

# Action planning with the gender integration continuum 2 h 40 min



ACTION PLANNING FOR FORB

GROUPWORK  
GROUP EXERCISE

## About the exercise

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Best suited to civil society organisations/human rights defenders or public policy makers. This exercise requires a strong understanding of FORB and of gender equality on the part of both participants and the facilitator.

### PURPOSE

- To learn about the gender integration continuum as a tool for integrating gender into FORB programming/action planning.
- To support participants to adopt gender aware approaches to tackling freedom of religion or belief (FORB) related issues.

### DESCRIPTION

Participants work together to complete an action plan template, incorporating gender aware approaches. This exercise works well as a follow-up to problem identification exercises such as '[The problem tree](#)' exercise on page 158 and '[What's the problem?](#)' on page 175 and as a follow up to exercises in the FORB and gender chapter of this toolkit (page 96) e.g., '[FORB and gender equality](#)', '[FORB and family law](#)' or '[The expert advisors](#)'.



## Instructions

### RESOURCES

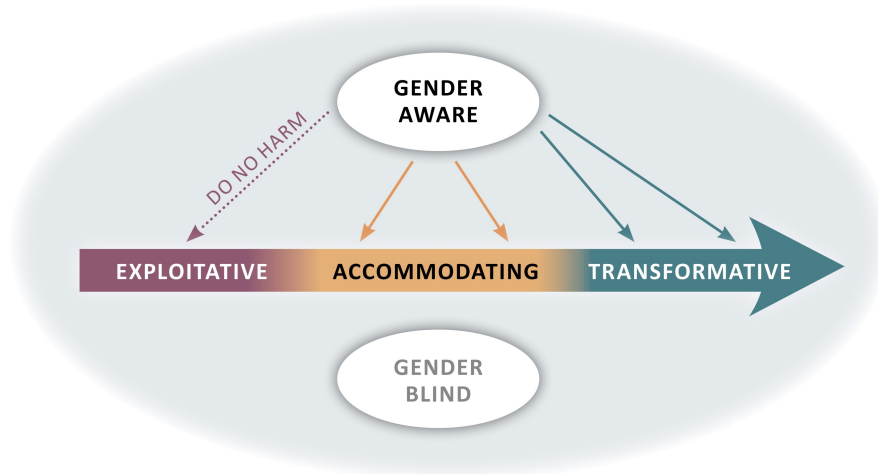
- Enough copies of the '[Action plan](#)' template for each participant.
- Enough copies of the '[Gender integration continuum action ideas](#)' handout for each participant.
- Flipchart sheets and marker pens.
- PowerPoint or other form of knowledge input on gender transformative approaches.

Find the template and handout at [www.forb-learning.org/exercises/gender-integration-continuum](http://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/gender-integration-continuum).

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Prepare a knowledge input on gender transformative approaches and ideas for action-planning (suggested content below).
- Prepare some examples of gender-blind/exploitative, gender accommodating and gender transformative actions from your own context.
- Write up the guiding questions on a flipchart sheet (see below).

## GENDER INTEGRATION CONTINUUM

**HOW TO INTRODUCE THE EXERCISE** 19 MIN

- **KNOWLEDGE INPUT – THE GENDER INTEGRATION CONTINUUM** (9 MIN)

The gender integration continuum is a tool for analysing the way in which projects and programmes manage gender norms and inequities. As such it is a relevant tool for action-planning and programme design related to FORB.

The framework helps us to distinguish between ‘gender blind’ FORB action-plans or programmes, which are designed without analysis of the differences in the FORB violations faced by men and women, or of the social and political roles, expectations, responsibilities, rights, and power dynamics between and among women and men, and ‘gender aware’ action-planning, which examines and addresses those violations, roles and power dynamics.

Gender aware action-planning can be evaluated along a continuum from exploitive to transformative. Exploitive ‘gender aware’ initiatives make use of existing inequalities and reinforce stereotypes. Even if the intention is to promote a positive outcome, the approach is harmful and can undermine the objective and exacerbate inequalities in the long term.

Effective gender aware actions fall on the continuum between accommodating and transformative. Accommodating means the action idea works around existing gender inequalities to try to improve the situation without directly challenging power dynamics. Transformative actions critically challenge gender norms, strengthen systems that support gender equality, change inequitable gender norms, and strengthen equitable gender norms.

