
Barbershop Toolbox

Getting Started

March 2017





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Know your audience

Before you get started, it is important to consider your target group and the end goal of the Barbershop session. Are you planning on mobilizing management only, or do you wish to raise awareness among a wider group? Or perhaps both?

Barbershop events are primarily designed to engage men through male-to-male discussions on the importance of achieving gender equality.

The tools can be used for single-sex groups (men only) or for a mixed group (women and men together). However, when the group is mixed, make sure to still provide the opportunity for male-to-male discussions to ensure a productive dialogue on what men can do to help achieve gender equality. This can be done by dividing the participants into groups based on gender and finding male experts that can participate as facilitators and share their experience as speakers.

Choose your tool

Each tool is targeted towards a specific goal, so begin by deciding what kind of discussion would be most beneficial for the group, and then choose the

tool or tools that meet these objectives. Most of the tools can be adapted to different levels of audience with minor changes.

Go to **Choose Your Tool** to get an overview of recommended tools for targeted audience groups.

Pick your venue

Based on your audience and the tool(s) you select, choose the venue, or space that best suits your needs. A workshop requires the possibility for different groups to work simultaneously, while a high-level event might require a room or venue with a stage, a sound system, etc.

Build partnerships

Consider building partnerships with experienced local NGOs and civil society activists to strengthen the Barbershop session or workshop. It might be added value to invite partners to shape the agenda, facilitate the event, or share their experience, either as keynote speakers or by participating in a panel discussion.

There are numerous NGOs and networks doing excellent work to get men and boys engaged in promoting gender equality. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

MenCare, a global fatherhood campaign

MenEngage Alliance

Promundo

UN Women Country Offices

White Ribbon

When organizing a Barbershop, it is vital to understand and join those that have paved the way and worked tirelessly to create a more gender equal world. Barbershop events should include women's voices, and partnerships provide perfect opportunities to invite female experts to participate, possibly as speakers, panelists or co-organizers. Keep in mind the MenEngage Alliance's definition of how to be accountable allies to women and girls. See more on this under **Resources**.

For MenEngage Alliance, being “accountable” means

Building gender equality in all we do and ensuring that our work with men and boys contributes to the empowerment of women and people from other oppressed genders

Being critically aware of one’s own power and privileges and open to constructive criticism (a culture of reflection and dialogue)

Taking action to address personal and institutional practices that go against our principles of gender equality and human rights, acknowledging any harm caused and making amends (“do no harm” principle)

Respecting and promoting women’s leadership in the gender equality movement

Creating structures of consultation and partnerships with women’s rights organizations





Select and train facilitators

The success of the Barbershop event largely depends on the facilitator, so it is important to choose this person carefully. The facilitator should have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and experience in working with diverse groups of people, as well as personal and professional experience in examining the issues of gender justice and inequality. This can be someone within the workplace, in the local community or an international expert. The facilitator should be prepared to handle resistance and provide conflict-resolution. Consider having two facilitators to provide support for each other, and to mitigate and resolve conflicts if they arise.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATORS AND DISCUSSION LEADERS

During the Barbershop event the facilitator is responsible for:

Introducing the topic at the beginning of the session

Explaining the event's overall objective

Guiding and supporting discussion leaders during table discussions

Giving closing remarks, highlighting the main themes of the discussion, possible solutions identified and providing the participants with concrete resources to continue their journey to becoming agents of change for gender equality

A successful facilitator leads the discussion from identifying a problem, through a dialogue with the participants about their own ideas and experiences, and finally helps them find ways to move towards a more gender equal world.

As organizer you should be prepared to divide the participants into groups, based on gender. Organize the seating so that each table has a discussion leader, who has been familiarized with the questions and their purpose beforehand. Choose discussion leaders who are respected among their peers and have some authority in the group.

Discussion leaders should know the event's objective and have familiarized themselves with the questions and their purpose beforehand. They should be ready to provide a short insight into the discussion at their table, summarizing main findings and any solutions identified.

It is strongly encouraged that you, as organizer, meet with the facilitator and discussion leaders prior to the event to discuss the topic at hand and how you would like to see the discussion evolve. Establish with the facilitator and the discussion leaders some ground rules on what is acceptable during the discussion and how to handle conflicts that might arise.

