

NEGOTIATING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

A manual to promote equal opportunities
in the world of work

Manual for delegates



LO Norge

With our sincere gratitude to LO Norway for their generous and genuine support, which made this manual on gender-responsive collective bargaining possible.

Their commitment strengthens our shared work toward fairer and more inclusive collective agreements.



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Introduction

Trade unions have historically played a fundamental role in giving workers a collective voice, shaping labour policies and building solidarity amongst working people.

During the global health and socio-economic crisis of 2020, unions demonstrated this power. Workers in health care, commerce, cleaning and security sectors with high public exposure and risk faced low wages, insufficient protective equipment, chronic understaffing and overwhelming workloads. Unions stepped forward to defend their rights. Through collective bargaining, they mitigated the effects of the crisis on employment, working conditions and income, while strengthening the resilience of companies and labour markets.¹

However, negotiations often remained narrow in scope. One critical gap: limited attention to gender equality.

Nearly thirty years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,² progress toward gender equality has stalled or reversed:

- **300 YEARS** to end child marriage;
- **286 YEARS** to close legal protection gaps and eliminate discriminatory laws;
- **140 YEARS** before women achieve equal representation in workplace leadership;
- **47 YEARS** to reach gender parity in national parliaments.³

Simultaneously, active resistance to gender equality is expanding globally. Political, cultural, and religious movements promote restrictive gender roles, frame equality as "ideological colonization" and attack women's human rights defenders and trade unionists.⁴

Gender equality is sliding backwards.

This moment demands urgent action: bringing gender issues to the bargaining table, developing gender-responsive policies and transforming the structures that reproduce inequality and discrimination.

Through freedom of association, collective bargaining, social dialogue and collective action, trade unions provide women workers with the first and last line of defense.

We know collective bargaining works. We know gender equality strengthens societies and economies.

So, what are we waiting for?

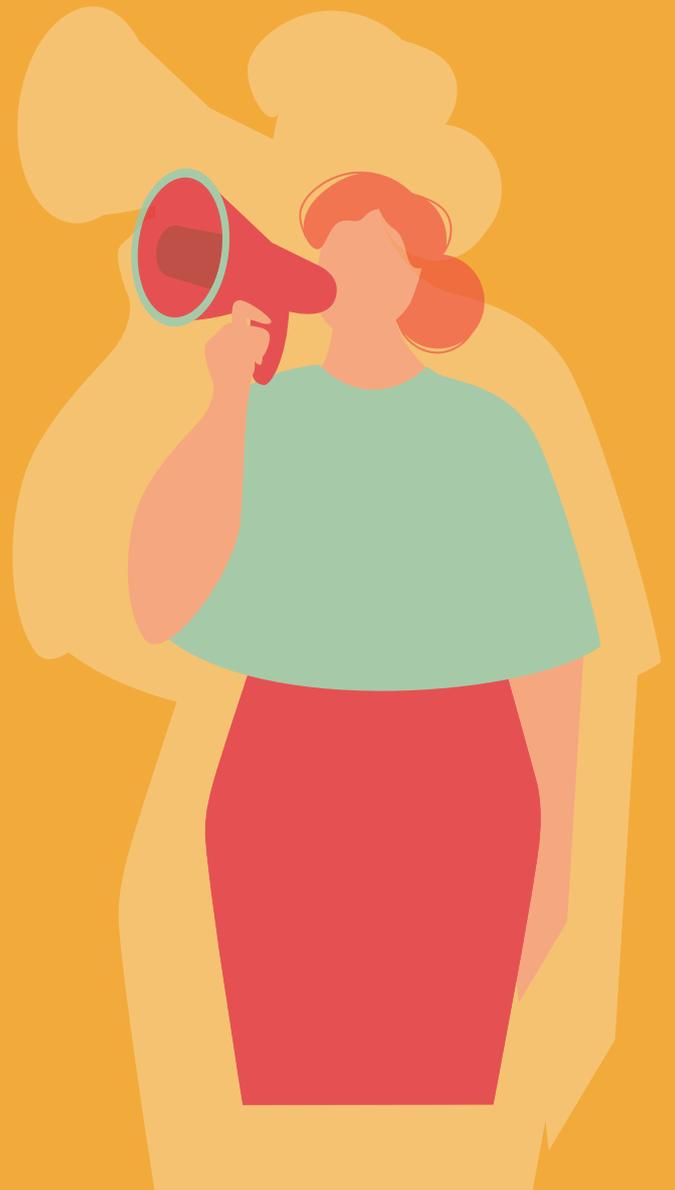
¹ International Labour Organization. (2022). *ILO Social Dialogue Report 2022: Collective Bargaining for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient Recovery*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/social-dialogue-report-2022-collective-bargaining-inclusive>

² United Nations. (1995). *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/02/beijing-declaration-and-platform-for-action>

³ UN Gender Snapshot 2025. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/196/19/pdf/g2419619.pdf>

⁴ UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls. (2024). *Escalating Backlash Against Gender Equality and the Urgency of Feminist Responses*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc5651-escalating-backlash-against-gender-equality-and-urgency>

1 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: A TRANSFORMATIVE TOOL



Collective bargaining is a democratic mechanism through which workers and employers jointly define, adapt, and improve working conditions. Built on negotiation, participation and shared responsibility, it advances rights, strengthens social justice, and transforms the world of work.

1.1 THE FOUNDATION: THREE INTERCONNECTED RIGHTS

Collective bargaining is built on three fundamental rights established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its core conventions:

- 
- **FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION** (CONVENTION NO. 87)
 - **RIGHT TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING** (CONVENTION NO. 98)
 - **EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION** (CONVENTION NO. 111)

These rights are deeply interconnected. Together, they ensure bargaining processes reflect workers' realities and that women, young workers and marginalized groups are heard, protected and represented.

Most workers globally lack full protection of these rights⁵ and violations, such as retaliation for organizing and restrictions on bargaining, remain common. **Between 2015 and 2023, global compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights declined 7 per cent. From 2020 to 2023, compliance deteriorated in approximately 40 per cent of ILO member States.**⁶

In labour markets marked by precariousness, inequality, rapid technological change and recurring crises, collective bargaining stands as one of the strongest tools for defending workers' rights - especially those of women and vulnerable workers.

⁵ International Labour Organization. (2019). ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. <https://www.ilo.org/about-ilo/mission-and-impact-ilo/ilo-centenary-declaration-future-work-2019>

⁶ International Labour Organization. C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (No. 87) and C098 - Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98).

C087: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312232

C098: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312243

1.2 A TOOL FOR EQUALITY

A genuinely inclusive negotiation process considers the rights and needs of all workers, without discrimination.

Unions represent all workers, including those most vulnerable, and ensure their perspectives shape labour policies. Through collective action, unions monitor employer compliance.

Integrating a gender perspective means recognizing the specific challenges created by social norms that hinder equal opportunities, including but not limited to access to employment, equal pay, promotion, health and safety, work-life balance, leave, and training.

Although this manual centers on negotiating from a gender perspective, collective agreements benefit all workers. Gender is only one dimension of identity; it intersects with age, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, disability, sexual orientation, religion, mental health and neurodiversity. These factors combine to produce different forms of vulnerability, exclusion or privilege in the world of work.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work⁷ places inclusivity at its center: employment, protection of rights, non-discrimination, equal opportunity, fair distribution of progress, and social justice must guide policies addressing inequality.

With this understanding, collective bargaining becomes a transformative tool for equality and social justice.

