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♀ WOMEN

We are all in for
equality



Organizing for a
just future
IndustriALL 4th Congress
Sydney | 4-7 November 2025

Actions and resources
from IndustriALL to
promote gender equality
and women's rights
2019–2025

Introduction

Since the last IndustriALL's Global Women's Conference in 2019, IndustriALL and affiliates have made significant progress in advancing gender equality across our industries.

This report was developed in preparation for the upcoming Women's Conference, held under the slogan *We are all in for equality*. This document is intended to guide discussions and offers an opportunity to give greater visibility to the work of women trade unionists within our structures, as well as the efforts of male allies leading up to the Congress: *Organizing for a just future*. This resource will help deepen reflections on the Congress theme through a gender-sensitive lens.

This report, designed as a resource guide,

- **Highlights key actions taken over the past six years and the impact they have had on our affiliates, women members and workers.**
- **Showcases initiatives led by affiliates to inspire other unions.**
- **Promotes materials, tools and resources developed by IndustriALL during this period to ensure better visibility and use.**
- **Brings together powerful discussions and expert contributions from IndustriALL's Women's Committee meetings on strategic gender equality issues. These passionate exchanges have raised fundamental questions that must shape the development of our union strategies.**

Much has been achieved, yet these gains stand in stark contrast to the challenges ahead. According to UN Women, in 2024 one in four countries has seen a regression in women's rights. Progress on equality, diversity, and inclusion is being rolled back. The human rights of members of the LGBTQI+ communities also face violent attacks. Despite strong resistance, hard-won rights are dismantled with disturbing ease.

The setbacks highlighted should not crush or silence our trade unions. This report is a record of our achievements and a toolkit to keep moving forward. What matters most is the fight itself for gender equality and women rights: the daily persistence of trade unions, the efforts to uphold and protect, through organizing, collective bargaining and campaigning, what's been achieved in the name of gender equality in our industries. We must reject every step and push back.

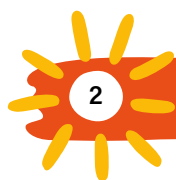
Over the past six years, IndustriALL has established an institutional framework to support progress. At our 2021 Congress, resolutions were adopted and statutes amended to strengthen inclusion of both women and young people. The Executive Committee also endorsed a new roadmap for better integration of gender across all areas of our work. While this document does not revisit those developments in detail, I want to emphasize their importance to everything we have accomplished.

I invite you to use this resource guide- to explore and apply everything IndustriALL has produced over the past six years.

This report does not capture everything. Across our affiliates, countless actions have been taken that go beyond what could be included here. We hope you will take the opportunity to share those experiences- your victories, lessons, and fights- during the Women's Conference and again at Congress.

It is a great achievement, but it's only the beginning – a lot still needs to be done.

Christine Olivier



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Following the Action Plan adopted at the 2021 Congress, the Women's Committee set key priorities for the current Congress period to advance IndustriALL's gender equality goals. The Executive Committee also approved a gender roadmap, highlighting the mentoring of young women as a strategic priority to foster female leadership in unions and industries.

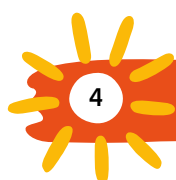
- Gender discrimination and the gender pay gap
- Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH)
- Decent work for women in supply chains and gender-responsive human rights due diligence (HRDD)
- Women's representation and participation in trade unions
- The future of work for women (Industry 4.0, women in STEM, Just Transition)
- Development of gender-responsive occupational safety and health (OSH) policies
- Improved maternity protection

Highlights in numbers: a sample of IndustriALL's projects results

Between 2021 and 2025, IndustriALL created meaningful spaces for women's organizing and leadership across the union movement. A total of 26,478 women were involved in 2,354 capacity-building events, leading to 53 new women's structures offering platforms for organizing and representation. This also led to efforts in bargaining to advance gender equality, including the negotiation of 70 gender-specific policies. These reinforced equality in union strategies and supported 144 campaigns focused on issues such as violence against women, maternity rights, and the ratification of ILO Conventions C183 and C190 in all regions, leading to the ratification of the conventions in Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.

Some regional examples-among many others- demonstrate this progress.

