Training Course on
Forging Pathways to Gender Equality in Statistical Leadership

Module 6:
Action planning for "growing" women leaders in NSO/NSS organizations

6-1.   Module Objectives

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- Identify common barriers to women's leadership roles in organizational settings

- Recognize strategies to overcome the obstacles to women's leadership

- Develop proficiency in utilizing diverse assessment tools to gather relevant data on women's representation in leadership roles

- Interpret assessment results to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement regarding gender equality in leadership

- Develop an action plan outlining concrete steps and milestones for implementing identified strategies and interventions and monitoring progress toward achieving gender equality goals in leadership

6-2.   Agenda for Module 6

SUGGESTED TIME (85 mins)	TOPIC/ACTIVITY
15 mins	1a- Trigger presentation on *Barriers to gender equality in women's leadership in statistical organizations/units*
20 mins	1b- Small-Group discussion and reporting back (Plenary): *Reflections by participants on barriers to women's leadership in statistical organizations/units*
15 mins	2- Evaluating where the organization is with respect to women in leadership positions: *Illustrating how-to's of assessment tools*
15 mins	3a- Trigger presentation on *Matching barriers to strategies*
20 mins	3b- Small-Group discussion: and reporting back (Plenary): *Reflections by participants on challenges in designing strategies for growing women leaders in statistical organizations*

6-3.   Barriers to Gender Equality in Women's Leadership in Statistical Organizations/Units

6-3-1. Contents

Various factors can contribute to the underrepresentation of women in statistical leadership roles. These include:

1. **Historical Gender Disparities**: Many statistics-related fields, such as mathematics and computer science, have traditionally been male-dominated. This historical trend can create barriers for women entering these fields and advancing to leadership positions.

2. **Societal Expectations and Stereotypes**: Societal norms and stereotypes can influence women's career choices. Stereotypes suggesting that women are less capable in quantitative fields can discourage them from pursuing careers in statistics or related areas.

3. **Workplace Bias and Discrimination**: Women may face bias and discrimination in hiring, promotion, and recognition processes, hindering their progression into leadership roles. This bias can be both explicit and implicit.

4. **Work-Life Balance Challenges**: Family responsibilities and career advancement can be more challenging for women due to societal expectations and traditional gender roles. This can impact their ability to devote time and energy to pursuing leadership positions.

5. **Lack of Representation and Mentorship**: The lack of female role models and mentors in statistical leadership positions can make it more difficult for women to envision themselves in similar roles and navigate the path to leadership.

6. **Unconscious Bias**: Even well-intentioned individuals may hold unconscious biases that affect their perceptions and decisions regarding women's leadership potential.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach involving changes in organizational culture, policies promoting gender equality, targeted mentorship and support programs for women, and efforts to challenge and mitigate unconscious biases.

6-3-2.   Training activity: *Reflections by participants on barriers to women's leadership in statistical organizations/units*

(10 mins) **Break-out groups** of about six participants with a mix of gender and Type 1 and Type 2 participants will reflect on the following:

1. What specific examples have you observed or experienced barriers to women's advancement into leadership roles within your organization?

2. Give examples of how your organizational policies, practices, and cultural norms potentially create obstacles or barriers for women aspiring to leadership roles.

3. Identify any implicit biases or stereotypes that may influence perceptions of women's leadership capabilities or suitability for specific positions within your organization.

(5 mins) **Gallery Viewing**

The results of discussions will be documented on Flipcharts, and participants will go around to read them. The convenor can point out the reflections that are most common across groups.

6-4.   Assessment Tools

The following assessment tools can help institutions identify barriers to women's leadership and develop targeted action plans to promote the growth of women leaders within the organization. In carrying out these assessments, it is essential to involve women at all levels of the organization in the assessment process and in developing and implementing action plans.

1. **Gender Gap Analysis**: Conduct a comprehensive gender gap analysis to identify disparities in leadership roles and decision-making positions within the organization. This analysis can help pinpoint areas where women are underrepresented and inform the development of targeted action plans. The data can also be used to track progress in closing gaps in leadership.

2. **SWOT Analysis**:
   - **S**trengths: Identify organizational strengths that support women's leadership, such as a diverse workforce, inclusive policies, or supportive leadership.
   - Weaknesses: Identify internal weaknesses or challenges that hinder women's leadership advancement, such as gender bias in recruitment or promotion processes, lack of mentorship opportunities, or limited representation of women in senior leadership.
   - **O**pportunities: Identify external opportunities for promoting women's leadership, such as changing societal attitudes towards gender equality, emerging talent pipelines of qualified women, or industry trends prioritizing gender equality.
   - **T**hreats: Identify external threats or challenges that may impede progress towards gender equality goals, such as legal or regulatory constraints, cultural resistance to change, or competitive pressures.