1.3 BENEFITS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

When functioning effectively, collective bargaining and social dialogue generate broad benefits beyond wages and hours:



⁷ International Labour Organization. (2022). *Op.Cit.*

- improve wages and working conditions;
- reduce wage inequality;
- provide predictability and stability;
- lower conflict and foster cooperation;
- expand protections for vulnerable groups;
- strengthen participation, transparency and consensus;
- enhance compliance through shared monitoring;
- allow adjustments during economic shocks without destroying jobs;
- support structural transitions responsibly;
- promote training, retention and productivity;
- offer non-confrontational dispute resolution channels;

Through these functions, collective bargaining serves as modern workplace governance - flexible, representative, oriented toward the common good.⁸

⁸ International Labour Organization. (2024). *ILO Social Dialogue Report 2024: Social Dialogue at the Highest Level for Economic Development and Social Progress*.
<https://www.ilo.org/publications/social-dialogue-report-2024>
<https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/social-dialogue-report-2022-collective-bargaining-inclusive>

1.4 BASIC ELEMENTS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The ILO⁹ defines collective bargaining as:

"...all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations, on the one hand, and one or more workers' organizations, on the other, for—

- (A) determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or
- (B) regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or
- (C) regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers' organization or workers' organizations."

Collective bargaining is a key form of social dialogue. It encompasses workplace consultation and cooperation through voluntary, formal and informal exchange to reach mutually agreed outcomes.

While negotiations often involve differing interests, the process builds trust, promotes stability, and fosters labour peace. It creates a democratic mechanism through which employers and workers jointly shape working conditions.

Successful negotiations result in a collective agreement.

1.4.1 KEY ELEMENTS

A) RESPECT FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Collective bargaining requires the protection of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the need for collective bargaining.

B) PARTICIPANTS

One or more employers or their organizations; one or more trade unions.

C) GOOD FAITH

Both parties must negotiate honestly and respectfully.

D) REPRESENTATIVE AND AUTONOMOUS PARTICIPANTS

Representatives ensure all interests are reflected. Autonomy prevents external interference.



⁹ International Labour Organization. Topics: Collective Bargaining and Labour Relations. <https://www.ilo.org/topics/collective-bargaining-labour-relations>

E) TRANSPARENT INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Parties share economic, organizational, or productivity data supporting proposals to prevent information imbalances.

F) INCLUSION AS A CONDITION FOR EQUALITY

Bargaining covers all workers within its scope, including temporary, domestic, migrant and atypical workers. Extension mechanisms establish equitable conditions across sectors.

G) CLEAR LEGAL FRAMEWORK

A coherent framework ensures security, permits adaptation, and defines the agreement duration and post-expiration validity.

1.5 THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions play a decisive role in shaping labour regulations and leading collective bargaining. To exercise this role effectively, freedom of association and collective bargaining rights must be guaranteed for all workers.

**GLOBALLY, TRADE UNIONS REPRESENT
MORE THAN 251 MILLION WORKERS.¹⁰**



However, unions must grow stronger: by organizing more workers, expanding into low-density sectors, pressuring governments to protect freedom of association, building alliances with social movements, fully integrating a gender perspective, addressing digitalization and AI challenges, and promoting the formalization of employment.

Only through democratic, transparent unions attentive to the most vulnerable can collective bargaining serve as a strategic tool for transformation and the advancement of equitable societies.

¹⁰ International Labour Organization. *How Are Trade Unions Adapting to Changes in the World of Work.*
<https://www.ilo.org/topics/collective-bargaining-labour-relations>

2 GENDER PERSPECTIVE: FOUNDATION FOR INCLUSIVE BARGAINING



For collective bargaining to function as a genuinely inclusive tool, processes must address all workers' needs without discrimination.

Gender operates as a structural determinant across social and economic relations.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING GENDER

"Gender" refers to socially constructed roles, BEHAVIOURS, activities, and attributes societies assign to men and women, including gender diversity and identity.¹¹ These roles are constructed through social processes, not biological determinism.

Social constructions establish which activities are "masculine" or "feminine" while systematically assigning higher value to masculine-coded roles.

A gender perspective provides an analytical framework and a transformative methodology for addressing structural inequalities.

What gender perspective is — and is not

A gender perspective involves:

1. Critiquing the dominant male-centered worldview shaping societies.
2. Reinterpreting and transforming social relationships and institutional structures - including unions.

This approach analyses reality and transforms it through practices rooted in equality and non-discrimination.

A gender perspective does NOT mean:

- adding "women's issues" to existing structures;
- treating gender as a separate "variable" rather than a transversal principle;
- limiting gender work to women only;
- adapting women to systems designed for men;
- implementing gender activities solely for donor requirements;
- reinforcing traditional gender roles through superficial initiatives;

Applying a gender perspective requires sustained organizational commitment: unlearning stereotypes, transforming power structures and building equitable cultures.

¹¹ UN Women Gender Equality Glossary. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/genderterm>

2.2 THE URGENCY: GENDER EQUALITY UNDER ATTACK

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of sustainable development. Research shows dismantling gender-based barriers boosts productivity, reduces poverty, strengthens social cohesion, and improves well-being for current and future generations.

Yet the UN's Gender Snapshot 2025¹² shows that progress on equality is slowing or reversing globally as a result of an organized backlash that seeks to halt equality gains through disinformation campaigns, anti-feminist rhetoric, regressive proposals, and attacks on women defenders and trade unionists.

This backlash intensifies when equality movements achieve visibility or secure legal, cultural, or policy changes.

2.2.1 CURRENT REALITY: KEY DATA

THE EVIDENCE REVEALS DEEP STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES:

- women hold **27.2 per cent** of parliamentary seats globally;¹³
- women occupy **30 per cent** of managerial positions;¹⁴
- **61 countries** legally restrict women from performing the same jobs as men;¹⁵
- **46.4 per cent** of working-age women are employed, compared to **69.5 per cent** of men;¹⁶
- women earn **20–30 per cent** less than men on average;¹⁷
- women perform **2.5 times** more unpaid care work than men;¹⁸
- women comprise less than **30 per cent** of STEM and digital sector workforces;¹⁹
- one in eight women experienced intimate partner violence **in 2025**;²⁰
- **1.8 billion women** lack legal protection against online harassment;²¹
- **38 per cent** of women have experienced digital violence; **85 per cent** have witnessed it;²²

These disparities reflect structural inequalities embedded in economic and social systems, not individual circumstances.

¹² UN Gender Snapshot 2025. Op.Cit

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ World Bank. (2024). *Women, Business and the Law 2024. (61 countries legally restrict women from performing the same jobs as men)* <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

¹⁶ UN Gender Snapshot 2025. Op.Cit

¹⁷ International Labour Organization. *ILOSTAT Database. (Women earn 20-30% less than men on average)* <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

¹⁸ UN Gender Snapshot 2025. Op.Cit

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

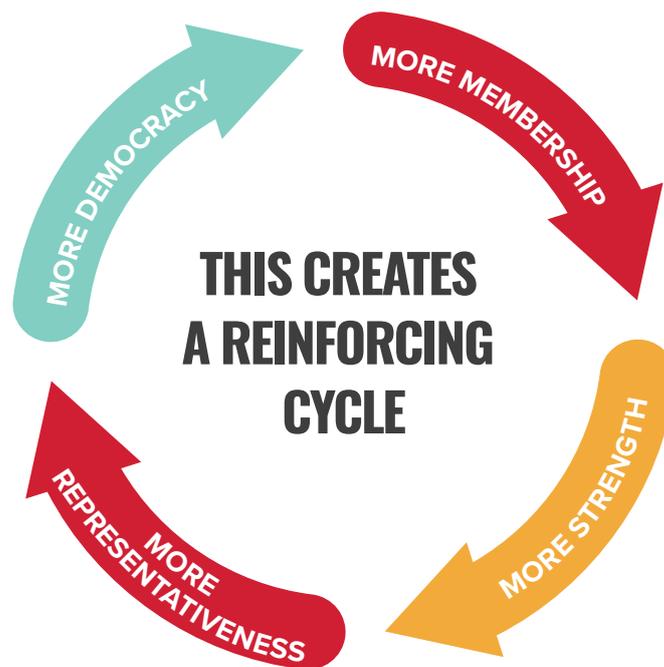
²² Ibid

2.3 THE STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY: HOW GENDER EQUALITY STRENGTHENS UNIONS

Promoting gender equality serves dual purposes: advancing imperative justice and strengthening the organization.

