

C2: GENDER JOURNEYS IN POLITICS

AIM

By the end of the session, participants will have:

- ▶ Identified key moments during women's journey into and in the party (or political work, such as being an election observer) when men's sexist attitudes and behaviors and gender-based discrimination has harmed them and limited their participation and progress.
- ▶ Specified actions that men can take, together with women, to intervene at these key moments to help improve women's participation and progress.

STEP-BY-STEP

1. Explain the learning aims of the activity. Remind participants about the research and evidence that shows the extent of the sexism, gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence that women face in political life, from the moment they

decide they want to get involved. Where possible, refer to research and evidence from the country/region in which the workshop is being done.

2. Emphasize how important it is for men to look closely at women's experiences of sexism, gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence in political life in order to better understand both the extent of the problem, and the roles they can play in challenging this sexism, discrimination and violence in order to improve women's participation and progress.
3. Explain the concept of the "gender journey" - the "journey" refers to a timeline of women's experiences of being in the party (or organization), from the moment they decided they wanted to join the party until now. We will use the term "gender journey" to think and talk about the ways in which women's experiences of being in the party, from the moment they decided to join until now, has been affected by their gender identity as women, and the sexism and gender-based discrimination and violence they have faced as a result.
4. Draw a road or path on flip-chart paper or on the floor, explaining that this will show women's "gender journey". Brainstorm with the group the different moments on this journey when women could experience sexism, discrimination and/or violence that limits their political participation and progress. Examples of these key moments include:
 - ▶ Decision to join party or political organization
 - ▶ Selection as candidate
 - ▶ Promotion to more senior position
 - ▶ Participation in decision-making process (formal and informal)
 - ▶ Participation in leadership structures (e.g. leadership councils and committees)

Time: 75 mins

Materials:

- ▶ Flip-chart paper and pens
- ▶ Post-it Notes/Small cards

Training Tips:

- ✓ Where possible, meet with women from the party/organization beforehand to gather first-hand testimonies from them about their gender journeys in the party/ organization.
- ✓ Decide how best to present this information during the session - ensure that you do so in ways that do not expose women to any further discrimination or violence. See the Notes section for more guidance on this.

5. Refer to the available research evidence, from your country and elsewhere, to highlight the nature and extent of the sexism, discrimination and/or violence that women face at each of these moments on their gender journey in political life. If you have gathered personal testimonies from women in the party/organization beforehand, share some examples of their testimonies of sexism, discrimination and/or violence for each of these key moments.
6. Break participants into smaller groups of 4-6 people each. Ask each small group to choose one of these key moments to work on; ensure that each of the key moments has at least one small group working on it. Ask each small group to spend the next 15 minutes discussing their key moment, noting their answers to the following questions on small cards or Post-it Notes:
 - ▶ *What kinds of sexism, discrimination and/or violence might a woman face at this moment?*
 - ▶ *Which men (and other women) are involved in perpetrating this sexism, discrimination and/or violence?*
 - ▶ *Which aspects of party/organizational culture allow this sexism, discrimination and/or violence to continue and deter women and men from taking action to stop it?*
 - ▶ *What could other men do at this moment to challenge this sexism, discrimination and/or violence and support women?*
7. When the small groups have completed their discussions, bring everyone back together. Invite each small group to take turns in presenting back to the rest of the participants on their answers to the three questions, by placing their small cards or Post-it Notes on the 'gender journey' (that is drawn on flip-chart paper or on the floor.) When all the small groups have reported back, lead a general discussion of:
 - ▶ The different kinds of sexism, discrimination and/or violence that woman face at different stages of their gender journey in political life. Refer to any personal testimonies from women that you have gathered beforehand to ensure that this discussion reflects the realities of women's experiences. Make the distinction between **direct/personal** sexism and discrimination and **indirect/organizational** sexism and discrimination (see the Notes.) Ask participants to share stories from their own lives about this.
 - ▶ The different kinds of men involved in perpetrating this sexism, discrimination and/or violence. This may include family and community members, colleagues in the party/ organization, as well as senior figures and leaders in the party/organization.
 - ▶ The different aspects of party/organizational culture which allow this sexism, discrimination and/or violence to continue and which deter women and men from taking action to stop it. Make the distinction between **formal aspects** (e.g. a lack of policy or a failure to implement policy) and **informal aspects** (e.g. a culture of impunity) and stress that both need to be addressed. Explain that subsequent sessions (D3 and D4) will look more closely at how to do this.
 - ▶ The different kinds of actions that men can take to challenge this sexism, discrimination and/or violence and support women. Emphasize the importance of men working together with women to do this, and that more will be said about this in a later session (see C4.) Ask participants to share stories from their own lives of examples of men taking action with women to challenge sexism, discrimination and/or violence.
8. End the session by reminding the group of the importance of listening to women's experiences of their gender journeys in politics, and that a later session (see D1) will look more closely at listening as the first step on taking action to stop the sexism, discrimination and/or violence.