3. **PESTLE** Analysis:
   - **P**olitical Factors: Consider how political factors, such as government policies or regulations related to gender equality, may impact opportunities for women's leadership within the organization.
   - **E**conomic Factors: Assess how economic conditions, such as wage disparities or access to funding for leadership development programs, may affect women's ability to advance into leadership roles.
   - **S**ocial Factors: Examine societal norms, cultural attitudes, and social expectations regarding gender roles and leadership and how these factors influence women's career trajectories.
   - **T**echnological Factors: Explore how technological advancements and digital transformation initiatives within the organization may create opportunities or challenges for women's leadership, such as remote work arrangements or digital skills gaps.
   - **L**egal Factors: Consider legal obligations related to gender discrimination, harassment, and equal employment opportunities, and ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.
   - **E**nvironmental Factors: Evaluate the organization's environmental sustainability goals and initiatives and consider how they intersect with gender equality efforts.

4. **Benchmarking and Comparative Analysis**: Compare the representation of women in leadership roles within the organization with other similar organizations or international benchmarks. Benchmarking can provide insights into how the organization compares with industry standards and identify areas for improvement.

5. **Gender Mainstreaming Assessment**: Assess the integration of gender considerations in policies, practices, and programs. Determine how gender is mainstreamed throughout the systems' verticals, from data collection to decision-making processes.

6. **Employee Surveys**: Conduct surveys to gather feedback from employees, including women, about their experiences, perceptions of gender equality, and barriers to career progression. Use the survey results to inform gender-sensitive leadership development initiatives.

7. **Stakeholder Consultations**: Engage with key stakeholders, including women employees, to gather their perspectives on the barriers and opportunities for women leaders within the NSO or NSS. Stakeholder input can inform action planning.

8. **Legal and Policy Review**: Evaluate existing policies, practices, and legal frameworks related to gender equality and leadership within the organization.

9. **360-Degree Feedback**: Implementing a 360-degree feedback process that solicits input from peers, supervisors, and subordinates can provide a holistic view of leadership capabilities and identify potential biases in performance evaluations. Analyzing feedback through a gender lens can uncover patterns of prejudice and discrimination.

10. **Gender Budgeting Analysis**: Conduct gender budgeting to assess how financial resources support gender equality, women's empowerment, and leadership development initiatives.

Box 6-1 provides a list of questions that can be used to design surveys and consultations.

Box 6-1. Some questions that can be asked in surveys and consultations:

1. In your opinion, does our organization value gender equality and women's empowerment?

2. Do you feel comfortable expressing your opinions and ideas in team meetings or discussions?

3. Have you witnessed or experienced any discrimination or harassment based on gender in the past year?

4. Do you believe that women have equal opportunities for advancement and career growth within our organization?

5. Have you observed gender disparities in allocating work assignments or project opportunities?

6. How satisfied are you with gender diversity among leadership positions within our organization?

7. Do you feel your contributions are equally recognized and rewarded regardless of gender?

8. Are there any specific organizational policies or practices that you believe may unintentionally disadvantage women?

9. How effective do you think our organization is at addressing issues related to gender diversity and inclusion?

10. Have you received training or education on unconscious bias, diversity, or inclusive leadership?

11. Do you believe that gender equality and women's empowerment are adequately prioritized in decision-making processes within our organization?

Selecting assessment tools that align with the organization's goals, culture, and context is essential. Combining multiple assessment methods can provide a more comprehensive understanding of barriers to women's leadership and inform the development of targeted strategies and actions for improvement.

6-5.   Matching Barriers to Strategies/Actions

6-5-1.   Contents

6-5-1-1.   Strategies/Actions for "growing' women leaders

Some strategies and actions for growing women leaders are listed below.

1. **Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs**: to support women in their leadership development

2. **Flexible Work Policies**: to accommodate the needs of employees balancing work and caregiving responsibilities

3. **Leadership Development Initiatives**: targeted leadership development programs and workshops for aspiring women leaders

4. **Promotion and Recognition**: programs to acknowledge and reward women's leadership contributions

5. **Metrics and Monitoring**: to track progress on women's leadership initiatives and regularly review data

6. **Review and Revise Policies**: Ensure policies support gender diversity and inclusion.

7. **Create Leadership Programs**: Develop tailored leadership development initiatives for women.

8. **Ensure Fair Recruitment**: Eliminate bias in recruitment and promotion processes.

