

## TOOL 4.8

### Terms of Reference for GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Assessment

- » **GOAL:** Provides a sample ToR for independent specialists to conduct employee interviews and surveys about GBVH
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources and Gender Focal Points

The purpose of the sample terms of reference (ToR) below is to recruit a specialist on gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and work to undertake an assessment of the impact of GBVH on your business, employees, and/or the communities in which your company operates and to make recommendations so that your company can improve its responses to GBVH.

It is generally recommended that you start with addressing bullying and sexual harassment and take steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace. Once you have made progress on these issues, you will have built the corporate culture that will allow you to support your employees further by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace. Each company using this sample ToR should assess what stage they are in terms of responding to GBVH.

This assessment must be carried out by an individual or firm that has demonstrated experience in GBVH principles, including the survivor-centered approach, best interest of the child, trauma-informed care, and assets-based approach.<sup>70</sup> Individuals or firms that do not follow these principles could cause harm by retraumatizing survivors or putting employees and themselves at risk of retaliation.<sup>71</sup> An external expert can also help with impartiality at the company level.

The individual or firm should also have demonstrated experience in workplace issues so the recommendations align with relevant employment laws and practices. If a company does not have the resources to hire a GBVH expert, it could consider seeking guidance from reputable online resources on next steps.

*Note: An initial GBVH and respectful workplaces assessment can help companies understand the different kinds of GBVH affecting employees and impacting community members, employee/community members' knowledge and attitudes towards GBVH, and help-seeking behaviors. It usually allows companies to develop necessary training, support, or referral services for staff and communities. Certain individuals or firm will be able to offer technical advisory throughout this process and use the data and information from GBVH and respectful workplaces assessments to advise on company actions beyond the initial assessment stage.*

<sup>70</sup> For more information on these principles, see the service provider guidelines in [TOOL 4.5](#).

<sup>71</sup> For more information on ensuring that an assessment is conducted safely and ethically, see [WHO Guidelines on Conducting Research on Violence Against Women](#).

## Sample Terms of Reference for External Expert

### Overview

GBVH is experienced in workplaces around the world. Global studies have documented the costs to business due to disrespectful behaviors in workplaces. GBVH occurring on the job can create a hostile work environment, causing employees stress, anxiety, and fear. It can also disrupt concentration, which can lower productivity and/or increase turnover. Violence that occurs away from the worksite such as domestic and family violence can also affect employee safety and wellbeing and impact job performance. GBVH has financial consequences for individuals and businesses as it can increase health and safety risks, reduce employee engagement and productivity, increase absenteeism and presenteeism<sup>72</sup>, turnover of employees, and damage companies' public image, business reputation, and social license to operate.

Anyone can experience GBVH, regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status. While men also experience forms of GBVH such as sexual harassment in the workplace, it is more often experienced by women and children. Other factors that increase the risk of experiencing violence include race, income, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

[*Company name*] is committed to a respectful workplace free of GBVH and is supportive of our employees and community members who may have experienced GBVH connected to the workplace. [*Company*] is conducting an assessment to understand the different kinds of GBVH affecting employees and impacting community members, employee/community members' knowledge and attitudes towards GBVH, and help-seeking behaviors so that we can develop necessary training, support, or referral services for staff and communities.

### Objective

The aim of this ToR is to better understand:

- The different kinds of GBVH that happen in workplaces in [*insert country*] and [*Company name*] specifically,
- The policies and procedures at the country and company level on GBVH,
- The types of people who may be at risk,
- What managers and workers think about these issues,
- The responses currently available through the company and the community, and employee and community members' perceptions about these responses, and
- What else might help the company better manage these issues both internally and at the community level.

<sup>72</sup> Where staff have compromised productivity due to GBVH and Respectful Workplaces issues.

