USAID's Engendering Industries Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries:
6.5 Leverage existing women's and diversity networks to support development of good practices

About Your Gender Equality Plan

The following Gender Equality Plan was generated using Engendering Industries' online tool: The Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries. The best practices listed in this plan were identified and included to fill gender equality gaps at your organization. The information included in your plan provides an overview of how to implement best practices, challenges to implementation, and markers of success. More information and resources for advancing gender equality at your company are available at EngenderingIndustries.org.

Description

Use well-established networks to generate ideas for improvements, give women and men a voice in the change management process, and ask members to act as ambassadors for planned interventions (e.g., reaching out to employees in remote locations and onboarding them)

In order to make these networks effective it is important to:

- Define purpose, roles, and targets for the network
- Agree on frequency and rules for agenda setting, invitation of external input providers and means of collaboration between the network and the organization

Challenges to Implementation

In many companies, women and diversity networks have been established in phases, to create a safe space to discuss gender equality and D&I issues and needed improvements, but over time the aims and direction of these networks get lost, and the networks fail to create impact within the organization

Women and men may be reluctant to participate because they do not want to be perceived as having the need for a support group, or sometimes do not want to be seen as being aligned with other women and individuals who share their identity

Women may not have time for networking and events outside of business hours due to family responsibilities

There may be weak/lack of support from management and the CEO

What Success Looks Like

Women and diversity network is well established and has a purpose

Members of the network are perceived as strong partners for change management interventions and act as ambassadors for new measures

The network is used by employees as an informal entry point for ideas, complaints, and feedback on gender equality and D&I interventions

Resources and Tools

Article: 6 Trends Driving Cutting-Edge Corporate Women's Networks (Thrive Global)

Article: Do Women-Only Networking Groups Harm Female Entrepreneurship? (Forbes)

Article: How to Start a Women's Networking Group at Work (Equality Works)