Women who feel represented in collective bargaining demonstrate higher rates of union membership, mobilization, leadership participation and collective action engagement.

Diverse bargaining teams produce more comprehensive and inclusive agreements. Gender-equal unions demonstrate stronger democratic processes, greater transparency, broader representativeness, enhanced capacity to build alliances, and increased organizational legitimacy.



Gender equality serves as both a fundamental right and a strategic mechanism for strengthening the global labour movement.

2.4 PROOF OF CONCEPT: GLOBAL AGREEMENTS DEMONSTRATE WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Collective agreements at global, regional, and company levels prove that comprehensive gender equality provisions are achievable across diverse sectors and cultural contexts.

Global Framework Agreements:

UNI Global Union has negotiated Global Framework Agreements with multinational corporations, establishing binding gender equality commitments:

- **INDITEX (2024):** Commitment to Sustainable Development Goal number five on gender equality, employment diversity across genders/ages/origins, disability inclusion, and combating sexual harassment across all markets.²³
- **BNP PARIBAS (2024):** Equal pay frameworks, minimum 14 weeks paid maternity leave across 57 countries, domestic violence support, including dedicated intranet resources, and comprehensive HR/psychological/medical assistance.²⁴
- **CIRSA (2024):** Commitment to equality between men and women, diversity across genders/ages/backgrounds/sexual orientation/disability, training opportunities for all workers, and implementation of ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment.²⁵

These agreements demonstrate that gender provisions can be negotiated across sectors (finance, retail, gaming) and cultural contexts, establishing global minimums that local unions build upon.

²³ UNI Global Union and Inditex. (2024). Global Agreement.
<https://www.uni-europa.org/news/uni-global-union-inditex-global-agreement-2024/>

²⁴ <https://uniglobalunion.org/workers-rights/global-agreements/>

²⁵ Ibid

Beyond Global Frameworks:

Unions achieve gender equality through diverse strategies. The Matildas' collective bargaining agreement in Australia pioneered revenue-sharing models, ensuring equal pay in sports. Banking sector unions in the Philippines and Argentina have operationalized national equality frameworks through comprehensive workplace provisions. Across Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America,

**UNIONS NEGOTIATE SYSTEMATIC
PAY MONITORING, WORK-LIFE BALANCE
PROTECTIONS, AND VIOLENCE-PREVENTION
MEASURES TAILORED TO LOCAL CONTEXTS.**



SECTION 4 provides detailed guidance on negotiating similar provisions in your workplace.

3 GENDER AND POWER: UNDERSTANDING THE BARGAINING CHALLENGE



Negotiation is a relational process in which the parties have different levels of access to economic, social and institutional resources. These differences influence bargaining power. Gender is one of the factors that shapes how these resources are distributed in the world of work.

3.1 HOW GENDER SHAPES POWER DYNAMICS

Gender roles establish differentiated expectations for men, women, and gender-diverse people. Historically, "productive" roles were assigned to men, while care work and undervalued "invisible" tasks were assigned to women.

While gender norms are socially constructed, their material consequences produce unequal access to:

- **income;**
- **employment stability;**
- **professional development;**
- **social recognition;**
- **decision-making power;**

Merit-based explanations are insufficient. Gender inequalities in wages, employment and protection systems result from structural patterns, not individual qualifications.

3.2 FROM UNEQUAL RESOURCES TO UNEQUAL POWER

Gender inequalities produce structural disadvantages:

LOWER WAGES

- **higher rates of informal employment;**
- **increased vulnerability to violence;**
- **precarious employment conditions;**
- **limited leadership opportunities;**
- **undervalued and unrecognized care work;**

These factors systematically reduce women's bargaining power.

Women often negotiate household responsibilities before negotiating in the workplace, retaining primary care responsibility. This household-level negotiation determines their capacity to enter, remain in, and advance within labour markets.

The **glass ceiling**—invisible barriers to professional advancement—and the **sticky floor**—socio-cultural norms confining women to care roles—function as reinforcing mechanisms of inequality.

3.3 GENDER INEQUALITY AT THE BARGAINING TABLE

Social norms shape collective bargaining processes through gendered structures that influence multiple dimensions of negotiation:



- **Composition of bargaining teams:** Women remain underrepresented in union leadership. When women participate in negotiations, they're frequently assigned to "women's issues" rather than core strategic negotiations. Often, one woman on a bargaining team is deemed sufficient when men are not limited in their participation in the same way.
- **Priority setting:** Masculinized union cultures prioritize wages and productivity measures, while issues disproportionately affecting women—pay equity, care leave, protection against violence—receive secondary consideration.
- **Bargaining capacity:** Limited women's representation in leadership marginalizes gender equality or positions it as secondary.
- **Participation structures:** Care responsibilities constrain women's availability for extended negotiation sessions unless organizational structures intentionally address these barriers.
- **Scope of negotiable issues:** Agreements containing equality clauses frequently fail to address occupational segregation, unequal access to advancement, unpaid care burdens, precarious employment in feminized sectors, and exposure to violence.

3.4 THE SOLUTION: TRANSFORMATIVE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Unions that fail to critically examine their internal cultures and power structures risk perpetuating the inequalities they aim to eliminate.

A gender perspective reframes power from domination to collective and transformative capacity, aligning with core trade union values: democracy, participation, solidarity and equality.

Without a gender perspective, collective bargaining perpetuates inequality. With it, collective bargaining functions as a transformative mechanism.

For more information on how to use this manual for practical guidance on implementing these approaches at organizational level, see Annex 1.

ACTIVITIES

Before exploring implementation strategies, the following activities help negotiators understand gender dynamics through practical exercises.

1 | ACTIVITY "IN THEIR SHOES"

- **OBJECTIVE:** Promote empathy and reflection on gender roles and the distribution of care work.
- **MATERIALS:** Paper, pens.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Introduction

The facilitator explains that the session will explore gender dynamics and shared responsibility for care work through a practical exercise.

2. Individual work

Participants list tasks they typically perform daily: paid work, domestic work, care responsibilities, community involvement and personal or self-care activities.

3. Exchange of roles

Participants exchange lists with another person and review the responsibilities received. This enables us to experience tasks outside our usual responsibilities and observe how responsibilities differ across individuals.

4. Group discussion

The facilitator poses questions:

- How did you feel reviewing someone else's task list?
- Were any tasks surprising or overwhelming?
- How does society assign these tasks differently to men and women?
- What are the implications for workplace equality?

5. Conclusion

The facilitator synthesizes key insights and highlights how gender expectations shape the distribution of care work.