- In South Asia, 56,000 workers were organized in 2024, 34 per cent of them women.
 - India saw 31 CBAs signed in MNCs, with seven targeting women's recruitment and regularization, while SEWA offered heat wave insurance to 46,000 members.
 - In Cambodia, revitalization of affiliates' women's committee led to a 19.5 per cent increase in female union leaders- from 46 in 2023 to 55 in 2024.
 - Between 2018 and 2023, over 150 trade unionists, half of them women, graduated from the Middle East and North Africa leadership academy.
 - Tunisia's FGTHCC-UGTT organized 7,000 workers in one year, the majority being women.
- These results were made possible thanks to the support of many TUSO groups and IndustriALL affiliates. The details list of these supports will be available in IndustriALL Congress Report.



Building union power

Mentoring of young women trade unionists

Since June 2024, IndustriALL has developed mentoring projects for young women trade unionists with support from LO Norway (Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana), Latin America (Peru, Colombia), and more recently Apheda in Asia (Indonesia, Philippines). Thirty mentees are paired with 25 experienced women mentors. These initiatives build on the 2021 youth resolution and the 2022 roadmap for advancing gender equality through mentorship.

Inspired by UNI Global Union's model, the programme creates formal mentor-mentee relationships built on trust and mutual learning. Over 2.5 years, mentors guide mentees in setting union-related development goals and navigating their leadership journey. Drawing on the mentees' own knowledge, mentors help strengthen their skills and confidence.

The programme moves beyond conventional training formats. Each mentee defines her own focus, supported by guidance tailored to her needs. In parallel, mentees participate in national and regional workshops, online and in person, that reinforce skills in organizing, leadership, communication and collective bargaining with a strong gender lens.

The project empowers young women to take on leadership roles and build supportive networks that foster sisterhood and solidarity across the trade union movement. It also strengthens union structures to advance gender equality through collective capacity-building.

Six months after the start of the project, already, three mentees had managed to be elected in different positions in their unions, and one was elected to the health and safety committee at her factory.

Testimonies of mentees and mentors:

"I want to be a leader at the highest national level of my union because I would like to be able to directly influence policies that affect women in the workplace. The mentorship programme has outlined various activities that are going to help me. I have been able to campaign and stand for an election as the vice chairperson of my national union. And before now, it would not be easy, but my mentor has guided me, giving me all the things, my potential, what I can do. And I won. And I tell you, six months ago, I could not boldly do that."

Mentee from Ghana

"My goal with this programme is to unite women. I want to show that we all share the same drive to lead, because we are organized, strong and determined women. I hope leadership spaces for women become normalized within our unions and that we understand we not only can be there—we must be there."

Mentor from Colombia

 Watch the [video of mentees and mentors in Latin America](#), explaining their expectations of the project (in Spanish).

See other inspiring mentees' [stories](#) and [testimonies](#).



IndustriALL has developed [material](#) to guide the mentees and the mentors through their formal relationship. If your union wants to develop such a programme, the manual for mentees and mentors can support you.



Lessons learned:

Union support and leadership commitment are vital to nurturing young women leaders. Encouraged by early results, several unions now aim to extend the initiative to more young activists, women and men alike.

Benefits for mentees include identifying their own strengths and development needs, fostering behavioural change and self-confidence in male-dominated spaces, continued informal knowledge transfer and emotional support, resilience in navigating union and workplace politics, solidarity among women, strategic gender thinking, empowered activism and sustained mentorship beyond traditional training.

Mentors gain insight into young workers' needs, enhance support skills, broaden their perspectives through generational exchange, strengthen engagement capacity and build mutually rewarding relationships.

Unions benefit from stronger structures with young activists, new leadership pathways, increased gender equality, active engagement by trained young women, sustainable mentorship models and improved responsiveness to workforce diversity.

Reinforcing women structures

The strengthening of women's committees and networks across regions has played a vital role in coordinating joint actions among affiliates to promote women's rights. These platforms support policy development, alliances with women's organizations and joint strategies and campaigns. Notable successes include campaigns in the [Philippines](#) and [Malaysia](#) that have led to legislative changes and extended maternity leave.