9. **Regular Progress Reviews**: Conduct gender diversity audits to track progress.

10. **Transparent Reporting**: Publish gender diversity reports regularly.

11. **Celebrate Successes**: Recognize and highlight women leaders' achievements.

12. **Seek External Partnerships**: Collaborate with organizations promoting gender equality.

13. **Ensure Equal Access to Training**: Provide equitable access to training and capacity-building.

14. **Engage Men as Allies**: Encourage men to support and mentor women leaders.

6-5-1-2.   Matching Strategies/Actions to Address Barriers/Gaps

Table 6-1 below illustrates matching action points to address barriers and gaps in women's leadership.

Table 6-1. Matching barriers to action points

Barriers/Gaps	Description	Action Points
Limited Representation of Women in Leadership Positions	Gender disparity at the leadership level is a common issue in many organizations, including NSO/NSS. This gap hinders diversity and inclusivity, resulting in missed perspectives and ideas.	• Gender Gap Analysis: Conduct a comprehensive gender gap analysis to identify existing disparities in leadership roles and decision-making positions within the NSO or NSS. • Develop and monitor diversity and inclusion metrics related to women's representation in leadership positions using surveys and data analysis to identify underrepresentation. Regularly review these metrics to track progress and adjust action plans accordingly. • Use 360-degree feedback assessments to evaluate leadership skills and competencies and offer targeted leadership development programs for women. • Transparent Reporting: Publish gender gap reports regularly.
Lack of Mentoring and Role Models for Women	Without proper mentoring and role models, women may lack guidance and inspiration to reach leadership positions.	• Implement mentorship programs and utilize self-assessment tools to identify potential mentors and mentees.
Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Decision-Making	Gender bias and stereotypes can affect the perception of women's abilities and suitability for leadership roles. This can lead to discrimination and unequal opportunities.	• Create awareness through implicit bias assessments and training programs to challenge and change biased perceptions. • Analyze decision-making processes using decision analysis tools to identify gender biases and promote inclusivity.
Unequal Access to Leadership Development Opportunities	Unequal access to leadership development opportunities, such as training and mentorship, can hinder the growth of women leaders.	• Implement a skills gap analysis using competency assessments to identify training needs for women and provide equal access to leadership development programs. • Use 360-degree assessments and performance appraisals to evaluate and promote women based on their skills and contributions.

Barriers/Gaps	Description	Action Points
Work-Life Balance Challenges	Balancing leadership roles with family and personal life can be a significant challenge for women. This can lead to burnout and hinder career progression.	• Conduct work-life balance assessments to identify challenges faced by women and create policies that support a healthy work-life balance. • Promote Work-Life Balance: Implement family-friendly policies and flexible work arrangements.
Limited Networking and Visibility Opportunities	Building professional networks and gaining visibility are essential for career growth. Women may face barriers to access such opportunities.	• Utilize social network analysis to identify networking gaps and encourage women to build professional connections within the organization. • Develop assessment tools to measure and track the visibility of women in key projects and leadership roles.
Insufficient Leadership Development Programs	Inadequate leadership development programs tailored for women's needs can hinder their professional growth.	• Use leadership competency assessments to identify skills gaps and tailor training programs to address specific areas for women. • Compare the representation of women in leadership roles within the NSO or NSS with other similar organizations or international benchmarks. Benchmarking can provide insights into how the organization compares with industry standards and identify areas for improvement. • Ensure Equal Access to Training: Provide equitable access to training and capacity-building.
Resistance to Cultural Change	Organizational culture may resist changes necessary for promoting women leaders.	• Use cultural assessments and employee engagement surveys to understand organizational culture and address resistance to change. • Communicate and Create Awareness: Promote the importance of gender diversity through awareness campaigns.

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Lack of Mentoring and Role Models for Women	Without proper mentoring and role models, women may lack guidance and inspiration to reach leadership positions.	• Implement mentorship programs and utilize self-assessment tools to identify potential mentors and mentees. • Encourage the use of psychometric assessments to identify leadership potential and match women with suitable role models.
Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Decision-Making	Gender bias and stereotypes can affect the perception of women's abilities and suitability for leadership roles. This can lead to discrimination and unequal opportunities.	• Create awareness through implicit bias assessments and training programs to challenge and change biased perceptions. • Analyze decision-making processes using decision analysis tools to identify gender biases and promote inclusivity.
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A Sample Template

This action plan template provides a structured framework for implementing strategies to address barriers to women's leadership. It outlines specific tasks, responsibilities, timelines, and deliverables to guide the implementation process effectively.

Goal: Increase the representation of women in leadership positions within [Organization Name].