2 | ACTIVITY "A DAY IN MY LIFE"

- **OBJECTIVE:** Visualize the volume of unpaid care work women perform and develop strategies to recognize, reduce, and redistribute these tasks.
- **MATERIALS:** 15 balloons per participant, large garbage bags (one per participant), paper, markers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1. Preparation**

- The facilitator explains that each balloon represents one hour of unpaid care work performed in a typical day.

- 2. Inflation and collection**

- Participants inflate one balloon for each hour spent on childcare, elder care, domestic tasks and other unpaid work. Participants place all balloons into their garbage bag.

- 3. Visualization**

- All bags are gathered to visualize the collective care load.

- 4. Group reflection**

- The facilitator guides the discussion using two questions:

- a) How many hours daily do women spend caring for others?

- This question highlights physical and emotional impacts and how unpaid care labour constrains opportunities.

- b) What strategies can recognize, reduce, and redistribute care work?

- Participants consider workplace policies, collectively bargained measures, and family and community solutions.

- 5. Conclusion**

- The facilitator emphasizes distinguishing between unpaid care work, paid work, self-care, and community work. Understanding these categories illuminates the gendered distribution of time and effort.

4 HOW TO INCORPORATE GENDER PERSPECTIVE INTO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



Integrating a gender perspective requires action across all organizational spaces: union structures, training, publications, mobilization and internal culture. It must be ongoing, not occasional.

This section provides practical guidance for incorporating a gender perspective into collective bargaining. Implementation requires examining whether unions guarantee equal participation and representation and whether their internal culture supports gender equality.

4.1 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

Building transformative unions requires increasing women's power within those unions.

Unions must adopt an inclusive approach to power—conceptualized as collective, generative, and transformative rather than as domination.



THIS REQUIRES:

- questioning internal beliefs, biases and privileges;
- analyzing existing power structures and decision-making processes;
- fostering conscious and inclusive leadership;
- building broad, diverse alliances;
- strengthening mutual support networks;
- promoting participation by marginalized groups;
- redistributing power based on rights, democracy and dialogue.

► Current reality: women in union leadership

Research demonstrates that women's leadership in unions and bargaining teams correlates with more gender-inclusive collective agreement outcomes.²⁶

However, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles globally:

► Union participation:

Unionization rates:²⁷

Despite higher membership rates across many sectors, women do not advance into leadership positions at the same rate.



- women: 18 per cent
- men: 16 per cent.

²⁶ Pillinger, J., Schmidt, V., & Wintour, N. (2016). *Collective Bargaining and Gender Equality*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_528947.pdf

²⁷ Op.Cit

► Trade unions:



- representation is highest in Europe and North America; lowest in Africa and Asia-Pacific.³⁰

While **70 per cent** of unions have implemented policies such as gender quotas, policy adoption alone proves insufficient without accompanying cultural and structural transformation.³¹

When union structures are robust, and women participate in bargaining teams, equality clauses are strengthened, implementation becomes more effective, progress sustains over time, and transparency and democratic processes are strengthened.

► Employers' organizations:

- **75 per cent** of employers' organizations have women comprising more than 40 per cent of staff;
- only **28 per cent** achieve gender parity (40–60 per cent women) in senior leadership;
- **10 per cent** have no women in senior positions.³²

Progress has occurred: between 2017 and 2023, employers' organizations with at least 30 per cent women on boards increased from 19 per cent to 26 per cent.³³

²⁸ International Labour Organization. (2019). *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality: For a Better Future of Work for All*, pp. 110-114. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/-/quantum-leap-gender-equality-better-future-work-all>

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

► Building capacity: UNI's Women's Mentoring Program

UNI's Mentoring Program, launched in 2013, pairs experienced women trade union leaders with younger women trade unionists under age 35. **Operating across all four UNI regions in more than 60 countries**, the program develops competencies in leadership, negotiation, and organizing through job shadowing, workshops, and peer exchanges.³⁴

The program directly supported UNI's 40x40 campaign³⁵ and was a determining factor in helping achieve UNI's 40 per cent women's representation rule in 2023.

Participating unions report increased women's participation in leadership and bargaining teams, with demand continuing to grow significantly.

► Practical strategies

Beyond mentoring, unions have successfully implemented:

- gender quotas in leadership structures;
- women's committees with decision-making power (not advisory only);
- reserved seats on bargaining teams, ensuring women negotiate core economic issues;
- capacity-building programs targeting young women workers;
- training in negotiation and leadership skills;
- networks providing peer support and collective learning.

³⁴ UNI Global Union Equal Opportunities Department. Manual for UNI Mentoring Program. https://en.uni-iwd.org/descargas/manual%20for%20uni%20mento-ring%20program-en%20_en.pdf

³⁵ UNI Global Union. 40x40 Campaign. <https://www.uni40for40.org/>

4.2 GENDER ANALYSIS: BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Gender analysis enables unions to identify inequalities within sectors, workplaces or union structures and transform findings into concrete bargaining proposals. This approach is particularly relevant in the services sector, where women constitute a large portion of the workforce, and labour inequalities persist.

A comprehensive gender analysis includes:

a) Quantitative analysis: "Where are the women and the men?"

Collect sex-disaggregated data on:

- job categories;
- contract types;
- working hours and shift patterns;
- pay structures and bonuses;
- turnover and absenteeism rates.

b) Qualitative analysis: "How do women and men experience work?"

Examine:

- sexual division of labour;
- access to resources and training;
- stereotypes and gendered task assignment;
- work-life balance and care responsibilities.

c) Identifying practical and strategic needs

Gender analysis distinguishes between immediate workplace improvements (practical needs) and transformative changes that address power structures (strategic needs):

Practical needs:

- flexible schedules;
- childcare and support services;
- gender-responsive health and safety measures;
- reduction of involuntary part-time work.

Strategic needs:

- access to leadership positions;
- balanced participation in bargaining processes;
- training on equality and violence prevention;
- elimination of gendered job segregation.

d) Identifying limitations and opportunities

Unions must assess both the barriers to advancing gender equality and the favorable conditions that can be leveraged:

Limitations:

- traditional organizational culture;
- lack of shared responsibility for care;
- horizontal and vertical segregation;
- limited women's representation in bargaining.

Opportunities:

- companies with equality or Corporate Social Responsibility³⁶ (CSR) policies;
- new equality legislation;
- unions committed to gender equality;
- availability of gender-disaggregated data.

e) Assessing institutional capacity

Evaluate the resources and institutional support available to advance gender equality negotiations:

- unions with equality training programs;
- equality committees with adequate resources;
- companies receptive to pay audits;
- public institutions offering analytical tools and statistics.

4.3 CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP THROUGH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The global gender pay gap persists due to structural factors: undervaluation of feminized jobs, occupational segregation, lack of pay transparency, unequal representation in unions, and care responsibilities that disrupt career progression.³⁷

Countries with coordinated, widespread collective bargaining demonstrate smaller pay gaps.³⁸

Unions can negotiate concrete measures to address pay inequity:

- job evaluations using gender-neutral criteria;
- targeted wage adjustments in undervalued occupations;
- access to sex-disaggregated pay data;
- regular review of wage structures and bonuses;
- internal equality diagnostics.

When these measures are combined with strong union mobilization, they produce significant results.

³⁶ “CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (“Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach”), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders” (<https://www.unido.org>)

³⁷ International Labour Organization. (2018). *Global Wage Report 2018/19: What Lies Behind Gender Pay Gaps*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/global-wage-report-201819-what-lies-behind-gender-pay-gaps>

³⁸ *Ibid*

**CASE
STUDY**

Professional Footballers Australia – Matildas

In 2015, Australia's women's national football team went on strike in response to wages below the national minimum wage, inadequate working conditions and insufficient investment in women's football. Despite competing at the highest international level, players earned approximately AUD \$21,000 annually³⁹.

