



Centre
for Systems
Solutions

EQUALITY, EQUITY, AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

THE CENTRE FOR SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS SURVEY REPORT



OCTOBER 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes and analyzes the survey conducted in July 2023 by the Centre for Systems Solutions (CRS), a non-governmental organization with 16 staff members and associates. The purpose was to evaluate employees' knowledge and awareness of equality (with the main focus on gender equality) and diversity issues in the organization. The document covers the replies obtained from staff members only, associates not being addressed.

The survey was conducted in line with the Gender Equality Plan (GEP), established by the Management Board in May 2022. Among the goals defined in the document, two are directly linked to the topic of equality, including gender equality, namely:

Target 1) Raising awareness of the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity
Target 6) Creation of measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

To track the progress towards the realisation of both targets, CRS set a goal to provide training for employees on equality issues, discrimination phenomena (including discriminatory language), violence (including that based on prejudice or gender), harassment, and sexual harassment. The training is to be preceded and followed by surveys. The survey conducted in July 2023 reports on the state of affairs before the training. It will be followed by a more extensive after-training survey in the future.

Glossary of the terms used in the document

Equality in the workplace refers to the idea that all employees should be treated fairly and without discrimination. It implies that everyone should have the same opportunities, resources, and benefits, regardless of gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.

Gender equality, also known as **sexual equality**, is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations, and needs equally, regardless of gender.

Promoting equality ensures that employees are not disadvantaged or discriminated against based on personal characteristics. It fosters a diverse and inclusive work environment.

Equity goes beyond equality and involves providing different levels of support or resources to employees based on their individual needs and circumstances. The goal of equity is to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, even if it means providing additional support to those who face disadvantages or barriers.



In grey are important definitions.

Equity recognizes that people have different starting points and challenges. It helps level the playing field by addressing systemic inequalities and providing accommodations or support to help underrepresented groups thrive in the workplace.

Workplace harassment refers to any unwanted behavior, conduct, or communication that creates a hostile or intimidating environment for an employee based on their protected characteristics, such as gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Harassment can be verbal, physical, or psychological and may include bullying, discrimination, or sexual harassment.

Addressing and preventing workplace harassment is crucial for maintaining a safe and respectful work environment. Harassment not only harms the well-being of the targeted individuals but can also lead to decreased productivity, increased turnover, and legal consequences for employers.

Creating a workplace that values equality, promotes equity, and prevents harassment is not only a legal obligation but also a moral imperative. Equality, equity, and harassment are related to the treatment of employees and have a significant impact on the overall work environment and employee well-being.

The following document offers an overview of the state of equality, equity, and harassment prevention policies in the Centre for Systems Solutions. It highlights key findings, challenges, and recommendations for improving workplace conditions. The data presented here is based on a comprehensive analysis of various sources, including organizations' procedures, internal policies - like employment-related procedures conditions, and survey findings.

Here's a breakdown of the survey's objectives:

Assess the Current State and Level of Awareness:

The primary objective of the survey was to understand the existing situation in CRS regarding equality and diversity. This includes gauging the employee's current level of awareness and understanding of these issues.

Support Gender Equality Plan Evolution: The survey was conducted to assist CRS in identifying potential actions for the evolution of their Gender Equality Plan. The organization is committed to promoting gender equality and intends to use the survey results to refine its existing plans or develop new strategies.

Map Knowledge about Discrimination Phenomena:

One of the specific goals was to gather information about CRS employees' knowledge regarding discrimination. This could help CRS identify areas where employees may need more education or training.

Address Violence and Harassment: The survey also sought to understand the knowledge and awareness of issues related to violence and harassment, especially those based on prejudice or gender. This information can be crucial for creating a safe and inclusive work environment.

KEY FINDINGS

Gender discrimination in the workplace is a well-documented issue that has persisted for many years. It refers to the unfair treatment of individuals based on their gender, typically favoring one gender over the other. Gender-based discrimination can manifest itself in various ways, including missed opportunities such as raises, promotions, or important task assignments.

