

Final Report

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# Virtual Dialogue on Understanding Change through Training for Gender Equality



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**24 April – 14 May 2017**

**Online Community of Practice Platform**

<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/CoP>

**Webinar:**

**Wednesday, 3 May 2017**

**9:00am EST/ 10:00am AST/03:00pm CET**

# Virtual Dialogue: Understanding Change through Training for Gender Equality

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## Final Report

The UN Women Training Centre’s 10<sup>th</sup> [Virtual Dialogue](#) enabled participatory reflection on **Change through Training for Gender Equality** – from the change which training has achieved to date, the change it can aspire to achieve, and how this change can be assessed and evaluated. Comprising a [3-week online forum discussion](#) and a live [Webinar](#), this Virtual Dialogue helped us better understand the transformative potential of training for gender equality by looking at why we engage in training, what kind of change training can bring about, and how can we meaningfully evoke and evaluate processes of change.



**3** expert panellists

**100** participants in the

Webinar & forum discussion – CoP members, gender experts, training practitioners, researchers, academics, representatives of NGOs and international organisations from around the globe<sup>1</sup>

This Report offers an analytical synthesis of the discussions during the Virtual Dialogue and raises issues for further debate around change through training for gender equality.

## I. Objectives

### Objectives of the 10<sup>th</sup> Virtual Dialogue<sup>2</sup>

To discuss key questions about **change** through training for gender equality, such as:

- *What kind of change can training for gender equality aspire to?*
- *How has training for gender equality led to change thus far?*
- *How can change through training be assessed and evaluated?*

### What are Virtual Dialogues?

*Virtual Dialogues are online discussions that form part of the UN Women Training Centre’s [Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#). They are ways to continually discuss, exchange and share knowledge on topics related to training for gender equality that respond to the interests, needs and motivations of the CoP. Virtual Dialogues aspire to be inclusive processes of collective knowledge production to improve the quality and impact of training for gender equality worldwide.*

<sup>1</sup> Please see the [Annex](#) of this Report for details on the participants.

<sup>2</sup> Details of the format of the Virtual Dialogue and the key questions that guided discussions are outlined in the event’s [Concept Note](#).

## II. Background

Training for gender equality's conceptualisation as a “process of transformation”<sup>4</sup> is grounded on the understanding that training can, and does, lead to tangible change. The underlying assumption is that “a change in understanding can lead to a change in behaviour, and furthermore that change in individuals can lead to change on an institutional level and impact existing policies and practices.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, questions remain about how this assumption plays out in practice. Moreover, the issue of how change can be articulated, assessed and evaluated is a challenging one. As a field, training for gender equality has often struggled with evaluating long-term change.<sup>6</sup>

*As authors like Walter (2007) have argued, processes of training and capacity development “are not linear but involve an often messy and incremental, step by step, sometimes going backwards, change”<sup>3</sup>*

## III. Key Messages of the Discussion<sup>7</sup>

### What kind of change can training for gender equality evoke?

Participants in the Virtual Dialogue broadly agreed that training for gender equality leads to different kinds of change, both individual and institutional. Key points raised by the debates included:

#### TRAINING AS A TRIGGER OF INDIVIDUAL CHANGE

- Awareness is the cornerstone of change – only when people become aware of gender inequality, its causes and consequences, can they begin to work towards change. By deconstructing gender norms and analysing the power structures that underlie gender inequality, training for gender equality raises individual awareness and fosters understanding of gender norms and power dynamics. This, in turn, influences mind sets and encourages people to change their own attitudes and behaviours, or advocate for change in their communities and workplaces.
- Training endows people with the capacities to develop strategies that bring about change, for instance, by equipping them with the skills to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate gender-transformative policies, projects or programmes.