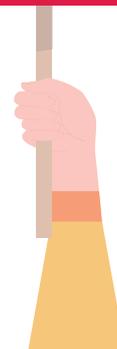
Following the strike, the Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) negotiated a landmark collective bargaining agreement that included:

- significant salary increases (doubling base pay);
- improvements in travel and accommodation standards;
- increased investment in women's football development;
- access to better training facilities.⁴⁰

In 2019, a subsequent agreement achieved further advances:

- equal share of commercial revenue between men's and women's national teams;
- enhanced parental leave and maternity protections;
- equal per diem rates and business class travel for international matches;
- increased base salaries.⁴¹

This collective bargaining process established a precedent for women's sports globally and demonstrated that strike action, combined with strategic negotiation, can address systemic pay inequity.



³⁹ Professional Footballers Australia. Matildas Collective Bargaining Agreement. <https://pfa.net.au/collective-bargaining/matildas-cba/>

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Ibid

National legislation integration

Banking sector unions have successfully negotiated the implementation of national equality frameworks:

- **Philippines:** DDHEA union (Development Bank of the Philippines Employees Association) negotiated implementation of the Magna Carta for Women (Republic Act 9710), ensuring equal pay for equal work and equal career advancement opportunities for women without gender bias.
- **Argentina:** La Bancaria (Banco de la Nación Argentina) integrated a gender perspective throughout their leave regime (2023), explicitly recognizing that equitable leave policies reduce barriers to gender equity and career progression.



4.4 UNPAID CARE WORK AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY

Unpaid care and domestic work are essential for societies and economies, yet this work remains invisible, undervalued, and disproportionately carried out by women.⁴² These inequalities heavily influence women's working conditions, labour trajectories, bargaining power and economic autonomy.

Because unpaid care constitutes a structural barrier, unions must negotiate measures that:

Recognize unpaid care as labour, the disproportionate burden carried by women, and the economic value created by care work.

- reduce working hours where needed, excessive workloads, and double and triple burdens for women;
- redistribute care responsibilities more equally across genders, support services at the company level, and parental leave that encourages men's involvement;
- promote cultural transformation within families, workplaces and unions, rejecting the assumption that care is "women's responsibility";
- when unions bargain successfully on these dimensions, they transform care from an invisible, gendered burden into a recognized right supported by employers and the state.

Union wins on care work provisions

Morocco - Banking Sector (UMT): The Union of Banking and Financial Institutions (USIB/UMT) successfully negotiated on-site childcare facilities and lactation spaces across multiple banks. CIH Bank established a full childcare center at its headquarters, while Crédit du Maroc created dedicated lactation spaces in union offices. These provisions recognize care as a workplace concern requiring employer-supported infrastructure.



⁴² International Labour Organization. (2021). *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/care-work-and-care-jobs-future-decent-work>

CASE STUDY

La Bancaria - Banco de la Nación Argentina⁴³

In 2020, Banco de la Nación Argentina initiated a comprehensive review of its leave regime with a gender perspective, working in partnership with La Asociación Bancaria (the banking workers' union) and UNI Global Union. The process was led by the bank's Gender, Diversity, and Human Rights Management office.

The resulting 2023 agreement created eight new leave categories and expanded several existing ones, grounded in core principles that recognize care as a universal human right encompassing the right to care for others, the right to be cared for, and the right to practice self-care.

New leave provisions include:

- **progressive return after maternity/adoption: six-month phased return with reduced hours (months one and two: three hours less; months three and four: two hours less; months five and six: one hour less), independent from breastfeeding breaks;**
- **accompaniment for serious illness: 20 working days per year (continuous or discontinuous) to accompany direct family members undergoing treatment for serious conditions;**
- **surrogacy leave: 90 consecutive days with full pay for people undergoing surrogacy**
- **extended leave for gestating person: Expanded to 30 consecutive days (added to maternity leave);**
- **domestic/intrafamily violence leave: Up to 20 working days per year with appropriate documentation;**
- **preventive health studies: one working day per year for preventive medical checkups;**
- **personal procedures: one working day per year for personal errands (no justification required).**

The agreement systematically replaced gendered language with inclusive terms: "*persona gestante*" (gestating person) instead of only "madre" (mother); "*persona no gestante*" (non-gestating person) instead of only "padre" (father). This linguistic shift recognizes diverse family structures, including LGBTQI+ families, surrogacy and adoption.

The comprehensive approach demonstrates how collective bargaining can operationalize gender perspective across multiple dimensions: care work, reproductive rights, violence protection, diversity, health, and work-life balance. The tripartite collaboration among the bank, the union and the global federation created a model that addresses structural barriers to gender equity rather than implementing isolated measures.

⁴³ La Asociación Bancaria, Banco de la Nación Argentina, and UNI Global Union. (2023). *Acta de Acuerdo sobre Ampliación y/o Modificación de Régimen de Licencias del Banco de la Nación Argentina.*

**CASE
STUDY**

Sweden – Right to Request Part-Time Work

In Sweden, collective bargaining and labour legislation enable workers to request reduced working hours during specific life stages.

Key provisions include:

- right to request reduced hours for parents with children under age of eight;
- employer obligation to accommodate requests unless significant operational difficulties exist;
- protection from discrimination;
- right to return to previous hours.⁴⁴

These provisions operate within Sweden's broader framework, including 480 days of paid parental leave per child, with 90 days reserved for each parent (non-transferable) to encourage paternal involvement.⁴⁵

This framework has contributed to Sweden's high female labour force participation rate (approximately 80 per cent). However, challenges persist: women continue to use part-time arrangements and parental leave more extensively than men, contributing to persistent wage gaps.

⁴⁴ Government of Sweden. Gender Equality Policy. <https://www.government.se/government-policy/gender-equality/>

⁴⁵ Swedish Social Insurance Agency. Parental Benefit. <https://www.forsakringskassan.se/english/parents/when-your-child-is-born/parental-benefit>

**CASE
STUDY**

Costa Rica – National Care and Child Development Network

Costa Rica implemented the National Network of Care and Child Development (REDCUDI) in 2014 to address the disproportionate care burden on women. The network provides subsidized early childhood education and care services for children from birth to age seven.⁴⁷

Between 2014 and 2022, REDCUDI expanded from serving approximately 10,000 children to over 30,000 children nationally.⁴⁸ While REDCUDI operates as a state-funded program, it demonstrates how public policy can complement collective bargaining strategies. Unions can leverage such programs by advocating for employer contributions to care services or workplace-based care facilities.

⁴⁷ Government of Costa Rica. (2021). *Red Nacional de Cuido y Desarrollo Infantil se Fortalece en Última Administración*. <https://presidencia.go.cr/comunicados/2021/03/red-nacional-de-cuido-y-desarrollo-infantil-se-fortalece-en-ultima-administracion/>

⁴⁸ Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS). (2022). *Red Nacional de Cuido y Desarrollo Infantil: Informe de Gestión 2018-2022*. Government of Costa Rica. [No public URL available]

4.5 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Most occupational health and safety (OHS) systems were designed around a male standard.

This model excludes women's realities and fails to adequately protect them.⁴⁹

Women face specific workplace risks due to:



BIOLOGICAL AND REPRODUCTIVE FACTORS:

- psychosocial stress from balancing work and care responsibilities;
- under-recognition of injuries related to repetitive tasks;
- exposure to chemicals not tested for effects on women's bodies;
- poorly designed personal protective equipment;
- gendered division of labour, assigning women to monotonous, low-control tasks.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE OHS MUST INCLUDE:

- ergonomic assessments accounting for sex and gender differences;
- preventive measures for pregnant or breastfeeding workers;
- menstrual health considerations;
- menopause-sensitive policies;
- protocols addressing sexual and gender-based harassment;
- psychosocial risk assessments.

