *Peer support network from other female line supervisors
Family responsibilities: A female line-chief recently gave birth to her first child. At the same time, her mother-in-law fell ill during this time, and because her husband works far away from home (further than the factory), she has to take leave periodically to attend to her mother-in-law including taking her to the hospital. Before having her child and before this family emergency, she has been able to meet the demands of her job. Given her situation at home, she considering leaving the workforce entirely to meet her family responsibilities, as she has already spent ten working years at this factory.	*Provide good on-site ECD facilities *Provide flexible family leave *Counseling for female line-chief
Confidence needed: A female employee was promoted to a more senior manager position. She will become the second female senior manager in the factory. She is very skilled and performs well. But in meetings, she is very quiet.	*Gender sensitization for managers *Peer network or mentoring from the other female senior manager *Confidence-building/skills training

Some of the other managers are starting to doubt her capacity in a more senior role because of how she behaves and interacts with other managers. They feel that she does not have what it takes to take on this more senior role.	
Lack of decision-making capacities: A female manager teammate is a talented and dedicated staff. She is well regarded by her peers as well as workers. However, senior management has not provided her the opportunities to make decisions, and most of the decisions are left to her male colleagues, despite the fact that she has been in the factory for a longer period of time.	*Gender sensitization at the senior management level *Rethinking JD and allocation of tasks *Gender sensitization for male peers
Family tensions: The factory management team recently noticed that a female worker is particularly talented. Not only is she productive and skilled, she has shown leadership capacities when interacting with her colleagues and in communicating with her supervisor. They feel that she would make the perfect line supervisor. She was initially interested and excited about this prospect, but upon informing her husband, who is a male worker in the same factory, he said no. He said that she would make more money as a worker pulling overtime hours, and that being a woman, she does not have to take on such a difficult role with long hours. He also discouraged her because they are trying to have their first child. Because of these reasons, she declined the offer to become a supervisor as a result.	*Counseling for female worker *Outreach to husband *Maternity and paternity leave

Ask each group to present their roleplay. Ask the participants who are observing:

- What is happening in this scenario?
- What are the barriers facing this specific female employee? Why is she facing these barriers?
- Do you have the sufficient policies and processes in place in your workplace to provide a solution? Why or why not?
- Ultimately, what is the solution in the roleplay? Do you have any other suggestions on other solutions?

After the participants complete their roleplays, thank them for their performance and thank the other participants for their suggestions.

Summarize the roleplays through a plenary discussion. Ask the participants what their thoughts are on this exercise. *Are these the types of scenarios you have witnessed or heard about? Are some of these solutions feasible in your factory, why or why not (based on the policies and processes in place)? What would you need to make sure that this is feasible?*

Conclude by saying that there are many ways to provide support to female employees including providing counseling, mentoring, skills-building, more flexible working hours, and giving them opportunities to take the lead (refer to Appendix 1 for suggestions). There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there is always something management teams can do to act to create a friendly environment to foster women leaders.

5. Let's support women leaders (20 minutes)

Explain that we have identified some of the root causes of women's underrepresentation in leadership position through our two activities. From a rapid assessment of our policies and processes, we see that there are areas of improvement. In terms of people, there is room for further gender sensitization and training.

Ask the participants to spend 15 minutes to develop some action points based on the reflections from the activities. Explain that the participants can get some ideas of action points by looking at the assessment toolbox indicators. When developing the action plan, be sure to mark down the corresponding indicators from the toolbox.

Mark down the action points from the participants on the flipchart titled, "Taking Action on Women's Leadership".

Section 3: Developing and tracking our gender action plan

Time: 85 minutes

Note to facilitator: As part of the gender action plan, the participants should rely on the reflections they have had since training two on health and safety, as well as on women in leadership in training three. The task here is to make sure that the points raised by the core group reflect the vision set out by senior management in their draft strategy.

Refer to Appendix 1 for some suggestions on what they could include in the action plan.

6. Developing a gender action plan (40 minutes)

Explain that we will now develop a gender action plan based on the action planning the core group has developed on health and safety in training two, as well as on women in leadership in the previous activity. As well, the task here is to ensure that the gender action plan reflects the spirit and the goals set out by the gender strategy developed by the senior management team.

Give the participants each a copy of the strategy. Put up the flipcharts with the action points from training two and three – post these flipcharts around the different corners of the room. Ask the participants to take five minutes to review the strategy and to reflect on the action points they raised over the last two trainings.

Begin by ask the participants to compare the strategy and the action points that they have developed over the last two trainings – *is there anything missing in the strategy? If so, what are they? Are there areas in the strategy that should not be there?* If any of the three to five priorities mentioned by the core group is not highlighted in the gender strategy, make a note of it – explain that we will return to this point in the following exercise.