The overall objective of gender integration in programming and action-planning for FORB is to ensure that women’s experiences of FORB violations are recognised and that activities contribute to women being empowered to claim and gain full access to the right. This generally involves moving toward gender-transformative actions – gradually challenging existing gender inequities and promoting positive changes in the gender roles, norms, and power dynamics that result in violations and a lack of freedom.

Let’s look at some examples:

- An all-male delegation of faith leaders meets with the Minister of Religious Affairs (also a man) to lobby him on the need to protect women from the risk of religious conversion through marriage (gender blind/exploitive).

**SHORT TALK**

**TIP!** Swap these examples for ones relevant to your context!

- A civil society organisation conducts consultations with minority women’s groups before conducting research on violations of the right to FORB and publishing a report on the findings (gender accommodating).
  - A network of civil society organisations works together to establish a female religious leadership forum, bringing together representatives from diverse faith traditions and geographical areas, committed to the promotion of both FORB and gender equality (gender transformative).
- **DISCUSSION** (10 MIN)  
Invite comments and questions on the presentation, then ask follow-up questions:
    - Can you think of any examples of FORB action/programming that is gender blind or exploitative from your context?
    - Can you think of any good examples of FORB action/programming that is gender accommodating or gender transformative from your context? Allow time for sharing of any inspirational examples.
    - In relation to issues you work on, do you think a gender transformative approach is possible in your context, or is it more advisable to focus on a gender accommodating approach?

#### HOW TO RUN THE EXERCISE 2 H 20 MIN

- **GROUPWORK** (1 H 30 MIN)

Divide participants into small groups and hand out flipchart sheets and marker pens. Give each participant a copy of ‘Action plan’ template and the ‘Ideas for action planning’ handout.

Tell groups that their task is to develop a gender aware action plan for tackling a FORB and gender related problem. They should do this by recreating the action plan template on their flipchart sheets and filling it in. Go through the various elements of the action plan template and point to the groupwork questions displayed on the flipchart sheet, remind participants of the gender integration continuum.

#### GROUPWORK QUESTIONS

- **PROBLEM:** Choose a specific FORB and gender equality issue that you want to tackle. Be as specific as possible – what are the problematic attitudes, behaviours and rules?
  - **GOAL:** What would gender transformative change look like in relation to this issue? For example, a positive change in gender norms, power dynamics or policies within an institution (attitudes, behaviours, rules).
  - **TACTICS/STEPS:** Can you draw on any of the suggested activities from the handout? Or adapt your own ideas so that they are gender aware (either gender accommodating or gender transformative)?
  - **ALLIES:** Are there women's groups you want to work with? Or male faith leaders who actively support gender equality? Or progressive scholars who support gender-sensitive religious interpretations?
  - How will we know if this action plan is having the desired effect? Is there some way in which this will be visible? What can we do to check?
- **GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND PLENARY DISCUSSION** (50 MIN)  
Invite each group in turn to present and receive feedback from the plenary (maximum 10 min/group).

Make it clear that the aim of this discussion is to support, encourage and help one another, developing our ideas together. It is not a competition to see who has the best action plan – none of us have had time to come up with the perfect plan!

**TIP!** A ready-made PowerPoint presentation/script introducing the action planning model is available in multiple languages in Session 8 of the [Local Changemakers Course](#).

**TIP!** Why not schedule a break or introduce an energiser at this point? ‘[Emoticons](#)’ on page 25 works particularly well with this exercise.

Use the following questions to lead the feedback discussion:

- What do you like about this action plan?
- Do you have any suggestions for how to make any part of the plan more gender transformative?

**HOW TO CONCLUDE THE EXERCISE** 1 MIN

Congratulate participants on their excellent work and their engagement. Emphasise that, regardless of whether they intend to use their action plan or not, they have learnt gender sensitive action planning skills that they can use in all kinds of change making processes they are involved in in the future. Outline next steps in accordance with the plan for your training and the process to follow it.

**Source**

Adapted from the Gender Integration Continuum training module, Interagency Gender Working Group, the FORB Learning Platform's online course 'FORB and gender equality – enemies or allies?', [www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender](http://www.forb-learning.org/courses/forb-and-gender) and the 'Our change journey' exercise from the Local Changemakers Course, [www.forb-learning.org/changemakers](http://www.forb-learning.org/changemakers).