After four years of campaigning, IndustriALL Philippine affiliates saw the Senate ratify ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in 2023. The women's committee drew momentum from IndustriALL's 2017 global pledge, successfully securing expanded maternity leave from 65 to 105 days with full wage payment. Post-2019 adoption of ILO C190 and Resolution 206, affiliates anchored their push in documented violence cases- 16,158 in 2022, rising from 12,492 in 2021 and 15,828 in 2020- and legal gaps in Philippine gender-related laws. Campaigning involved lobbying lawmakers, producing a position paper and developing national educational materials. The C190 push was mainstreamed through Labour Day, World Day for Decent Work, and International Youth Day activities.

Engaging men and developing men allyship



At the 2023 Women's Committee meeting in Cape Town, the discussion focused on how to engage men in advancing gender equality and feminist union agendas. ELA (Basque Country, [Spain](#)) saw less resistance when men were involved in the organizational culture shift and feminism's benefits were clearly explained. This work was guided by a 2017 gender equality survey that exposed structural biases and sparked dialogue across workplaces. CGT ([France](#)) conducted a similar internal survey, using the findings to drive change and manage resistance.

Crucially, engaging men must go beyond dialogue to redistributing power, requiring men to share leadership space and structural change to be built collectively.

IndustriALL created a gender equality task force in December 2022, made up of six women and six men, to engage men in gender equality policy development. As an advisory body to the Women's Committee, it contributed to the new policy on GBVH, misogyny, and sexism, and assessed the impact of AI on women's



employment, offering recommendations for integrating gender considerations into IndustriALL's and trade unions' AI strategies. The 2025 participatory audit called for deeper male engagement: promoting male allyship initiatives, through the task force, hosting joint sessions with the Women's Committee, and strengthening gender expertise to bolster the task force's advisory role.



Several trade unions have developed initiatives to engage men in the fight for gender equality, particularly around gender-based violence and harassment. In **North America**, USW and IAMAW launched "Be More Than a Bystander" to involve men as change agents. Öz Iplik-Is in **Turkey** offered training on balancing work and family, shifting attitudes on care roles.

The Imagine toolkit, presented in IndustriALL Women Committee meeting in November 2024, created by organizations in Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands, promotes male emancipation and gender equality. Though European in origin, it was successfully adapted in **Korea**, where NCTU trained 20 gender equality lecturers in 2023, prompting wider engagement and peer training in 2024. Its 19 interactive activities challenge gender norms; unions like the Metalworkers' Union reported strong uptake and positive feedback. Effective implementation demands thoughtful facilitation and navigating stereotypes

Developing a feminist approach to trade unionism

Aligned with IndustriALL's transformative agenda, the Sub-Saharan Africa office and FES-TCC have hosted four feminist schools since 2022, engaging over 50 women leaders, shop stewards and mentees. These trainings have reshaped women's perspectives on union roles through a feminist lens. Topics included developing feminist union agendas, building networks, dismantling toxic hierarchies and patriarchal power structures and using feminism to advance social justice and sustainable development.



At the June 2023 Women's Committee meeting, participants discussed the transformative power of feminist trade unions and the need to embed principles like transparency, inclusion, voice and co-creation into union operations. Affiliates shared bold efforts to become feminist unions. ELA from the Basque country in **Spain** started a full transformation using the participatory organizational change for gender equity methodology (Pro Equidad), identifying structural biases and launching a strategic gender plan to address them, with a commitment to participatory implementation. The plan is headed by a woman elected to the executive committee, supported by a working group responsible for roll-out across the organisation and among delegates. The union acknowledged the need to meet women's distinct needs and embrace feminist practices. A diagnostic revealed lingering heteropatriarchal patterns from its industrial roots. In **Sweden**, IF Metall formally adopted feminism in 2017, driven by grassroots demands and now focuses on reform through national negotiations and progressive collective agreements. In **France**, CGT has promoted a feminist identity since the 1950s, formalizing it in 2019. It enforces gender parity in its executive committee and sees resistance as part of the ongoing struggle for justice.



At the same meeting, a presentation was given on socialist feminism. Socialist feminism provides unions with framework to recognize care and social reproduction as central to wealth creation, demanding fair compensation and public support. Women representation alone isn't enough; unions must confront patriarchal structures and embed feminist principles in collective bargaining and leadership.