To start building an action plan based on the strategy and drawing together the action points they have developed over the last two trainings, ask the participants to answer the following questions:

- What are the steps we need to take to reach the goals set out in the strategy? (i.e. action points) If our actions are successful, what are the impacts we would see (what we would call success)?

Under each action point, ask the participants to think along different timelines:

- **Short-term**: Thinking of activities, initiatives, and actions that can be taken to see greater gender equality within six months
- **Medium-term:** what can be accomplished within one year
- **Long-term:** longer time visioning of things to achieve within two years

For each action, identify the following: *Who will be responsible for taking this action (key responsible person, enablers and others to support the action)? What do we need in terms of resources to take the action (i.e. time, human resources including skills, and budget)?*

After listing all the action points, ask the participants to rank them based on the urgency. Is this something we need to do immediately? Is this something that we need to address relatively soon? Is this something that is important, but we can take our time with addressing?

Conclude and say that after developing the first draft of the gender action plan, it should be presented to senior management. Explain that during this process, there may be some changes proposed by senior management, and the draft will likely go through a few more edits before it is finalized. They may also want to consult other managers, supervisors, and workers on it.

7. How do we know if we are successful or not? (40 minutes)

Say that now that we have our action plan, the next step is to think about ways to measure success. When we developed the draft action plan, we identified some measures of success. Going back to the list of successes, ask the participants: *How do we measure success?*

There are many ways to measure success. It depends on the type of initiatives we take. Remind the participants of the consultation homework as a point of reference.

Let us look at an example together. Say we want to conduct a training to raise awareness on sexual harassment:

- Who are we targeting?
- What are the expected outcomes?

In a training on harassment, we would want the participants to know how to identify cases of sexual harassment, know that it is prohibited, and know how to report if they or someone they know experience it. For workers, we want them to be familiar and comfortable with the reporting processes. For supervisors, we may want them to recognize that they have to play a more active role in prevention. Now, the question is *how* do we measure success?

To answer the how, ask the participants to reflect upon the activity and homework on consultative mechanism on training day one. Ask the participants to share some of their learnings from the activity and homework: *How can we use a consultative mechanism to track the success of our action plan? How can we improve upon our existing consultative mechanisms (think back on the homework)? How can we better utilize existing mechanisms like our PC Committee?*

Working as a plenary, ask the participants to answer the three questions for at least five of the points in the action plan. Probe the participants if needed, especially encouraging them to consult all levels of employees.

Ask the participants to bring out their consultative mechanism homework – are there any changes to the consultation plan so that it includes tracking and monitoring the successful implementation of the action plan? Give the participants five minutes to reflect on their homework and make the necessary changes.

After this exercise, ask the participants: *how will you use this data to help track progress in the action plan? How will this be used for future planning and strategy development?*

Conclude this activity by saying that the only way to tell if we are successful in making changes is by tracking the impact we make. We may find that we are successful, but other times, we may find that we are making no impact. Even if we do not have the intended impact, we can still use the learnings to think of ways to improve upon our approach. Sometimes, we may learn most from when we do not succeed, and we may have to try different approaches before finding what works best in our workplace.

Finally, remind the participants that the results should be shared not only with senior management, but also employees in the factory. Being transparent with the impact they are making through WE Women can help gain support and let employees celebrate the positive changes together.

Section 4: Communicating WE Women across the factory

Time: 90 minutes

Note to facilitator: The last activity for the participants is focused on how to communicate WE Women to all levels of the factory. The participants need to be mindful that there are different audiences across the factory, and each group would have a different reason as to why they may be supportive of gender equality. The purpose of these activities is for the participants to learn the importance of tailoring the message and the means of delivering the message for effectiveness.

8. Communicating WE Women across the factory (90 minutes)

Now that we have our gender strategy and gender action plan, your role as managers is to communicate across all levels of the factory. Your immediate role is to present the gender action plan to senior management to collect their immediate feedback. Again, you may wish to speak to managers, supervisors, and workers to collect their feedback (we will talk, in greater detail, later this training).

And with managers, supervisors, and workers, your role is to get their buy-in for WE Women and support the implementation of the action plan and in promoting a gender equal work environment. As this is a factory-wide effort, you will need their support to ensure that WE Women leads to lasting change.

Part I: Communicating to senior management (30 minutes)

As seen in the gender action planning exercise, say to the participants that they may require some additional resources and support from senior management, for instance, in time, staffing (human resource), or budget. They may also need senior management to provide support by recruiting the help of other managers and supervisors, or simply making a statement to the entire factory to show support for your initiatives.