There is a gender imbalance within the organization, both in terms of overall employees and in leadership roles. Let's break down the key points:

Overall Employee Gender Distribution

Men	Women
9/16 (56.25%)	7/16 (43.75%)

Management Board

Men	Women
2/3 (66.66%)	1/3 (33.33%)

Senior Staff Members

Men	Women
6/9 (66.66%)	3/9 (33.33%)

Partners (Advisory Body to the Board)

Men	Women
2/4 (50%)	2/4 (50%)

From this data, it's evident that women are underrepresented in both leadership positions (board and senior staff) and the overall employee population.

This gender imbalance is seen by the employees as an issue that needs to be addressed in the future recruitment processes.

Do you feel that any gender is treated equally in CRS?

If No or Sometimes, can you provide an example where genders have not been treated equally, either in the past or currently? Are there any specific fields in which you feel that men and women are not treated equally? Please list them.

Sometimes 1/16

Yes	
15/16	

I've not witnessed upfront discrimination, but I may be missing small micro-aggressions. Generally, there is a gender imbalance in the management and higher positions in the organisation. This should ideally be rectified. If we hire a manager / COO for example. Let's try to avoid a cis male.

Mostly yes, but due to the most of senior staff being males, it's sometimes difficult to say if the situation is experience/competences based or gender based

Do you think your organization should be doing more to increase gender diversity at your workplace, doing less, or is the amount of effort currently being used to increase gender diversity (gender ratio among employees) correct?

About right	More
13/16	3/16

It should be noted here that the Centre for Systems Solutions employs gender-neutral recruitment processes:

Uses inclusive language in job descriptions and postings. Avoids gender-specific pronouns like "he" or "she" and opts for gender-neutral alternatives such as "they" or "the candidate."

Reviews and revises job descriptions to eliminate any biased language that may discourage candidates from underrepresented genders.

Actively seeks out candidates from underrepresented genders in both masculinized and feminized areas.

Encourages employees to refer candidates from underrepresented genders.

Offers flexible work arrangements that can help attract and retain employees from diverse backgrounds.

Recognizes that work-life balance is important to all employees, regardless of their gender.

Creates visual content that promotes diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

Features images and stories of employees from diverse backgrounds and genders in marketing materials and on the website.

i Already implemented good practices are highlighted in pink.

When it comes to a set of principles for how employees are treated in terms of training, promotions, and raises the Management Board declares that they emphasize fairness, consider both individual performance and seniority, and take into account the financial condition of the organization. The majority of survey participants confirm that declaration. However, the specific implementation and details of these principles are not clear for some employees.

How well does the following statement describe CRS: "Employees are treated equally, participation in training and courses, promotions, and raises are given based on the material condition of the organization, seniority, and individual employee performance"?

Clarify if needed.

Somewhat well **2/16**



Not too well **1/16**

I work remotely - in fact I do not have full knowledge to answer.

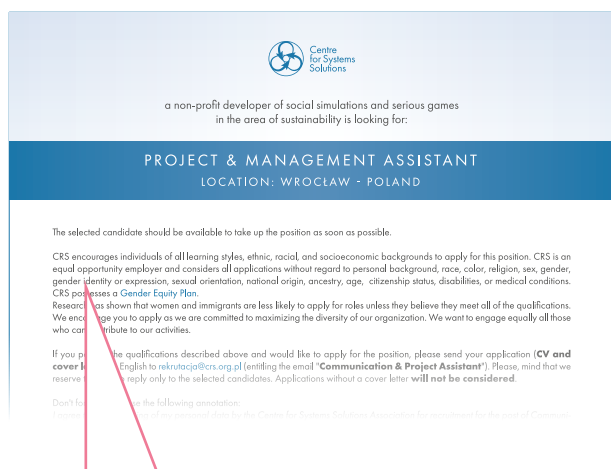
Seniors have more courses, travels and organized trainings options than juniors and mids.

I have no idea because these things are not transparent.

It's important for an organization to formulate and apply clear and transparent principles for how employees are treated in terms of training, promotions, and raises to ensure fairness and maintain employee morale. In this situation, it appears that the principles have been outlined and covered by exclusive documents, but the specific implementation and details are unclear to employees.

One of the good practices is to be **transparent about the financial condition of the organization** and how it may impact decisions regarding raises, promotions, and training opportunities. If there are budget constraints, employees should be aware of them.

The Management Board is transparent about the organization's financial position and how it may affect decisions about pay raises, promotions, and training opportunities. Once a year, during the CRS retreat, the financial status of the organization is presented to the staff.