Unions should reframe reproductive labour as vital to wealth creation, make unpaid care work a central issue in negotiations and advocate for public services supporting intergenerational care. They must reject labour commodification, challenge neo-liberal norms and fight sexism within structures and bargaining practices.

To lead transformative change, unions need sharper feminist analysis, internal coherence and external legitimacy to confront capitalist patriarchy and uplift broader movements.

Feminist unions are defined not just by who leads them, but by how they lead: whether they promote care, inclusivity, democracy and justice—both within the union and in the societies they shape.

Fighting for gender equality and promoting women's rights in supply chains

Advancing pay equity



IndustriALL published, with FES support, a [toolkit](#) on pay equity detailing possible strategies for trade union around pay transparency and gender neutral job evaluation. It raises awareness on the undervaluing of women's work and the collective bargaining strategies to close the gender pay gap. It also addresses the issue of low paid jobs promoting approaches to raise the wage floor through living wage strategies.

With FES support, IndustriALL has also developed ready-to-use training [modules](#) complementing its toolkit, with practical exercises to calculate the gender pay gap, to compare equal value jobs, to organize advocacy campaigns within the union and conduct wage negotiations focusing on the value of work.

Regional trainings funded by FES were held in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2024, and in South Asia and Southeast Asia in 2025. These sessions engaged trade union affiliates to build capacity, strengthen gender equality strategies and foster cross-regional collaboration.



The **Kenya** Glass Workers Union (KEGWU) followed up IndustriALL's training workshop with internal meetings to raise awareness about the gender pay gap. In three companies, they conducted wage comparison surveys, advocated for gender-sensitive HR policies and incorporated pay equity concerns into CBA negotiations. As a result, they raised awareness, secured management commitment for wage audits, included gender pay gaps in bargaining proposals, encouraged women to voice concerns and strengthened collaboration with external stakeholders on gender equality.

Two other trade union victories to close the gender pay gap were celebrated in the Women's Committee in May 2024. Women in **Brazil** earn 21 per cent less than men, with the gap rising to 32 per cent in female-dominated sectors. To address this, Brazil passed Bill 1085 in July 2023 to [enforce equal pay and fight labour market inequalities](#). The law mandates workplace inclusion programmes and pay transparency reports for companies with over 100 employees. Severe penalties apply for pay discrimination, including fines up to ten times and compensation for moral damages.

In **Australia**, [paid parental leave will increase from 20 to 26 weeks by 2026](#), starting with gradual increases from July 2024. Four weeks of leave will be reserved for each parent to promote shared caregiving responsibilities. This reform supports gender equity and is expected to benefit 180,000 families annually.

Awareness still needs to be raised about the undervaluation of women's work in our industries. A campaign comparing the value of female- and male-dominated jobs could be critical.





IndustriALL features on gender pay gaps

- ↗ Achieving pay equity through collective bargaining
- ↗ Closing the gender pay gap
- ↗ Panel discussion on pay equity in IndustriALL 2022 Women Committee

Building work environments free from all forms of violence and harassment, including GBVH

The adoption of ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 in June 2019 marked a turning point in addressing violence and harassment in the world of work, especially GBVH. IndustriALL, in partnership with global unions, intensified its efforts through the joint campaign *ILO C190: It can change lives*, launched after the November 2019 Women's Conference to push for ratification and implementation of the convention. IndustriALL published, with the other sisters organisations, a joint [leaflet](#), as well as [artwork](#) and a [video](#).

From 2021 to 2023, IndustriALL, supported by FES, developed and delivered training materials across Asia, MENA, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, equipping 300 trade union leaders and staff to prevent and address GBVH in the workplace and their own unions through the application of ILO C190 and Recommendation 206. Affiliates deepened their understanding of the instruments and how to use them effectively.

Following the adoption of its new [policy](#) on GBVH, misogyny and sexism in November 2023, IndustriALL launched the No Excuse campaign to drive cultural change in industries and unions. The policy outlines actionable steps, with collective bargaining positioned as a central tool to shift entrenched norms and promote equality.