► The 3 'm's of occupational health & safety

UNI Global Union's Equal Opportunities Department has developed comprehensive guidance addressing three critical dimensions of women's health at work:⁵⁰

⁴⁹ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. *Gender Issues in Safety and Health at Work*. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/gender>

⁵⁰ UNI Global Union Equal Opportunities Department. (2024). *The 3 'M's on Occupational Health & Safety, Maternity*: https://en.uni-womens-health.org/descargas/en/2024/maternity_en.pdf Menstruation: https://en.uni-womens-health.org/descargas/en/2024/menstruation_en.pdf Menopause: https://en.uni-womens-health.org/descargas/en/2024/menopause_en.pdf

MATERNITY: Protections must extend beyond basic maternity leave to include workplace adaptations, breastfeeding facilities, protection from hazardous substances, and non-discriminatory treatment throughout pregnancy and postpartum periods.

MENSTRUATION: Workplace policies should address menstrual health through access to appropriate facilities, break allowances for menstrual pain, reduction of stigma, and accommodation for workers with conditions such as endometriosis or dysmenorrhea.

MENOPAUSE: Recognition that perimenopause and menopause affect women's work experience requires workplace adjustments including temperature control, flexible scheduling, access to health support, and elimination of stigma.

► Mental health as a fundamental right

Mental health protections constitute a fundamental workplace right⁵¹

GENDER-RESPONSIVE OHS MUST ADDRESS:

- psychosocial risks disproportionately affecting women (care burden, harassment, discrimination);
- violence and harassment as mental health hazards;
- technology-facilitated stress and surveillance;
- workload and time pressure;
- lack of autonomy and recognition;

► Union wins on gender-responsive ohs

Banking sector unions have negotiated specific provisions addressing women's health needs:

PHILIPPINES - DDHEA (DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES):

- **MENSTRUAL LEAVE:** two days paid menstrual leave per month for employees experiencing severe menstrual cramps (dysmenorrhea), upon medical certification. Leave not deducted from sick leave balance.
- **LACTATION FACILITIES AND BREAKS:** Nursing mothers receive paid lactation breaks of at least 40 minutes per eight-hour shift to express milk. Employers provide safe, clean, private lactation rooms equipped with seating, electrical outlets and refrigeration for milk storage, in compliance with the Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act (RA 10028).

⁵¹ UNI Global Union Equal Opportunities Department. (2025). *Mental Health at Work: A Fundamental Right*. https://en.uni-womens-health.org/descargas/en/2025/-fundamental_right_en.pdf

► Additional union achievements:

United Kingdom - Unite the Union (Screen Time Campaign):

Unite the Union launched a comprehensive campaign requesting employers grant paid time off for medical screening appointments, including cervical screening, mammograms and prostate screening. The campaign emphasizes that paid time off for screening appointments saves lives and addresses barriers, particularly affecting women in low-paid and precarious employment who cannot afford to lose pay to attend appointments.

Unite successfully negotiated model clauses requiring line managers to agree to paid leave for medical appointments, tests, check-ups, health clinics and health screenings. The policy recognizes that employees may have limited control over appointment timing and ensures that appointments are handled confidentially. Members of staff are not required to disclose medical details, and requests are dealt with promptly, sympathetically, and confidentially.

4.6 VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (TFGBV)

ILO Convention 190⁵² recognizes violence and harassment as threats to workers' dignity, health and security—and that gender-based violence disproportionately affects women across all sectors.

Unions have a crucial role in preventing violence, ensuring protection and remedies, negotiating clear policies, and supporting survivors.

⁵² International Labour Organization. (2019). C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190

► The scale of workplace violence: evidence from retail

The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA) documented alarming escalations in customer abuse and violence affecting retail and fast-food workers—sectors where women comprise the majority of the workforce.

SDA's December 2025 member survey revealed:

- **88 per cent** experienced verbal abuse in the past **12 months**;
- **25 per cent** experienced physical violence (double the **2023** rate of **12.5 per cent**);
- **19 per cent** experienced sexual harassment (up from **17 per cent in 2023**);
- **31 per cent** experienced ethnicity/race/cultural background-related abuse (up from **24 per cent**);
- only **34 per cent** feel safe in their workplace, with an additional **28 per cent** unsure.

The mental health impact was severe: 72 per cent of members who experienced abuse reported stress, and 70 per cent reported anxiety. Among those affected, 58 per cent returned to work but found it more stressful, and 15 per cent considered quitting.

Despite 73 per cent reporting incidents, systemic failures persisted: 62 per cent did not receive satisfactory responses, and 51 per cent were unaware of any action taken. Among those who never reported, 57 per cent thought it was not worth reporting, and 53 per cent believed no action would be taken. However, 62 per cent would report all incidents if they were confident that action would be taken.

These findings underscore why comprehensive violence prevention frameworks—like those negotiated in collective agreements or global framework agreements—are essential across all sectors. When employers fail to respond effectively to violence, workers lose confidence in reporting mechanisms, perpetuating unsafe conditions and mental health harm.

► Comprehensive violence protections in global framework agreements

Global agreements are addressing some of these gaps. BNP Paribas negotiated provisions including dedicated intranet resources, HR support with confidential assistance and accommodations, social services support, psychological support through Employee Assistance Programs, and medical support.⁵³

At company and sectoral levels, unions can negotiate similar provisions adapted to local contexts, ensuring that reporting leads to meaningful action and adequate post-incident support—the very elements SDA members identified as critically lacking.

⁵³ BNP Paribas Agreement. Op.Cit

► Technology-facilitated gender-based violence

Digitalization has expanded violence into online and technology-mediated spaces. Common forms include:

- online harassment;
- threats or blackmail;
- sharing intimate content without consent;
- deepfakes;
- impersonation;
- surveillance and monitoring;
- doxxing;
- cyberbullying in workplace platforms.⁵⁴



Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) constitutes a workplace issue because digital and physical workspaces are interconnected. TFGBV affects mental health, confidence, productivity, retention and participation in public and union life.

UNIONS MUST NEGOTIATE:

- clear definitions of unacceptable behavior;
- internal procedures for reporting and investigation;
- confidentiality guarantees;
- employer responsibility for digital safety;
- training for workers and supervisors;
- sanctions for perpetrators;
- paid leave and accommodations for survivors.

⁵⁴ United Nations. (2024). *AI and Anonymity Fuel Surge in Digital Violence Against Women*. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2024/11/ai-and-anonymity-fuel-surge-digital-violence-against-women>

UNI'S break the circle! campaign

UNI Global Union's Break the Circle! campaign⁵⁵ provides insights and practical ideas for unions to address TFGBV through collective bargaining and workplace action.

Campaign resources include definitions and a conceptual framework explaining TFGBV forms and workplace manifestations; an educational leaflet, "Digital or Physical – Every Workplace Should Be Safe";⁵⁶ survey findings from 430 workers globally documenting experiences; worker testimonials on TFGBV's impact; and social media campaign materials.

IDEAS FOR UNION ACTION INCLUDE:

Negotiation and enforcement: Negotiate comprehensive workplace policies addressing TFGBV, advocate for full implementation of ILO Convention 190, establish zero-tolerance policies, mainstream gender perspectives in all negotiations, and include domestic violence as a workplace issue.

