

Learning Activity 3.3

The vulnerability of immigrant farmworkers to sexual harassment

Overview

A culture of sexual harassment and abuse predominates in sectors that are heavily dependent on seasonal, migrant and unauthorized workers. This activity looks at the issues faced by immigrant workers in global supply chains. Analyzing a documented case study will help participants realize the imbalance in power relationships that creates occasions for abuse against vulnerable women workers.

The method to be used is a structured discussion in two phases: first in small groups, to allow more confidentiality and opportunities for each of the participants to express their views and then in plenary, to reach a consensus on possible organizational changes to avoid this problem.

Note this Learning Activity is linked to [Case Study 3.1](#) → *The vulnerability of immigrant farmworkers to sexual harassment.*

Suggested time

90 minutes

Aims

- Gain an insight into how vulnerable and precarious workers are particularly at risk of gender-based violence.
- Appreciate the different pressures faced by managers, supervisors, workers and unions.
- Devise organizational solutions aimed at preventing sexual harassment.

Target group

Representatives from:

- Lead companies aiming to improve supply chain organization;
- Global, national and local employer organizations and trade unions;
- National and local government responsible for legislative implementation and factory inspection;
- Multi Stakeholder Initiatives and social auditors;
- Global, national and local NGOs and women's organizations.

Preparation

- Prepare the activity by collecting sources of information for the group work session, including a handout of Case Study 3.3.
- Provide contextual information and tips about the issues that can be discussed.

Setting

A room where different groups can easily be accommodated.

Materials

- Handout with case study
- Flip charts and post-it cards
- Markers
- Tape (if needed)

Time/Steps

Step 1: Background reading (suggested time: 15 minutes)

Participants are split into small groups and asked to read the information in Case Study 3.3 on immigrant farmworkers, which contains a story of a woman farmworker's experience of sexual harassment (Patricia).

Step 2: Small group discussion (suggested time: 45 minutes)

In small groups, participants are asked to discuss the following questions:

- Whose responsibility was it that Patricia was sexually abused? Consider the role played by the manager, Patricia and the farm employer.
- Why was Patricia particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse?
- What organizational strategies could be introduced on the farm to help protect female immigrant farm workers from sexual abuse?
- For the last question, ask participants to elaborate on a flip chart their vision of the existing workplace problems and organizational changes needed.

Step 3: Reporting back and plenary discussion (suggested time: 30 minutes)

- Each group will provide a brief report on their discussion to the plenary, presenting the flip chart showing workplace problems and organizational changes needed.
- In the plenary session, facilitate a discussion of the different inputs provided by the small groups and draw up an agreed group response to the organizational changes that are needed to prevent sexual harassment of vulnerable women workers.

How to adapt it

The session can easily be adapted to a full group discussion or a role-play. The aim should be to stimulate a discussion about the workplace problems and organizational changes needed to prevent sexual harassment. Discuss this in relation to the role of the manager, supervisor, worker and union and how they can resolve the problems identified.

To know more on how to design and run role plays you can consult the ITCILO Compass:

<http://compass.itcilo.org/methodology/role-play/>

Tips

- Give an introduction and set the scene to the activity, stressing how and why vulnerable women workers are more likely to be at risk of sexual harassment.
- Ensure that each group nominates a group member to provide the report back to the plenary session and clarify the timing of the reporting.