Objective: Address barriers to women's advancement in leadership roles by implementing targeted strategies and initiatives.

For each strategy/action selected, include the following information

1- Description of action to be taken

2- Specific task/tasks

3- Responsible Party

4- Timeline

5- Deliverable

6- Targets and indicators

Illustrations

1. Conduct a Barrier Assessment

Task: Use assessment tools to identify barriers to women's leadership within the organization.

Responsible Party: Growing Women Leaders Committee.

Timeline: Month 1-2.

Deliverable: Report highlighting key findings and recommendations.

Targets and Indicators

o Target: Complete assessment within two months.

o Indicator: Percentage of assessment tasks completed on schedule

2. Raise Awareness and Training

Task: Develop and deliver training sessions on unconscious bias, gender stereotypes, and inclusive leadership

Responsible Party: Human Resources Department

Timeline: Month 3-4

Deliverable: Training materials and attendance records

Targets and Indicators:

o Target: Conduct training sessions for at least 80% of employees

o Indicator: Attendance rate for training sessions

Supporting Actions

(a) Evaluation

Regularly assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies through surveys, focus groups, and performance reviews. Adjust action plan based on feedback and evolving organizational needs.

(b) Communication

Ensure transparent communication about women's leadership initiatives across all levels of the organization through newsletters, intranet updates, town hall meetings and similar mechanisms.

Sustainability

Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in organizational culture and practices ensures long-term commitment and sustainability of efforts 'to grow' women leaders. This involves promoting GEWE in every aspect of the organization's operations, policies, and decision-making processes. Thus, 'growing' women leaders become a fundamental part of the organization's operations rather than just a standalone initiative or program.

Examples of what is needed to achieve sustainability include:

1. Leadership Commitment to "growing" women leaders and GEWE

2. Gender-responsive Policies and Practices (recruitment, hiring, promotion, compensation, and employee benefits)

3. Increasing representation of women's voices in leadership positions, decision-making bodies, and employee resource groups

4. Continuous Learning and Development for all on topics such as gender equality, unconscious bias, and inclusive leadership skills

6-5-1-4. Challenges to designing strategies—what are these?

Designing strategies to address barriers to women's leadership can accompany several challenges and difficulties. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Resistance to Change**: Implementing new strategies to promote women's leadership may face resistance from individuals or groups within the organization who are comfortable with the status quo or who perceive the changes as threatening their positions or power dynamics.

2. **Cultural Norms and Bias**: Deep-rooted cultural norms and biases within the organization or society may perpetuate stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes toward women in leadership roles, making it challenging to shift perceptions and behaviors.

3. **Lack of Awareness or Understanding**: Some stakeholders may need more awareness or understanding of the systemic barriers women face in leadership positions, which can hinder their ability to recognize the need for intervention or to advocate for change effectively.

4. **Resource Constraints**: Limited financial and human resources may constrain the organization's ability to implement comprehensive strategies to address barriers to women's leadership. This can include budgetary limitations for training programs, mentorship initiatives, or organizational restructuring efforts.

5. **Complexity of Intersectionality**: Women's experiences and barriers to leadership are often shaped by intersecting factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and disability. Designing strategies that adequately address the intersectional nature of these barriers requires careful consideration and may pose additional challenges.

6. **Retention and Advancement**: Even if initial barriers to entry into leadership roles are addressed, ensuring the retention and advancement of women within the organization's leadership pipeline can be challenging. Issues such as work-life balance, access to development opportunities, and unconscious bias in promotion processes may continue to impede progress.

7. **Sustainability and Accountability**: Developing sustainable strategies embedded into the organizational culture and practices and establishing accountability and progress-tracking mechanisms are crucial for long-term success. However, maintaining momentum and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives over time can be challenging amidst competing priorities and leadership turnover.

6-5-2.   Training activity: *Reflections by participants on challenges in designing strategies for growing women leaders in statistical organizations*

(10 mins) **Break-out groups** of about six participants with a mix of gender and Type 1 and Type 2 participants will reflect on the following:

1. What obstacles or challenges do you anticipate when designing strategies to promote women's leadership within our organization?

2. How might differing perspectives and priorities among stakeholders influence the design and implementation of gender-inclusive leadership initiatives?

3. In what ways do organizational culture and existing power structures present challenges or opportunities for implementing effective strategies to address barriers to women's leadership?

4. Identify potential unintended consequences or risks associated with specific strategies to promote gender equality in leadership positions.

(5 mins) **Gallery Viewing**

The results of discussions will be documented on Flipcharts, and participants will go around to read them. The convenor can point out the reflections that are most common across groups.

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