Capacity building: Deliver training on recognizing and responding to TFGBV, train shop stewards in trauma-informed approaches, and run digital campaigns raising awareness.

Support systems: Establish confidential advice lines, referral networks and mental health support. Ensure protection without fear of retaliation.

Systemic change advocacy: Campaign to include digital spaces in workplace safety standards, advocate for stronger digital accountability and legal protections, and promote responsible digital platform use.⁵⁷

► Banking sector implementation of violence protections

Banking unions have negotiated comprehensive violence and harassment frameworks aligned with national legislation and ILO Convention 190:

- **Philippines (DDHEA):** Established clear guidelines to prevent and address sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and workplace discrimination in line with the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313). A Gender Sensitivity Committee composed of union and management representatives handles complaints confidentially and ensures a harassment-free workplace.
- **Argentina (La Bancaria):** Negotiated up to 20 working days paid leave per year for workers experiencing domestic/intrafamily violence, with documentation from victim services, police reports or state agencies. The bank committed to maintaining workplace environments free from discrimination and violence.

⁵⁵ UNI Global Union Equal Opportunities Department. Break the Circle! Campaign. <https://en.breakingthecircle.org/> [Supporting research: 20251224SDAResearch2025NODASFinalReport.pdf]

⁵⁶ UNI Global Union Equal Opportunities Department. Break the Circle! Campaign. <https://en.breakingthecircle.org/> [Supporting research: 20251224SDAResearch2025NODASFinalReport.pdf]

⁵⁷ UNI Global Union. (2024). #16Days - UNI Mobilizes Unions to Confront Online Violence and Harassment. <https://uniglobalunion.org/news/16days-uni-mobilizes-unions-to-confront-online-violence-and-harassment/>

▶ Union bargaining achievements on violence

Australia - SDA Retail Sector:

The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA) successfully negotiated paid domestic violence leave provisions in multiple retail sector collective agreements before it became a national entitlement. In the 2019 Woolworths Supermarkets Agreement, the SDA secured five days paid domestic violence leave and five days unpaid domestic violence leave for all Woolworths workers. The union achieved similar provisions in agreements with Big W, Kmart, Coles and Officeworks. These negotiated protections provided immediate workplace support for employees experiencing family and domestic violence, covering time off for legal proceedings, medical appointments, relocation and safety planning. The SDA's sustained advocacy through enterprise bargaining demonstrated the viability of paid leave provisions and built momentum for the national campaign that ultimately led to ten days paid family and domestic violence leave being enshrined in Australia's National Employment Standards in 2023.

CWU - Ireland ICTS and Postal Sector:

The Communications Workers' Union (CWU) in Ireland negotiated a Domestic Violence Policy with An Post, providing up to two weeks of special paid leave over any 12 consecutive months. This constitutes five days more than what is provided for through national legislation. They also negotiated financial assistance upon request, in the form of salary advances. Furthermore, a provision was made for the employer to assist in developing a personal safety plan where appropriate, as well as to change working hours and/or provide flexible working arrangements, as per the Company's flexible working arrangements.

Unifor - Canada Care Sector:

Unifor in Canada has successfully bargained for Women's Advocates in its units since 1993. There are currently 747 bargained into collective agreements. A Women's Advocate is a specially trained workplace representative who assists women with concerns such as workplace harassment, intimate violence and abuse. The Women's Advocate is not a counsellor but rather provides support for women seeking workplace and community resources. The Women's Advocate Program is an excellent example of a successful joint union/management workplace initiative that helps to create healthy, respectful, and safe workplaces.

4.7 DIGITALIZATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Digitalization, AI, and emerging technologies are transforming employment, requiring new skills and creating novel forms of supervision and control. Without a gender perspective, these transformations risk exacerbating existing inequalities.⁵⁸

KEY RISKS:

- algorithms reproducing gender and racial biases;
- occupational segregation in the tech sector;
- reduced access to digital tools for women;
- technology-facilitated violence;
- monitoring systems are increasing stress and surveillance;
- job losses in feminized sectors due to automation.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- training in digital skills for women;
- closing the digital gender divide;
- negotiating safeguards on algorithmic management;
- promoting remote work with gender-sensitive safeguards;
- using technology for training, awareness, and organizing.



► Union priorities:

Negotiate transparency on algorithmic systems, human oversight of automated decisions, limits on intrusive digital surveillance, protections against discrimination by AI, digital literacy and upskilling programs prioritized for women, gender audits of digital tools, and hybrid work arrangements that don't reinforce gendered burdens.

⁵⁸International Labour Organization. (2021). *The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/role-digital-labour-platforms-transforming-world-work>

4.8 INTERSECTIONALITY

Gender does not operate in isolation. Discrimination intensifies when intersecting with:

- **race or ethnicity;**
- **disability;**
- **migration status;**
- **sexual orientation;**
- **gender identity or expression;**
- **age;**
- **socioeconomic background;**
- **religion;**
- **mental health or neurodiversity;**
- **indigeneity.**

A migrant woman working in domestic or care services may simultaneously face gender discrimination, racial discrimination, labour informality, language barriers, limited access to social protection, and increased vulnerability to violence and exploitation.

Intersectionality requires both unions and employers to recognize these multiple layers and address them through comprehensive approaches.⁵⁹

► Intersectional bargaining in practice

Unions negotiating for workers experiencing multiple forms of discrimination must address overlapping vulnerabilities:

- **Language access:** Contracts and materials in workers' native languages.
- **Immigration status protection:** No retaliation for reporting violations regardless of documentation.
- **Cultural and religious accommodation:** Prayer time, dietary requirements, dress codes.
- **Racial discrimination:** Explicit anti-racism training for employers and managers.
- **Gender-based violence vulnerability:** Safe reporting mechanisms and protections against harassment.

These overlapping factors require coordinated strategies addressing multiple discrimination axes simultaneously.

⁵⁹ Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. (2008). *Herramientas Básicas para Integrar la Perspectiva de Género en Organizaciones que Trabajan Derechos Humanos*. <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/25753.pdf>

4.9 DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) principles strengthen workforce retention, innovation, productivity, psychological safety and community relations.



UNIONS CAN NEGOTIATE:

- anti-discrimination clauses;
- inclusive recruitment and promotion practices;
- equal access to training and promotional opportunities;
- accommodation for workers with disabilities;
- inclusive language policies;
- policies supporting LGBTQI+ workers;
- cultural competence training;
- measures addressing racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.

DEI is fundamental to modern, democratic, and effective collective bargaining.⁶⁰

As demonstrated in global agreements (Section 2.4), comprehensive DEI frameworks can include commitments to employment diversity across multiple dimensions (gender, age, origin, disability, sexual orientation), specific measures for disability inclusion with due diligence processes, and union collaboration in implementation and monitoring.

⁶⁰ United Nations Global Compact. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. <https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/dei>

► Banking sector dei achievements

Philippines (DDHEA):

Implemented the Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710), ensuring equal pay for equal work and career advancement opportunities accessible to women without gender bias. Established a women's rights committee with union and management representatives to oversee enforcement and conduct regular gender sensitivity training.

Argentina (La Bancaria):

Systematically implemented gender-inclusive language throughout leave policies, recognizing diverse family structures (surrogacy, adoption, LGBTQI+ families) and replacing binary gendered terms with inclusive alternatives.

5 KEY AREAS TO NEGOTIATE: QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE



This section presents examples of areas where unions can negotiate equality measures through collective bargaining. The examples provided are illustrative, not exhaustive. Each measure should be adapted to specific workplace contexts and priorities identified through gender analysis and consultation with workers.