#### TRAINING AS AN ACCELERATOR OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

- Training can accelerate change towards gender equality across two key dimensions of institutions, namely their “internal” dimension – i.e. the workings of the organisation, such as its internal stance on issues of work-life balance, equal pay, equal opportunities and workplace harassment – and their “external” dimension – i.e. the way in which the organisation implements its programmes and policies, deals with beneficiaries, and the technical skills of staff vis-à-vis gender analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Walters, H. (2007) *Capacity Development, Institutional Change and Theory of Change: What do we mean and where are the linkages*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> UN Women (n.d.) *Training for gender equality and women's empowerment*. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

<sup>5</sup> Callerstig, A.-C. (2016) “Gender Training as a Tool for Transformative Gender Mainstreaming: Evidence from Sweden”, in M. Bustelo, M. Forest and L. Ferguson (Eds.) *The Politics of Feminist Knowledge Transfer: Gender Training and Gender Expertise* (pp. 118-138). Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> UN Women Training Centre (2016) *Compendium of Good Practices on Training for Gender Equality*. Prepared by Dr L. Ferguson, E. Wretblad and R. Leghari. Santo Domingo: UN Women Training Centre.

<sup>7</sup> The points raised in this section are derived from the insights shared by the Webinar panellists and the contributors to the forum discussion, as well as the debates sparked by questions from the Webinar participants.

- Training cannot evoke institutional change if it focuses exclusively on the external dimension. If it does so, for instance, training may raise awareness among individual workers while the organisational culture around them remains gender blind.
- It is important to recognise that institutions are not just the “sum of individuals” who work within them. Institutional change through training requires the creation of a whole “gender system” by which gender awareness and transformative change become ingrained in the organisation’s “DNA”. In this way, institutions remain committed to gender equality even in the event of staff turnover.

*“Building the capacity of individuals doesn’t necessarily sum up to building the capacity of an institution [...] Looking at the institution as a whole, and not as the sum of individuals, is important and needs to shape the kind of training we provide, and the strategies we develop.”*

– Claudy Vouhé, Webinar Panellist

## THE NEXUS BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

- Individual and institutional change are interlinked. As individuals possess a range of “intersectional” identities, training people as “citizens” can have a knock on effect on their attitudes, practices and behaviours as “workers”. By the same token, transformative training for professionals can influence their personal stance on gender equality. For instance, when training for gender equality targets staff members in an organisation, it targets people as individuals but also starts a collective dynamic that can influence people’s private lives, workplaces and communities.
- While individual change can influence institutional change, and vice versa, this relationship is not automatic. Translating individual change into institutional change, for example, requires an organisation to be supportive of training for gender equality, and to enable staff to apply their new knowledge across the organisation’s external and internal dimensions. This could entail encouraging staff to discuss and seek to transform the organisation’s internal gender culture, while applying their new skills to external projects.

*“We cannot forget that people are never just one thing – they are never only individual citizens or workers. All of us are several things at the same time.”*

– Claudy Vouhé, Webinar Panellist

*“Does individual training lead to institutional change? Not always. People sometimes find it difficult to relinquish power [...] Legitimate change requires personal commitment and political will.”* – Lori Perkovich, Forum Participant

## How can training for gender equality bring about change?

Participants pointed out that there is no single “recipe” by which training for gender equality can bring about individual and/or institutional change – nothing works for all situations. Nevertheless, a number of issues are important to consider when seeking to evoke change through training:

- **Who is involved?** It is imperative to consider who is being targeted by training. For instance, if we are training staff in an organisation, we should recognise that training will only have a real impact if

we address these trainees *both* as workers and as individuals. Equipping trainees with the skills to apply gender analysis tools is useful, but will not lead to lasting change unless they also develop gender awareness as individuals. Training must consider the characteristics of trainees – their needs, sex, age, background, workplace seniority, and the context in which they live and work. Equally essential is considering who the trainer is – simply a good “gender technician” or someone who has analysed their own gendered construction and has the “*gender soul that training needs to bring about change.*” This ties into questions of the professionalization of gender trainers and their commitment to feminist principles.