Explain that to help them prepare the presentation, we will now work together to come up with a short presentation on the action plan, especially highlighting the following:

- Overall objective: what is the impact they seek and how does that support the strategy developed?
- Timing: The timeline of the activities
- Roles and responsibilities: What is expected of the core group, other managers, supervisors, workers, committee members, etc.
- Support needed from senior management: in terms of time, staffing, budget, or leadership support
- Anything missing from the strategy: If there are any points that the core group feel that has been left out of the strategy, they can also include this as part of their presentation to senior management.

Work with the core group to come up with a short presentation on the action plan to highlight the key points to share with senior management. Identify the participants who will represent the core group in delivering the presentation. Ask these participants to come forward and practice presenting the key points on their action plan.

Conclude by reminding participants that throughout the implementation process of the action plan, the core group's role is to report back to senior management on progress, successes, and challenges. They should repeat this type of exercise, where they work together as a core group to come up with an aligned presentation to senior management.

Part II: Communicating to managers, supervisors, and workers (40 minutes)

Explain to participants that one of their key tasks as the core group is to communicate WE Women to all employees. They will need to garner the support of managers, supervisors, as well as workers to successfully implement the action plan and reach the goals of the gender strategy. Everyone has a role to play in promoting gender equality.

Dividing the participants into three groups. Each group will be responsible for coming up a communications material (it can be an audio skit for the PA system, a live skit at a company picnic, a poster, be creative!). Each group will be assigned to one of the following audiences: managers, supervisors, and workers. The participants have to communicate the following:

- What is WE Women?
- Why should they care about gender equality?
- What can they do to help promote gender equality?

The trick is to tailor the messages to the interests of the different groups. Give the groups twenty minutes to design their communication materials. If a group is designing a poster, they will also have to think of a way to explain the poster to the targeted audience.

Ask each group to come up and rally support for WE Women for their audience using their communications material. After each group's presentation of the materials, ask the participants if there are any other points that they would bring up.

Thank the participants for their work. Conclude by saying that the most important part of communication is by thinking of the situation of those they are speaking to. Think about what the audience can relate to, as this helps them identify messages that may resonate most for them.

Part III: Engaging men to promote gender equality (20 minutes)

One of the challenges that can arise in any program or initiative on gender equality is gaining the support of men. Gender equality is often seen as a "woman's issue" or only

about women's rights. Even though gender equality brings about positive changes for both women and men, sometimes, men may see this as a disadvantage to them. Without their buy-in, it will be difficult to provide a supportive environment for women.

Draw two columns in a flipchart in the front of the room. Ask the participants to brainstorm on some of the arguments or concerns that male colleagues may raise about the program. Then, in the other column, brainstorm on some of the counter-arguments they could make to show that gender equality and WE Women can also benefit men.

Below are some examples of arguments and counter-arguments:

Arguments against gender equality	Counter-arguments
Promoting women disadvantages men	Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment means giving equal opportunities to both women and men. If we look at Bangladeshi society, women are less likely to have access to education, they are also more likely to be asked to take on family and care responsibilities. They are also more likely to be asked by family to work to provide for the family but are also asked to give up their career and prospects of progression if it means she may have less time for her family. We place uneven expectations on women and men, and promoting women means we are giving them an equal opportunity to grow and contribute.
I don't see how it can benefit men	In the short-run, promoting gender equality can create a more positive working environment overall. Men are in the working environment too, so this can benefit them. In the long-run, promoting gender equality both at home and at work means that women and men are equal. This opens more doors to both women and men. Women can take on different roles in the factory (so can men). Similarly, men can take on more responsibilities at home (for instance, what we are pushing for in terms of gender equality would mean that men should also have the right to take time off to attend to family matters).
We are only expanding opportunities for women	By challenging gender norms, we are opening opportunities for both women and men. Think about the role of HR and Welfare Officer, this is the task that is usually done by women. If we are gender equal, this means that these positions can also be opened up to men. Think also about some of the more demanding roles with longer working hours like

	production manager, women can start taking on these roles as well.
Women have not proven themselves as leaders	Women have not been given the opportunity in the first place! There are two ways to look at it. One, from evidence, we see that companies that have more women in leadership positions tend to outperform companies that do not. Second, women and men, because of the way they have been brought up, have different skills and ideas that they can bring to the table.

After brainstorming on some of the arguments and counter-arguments, ask the participants to think of some male champions they would like to enlist to show their support for WE Women (we will call them *enablers*, as their support can lead to cascading support across the factory). Also, ask them to think of some people in the factory that can act as *barriers* if we do not have their support. List these people in a flipchart:

Person/Stakeholder	Are they an enabler or barrier? Why?	Action (Rally support, mitigate)

After thinking of all the people that can be enablers or barriers, ask the participants: *what are some concrete actions you can take early on in WE Women to rally the support of male colleagues, be they enablers or barriers?*

Conclude by saying that communication is one of the most important parts of any program, especially WE Women. Because WE Women is not a project but a long-term commitment to gender equality and promoting an inclusive working environment, every employee in the factory needs to be engaged and make individual and collective changes for lasting change. Refer to the communication skills that were discussed in training-1 and initiate a discussion on how they can benefit using those soft skills.