IndustriALL's training on GBVH and ILO C190 enabled affiliates to bargain for concrete protections, including establishing safe [houses](#). After years of lobbying by the IndustriALL **Indonesia** women's committee, the ministry adopted safe house policies for industrial zones and workplaces, offering secure spaces for women to report issues and receive factory-level training. The committee and affiliates also developed and negotiated [zero tolerance policies](#), now implemented in over 80 factories, rooted in ILO C190.

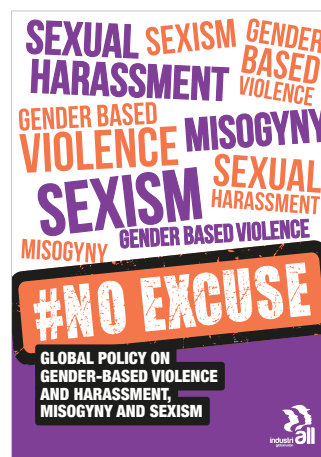
In **Tunisia**, a new [centre](#) run jointly by IndustriALL and the FGTHCC-UGTT for women was created. It is intended to be a place of education and empowerment for women workers and trade unionists. It will also be a support and safe centre for women victims of violence and harassment.

To date, 50 countries have ratified ILO C190.
Some of the successful campaigns for ratification:

- ↗ Uruguay
- ↗ Nigeria
- ↗ Peru
- ↗ Argentina



↗ PLAY VIDEO



↗ OPEN



Are you familiar with IndustriALL training materials on GBVH and ILO C190?

Joint global unions train the trainers toolkit on ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206):

 [Train the trainers toolkit](#)

 [Facilitator guide](#), also available in SP, FR, Croatian, TUR, POR

 [Activity workbook](#), also available in SP, FR, Croatian, TUR, POR

Joint global unions training toolkit on taking action on violence and harassment against LGBTQI+ workers and other vulnerable groups

 [Facilitator's guide](#)

 [Participant workbook](#)

Ready-to-use training modules on GBVH, prevention and handling cases of GBVH

 [Slides for training](#)

 [Briefing notes for trainers](#)

FR, SP, TUR, POR available upon request.

FAQ and guidelines for trade unions to deal with the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work

 [Part 1: Understanding domestic violence](#)

 [Part 2: Recognizing domestic violence](#)

 [Part 3: What unions can do to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work](#)

Material also [available in FR and SP](#)

A gender transformative approach to HRDD



The October 2022 IndustriALL Women Committee debates emphasized the need for a gender-transformative approach to human rights due diligence (HRDD), lamenting current frameworks like the UN Guiding Principles for neglecting gender-specific standards and perpetuating harmful norms. HRDD often becomes a checklist, missing deeper cultural and social dynamics. A truly gender-responsive HRDD must assess gendered business impacts, tackle intersectional barriers, engage meaningfully women and men from the start and drive structural reform through joint efforts of unions, companies, communities, and authorities. To promote this, trade unions should advocate for stronger HRDD laws, push for gender responsive global framework agreements, play an important role in terms of meaningful engagement by monitoring workplace risks and violations and share ground-level insights with companies, train on countering stereotypes and leverage investor interest in gender issues. Unions must also address HRDD's limitations: its lack of grievance mechanisms, weak access to remedy, and exclusion of SMEs. To ensure fairness, unions should advocate for comprehensive HRDD that covers the full supply chain and challenges cost-cutting practices that undermine living wages and safe working conditions. This makes union involvement crucial for closing gender gaps and demanding accountability. The debates in IndustriALL Women Committee in October 2022, highlighted the need to adopt a gender transformative approach to HRDD.



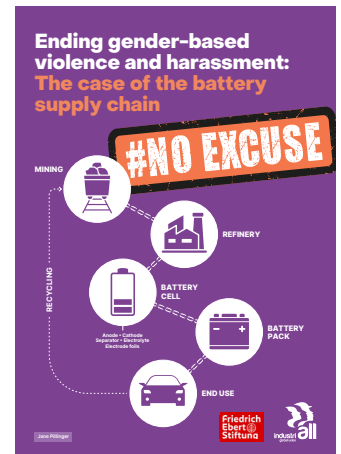
IndustriALL's training modules have enabled collaboration with H&M and Unilever through global agreements signed with both companies. H&M adapted the modules to develop internal training and launched joint sessions- together with IndustriALL and IF Metall- for the national GFA monitoring committees. This work contributed to the development of new global supplier guidelines to prevent and address gender-based violence and harassment. Guidelines are accompanied by capacity building and set a new industry standard. Pilot programmes are underway in selected supplier factories.