*“Context matters. We need to think about what gender training is for, for whom it is planned, and for what purposes.”*

– Maria Bustelo, Webinar Panellist

- **What will the training entail?** To bring about change, training should go beyond the mechanics of skills development and enable both trainers and trainees to develop a sense of their own gendered selves. Thus, reflexivity is key, as is deconstructing attitudes and practices in each person’s private life, social life and working life. It is important for trainers to acknowledge their own biases so as not to alienate target groups, particularly managers or male staff members. Moreover, only by tailoring training to the specificities of the environment and the participants can we ensure the most realistic and effective training programme, pedagogies, methodology, methods, and targets. For example, training at the community level is distinctly different from training within organisations and therefore requires different elements to be in place, e.g. trainers who speak the local language, etc.
- **How will the training work towards change?** One-off trainings that are akin to “check-list” or “tick box exercises” cannot evoke meaningful change that is sustainable over time. Transformative training requires a continuous process of learning, employing reflective tools, fostering participation, and “*forging alliances between the private and professional selves*”. A **feminist approach** to training is an essential condition for change. This involves feminist pedagogies that uphold participatory reflection and collective knowledge creation; that address power structures and social norms; that deconstruct the “gendered self”; and that champion women’s empowerment.
  - Training should be approached **strategically**, considering all the actors and elements involved. This helps tread a line between adapting training to local contexts – e.g. when we may have to side step issues deemed “too critical” – and falling prey to cultural relativism.
  - The “gendered autobiography” is a useful tool to bridge the gap between awareness of inequality and willingness to engage in change. This exercise asks trainees to write about how they became gendered persons – reflecting on their experiences throughout their lives, and whether they have complied with, or defied, gender norms. They then share how they felt upon analysing the construction of their “gendered selves”. This enables trainees to clearly see how social norms affect their lives, how they may have been complacent about gender inequality, and how they themselves are the result of a gendered process.
- **Is training embedded in a broader change process?** In itself, training for gender equality is unlikely to spur long-term transformative change. To be truly effective, it must be part and parcel of a broader change process, wherein training complements, and is complemented by, other activities.

- For instance, as discussed above, lasting institutional change means making gender part and parcel of an organisation’s “DNA”. This is facilitated by integrating training for gender equality within wider change strategies – such as concrete projects for organisational or community-level change. This makes change through training sustainable over time, while following-up with learners to monitor long-term individual and institutional transformation.
- **Are decision-makers on board?** As decision-makers control the human and financial resources needed to support institutional change for gender equality, they must be involved in training processes – whether senior managers in an organisation, government officials, or community leaders. Training sessions may not be the best strategy to secure senior management support. Managers have busy schedules and may be reluctant to receive training together, so as not to expose what they do, and do not, know. Given these power dynamics, training initiatives have to be strategic when dealing with managers, forging the right alliances and making the right arguments.
  - Trainers can engage with managers through one-on-one dialogue and on-the-job support.
  - It is important to remind senior management that they are responsible for their organisation being in coherence with laws, policies and frameworks on gender equality. To this end, we can combine two kinds of arguments: legal and “efficiency” arguments, on the one hand, and human rights arguments, on the other.
  - Managers are not a homogeneous or monolithic group. Thus, it is vital to seek out allies within senior management –women and men – who are prepared to act on gender equality.
- **Are we targeting different levels?** Securing the buy-in of top-level managers ensures their support and the allocation of human and financial resources for gender equality initiatives. While engaging senior management is necessary to cement institutional change, individual-level change among staff is also key. If trainees feel that gender *matters* – as workers and as individuals – they will not be able to ignore gender inequality in their work or private lives. Bottom-up change through training can sustain wider institutional change and fosters ownership of change on the ground. In most cases, a dual approach is needed to engage both individuals and decision-makers. For change at one level to foster change at other levels, knowledge must be shared between these levels.
 

*“Change through training is like a puzzle that involves several interlinked elements. [...] We need to approach both the managers and the individual employees [... securing] top management buy-in [and then] getting employee buy-in for organisational change. Eventually, the employees are the implementers of change.” – Maram Barqawi, Webinar Panellist*
- **Are we following-up to ensure that change is sustainable?** Follow-up after training initiatives is vital to gauge and sustain change over time. As noted above, integrating training within broader change processes helps to make training sustainable while facilitating follow-up with
 

*“After the training, what next? What about the will of those people [...] with] power? [...] The follow-up that we are speaking of can be effective [only] in case there is leadership will.” – Alain Philippe Binyet Bi Mbog, Forum Participant*

participants. It also reinforces willingness for change among individuals, organisations, communities and decision-makers. Both training and broader change processes require management support.

