

GENDER EQUALITY: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Human rights education is a powerful tool to increase empowerment of women, girls and other stakeholders to take action for advancing gender equality. During the 2019 International Human Rights Training Program, participants identified challenges related to gender equality they face as human rights educators and strategies to promote gender equality through human rights education.



Challenges ???

Strategies

Limited access to resources, opportunities and services



Education

Limited access to education overall for girls/women, particularly to secondary or higher education, and in rural areas

Even in communities where girls outnumber boys in schools, the challenge is school drop-out of girls.



Economic empowerment

Denial of opportunities and access to resources for women (e.g., employment, land, career, etc.)

Limited economic capacity of women, particularly in rural areas

Economic, social and cultural rights violations (employment and education)



Access to services

Limited access to justice for women

Difficult accessibility to services for persons with disabilities, the elderly and women with special needs

Advocate with policy makers and parents to ensure that girls complete secondary and university education.

Advocate for special measures to reduce insecurity in schools.

Engage with Ministries of Education to include gender equality in the curriculum

Raise awareness about the importance of education and the fact that access to education for all (women/girls as well as men/boys) is about rights

Raise awareness of teachers on inclusive education so that they avoid stereotypical behavior and prevent girls from dropping out

Engage with media to raise awareness about access to education

Develop specific **second-chance education programs** for girls and young women in need

Invest in women's economic empowerment by **promoting income-generating activities** and **providing credit** to women cooperatives (e.g., village savings and credit associations)

Raise awareness about the value of cultural and sports activities for women as group therapy after trauma and to help change gender stereotypes

Involve appropriate stakeholders in consultation on women empowerment (e.g. government entities, NGOs, target group, field experts.)

Advocate for gender equality in the workplace (e.g., quotas for women)

Advocate for and contribute to the provision of **legal assistance** for women to access justice.

Consult with persons with disabilities, the elderly and women with special needs to ensure their specific needs are taken into account in the provision of services



Social norms and harmful practices



Culture, tradition and religion

Persistence of traditional harmful practices for women and girls, e.g. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child/forced marriage, force-feeding, levirate and sororate.

Resistance to change of cultural norms and traditions

Discriminatory practices and customs regarding the roles of women and men in society, e.g., negative masculinity, misogyny, patriarchal gender stereotypes.

Social pressure on women not to use family planning methods

Increase **advocacy** actions with religious and community leaders and engage them to change gender social norms

Advocate for intergenerational and safe dialogue spaces

Integrate a gender-based approach to the **awareness raising** activities

Advocate for legislation that criminalizes consent of parents to harmful practices

Raise community **awareness** about harmful practices, including the social and health related implications in schools, mosques, camps, etc.

Raise awareness of men and boys as well as women and girls about human rights, roles and responsibilities

Raise awareness about human rights conventions and laws with different stakeholders

Identify role models in the community to talk about gender equality, e.g., elders, men, religious people.

Identify allies to support the efforts (lawyers, international organizations, etc.)

Encourage human rights defenders to **integrate human rights education and participatory approaches** in their work related to gender equality

Engage with media to address cultural norms, challenging the negative and promoting the positive

Work with young people to end gender inequalities and harmful practices

Develop partnerships/alliances and support NGOs that support women facing gender-based violence

Advocate for the provision of psychological support for men and women in situations of violence or in violent relationships.

Report health care providers practicing FGM to the relevant administrative or judicial authorities

Limited participation of women in decision making

Low level of women's representation in decision-making bodies

Lack of empowerment and participation of women and girls

Advocate for the establishment of quotas for women's participation in government and other decision-making bodies

Advocate for the funding of civil society organizations working to support women in their efforts to become political candidates

Conduct **awareness raising campaigns** on the importance of women participation in decision making.

Strengthen women's empowerment through human rights education

4 Gender based violence (GBV)

The existence of many different forms of gender-based violence (sexual, physical, verbal, emotional, economic, domestic, honor crime) represents a significant barrier to gender equality

Gender-based violence is both a cause and a consequence of most of the challenges to gender equality listed above, i.e.,

- limited access to resources, opportunities and services
- social norms and harmful practices
- limited participation of women in decision making

Advocate to remove the laws that limits the sanction of GBV

Raise public awareness to change mindsets on negative patriarchy and masculinity

Raise awareness about women's rights through human rights education

Organize **campaigns** to combat violence against women

Build capacity of police (and other service providers), opinion shapers and men's groups to address gender-based violence using a human rights-based approach

Build networks with allies, including professional groups such as lawyers, as they can be good human rights supporters.

Build strong movements against GBV (e.g. #metoo #mydressmychoice)

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Inadequate or non-existing policies and legislation (transversal)

Poor implementation and monitoring of gender responsive policies and laws

Discriminatory customary laws and lack of gender based violence (GBV) - related laws in some countries

Weak harmonization of laws banishing child and forced marriages

Advocate for the ratification of international instruments (e.g., CEDAW) and harmonization of domestic laws relating to gender equality

Advocate for the adoption or amendment of laws to condemn GBV and other harmful practices

Advocate for enforcing laws regarding gender equality and application of the related sanctions

Advocate for the development of public policies on gender equity and equality, and for measures promoting girls' education.

Advocate for health programs that are favorable to women, especially women of reproductive age.

Advocate for the creation of a Ministry for Women's Affairs and Rights (where it doesn't exist)

Have an **advocacy strategy** with the right actors and at the right time (e.g. when the budget is being adopted, with local authorities ensure that funds are allocated)

Raise awareness about legal instruments that promote the elimination of violence against women.

Raise awareness of stakeholders regarding analysis of policies and investigation results

Build the capacity of duty bearers including policy makers, policy implementers and political leaders on gender equality through human rights education

Mobilize communities to hold government accountable