

Credocast

A publication of Credo Advisory

Vol. 3 Issue 4. September 2019



Gender Human Rights

Mainstreaming for Equality

3

The Concept

3

A Call for Equality

4

Engaging for Parity



3

The Concept

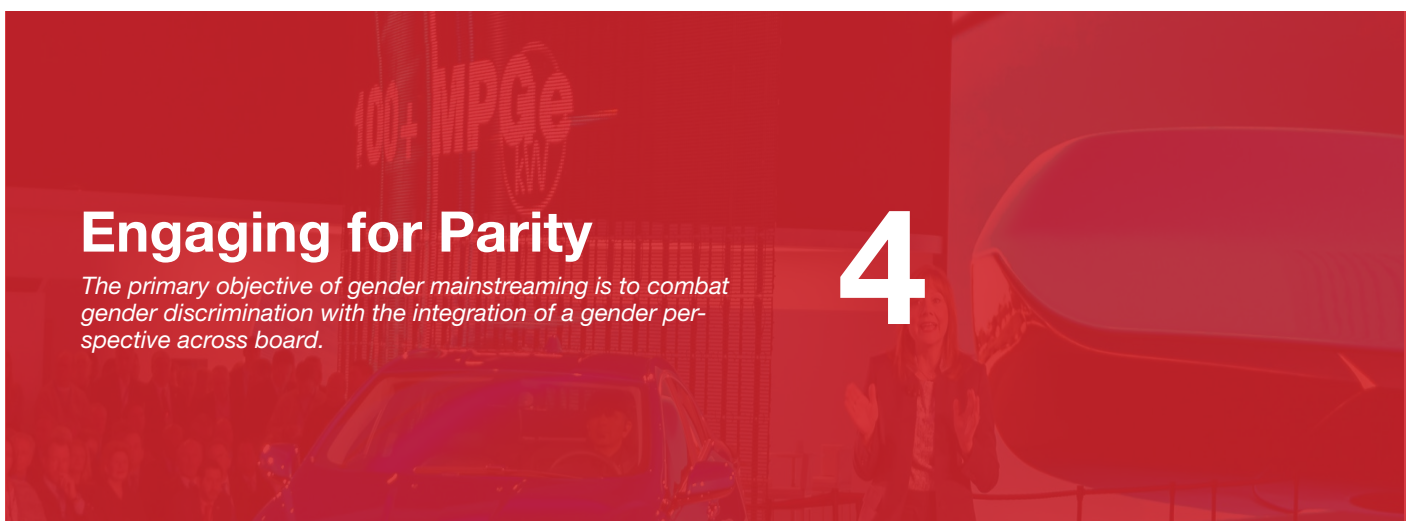
The idea of gender mainstreaming was first raised at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women, with a view of fostering equality between men and women.



3

A Call for Equality

In recent times, gradual changes have been made where women are slowly integrating into male dominated sectors such as politics, sports and technology.



4

Engaging for Parity

The primary objective of gender mainstreaming is to combat gender discrimination with the integration of a gender perspective across board.

About Credo Advisory

Credo Advisory is a strategic communications firm that specializes in designing and implementing strategic, operational and tactical communication initiatives. We provide a full suite of communications support to our clients, which include public communications and advocacy, government relations, community engagement, media relations, crisis communications, digital communications and capacity building.

Our mission is to develop bespoke communications products, activities and campaigns based on knowledge, research and industry insights. With our ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences and stakeholder groups, Credo's mission is to provide impactful strategic communications advisory from inception to implementation. At Credo, we are committed to improving the way societies communicate.

www.creadoconsulting.com



“The overall objective of gender mainstreaming is to have a society where women and men have equal opportunities, rights and objectives in all spheres of life.”

The Concept

Gender mainstreaming is a policy-making initiative aimed at addressing the welfare and concerns of men and women.¹ The idea of gender mainstreaming was first raised at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women, with a view of fostering equality between men and women.² Gender mainstreaming has subsequently been incorporated internationally as an agenda for realizing gender equality; which involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, application, monitoring and assessment of policies.³

The overall objective of gender mainstreaming is to have a society where women and men have equal opportunities, rights and objectives in all spheres of life. This can only be achieved with complementary strategic communications that fosters collaboration and inclusion across all sectors of life.

This thought piece highlights the importance of communications for impactful and sustainable gender mainstreaming and for promoting gender equality.