Similarly, IndustriALL, IUF and Unilever have co-developed a sexual harassment risk assessment toolkit rooted in occupational health and safety and aligned with ILO C190. It offers practical, preventive measures that involve workers in identifying and eliminating risks, including structural causes like unequal power and gender bias. Trainings at Unilever sites are expanding to embed these practices within company-wide systems.



For more guidance on how to lever HRDD to prevent and address GBVH in supply chains see IndustriALL [toolkit](#) **Ending gender-based violence and harassment: The case of the battery supply chain.**

IndustriALL has developed a toolkit aligned with ILO C190 that introduces a gender transformative approach into HRDD, which trade unions can use to hold companies accountable for their actions to address and prevent GBVH across the supply chain. The approach promotes inclusive risk assessments, effective grievance mechanisms, and meaningful worker participation. With intersectionality at its core, it addresses multiple layers of discrimination faced by women in precarious roles. The toolkit provides actionable strategies for unions in supplier workplaces and multinational companies alike.



The future of work of women workers

IndustriALL's Women Committee, with support from the gender equality task force, examined the gendered impacts of AI and proposed strategic union actions. New technologies generate new opportunities for gender equality but without a policy, the risk is high to exacerbate existing gaps.

AI systems, including algorithm management, often reinforce gender bias due to male-coded data and biased historic inputs, affecting recruitment, performance evaluations, and OHS and contributing to the gender pay gap. Only 22 per cent of AI professionals globally are women with a high dropout rate in STEM careers: 50 per cent drop out of French women in digital jobs after 8-9 years exacerbate the issue. These leaky pipelines in STEM are due gender stereotypes, poor work life balance, entrenched sexism and a lack of role models.

Automation has displaced women in feminized sectors like garment manufacturing. The growing demand for digital literacy and STEM qualifications in AI is creating significant barriers for women. Without gender-responsive transition plans and adequate re-skilling programmes, trade unions report that women's representation in the workforce in some workplaces has dropped from 90 to 60 per cent. Generative AI disproportionately threatens women's jobs, especially in clerical roles.

To counter these trends, unions should gather gender-disaggregated data to assess impacts on employment, wages, skills, health, negotiate for the conduct of AI system pre-installation risk assessment and follow up audits, and advocate for inclusive and ethical AI governance. Policy recommendations include prohibiting discriminatory AI systems, promoting women's STEM access, investing in anti-bias R&D and fostering equitable training and reskilling. These proposals shaped IndustriALL's gender-responsive AI policy, which also includes profit-sharing to close income gaps and calls for global AI standards supporting gender equality.



In October 2022, the Women's Committee addressed the urgent need to integrate a gender perspective into fossil fuel Just Transition efforts. Across many countries, transitions have excluded trade unions and communities, unfolding through top-down, technocratic and anti-democratic processes that cause job loss, community destruction and greenwashing. Women and unions are routinely left out of negotiations. Without a gender-transformative, worker-led approach safeguarding jobs, communities and energy security and sovereignty, Just Transition remains a flawed promise.

Transition in fossil fuels sectors is deeply gendered, disproportionately harming women in low-skilled roles with limited reskilling access and poor job transferability, especially in extractive regions. Apprenticeships are often inaccessible, and reskilling fails to reach these workers, as well as community care and service workers, reinforcing injustice. A genuine Just Transition must confront gender, racial, and social oppression, prioritizing worker- and community-led transformation rooted in equity, public services and full employment.

There is a need to conduct a feminist, intersectional approach that recognizes the ties between women workers, their communities and the care economy. It should also acknowledge the role of women supporting male relatives in the mines and others whose livelihoods hinge on mining. It calls for addressing gendered impacts like income loss, food insecurity and precarity.

Trade unions must lead and define the Just Transition they want, using their strategic leverage at production sites, especially in mining tied to EV supply chains, to build power. A feminist approach shouldn't be an afterthought; it must be central to how collective power is built. A true Just Transition depends on how unions build collective power, involving women and other marginalized groups, and form strong alliances with feminist, Indigenous, ecological and rights-based organizations to ensure equity, inclusion, and transformation.

