



Tool 9.3 Eliminating gender-based discrimination and promoting women's economic rights

Overview

This tool discusses the role that gender-based discrimination plays in exacerbating women's vulnerability to trafficking and advocates the promotion of their economic rights.

Women are often discriminated against in terms of wages, access to labour markets and marketable vocational training. This increases their vulnerability to exploitation by traffickers. In addition, gender stereotypes perpetuate their over-representation in lower paid, less secure, traditionally female jobs and determine the distribution of responsibilities for paid and unpaid work.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) obliges States parties to eliminate “any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education ... in particular by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods”. Article 4 of that Convention specifies that “temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination”.

Beijing Platform for Action

In the Beijing Platform for Action (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II), adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, Governments committed themselves to taking a number of measures in order to promote women's economic rights and eliminate discrimination in the workplace, including:

- Promoting and supporting women's self-employment and micro-enterprise
- Ensuring equal access for women to effective job training not limited to traditional employment areas
- Promoting equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women through legislation and education policies

Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

The Brussels Declaration was made at the European Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, held in September 2002. In section 7 of the Declaration, entitled “Root causes”, under the heading “Prevention of trafficking in human beings”, it is stated that:

- An essential aspect of a human rights based approach to trafficking in human beings is to put emphasis on gender perspectives. A European counter-trafficking strategy should include the combating of gender-based violence and patriarchal structures that foster a favourable environment for trafficking.
- Legislation and policies on equal opportunities must protect and strengthen the legal and social position of women and children and specifically address all forms of gender discrimination.
- Support programmes should be established aiming at the full participation and empowerment of women in society, in particular in educational facilities and economic life, including support to female entrepreneurship.
- Support programmes should aim at the strengthening of efforts to tackle poverty and further marginalization, particularly among the most vulnerable groups of the population, including women and the girl child, in all countries of origin, transit and destination through measures designed to improve governance, material support, social protection and employment opportunities and sustainable economic development.

National gender-equality machinery

Many States have set up national gender-equality machinery. According to general recommendation No. 6 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, such national gender-equality machinery should:

- Be established at a high-level of Government
- Have adequate resources
- Have a strong political commitment
- Have the authority/ability to influence policy
- Have a well-defined mandate to advise on the impact on women of all Government policies, to monitor the situation of women and to formulate new policies and carry out strategies and measures to eliminate gender discrimination

The realization of women's human rights requires the establishment of such high-level coordinating bodies, responsible for the supervision of gender-sensitive and effective implementation of national laws and the development and coordination of policies aimed at integrating a gender perspective into national laws, policies and programmes.

Promising practice

"Girls be Ambitious" (Cambodia)

Japan Relief for Cambodia and American Assistance for Cambodia

The objective of the Girls be Ambitious programme of Japan Relief for Cambodia and American Assistance for Cambodia, two non-governmental organizations, is to prevent the trafficking of Cambodian women and girls by raising awareness among those most vulnerable, providing incentives to keep them in school and providing vocational training that will improve their employment prospects, generate income and socially and politically empower them. The programme runs off the Rural School Project, a joint effort of the two organizations, which manages more than 300 schools in villages in Cambodia. The Girls be

Ambitious programme provides financial assistance to families whose daughters attend school. Each month, home room teachers e-mail the programme an excel attendance sheet for sponsored girls; immediate payment of US\$ 10 is provided where girls have achieved perfect attendance. Where girls do not have perfect attendance, the payment for that month is withheld pending the programme's investigations into the reasons for this lack of attendance.

In addition to the regular the school curriculum, participants in the Girls be Ambitious programme are provided with training in English, computer skills, handicrafts, agriculture and other vocational skills as well as awareness-raising programmes. Private persons or entities are called upon to participate in the project by sponsoring a participating girl for a school year for US\$ 120.



More information about the Girls be Ambitious programme is available at:

www.camnet.com.kh/Girls-Ambitious

More information about the Rural School Project is available at:

www.cambodiaschools.com

Programmes to create jobs and training programmes for women (Bulgaria)

Bulgaria implemented a three-year UNDP-funded project to promote the economic empowerment of women and to create jobs. Setting up a business support centre contributed to creating 160 new jobs, 131 of which were taken by women. The centre provided free vocational training and retraining programmes on topics that included tourism development, English language and computer skills. Of the 374 persons trained, 263 were women. A loan guarantee scheme was also established to facilitate women- or family-owned businesses accessing commercial credit from banks.

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, section 106 (a) (United States)

Section 106 (a) of this Act requires the Government of the United States to establish and carry out international initiatives to enhance economic opportunity for potential victims of trafficking as a method to preventing and deterring trafficking. Such initiatives may include:

- Microcredit lending programmes, skills training and job counselling
- Programmes to promote women's participation in economic decision-making
- Programmes to keep children, especially girls, in elementary and secondary school and to educate former victims of trafficking
- Development of educational curricula regarding the dangers of trafficking
- Grants to non-governmental organizations to accelerate and advance the political, economic, social and educational roles and capacities of women in their countries