CRS encourages individuals of all learning styles, ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds to apply for this position. CRS is an equal opportunity employer and considers all applications without regard to personal background, race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, citizenship status, disabilities, or medical conditions. CRS possesses a [Gender Equity Plan](#). Research has shown that women and immigrants are less likely to apply for roles unless they believe they meet all of the qualifications. We encourage them to apply as we are committed to maximizing the diversity of our organization. We want to engage equally all those who can contribute to our activities.

However, it is not enough to know the budget constraints. Employees should be aware of all the potential consequences and constraints linked to the future development of the organization. In practice, it is extremely difficult for an employee to get such an overview. By taking some further steps, the Management Board can help create a workplace environment where employees have a better understanding of how they are treated in terms of training, promotions, and raises, and where fairness is emphasized and practiced consistently.

Here are some steps that can help address this issue:

Communication and education: The first step is to communicate these principles clearly to all employees. This can be done through meetings, memos, or an employee onboarding handbook. The Equal Opportunity Commissioner or the Wellbeing Officer should ensure that everyone understands how these principles will be applied in practice. CRS can offer training sessions or workshops to employees and managers to ensure they understand the principles and how they will be implemented. This can also help address any questions or concerns to the Management Board.

Documentation: Providing written documentation, and procedures of the principles, including examples of how they will be applied. This can help employees understand the criteria for promotions, raises, and training opportunities.

Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing channels for employees to provide feedback or ask questions about the principles. This can be in the form of regular meetings, suggestion boxes, or anonymous surveys.

Performance Metrics: Clearly define the performance metrics that will be used to evaluate individual performance. This can include specific goals, KPIs, or other measurable criteria.

Seniority Consideration: Explaining how seniority will be factored in decisions. Will it be a primary determinant, or will it be considered alongside individual performance?

Appeal Process: Establishing a clear process for employees to appeal decisions related to promotions, raises, or training opportunities if they believe they have been treated unfairly.



In green are directives for further development and implementation.

Regular Updates: Periodically review and update of these principles to ensure they remain relevant and fair. Changes should be communicated to all employees.

Training for Senior Staff: Ensuring that managers and supervisors are well-versed in these principles and are capable of applying them consistently and fairly.

Legal Compliance: Ensuring that CRS's principles and practices are in compliance with all applicable labor laws and regulations.

The opportunities for women and individuals of other genders to advance, receive salary raises, and develop their skills can vary significantly depending on various factors, including location, industry, and organizational culture.

Historically, there have been significant gender disparities in many parts of the world, with women facing obstacles in terms of career advancement, wage equality, and access to skill development opportunities. These disparities have been the result of various social, cultural, and systemic factors, including gender stereotypes, workplace bias, and family responsibilities.

However, in recent years, there has been a growing awareness of gender equality issues, and many efforts have been made to address and reduce these disparities. Many countries and organizations have implemented policies and initiatives to promote gender equality in the workplace, such as pay equity measures, diversity and inclusion programs, and efforts to eliminate bias in hiring and promotion.

In summary, the opportunities for women and individuals of other genders in terms of career advancement, salary raises, and skills development are improving in many parts of the world, but disparities and challenges still exist.

In CRS, do you think that women and other gender have more, fewer, or the same opportunities to advance, salary raise, and skills development as men?

Advance

All genders have the same opportunities
16/16

Salary raise

All genders have the same opportunities
16/16

Skills development

All genders have the same opportunities
15/16

Women and other genders have fewer opportunities than men 1/16

Efforts to promote gender equality and diversity in CRS as a workplace are perceived very well by the employees. Only 1 out of 16 people assume that *Women and other genders have fewer opportunities than men*. The person is female and she has previously marked that the sentence *Employees are treated equally, participation in training and courses, promotions, and raises are given based on the material condition of the organization, seniority, and individual employee performance* describes CRS Very well. It is also one of 5 respondents who have ever considered gender may have been a factor in missing out on opportunities such as a raise, promotion, or important task assignment. It's worth noting that out of the 5 respondents, 4 are women.

Throughout your professional experience, have you ever considered your gender may have been a factor in missing out on opportunities such as a raise, promotion, or important task assignment?



Given the above, and the fact that, according to some, the skills development and training rules are not transparent, it is difficult to judge to what extent this assessment is based on the particular experience of this 1 respondent.