A series of [events](#) over three years, run by IndustriALL with the support of the FES in Latin America, organized women trade unionists from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica and El Salvador, to develop trade union action plans to ensure a gender-sensitive Just Transition for the energy sector in the region. Affiliates in Sub-Saharan Africa also [strategize](#) on how to implement a gender responsive Just Transition in their countries.



In the Women's Committee meeting in October 2022, FO Metal (**France**), presented steps taken to increase inclusion and gender equality in a company in electronics where less than 20 per cent of the qualified white-collar staff are women. They reviewed job ads to eliminate aggressive, "warlike" language and promoted work-life balance. They pushed for more inclusive team-building activities and proposed creating women-only teams to boost representation and reduce isolation. They addressed integration issues for new women staff, advocated for family-friendly policies and ensured equal pay-including bonuses and performance rewards. FO Metal also negotiated mentoring and support schemes to help women overcome workplace sexism and partnered with associations to encourage young women's entry into technical fields.

IndustriALL's feature on Women in STEM: a challenge for trade unions

Gender and OHS: ensuring a healthy and safe world of work for all workers:



The integration of gender and an intersectional approach into occupational health was [discussed](#) at the Women's Committee meeting in May 2025.

Occupational health and safety has historically been centred on male-dominated sectors like mining and construction, overlooking the distinct risks faced by women. Women's work-related injuries, like stress, musculoskeletal disorders and exposure to psychosocial hazards, are often under-reported, under-diagnosed and under-compensated. Ill-fitting personal protective equipment, designed for average male body types, further compromises safety for women and many men who don't match these standards.

Gender inequality inside and outside the workplace exacerbates health risks. Women are more exposed to psychosocial stressors due to dual roles as paid workers and unpaid caregivers. These risks include burnout, harassment and discrimination. Biological differences, such as muscle mass, pain processing, and reproductive health, affect how women experience work-related hazards, yet are rarely considered in workplace design or toxicology standards.

Workplace segregation persists; women are concentrated in lower-paid, precarious jobs and often assigned more repetitive or physically demanding subtasks. Even within identical job titles, task distribution and exposure differ by gender. This leads to unequal health outcomes and compensation gaps.

Men face higher rates of visible occupational accidents and fatalities, but women entering male-dominated jobs without proper adjustments suffer more injuries. Fear of being perceived as weak discourages women from reporting issues, perpetuating a cycle of invisibility and inadequate research.

A gender-responsive OHS approach, aligned with ILO Convention 190, requires sex- and gender-disaggregated data, inclusive risk assessments and meaningful consultation with women workers and health and safety representatives. Intersectionality must be central, recognizing how overlapping identities (e.g. race, age, disability) shape exposure to psychosocial risks.

[Safety for all – the need for gender-responsive OHS](#)

Discussions on OHS and gender at regional and national levels:

-  [Ivorian union campaigns for gender equality in the mines](#)
-  [Empowering women in Tunisia: a workshop on health and safety](#)
-  [Malaysia: women union leaders reject unsafe and unhealthy working conditions](#)



Unite (**UK**) presented its work on menopause in IndustriALL Women Committee in May 2024. Unite's national women's committee had long prioritized menopause and menstrual health, but these issues remained confined to equality spaces until a groundbreaking survey, launched on World Toilet Day, exposed how deeply they affect jobs and pay conditions. Shocked by the results, the union shifted strategy, pushing sectoral approaches and emphasizing that workplace adjustments shouldn't rely on managerial discretion. With reports of women being forced into part-time work, this became central to Unite's pay equality agenda.

The campaign gained momentum across regional committees, aided by public support, celebrity voices and the union's previous work on period dignity. Unite developed model agreements with clauses for flexible schedules, PPE adapted to menopausal needs, and training for managers. Male allies played a key role, recognizing the impact on wives, daughters and colleagues and breaking the taboo around these topics.

Self-organized equality groups within Unite helped create a safe space to raise these issues, allowing gradual normalization and increased union-wide support. Agreements had been signed in May 2024 with Ford Motor, Nestle, Jaguar, Land Rover, Arriva Buses and Barclays Bank.

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