

Border Management Branch



GENDER NETWORK
NEWSLETTER

The Importance of Networking Among Women

Networking is the practice of building connections and relationships with others, and it holds immense importance as a vital tool for professional growth and advancement. However, women also often face challenges in networking across hierarchical and gender differences. Studies demonstrate that networking can be more difficult for women than for men as traditional networking opportunities have long been created for and by men which respond to a masculine work culture. As traditional networks mostly created by men can unintentionally be exclusionary, it is important to create networks for women.

Networking is paramount in professional settings, but its significance becomes even more pronounced in male-dominated areas such as law enforcement agencies and similar organizations. Within these contexts, networking among women plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality and empowerment.

The Border Management Branch (BMB) is proud to announce its new Gender Network!

With the establishment of BMB in 2022, UNODC's border management and work on crimes that affect the environment were brought together. This collective approach to countering transnational organized crime also presents an opportunity to enhance gender work and empower women throughout the world. Through our quarterly newsletters, we wish to give the reader an insight into why this matters.

Happy reading!



By establishing communities and networks, women can exchange ideas, collaborate on problem-solving, and create opportunities for one another. Recognizing the significance of networking in advancing the cause of gender equality, the UNODC highlights the BMB Gender Network as an exemplar of how networking can drive positive change in such sectors.

Women's networks create a safe and inclusive space where members can openly discuss their shared experiences and challenges in the workplace, realizing that they are not alone in facing such obstacles. Through this collective understanding, women can find solace, receive guidance, and foster a supportive environment within these networks. By breaking down feelings of isolation and normalizing experiences, women's networks empower their members to tackle workplace challenges with increased confidence.

Furthermore, women's networks offer tailored benefits that cater to the specific needs of women. These networks provide valuable opportunities for sharing strategies, offering mentorship and sponsorship, and accessing resources that may otherwise be difficult to acquire. By connecting with women in similar positions, women from diverse backgrounds and those who have access to valuable resources, women can gain the necessary support and knowledge to fuel their professional growth and advancement.



Crimes that
Affect the
Environment

First Regional Meeting of CCP Women's Network



In March 2023, 30 women from customs and law enforcement authorities from 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean came together for the First Regional Meeting of the CCP Women's Network. This event was an opportunity to build interregional networks between Port Control Units (PCUs) and between the women officers who work there. With a key focus on gender mainstreaming and the importance of women's involvement in customs/law enforcement, this event also provided a forum for the participants to discuss the work of their PCUs and compare best practices and areas for improvement. The meeting was a great success and all participants indicated that they would like to attend another regional meeting of the CCP WN in the future and would also want to be involved in future UNODC gender initiatives in the region. Participants have stayed in contact through a CCP Women's Network WhatsApp group – the friendships built at the meeting will have ongoing positive impacts at both personal and professional levels.

Q: Now that you have attended the regional meeting, will you stay in contact with the other women you have met?

"Certainly, I have met sisters here... the thing of it is, it's a network, it's a community and that... offers something for me... When you're going through a tough day, I can identify persons in this group I can call, and they'll walk you through the process because they've been there before."



Andrea Maureen Murray
(Jamaica – Port Authority Jamaica)



Adriana Marcela Reyes Sibaja
(Costa Rica – Policía de Control Fiscal)

"Yes, of course! I think it's really enriching to have had the chance to learn from different cultures, other women and other forms of work and techniques they use. It opens the door to many new opportunities in unity."

"[In this meeting] I could share experiences, histories, knowledge. It is very important because you can grow stronger as a person but also as a professional. I will keep in contact with [the women here] and exchange information [with them] to help international logistics."



Valeria Cristina de Rezende Coelho
(Brazil – Port of Santos)

Empowering Women in West Africa's Fight Against Transnational Organized Crime

In West Africa, the Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption (GPCD) provides capacity-building support and mentoring to a high-performing specialist unit which centers women in the fight against transnational organised crime. The Cellule de lutte contre le crime organisé (CLCO), part of the Beninese Police Républicaine, is supported under the CRIMJUST project 'Strengthening criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking and related transnational organized crime in coastal francophone countries of West Africa' and is funded by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).



CLCO Intelligence Analyst defends her hypothesis in a 'red teaming' exercise in Criminal Intelligence Analysis training

CLCO has achieved significant disruptions of transnational organised crime, including the seizure of 2.5 tonnes of cocaine in a proactive, intelligence-led operation in September 2021. In July 2022, CRIMJUST supported the expansion of CLCO through the recruitment of 25 recent graduates of the Police Républicaine Training School, following a rigorous vetting and selection process. 36% of the new team members are women under the age of 24. By contrast, less than 5% of wider Police Républicaine personnel are women. Since recruitment, the nine women have completed intensive training to perform specialist roles - including surveillance, intelligence analysis and the management of covert human intelligence sources. Through their deployment in these specialist roles, the new recruits are redefining career paths for women in law enforcement in Benin. CRIMJUST is planning further actions to support the professional development of these women who are set to become future changemakers within their agency.