A Call for Equality

Since time immemorial, the rights and values of men and women have been unequal along economic, political and social lines. An example is the preference of male children over female children in many cultures. In recent times, gradual changes have been made where women are slowly integrating into male dominated sectors such as politics, sports and technology. However, there is a call for more inclusion and significant involvement of women across all sectors; specifically because of the strong correlation of gender parity to sustainable national development. Women in the Nigerian House of Assembly and the Senate make up less than 10% of all the representatives.⁴ The same can be found across the global political landscape where women, even though they represent half of the population, are grossly underrepresented and/or excluded from policy making and governance that affects the development and growth of a nation.

¹ Council of Europe – Gender Equality. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

² Council of Europe – Gender Equality. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

³ Council of Europe – Gender Equality. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

⁴ Konbini.com/lifestyle (2018) New Times Rwanda by Olanrewaju Eweniyi. Available at: <https://www.konbini.com/ng/lifestyle/women-now-make-68-parliament-rwanda/>

“ Government Legislatures and Parliaments, especially across Africa, need to embed gender mainstreaming as part of their polity. ”

In 2017, Nobel Peace laureate, Malala Yousafzai called for a state of emergency for education in Nigeria. She emphasized the need for the Nigerian Government to implement the Child Rights Act in all states; which will help foster the policy framework to drive the education of the girl-child.⁵

The sports industry is not excluded. Men and women do not get equal pay. Tennis champion, Serena Williams, has advocated for pay equality; imploring male players to be allies to their female colleagues and help push for equal prize and sponsorship remuneration.⁶

The movie industry has had its own fair share of gender inequality. This is evident in its long history of pay disparity, ageism against older actresses, sexual harassment and more. For example, there have been numerous public disclosures about supporting male actors earning more than leading female actresses in the same movies.



Engaging for Parity

The primary objective of gender mainstreaming is to combat gender discrimination with the integration of a gender perspective across board. The public and private sectors need to embed gender mainstreaming in all their strategic objectives. This sets the basis for promoting gender across all facets of society.

⁵ Punchng.com (2017) Education. Available at: <https://punchng.com/malala-calls-for-state-of-emergency-for-education-in-nigeria/>

⁶ SBS.com.au (2019) News, Jessica Washington. Available at: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/tennis-champions-drawn-into-equal-pay-debate>

“ Similarly, international and multi-lateral organizations have a significant role to play as gender equality is directly tied to the sustainable development goals. ”

Promoting Pro-Gender Policies

It is the responsibility of the government to implement policies that foster gender equality. Government parastatals, such as the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Nigeria or the Women’s Bureau under the US Department of Labor, should be a driving force in promoting these policies. Promoting pro-gender policies requires effective and integrated public communications. This can be implemented via engagement activities like women’s summits, marketing and promotional activities, tactical programming and broadcasts via national media, social media campaigns at the grassroots, etc.

Similarly, international and multi-lateral organizations have a significant role to play as gender equality is directly tied to the sustainable development goals. With their political and economic influence, organizations like the World Bank, United Nations, World Economic Forum, etc., can continue to communicate gender as a key component for economic development; with international summits focused on gender-based issues where country leaders and global figures converge for topical global discussions. Such summits, like the 2019 Global Summit for Women in Switzerland organized by the National Association of Women Business Owners, sustain the gender narrative across governments, multinational organizations, pressure groups and the public.⁷

Advocating Gender with the Media



In developing countries, radio is a fundamental tool to reach and sensitize the masses. Therefore, it can be a vehicle to promote women’s rights, gender equality and initiate a national discourse on women’s rights being human rights. For example, across Africa, Asia and Latin America, radio is raising awareness about the ills of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), other forms of violence against women, as well as promoting gender participation and leadership in government. The process is mostly supported by activist groups, civil society organizations and, in many cases, governments.⁸

Due to the commitment and public advocacy of women groups, FGM sensitization is disseminated in urban and rural areas so women are educated on their rights and can claim them.⁹ Sensitizing the public through various media channels, ranging

⁷ 2019 Global Summit on Women in Basel, Switzerland. Available at: <https://www.nawbo.org/events/2019-global-summit-women-basel-switzerland>

⁸ Womankind.org.uk (2019) Worldwide Equal. Available at: <https://www.womankind.org.uk/index.html>

⁹ Womankind.org.uk (2019) Worldwide Equal. Available at: <https://www.womankind.org.uk/fgm>

“ Since its emergence, social media has played an effective role in information dissemination due to its wide usage. ”

from editorial thought pieces to radio chat shows, can change mindsets and behaviours. Continuous radio and TV messaging prompts people to re-evaluate their personal beliefs about gender and stokes discussions in the workplace, schools, homes and beyond. An impactful sensitization video that resonated globally was an advert by Trocaire (an Irish development agency) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKhBnazwAV4>. The advert passed a powerful message on eradicating gender inequality.