Here are some reasons why gender may be a factor in missing out on these opportunities:

Family Responsibilities: Women often bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities, which can limit their availability for work-related tasks or assignments, making it more challenging for them to compete for opportunities.

Unequal Access to Networks: Building professional networks is crucial for career advancement. Gender imbalances in networks can limit women's access to mentors, sponsors, and opportunities for skill development.

Lack of Representation: In many industries and leadership positions, there is a lack of gender diversity. When there are fewer women in decision-making roles, it can result in a lack of understanding and support for the career advancement of female employees.

Glass Ceiling: An invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching top leadership positions in organizations. This barrier can limit their access to promotions and important assignments.

Stereotypes and Biases: Stereotypical and biased perception of the capabilities and roles of men and women can influence decision-makers in the workplace. For example, the stereotype that women are less assertive or less suited for leadership roles can lead to them being passed over for promotions or important projects.

Implicit Bias: Refers to unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that influence decision-making. Hiring managers, supervisors, and colleagues may hold implicit biases that affect their perceptions of a person's abilities, leading to missed opportunities for individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles.

Maternal Bias: Mothers often face discrimination in the workplace due to concerns about their commitment, availability, or ability to balance work and family responsibilities. This bias can lead to missed opportunities for career growth.

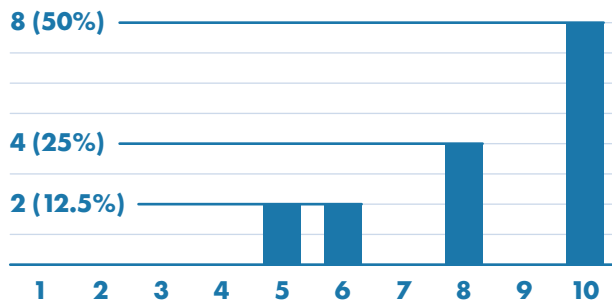
Gender Pay Gap: The gender pay gap, where women are paid less than men for equivalent work, can contribute to missed opportunities for career advancement. Lower salaries can affect a person's financial stability and make it difficult to negotiate for promotions or raises.

Harassment and Hostile Work Environments: Experiencing gender-based harassment or working in a hostile environment can deter women from pursuing career opportunities and advancement. Such experiences can also lead to missed opportunities as individuals may seek to leave the organization to escape such conditions.

Lack of Policies and Enforcement: Organizations that do not have effective policies in place to address gender discrimination and harassment may inadvertently perpetuate these issues, leading to missed opportunities for affected employees.

Organizations need to recognize and address these issues to promote gender equity and ensure that all employees have equal access to opportunities for career advancement and professional development. Legal protections against gender-based discrimination exist in many countries, and individuals who believe they have been discriminated against based on their gender can seek legal remedies. But first, they should feel confident and empowered to report any wrongdoing in the workplace without the fear of negative consequences. Based on the survey results we can assume that CRS employees feel secure in their workplace.

How secure do you feel in your current job role on a scale of 1 to 10? By secure, we mean that you are aware of your daily tasks and have the support of your supervisor. In simpler terms, this means that you should feel confident and empowered to report any wrongdoing in your workplace without the fear of negative consequences, such as losing your job or facing other unpleasant outcomes. And you are sure you will receive help.



Sexual harassment in the workplace is a serious issue that can have significant physical, emotional, and professional consequences for those who experience it. It involves unwelcome and inappropriate behavior or advances of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or intimidating work environment.

We can assume that no one has experienced sexual harassment in their current workplace.

Have you ever witnessed or experienced in your current workplace sexual harassment behavior (any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature)?

No
16/16

After taking the *Gender Violence in the Workplace* quiz, it's evident that the CRS team is highly aware of this issue.

Which of the following statements / behaviors is sexual harassment in the working environment:

- A. „Remember to come over to our room to have a drink tonight. It's been a while since we had a girl here.”
- B. Interrupt to stop sexually harassing jokes
- C. Peeping at colleagues changing clothes
- ✓ D. A and C

D.
16/16

Sexual harassment can occur in various forms, including:

Quid Pro Quo: This occurs when a person in a position of authority, such as a supervisor or manager, demands sexual favors from an employee in exchange for job benefits or protection.