The assessment should inform recommendations that will strengthen [company name]'s response to GBVH. You may want to consider improvements in:

- Policies
- Raising awareness about GBVH and addressing victim blaming
- Responding to GBVH in a survivor-centered, best interest of the child, trauma-informed, assets-based way, including how to report/receive disclosures, how to conduct investigations, survivor support, and proportionate disciplinary action
- Bystander action
- Monitoring and evaluation, including employee feedback through employee engagement survey<sup>73</sup>.

### Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive assessment exploring (but not limited to) the topics above.<sup>74</sup>

Consultants will be expected to undertake this assessment through surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews, and by reviewing policies, procedures, and data. Consultants should not ask employees about their personal experiences of GBVH.

Consultants must maintain confidentiality (unless the incident warrants escalation) and ensure discussions are handled with appropriate concerns for survivors' rights, needs, and wishes.

All findings should be kept strictly confidential. Individual experiences should not be included in the findings directly and no individuals should be forced to disclose experiences of GBVH. If individual cases are disclosed and need to be escalated, there should be a mechanism in place to handle the disclosure, provide help to the survivor, and protect the confidentiality of the complainant unless staff wish to publicly report their experience.

### Quality of Research

The quality of GBVH research by the consultant and data collection is determined by the extent to which data collection procedures are put in place and the principles of do no harm, informed consent, and anonymity are incorporated.<sup>75</sup> A range of mechanisms need to be put in place by the consultant to ensure and assess the quality of data collected. This includes:

- The use of a standardized and detailed training package for enumerators (if used).

<sup>73</sup> See [TOOL 4.7](#) for questions on employee engagement surveys.

<sup>74</sup> Depending on the size of the company and resources available, specify the assessment range. Decide whether to survey all employees or just a sample and define a sampling methodology. Confidentiality is key.

<sup>75</sup> M. Ellsberg and L. Heise, [Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists](#). Washington DC: World Health Organization, 2005.

- Clear explanations of the principles that consultants, interviewers, and enumerators must follow to ensure the research does no harm.
- Close supervision of interviewers during data collection, including interview observation, spot checks on data collected, etc.
- Quality control of data input, analysis, and peer review.
- Ensure sufficient self-care and debriefings for consultants, interviewers, and enumerators.<sup>76</sup>

Research and data collection processes need to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be aware that during the research process information may be revealed regarding personal experiences with GBVH.
- Make it clear to participants that information shared in the context of the assessment will be kept anonymous and confidential (unless the incident warrants escalation).
- The consultant must know how to identify trauma and have information available to refer individuals to service providers as needed.
- Include details about service providers to interview participants. At a minimum, consultants have an ethical obligation to provide a respondent with information or services that can help their situation.
- Escalation processes must be established prior to the beginning of any research activities that clearly outlines what should happen if employees, community members, researchers, or other stakeholders are at imminent risk of serious harm due to workplace violence and harassment connected to the company. The processes must respect confidentiality, be survivor-centered/in the best interest of the child and trauma informed. The guidelines should include who to contact and in what timeframes.

Escalation procedure for situations where there is imminent risk of serious harm include:

- Researchers will immediately report any serious safety issue to the company key contact.
- The company key contact will collect any relevant information related to the serious safety issue and report to the management team (via email).
- The company key contact will convene a virtual meeting of the management team (by video or phone conference) within 24 hours of receiving the report.
- The virtual meeting will review the case and determine a course of action.

<sup>76</sup> USAID, [How to Embed Self- and Collective Care in Organizations Addressing Gender-Based Violence](#), 2022.

- The company key contact will be responsible for implementing the decided course of action and reporting back to the management team.
- The company key contact will prepare a confidential incident report, including actions taken and final outcomes, to be shared with the management team and kept on record.

### Deliverables

- Study methodology and questions to be posed to staff, including safety and ethical considerations that will be applied (see above requirements), and policies and data to be reviewed.
- Draft report
- Final report with key recommendations for company action.

**It is generally recommended that you start with addressing bullying and sexual harassment and take steps to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) connected to the workplace.** Once you have made progress on these issues, you will have built the corporate culture that will allow you to support your employees further by responding to domestic or sexual violence that may occur outside the workplace.