- **Are we engaging with resistances?** By challenging the status quo and addressing power relations, training for gender equality invariably prompts resistances. Engaging with these resistances is an important part of training processes. It requires trainers to deconstruct their own biases and generate knowledge collectively with participants. Building alliances, with decision-makers and staff– particularly men – is a key strategy for addressing resistances towards lasting, positive change.
  - For instance, as many organisations are resistant to the term “feminist”, trainers can employ feminist approaches without referring to them as “feminist”.

*“You have to play feminist, but you don’t have to say it. This is a way of being strategic. There are a lot of resistances to the term ‘feminism’. But every good gender approach is always feminist.”*

– Maria Bustelo, Webinar Panellist

#### Change through Training: The Case of Madrid’s Complutense University (UCM)

To achieve individual and institutional change across UCM, its Gender Equality Unit pursues four interlinked aspects of change, using training for gender equality as a core part of its efforts:

1. **Awareness** of how gender relations impact everything at the university. Training is used to help the university community – staff, students and administrators – to “wear gender glasses” and evoke individual change;
2. **Willingness** to participate in gender change and feel that one is involved in the institution’s drive in towards gender equality. This second level involves both individual and institutional change;
3. The **implications of gender change** in projects and activities, which involves the entire university community thinking of how they can evoke change at the institutional level; and
4. Searching for **allies** across the university community, including among senior management.

#### How can we evaluate the change evoked by training for gender equality?

Despite the complexities of articulating change through training, participants highlighted the need to focus on long-term impacts, rather than only evaluating short-range outcomes. To do so they suggested:

- **Employing evaluation tools over the long-term:** Ex-ante needs assessments and ex-post assessments or qualitative studies are important to undertake and compare when assessing change through training. Tools like Kirkpatrick’s four-level model can measure change over time by looking at: 1) participants’ immediate **reaction** to the training; 2) how their **learning** and knowledge increased after the training; 3) how they **transfer** or apply their knowledge in practice; and 4) concrete **results** or changes in the participants’ wider environment. These results depend on the purpose of the training, e.g. has their institution enacted equal opportunities policies, or are women taking part in community decision-making? While the first two levels may be undertaken soon after the training initiative, levels 3 and 4 require the training team to monitor and evaluate change over a much longer time period. A one-off training to raise awareness is unlikely to spur change beyond level 2, whereas long-term training interventions may be evaluated across all four levels.

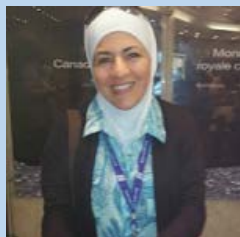
- **Considering multiple levels:** Identifying whether training has brought about tangible change means analysing different levels of change. At the individual level evaluators could determine whether participants are integrating gender issues into their work; at the household level, they could look at whether men are increasing their share of care work; and at the organisational level they could identify whether training created “change agents” who have sparked a “multiplier effect” and are helping to institutionalise knowledge from the training within the fabric of the organisation itself.
- **Indicators of sustainability:** It is not only important to change attitudes and behaviours through training, it is vital that this change is maintained over time. As institutions are key to maintaining the momentum for gender change, they should be a focal point for evaluation. A telling indicator is the involvement of the institution itself in gender change. Another is whether change survives staff turnover – i.e. if staff members who are heavily involved in promoting gender equality leave, does the organisation’s institutional memory around gender and its commitment to gender equality survive? Developing gender markers within organisations on the impact of commitments, communications and processes on gender equality, can be help to assess the long-term sustainability of change through training for gender equality.