Hostile Work Environment: This happens when unwelcome sexual comments, jokes, advances, or other behavior create an uncomfortable or hostile atmosphere for employees. These actions can come from supervisors, coworkers, or even clients/customers.

Cyberharassment: With the growth of technology, sexual harassment can also occur online, including through emails, social media, or other digital platforms.

Retaliation: When an employee reports sexual harassment and faces negative consequences or retaliation as a result, this is also considered a form of harassment.

Other results obtained from the quiz show that certain issues may not be fully understood by some staff members.

Gender equality is:

- ✓ A. Men and Women should receive equal treatment in all aspects of life
- B. Men and Women are treated based on their gender
- C. Men and Women need to live according to society's stereotypes about gender
- D. Women need to submit to men because Men are superior in all aspects

B. 2/16

A.
14/16

In what ways is discrimination against women in the workplace expressed?

- A. Wage gap between the sexes
- B. Restricting access to necessary medical services
- C. Limited opportunities for work and promotion because of issues such as marriage, and childbearing
- ✓ D. All of the above answers

A. 1/16

D.
15/16

Causes of gender-based violence and discrimination in the working environment:

- ✓ **A. Belittling, demeaning, and doubting the capacity of female workers; thinking that female workers are weaker and more restrictive than male workers**
- B. Respect women, do not want women to do hard work
- C. The will of the leader
- D. Requirements of the job

C. 2/16

A.
14/16 (87.5%)

One of the consequences of gender-based violence in the workplace:

- A. Men and women are free to pursue jobs
- B. Building a modern, healthy family with equal roles
- ✓ **C. Limiting the participation and contribution of women as employees, especially skilled workers**
- D. Equality in salary, bonus, and insurance regimes

C.
16/16

Which is NOT a toxic stereotype about house husband:

- A. Their life depends on his wife and his wife's family
- B. They are effeminate, weak, useless
- C. They are not worthy of men
- ✓ **D. They are happy, have fun and enjoy their choice of taking care of the family**

B. 1/16

D.
15/16

Gender-based violence in the work environment affects:

- A. Work productivity
- B. Profit of the company
- C. The relationship of employees in the working environment
- ✓ **D. All of the above**

B. 1/16

D.
15/16

In your opinion, what are the common stereotypes about women in the nature conservation industry?

- A. Strong and skillful
- ✓ **B. Weak, incapable of accomplishing tasks like men**
- C. Love nature and want to contribute to conservation
- D. Keep the balance between work and life

A. 1/16

B.
5/16

C.
10/16

Which of the following statements is considered demeaning, belittling women working in the nature conservation industry:

- A. "This knowledge is great, thank you for letting us know!"
- ✓ **B. "You are so skinny and pale. I think that you cannot do anything."**
- C. "It will be great if you pursue this path."
- D. "We really believe in your abilities and knowledge!"

B.
15/16

A. 1/16

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey findings and the current state of the Centre for Systems Solutions, here are some recommendations of the Equal Opportunity Commissioner to the Management Board.

To promote gender equality in the organization, the following steps could be considered:

Diversity and Inclusion Policies: Develop written documentation, and procedures of the principles, including examples of how they will be applied. Communicate these principles clearly to all employees. These policies should focus on gender balance in recruitment and promotion processes.

Gender-Neutral Recruitment: Ensure that recruitment processes are free from bias and that job postings are gender-neutral. Periodically review and update these principles to ensure they remain relevant and fair. Changes should be communicated to all employees. Encourage a diverse pool of candidates to apply for positions.

Regular Diversity Reporting: Regularly report on diversity statistics and progress in the organization. Transparency can encourage accountability and motivate efforts to address gender inequality.

Training and Awareness: Conduct training sessions to raise awareness about gender bias and discrimination in the workplace. This can help foster a more inclusive culture.

Mentorship and Sponsorship: Establish mentorship and sponsorship programs that connect women employees with senior leaders who can help guide their career advancement. This can help increase the number of women in senior staff and board positions.

Review Compensation and Benefits: Ensure that compensation and benefits packages are fair and equitable for all employees regardless of gender.

Supportive Policies: Implement policies that support work-life balance and family-friendly practices to attract and retain female employees.

Addressing gender inequality is an ongoing process that requires commitment and continuous effort from the organization's leadership and employees. By taking these steps, the organization can work towards a more balanced and inclusive workforce.

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