Be aware that discussions on sensitive topics, such as violence and sexual abuse, can trigger bad memories and anxiety for anyone who may have been affected by such acts. The facilitator and discussion leaders should be mindful of this, and be ready to refer participants to local organizations that provide support.



Facilitator's checklist

Based on a facilitator checklist provided in Program HMD by Promundo

The following steps assist facilitators in creating a safe environment that encourages open and participatory discussions

- ☐ **CREATE A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE SPACE**
Participants should feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics and personal opinions. Have them sit in a circle or half-circle during discussions to encourage exchange, rather than constructing a classroom-like setting. They may sit on chairs or on the floor.
- ☐ **ESTABLISH GROUND RULES WITH PARTICIPANTS**
These rules should include listening, respect for others, confidentiality, and participation.
- ☐ **PROMOTE REFLECTION, PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND PRESENT INFORMATION NEUTRALLY**
Be aware of your position of power. Accordingly, avoid judgmental and authoritarian attitudes. Never impose your feelings or opinions on the group. Ask open-ended questions rather than posing leading questions, giving advice or advertising beliefs. Offer brief responses to encourage participants to respond and debate issues from their experiences, and clarify misinformation when necessary. Be friendly and create rapport with your participants.
- ☐ **ALWAYS BE CONSCIOUS OF THE LANGUAGE YOU USE AND YOUR BEHAVIOUR**
Review your own views, assumptions and prejudices, and avoid bringing them to the group. Be aware if young men or women from particular social, cultural, or religious backgrounds trigger certain emotions in you, be they positive or negative, which may affect your own work in the group. Include as much physical movement as possible so that the participants remain active, alert and interested. Dress appropriately you should look approachable, but professional.
- ☐ **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO BE HONEST AND OPEN**
Participants should not be afraid to discuss sensitive issues for fear of judgment or ridicule from their peers. This includes sharing, learning from, and questioning firm opinions about masculinity and gender.
- ☐ **CAN YOU SPOT FUTURE LEADERS?**
Keep an eye out for participants who are particularly engaged and interested in promoting gender equality as they are likely to become effective leaders in the transformation process. Be mindful of opportunities to mobilize them to drive the conversation forward after the event.

Understanding the terminology

Based on UN Women Gender Equality Glossary and Promundo's Program HMD

FEMININITIES – the term refers to the social meaning of the feminine, which is constructed and defined socially, historically, and politically, rather than being biologically driven. There are many social constructed definitions for being a man and these can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how women should or are expected to behave in each setting. Femininities are not just about women; men perform and produce the meaning and practices of the feminine as well.

GENDER – the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

GENDER BLINDNESS → this term refers to the failure to recognize that the roles and responsibilities of men/boys and women/girls are assigned to them in specific social, cultural, economic, and political contexts and backgrounds. Projects, programs, policies and attitudes which are gender blind do not take into account these different roles and diverse needs. They maintain the status quo and will not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations.

GENDER EQUALITY – equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

GENDER IDENTITY – refers to a person's innate, deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth.

GENDER NORMS – ideas about how men and women should be and act, within a range that is defined by a particular society, culture or community at that point in time. We internalize and learn these "rules" early in life. This gender socialization begins early and continues throughout the life-cycle.

MASCULINITIES – the term refers to the social meaning of manhood, which is constructed and defined socially, historically and politically, rather than being biologically driven. There are many socially constructed definitions for being a man and these can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in each setting. Masculinities are not just about men; women perform and produce the meaning and practices of the masculine as well.

SEX – the physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females.



Additional Resources

On bringing men into the conversation

ABAAD, Programme Ra (Adaptation of Promundo's Program H)

CATALYST, Men and Equality

Promundo, HMD: A Toolkit for Action

On accountable partnerships with women

Greig, Alan with Edström, Jerker (2012) Mobilising Men in Practice: Challenging sexual and gender-based violence in institutional settings, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton: IDS

International Rescue Committee, Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls: Engaging Men Through Accountable Practice

MenEngage Alliance, Accountability Toolkit

Search for partners

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

MenEngage Alliance

Promundo

UN Women Country Offices

White Ribbon