6. Reflection and conclusion (20 minutes)

Thank the participants for their contributions today. Explain that this will be the last capacity-building session for the core group under WE Women.

Going around the room, ask the participants to name one key learning, and what they would like to change in their day-to-day work as a result of today's training.

Before concluding, explain to the participants that gender equality and creating an inclusive environment is not something that can be accomplished overnight. Even having developed the action plan, consultative mechanism, and having a strategy in place, the changes may not happen immediately. The participants should not feel disappointed if they do not see change within months, or even a year (change is slow to happen!) Explain that the most important part is to take the first step, and the fact that both the core group and senior management are engaged on gender and have developed a strategy and action plan are big first steps – this already is progress in the right direction.

Explain that the factory is not alone. The factory is among other factories to take this journey. The brand will set up ways to further develop a peer network among like-minded and dedicated factories.

As a next step, set up a meeting with senior management to present the draft action plan. After the presentation and upon request, NRT will provide mentoring session on the following:

- implementation of the action plan
- Discuss challenges, limitations and possible solutions/alternatives
- Discuss about workers feedback mechanisms
- Strategies to communicate policies and processes

Appendix 1: What works to support women in leadership positions

Based on research and testimony, here are some suggestions on what works in helping women gain access and succeed as leaders at work:

- Developing key sills including communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence: This is especially important in helping women speak up in meetings and be heard. Training programs can help women gain the skills and confidence to take on leadership roles at work.
- Mentorship and support systems: Women can benefit from having mentors and support systems with other professional women. For instance, a senior female manager can provide guidance to younger and more junior employees on what it takes to become a woman in leadership.
- Being confident and be heard: Often women feel intimated knowing that they are not 'liked' or being tried to 'take off' from the game. So instead of fearing rejection it is important to be clear on one's purpose and speak confidently. Respect comes with one's voice and perspective because it can help shape policy, the workforce and perspective.
- Building alliances with decision-makers: Women may be put down, pushed aside, or told they do not belong at the decision-making table. It's not easy to be bullied, but there is a way to get past it. It is suggested that women build healthy relationships with advocates, create a strong personal brand, establish guidelines before each project, position themselves as experts in their field, and communicate with confidence
- Standing in their success: Some women leaders shy away from speaking on their accomplishments for fear of being boastful or conceited. Women tend to think that it's needed to make themselves appear as non-intimidating or aggressive. It is important for women to have confidence and feel comfortable in sharing their successes.
- Exposing women to different company functions and operations: A look at companies globally show that women can reach leadership positions but are often limited to similar functions such as HR or other support functions. To combat that, it is important for businesses to build a pipeline of talented women across all company operations and functions.
- Supporting return to work: One of the toughest transitions is that from maternity leave or family leave back to work. Workplaces should provide support to women to help them return to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.
- Supporting women with family responsibilities: Given social norms, women take up the lion's share of household and care responsibilities. While the workplace is limited in their ability to change social norms, the workplace can provide flexible working arrangements and other provisions to help women balance work and family responsibilities.
- Top management leadership: Top management support is needed to show all levels of the workplace that gender equality is a priority for the workplace. Top

management can show their support by developing a gender strategy and by tracking progress on gender equality.

- Raising awareness: To create a gender equal environment, there needs to be buy-in among workers, supervisors, and managers. This can be accomplished through raising awareness through trainings, campaigns, and other activities.
- Including men in the discussion: Oftentimes, gender equality is seen as a woman's only issue. If this is not shared with both women and men, men in the workplace may feel excluded and may have misunderstandings. As such, the gender equality-related initiatives at work need to be clearly communicated and explained. This can prevent any potential backlash.
- Creating feedback loops: Ultimately, women and men are the benefactors to the initiatives we take to promote gender equality. Collecting their feedback and understanding the impact of the initiatives can help ensure that the steps we take have the intended effect. They would also be able to tell us what they need most.

Helpful resources for facilitators:

- Forbes Coaches Council. 2018. *15 Biggest Challenges Women Leaders Face and How to Overcome Them*. Forbes. [Link]
- ILO. 2015. *Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum*. [Link]
- McKinsey & Company. 2017. *Women in the Workplace 2017*. [Link]
- Williams, J. 2010. *Why Women's Leadership Initiatives Fail*. Forbes. [Link]