*“The key word is sustainability. [...] We need to make sure that change was achieved in the household, the community and the organisation. We need to determine that stakeholders were able to collaborate together in order to sustain this change.”*

– Maram Barqawi, Webinar Panellist

## IV. Annex: Participants

### Webinar Expert Panel Members (3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2017)



#### **Maram Barqawi, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager, Jordan Education Initiative**

*Maram is a certified expert in Evaluation Practice (CEP)<sup>™</sup> from the Evaluation Institute and is an instructor for EvalPartners. She has over 15 years’ experience in M&E, performance management, SMART key performance indicators, and data collection and analysis. She has worked on result-based management, performance monitoring systems, capacity building, information technology, education and economic research. In addition to her extensive experience with USAID/Jordan M&E methodology, she has collaborated with UNICEF, UNDP and ESCWA to monitor the MDGs, and has carried out projects in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Jerusalem, Morocco, India and Tunisia.*



#### **Dr María Bustelo, Rector's Delegate for Equality, Madrid Complutense University**

*Maria is the Rector's Delegate for Equality and the Director of the Gender Equality Unit at Spain's Complutense University in Madrid. She also directs the university's Master's degree on the evaluation of programmes and public policies. She has published widely on a range of topics, including evaluation and gender training, having recently co-edited the book “The Politics of Feminist Knowledge Transfer: Gender Training and Gender Expertise” (2016). She is also a member of the UN Women Training Centre's Expert Group on Training for Gender Equality.*




#### **Claudly Vouhé, Founding Member, Genre en Action**

*Claudly has worked as a gender expert for over 20 years. She specialises in training and supporting gender mainstreaming, including gender responsive budgeting (GRB), mostly in West African countries. As a feminist, she has been working alongside women's organisations as well as international and national institutions throughout her career. She is also a founding member of Genre en Action, a francophone research and advocacy network.*



The success of UN Women Training Centre’s 10<sup>th</sup> Virtual Dialogue is grounded on participants’ engagement during the forum discussion and Webinar, whose insights form the basis of this Report.

 **100** Webinar participants  
**33** forum contributions



Alongside the insights of three expert panellists, the **Webinar** attracted 100 participants, 18 of whom asked questions that sparked further debate. Questions which could not be discussed due to time constraints were posted on the [CoP forum](#). The Webinar was introduced by Khamsavath Chanthavysouk, Training & Capacity Development Specialist at the UN Women Training Centre. Both the Webinar and the forum discussion were moderated

by Ruya Leghari, Consultant for the Training Centre. Over thirty **forum contributions** were received from CoP members. Overall, participants represented 17 countries.

The UN Women Training Centre would especially like to thank the following participants who contributed insights to the forum discussion, and questions to the Webinar:

Forum Contributors					
#	Name	Country	Organisation/Professional Affiliation		
1	Alain Philippe Binyet Bi Mbog (M)	Cameroon	OMEP (World Organisation for Early Childhood Education)		
2	Lori Perkovich (F)	United States	NGO representative		
3	Nudrat Mufti (F)	Pakistan	Business Development Consultant		
4	Claudy Vouhé (F)	France	Co-Founder, Genre en Action		
5	Maram Barqawi (F)	Jordan	M&E Manager, Jordan Education Initiative		
6	Ogbeyalu Okoye (F)	Ireland	Financial Advisor		
7	Nitin Chaurasiya (M)	India	Researcher		
8	Ruya Leghari (F) (Moderator)	Spain	Consultant, UN Women Training Centre		
Participants Who Contributed Questions to the Webinar					
#	Name	Country	#	Name	Country
9	Aisha Abdullahi	N/A	17	Taleba Jamise	Germany
10	Srilatha Batliwala	India	18	Eddah Kanini	Kenya
11	Khamsavath Chanthavysouk	Dominican Republic	19	Thomai Karathanou	Greece
12	Nikhil Kumar Chaurasiya	N/A	20	Da Eun Lee	Republic of Korea
13	Gladys Díaz	Guatemala	21	Lut Mergaert	Belgium
14	Sabrina Evangelista	N/A	22	George Nikola	N/A
15	Lucy Ferguson	United Kingdom	23	Ogbeyalu Okoye	Ireland
16	Elisabeth Hofmann	France	24	Michee Sagara	N/A