

Facilitating non-mixed groups with men



Objectives

The aim of this fact sheet is to create the right conditions for men to reflect on their masculinity and build egalitarian masculinity.

The goal? Involving men in a women's empowerment project enables women to receive support from those around them (husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, neighbours, etc.), to avoid being blocked by their male peers, and encourages their emancipation process.

Practical use

As a facilitator or trainer, it is important to work on your position to facilitate the process of deconstructing traditional masculinity and promote equitable behaviour between men and women. Discover some practical advice on how to move towards a role as a facilitator and prepare to use the tools presented in this collection.



½ training day

A few good practices

Here are a few good practices for working on egalitarian masculinity in spaces with men.

NON-MIXITY

To begin with, it is essential **to work in single-sex mode**, i.e. to bring together an all-male group. It is preferable that the facilitator is also a man. If women are present, men may not express themselves naturally and limit their participation. It is also preferable for the facilitator to come from the community, as it is always easier to talk to your peers.

OFFER SOMETHING OTHER THAN TRAINING

To encourage the men to take part, you can **suggest an activity that they enjoy or are used to doing**: playing sport together, organising an inter-neighbourhood football tournament, meeting in a café to talk about politics, etc. This activity can bring them together and is a pretext for starting to talk about the reality that these men experience, but also about the women around them.

MEETING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

It is preferable for the meeting place not to be identified as a place dedicated to women and their emancipation. **A place that is accessible to men** on a daily basis, is one less obstacle to starting the process of collective reflection with men.

BUILDING TRUST

The key to the facilitator's role is to establish a climate of trust:

- Between participants themselves
- Between the facilitator and the participants

To help participants get to know each other and start talking to each other, **you can offer fun activities**.

For example: an informal discussion to create a friendly atmosphere at the start of the session, ice-breakers or games to help people get to know each other, work in small groups to encourage everyone to speak, etc...

The facilitator must also create a bond of trust with the participants. At the start of the session, the facilitator can remind participants of **the principle of confidentiality** and invite them to ensure that the discussions are not repeated outside the group. In this way, the men will be able to talk freely about the problems they encounter on a daily basis, as men, around masculinity.

CREATING A CLOSE, HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE

- The role of the facilitator is **to accompany the discussion and reflection**, not to pass on their own knowledge. The closer the facilitator gets to the participants, the more they will be able to contribute horizontally to the discussions. These relationships and the process of sharing is the starting point that new practices will be built on.
- You can use **accessible language, closer to the way the participants express themselves**. This will help the men to speak more confidently, as they would with friends in the street.
- It's also a good idea to let men know that you're still **available to talk to them, outside this space**. This could be by phone, WhatsApp or any other method appropriate to the context.
- Another facet of the facilitator's role is **to give participants an active role and promote participation**. They are the protagonists of the process. This can be achieved by setting up small action plans drawn up by the participants themselves, or by setting up a management committee for this non-mixed space.
- Avoiding a relationship of domination and **favouring mutual respect** will enable you to share on an equal footing. To achieve this, it is important to listen to men and give them the floor, rather than taking it from them. This is often referred to as listening circles or talking circles.
- And last but not least: **lecturing participants on machismo does not work!** A «top-down training» approach does not help to engage and interest men. The so-called «vertical» methodology does not allow men to take ownership of the subject and question themselves. Knowledge is not imposed on others, it is built collectively.

A popular education method: see, analyse, act

To work with men to build the foundations of an egalitarian masculinity that corresponds to the reality and daily life of the group, CENCA and APEF propose several steps:

1. SEE

Questioning based on people's experiences. Share the participants' life stories and accept everyone's fears. Starting by talking about personal situations at work and at home, and the challenges they face as men, is an effective gateway to tackling the issues of gender inequality.

2. ANALYSE

Identify the gender norms that are imposed on participants in their culture. Then confront them with different realities from those they have learned. Analysing the system that generates the conditions for traditional masculinity, but also the oppression to which people are subjected, will then enable the group to deconstruct hegemonic masculinity. This can be done by exploring men's representations of masculinity (see Tool worksheet 10: Men's talking circles).

3. ACT

Building new masculinity together. Together with the participants, find solutions that can be implemented on a daily basis to promote equal behaviour between women and men.



Important points : It is important for the facilitator to have a good knowledge of gender and masculinity issues, so as not to reinforce harmful attitudes towards women or even diminish women's power to act.

A first step might be for the facilitator to analyse his or her own attitudes, roles and behaviour as a man in society, in his family, at work, etc.



A brief theoretical reminder

Don't hesitate to refer to the theory sheet on masculinity (see the «I want to understand» section).

Key words

HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP
NON-MIXITY
FACILITATION