5.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

- anti-discrimination clauses prohibiting discrimination based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, nationality, socioeconomic status;
- transparent recruitment and promotion procedures using gender-neutral criteria;
- fair representation of women and minorities on committees, boards and decision-making bodies;
- equal access to training, professional development, and digital upskilling;
- mentorship and leadership programs for women and young workers.

5.2 ADDRESSING OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION

- gender-neutral job evaluations;
- reclassification of feminized roles;
- career pathways for workers in undervalued areas;
- training for women to access higher-paying positions;
- strategies for internal mobility.

5.3 REDUCING THE GENDER PAY GAP

- mandatory pay audits using disaggregated data;
- job classification systems valuing feminized job complexity;
- transparent wage structures and criteria;
- corrective wage adjustments in undervalued occupational categories;
- regular monitoring and review processes;
- bargaining committees trained in gender pay equity.

5.4 WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CO-RESPONSIBILITY

► Working time:

- flexible work arrangements negotiated with a gender-sensitive approach;
- predictable schedules;
- limits on mandatory overtime;
- options for reduced working hours without discrimination.

▶ Parental leave:

- paid maternity, paternity and parental leave;
- incentives for men to use parental leave;
- negotiated top-ups to supplement the gap between social support and regular wage;
- equal protection for diverse families (adoptive, same-sex families, guardians).

▶ Breastfeeding and reproductive health:

- paid breaks for breastfeeding;
- private and hygienic lactation rooms;
- leave for reproductive health needs;
- leave and protections in cases of pregnancy loss.

5.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY WITH A GENDER LENS

- gender-responsive risk assessments;
- proper personal protective equipment (PPE) designed for women;
- menstrual health accommodations;
- policies addressing menopause;
- ergonomic adaptations in feminized sectors;
- prevention protocols for sexual harassment and gender-based violence;
- psychosocial risk assessments (stress, burnout, surveillance, algorithmic pressure).

5.6 VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION

- internal procedures aligned with ILO Convention 190;
- clear definitions: sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination, tech-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV);
- confidential reporting channels;
- survivor-centered approaches;
- non-retaliation guarantees;
- paid leave for survivors (domestic violence and TFGBV);
- disciplinary measures for perpetrators;
- employer obligations to ensure safety in digital environments.

5.7 DIGITALIZATION, AI AND ALGORITHMIC MANAGEMENT

- transparency in automated decision-making;
- right to human review of algorithmically generated decisions;
- limits on excessive monitoring or surveillance;
- gender-responsive digital training;

- digital literacy programs for women;
- union involvement in implementing new technologies;
- measures to prevent algorithmic bias.

5.8 INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- gender-inclusive terminology;
- avoid masculine generics;
- documents and communications representing all genders;
- translation guidelines where applicable.

5.9 INTERSECTIONAL POLICIES

Explicitly address the needs of workers facing multiple forms of discrimination:

- migrant workers;
- lgbtqi+ workers;
- workers with disabilities;
- racial and ethnic minorities;
- young workers;
- older workers;
- indigenous workers.

6 FOLLOW-UP, MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION



Gender equality clauses are only effective when implemented and monitored.

Agreements should include:

1. Implementation committees

- joint employer–union bodies ensuring compliance with equality measures.

2. Regular reporting

- sex-disaggregated employment and salary data;
- progress on equality indicators;
- updated risk assessments.

3. Evaluation and review of mechanisms

- annual or biannual review of equality clauses;
- corrective action plans if objectives are not met.

4. Capacity-building

- ongoing training for union negotiators, HR staff and supervisors;
- workshops on gender equality, non-discrimination, and TFGBV.

5. Worker participation

- inclusion of women and young workers in monitoring committees;
- mechanisms for workers to submit concerns or feedback.

EXAMPLE: Philippines DDHEA Implementation Committee

The Development Bank of the Philippines collective agreement (Article XII, Section 7) established a Women's Rights Committee composed of union and management representatives to oversee the enforcement of gender equality provisions. The committee's mandate includes:

Regular monitoring of compliance with gender equality measures:

- **conducting gender sensitivity training for employees and management;**
- **handling complaints related to women's rights and gender equality;**
- **ensuring implementation of protections against discrimination, harassment and violence.**

This model demonstrates how joint union-management structures can ensure accountability and sustained implementation of negotiated equality provisions.

6. Alignment with national equality bodies and ILO standards

Refer to:

- ILO Convention 100 (Equal Remuneration)⁶¹
- ILO Convention 111 (Discrimination)⁶²
- ILO Convention 183 (Maternity Protection)⁶³
- ILO Convention 190 (Violence and Harassment)⁶⁴

⁶¹ International Labour Organization. (1951). C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C100

⁶² International Labour Organization. (1958). C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312256

⁶³ International Labour Organization. (2000). C183 - Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183). https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312327

⁶⁴ ILO Convention 190. Op.Cit.

7 CHECKLIST: IS OUR BARGAINING GENDER-RESPONSIVE?



A gender-responsive collective agreement:

Includes measures that:

- promote equal opportunities;
- prevent discrimination and violence;
- ensure wage transparency;
- support reproductive and menstrual health;
- address TFGBV;
- recognize unpaid care work;
- provide flexible and family-friendly arrangements;
- promote shared responsibility;
- reduce occupational segregation;
- adapt OHS to women's needs;
- provide equal access to training and leadership.

Has been negotiated by teams that:

- include women and young workers;
- have received training on gender equality;
- analyze sex-disaggregated data;
- understand intersectional needs.

Reflects commitments that:

- are measurable;
- have clear implementation mechanisms;
- include monitoring and follow-up processes.

8 FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEGOTIATORS



▶ **Prepare with data:**

Use sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis to support demands.

▶ **Build diverse bargaining teams:**

Ensure representation of women, young workers, and marginalized groups.

▶ **Negotiate holistically:**

Equality must be mainstreamed across all chapters—not isolated in a single clause.

▶ **Use clear, measurable language:**

Avoid vague commitments; favor enforceable obligations and timelines.

▶ **Strengthen alliances:**

Coordinate with women's committees, youth structures, DEI committees and equality bodies.

▶ **Ensure communication and awareness:**

Workers must understand the rights gained through the collective agreement.

9 CONCLUSION



Collective bargaining is one of the most effective tools unions have to improve working conditions and advance workers' rights. When grounded in gender equality, it becomes a mechanism for eliminating discrimination, redistributing opportunities, strengthening workplace democracy, and improving conditions for all workers.

The evidence demonstrates that gender-responsive collective bargaining produces concrete results: reducing pay gaps, establishing protections against violence and harassment, addressing unpaid care work, and creating pathways to leadership for women and marginalized groups. Unions that integrate a gender perspective increase membership, strengthen representativeness, and improve capacity to negotiate effectively.

Achieving gender equality through collective bargaining requires sustained effort and organizational change. Unions must increase women's participation and leadership, conduct gender analyses to identify structural inequalities, build diverse bargaining teams with training in gender equality, negotiate comprehensive protections that address intersecting forms of discrimination, and establish mechanisms to monitor implementation and ensure accountability.

Current challenges—backlash against gender equality, technology-facilitated violence, persistent pay gaps, unequal distribution of care work, and risks from digital transformation—require unions to adapt strategies and strengthen responses.

Gender-responsive collective bargaining is not separate from unions' core work. It is essential to build worker power, improve working conditions, and ensure decent work. The resources, evidence and practical tools outlined in this manual provide a foundation for unions to negotiate agreements that reflect the needs and rights of their entire membership.

Gender equality strengthens unions. Stronger unions deliver better outcomes for all workers.

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