Social Media for Social Engagement



Since its emergence, social media has played an effective role in information dissemination due to its wide usage. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn serve as dynamic channels to educate about gender and foster dialogue. An example is Procter & Gamble's (P&G) [#LikeAGirl](#) which went viral and became a social media sensation gaining more than 63 million views on YouTube alone.¹⁰

In the same vein, P&G stirred the [#WeSeeEqual](#) movement to mark the [International Women's Day in 2017](#). With this gender social media campaign, the brand sought to initiate a pro-gender world through gender equality. It leveraged insights to disclose gender prejudice, take action, spark conversations and set prospects that stimulate cultural and general change.¹¹ P&G explained that [#WeSeeEqual](#) would focus on leveraging its voice in media and advertising, aiding to eliminate gender-based obstacles on education for girls and economic prospects for women and eradicating hindrances to equal representation of women at all levels of its firm.¹²

¹⁰ The Drum (2017) Gender Equality Movement in Advertising are making gains by Lisa Lacy. Available at: <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/04/10/gender-equality-movements-advertising-are-making-gains>

¹¹ The Drum (2017) Gender Equality Movement in Advertising are making gains by Lisa Lacy. Available at: <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/04/10/gender-equality-movements-advertising-are-making-gains>

¹² The Drum (2017) Gender Equality Movement in Advertising are making gains by Lisa Lacy. Available at: <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2017/04/10/gender-equality-movements-advertising-are-making-gains>

“Countries across the globe have been able to capture gender-based data across various topical issues.”

Men as Gender Champions

Partnering with male advocates, who serve as gender champions, can increase awareness on gender equality. Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary General, shared his excitement about being an international gender champion. He further encouraged other senior leaders to be part of this campaign for equality.¹³ The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, in 2018 issued a press release on gender equality. He said standing up for gender equality is important to the Government of Canada.¹⁴ Trudeau explained that the government has taken action to protect gender-diverse Canadians from discrimination, reduce the gender wage gap, support women entrepreneurs and prevent gender-based violence.¹⁵ Having more prominent male champions, who openly speak about gender equality and have a proactive interest in promoting gender mainstreaming, would help sustain the gender parity movement.

Communicating Gender Data



Countries across the globe have been able to capture gender-based data across various topical issues. Communication experts have the responsibility of adapting data in visually appealing ways that can elicit interest and awareness to, subsequently, change behaviour. Some communication tools that can be used for gender data include infographics, testimonial videos and photos, repeated media messaging, etc. Communicating data driven messaging is crucial in benchmarking and monitoring progress and impact. For example, a 2018 survey result showed that only 25 of Fortune 500 companies have women CEOs.¹⁶

¹⁶ Business Insider (2018) Business insider Publication by Mark Abadi. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/fortune-500-companies-women-ceos-2018-8?IR=T>

“Gender advocacy using strategic communication tools can help to create awareness as well as stimulate behavioral impact.”

Credo Experience

Credo Advisory supported the development of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. The strategy incorporated various communication materials and initiatives to promote gender parity and inclusion in a male dominated sector. Awareness and advocacy activities included a mentoring programme, gender workshops, success story profiles, etc. Communication initiatives were also developed to promote the achievements of young female students participating in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes.

Credo is at the forefront of promoting gender equality, therefore, we ensure that our team are recruited using a gender-balanced approach.

Conclusion

Gender advocacy using strategic communication tools can help to create awareness as well as stimulate behavioral impact. A gender-responsive policy ensures that the needs of all citizens are equally addressed. Nations therefore need to play a major role in entrenching gender mainstreaming into the political agenda. Rwanda has set the pace for the world to follow by intentionally including women at the highest levels of government. Out of 80 parliamentary seats in Rwanda, women occupy a groundbreaking 54 seats.¹⁷ Other countries can take a cue from Rwanda by mainstreaming gender through intentional advocacy and engagement.

¹⁷ Konbini.com/lifestyle (2018) New Times Rwanda by Olanrewaju Eweniyi. Available at: <https://www.konbini.com/ng/lifestyle/women-now-make-68-parliament-rwanda/>