

Proven
Solution

Engaging Men As Allies



HeForShe



Barclays

Empowering male allies to champion gender equality

Global Context

Equality and diversity sit at the heart of business success. Companies with gender diverse senior management teams perform better – those in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams are 21% more likely to outperform on profitability.¹

However, there remains a continuing challenge. In the FTSE 100, senior women on boards represent only 14% of executive directors and, despite some progress, the proportion of women on Executive Committees is around a quarter.² In 2020 a survey of Fortune 500 companies found those with high levels of gender equality in management positions had 35% better return on equity. Yet women held only 29% of senior leadership positions worldwide.³

One solution is to create a movement of empowered Male Allies to help tackle gender inequality and accelerate change. Barclays has a long history of progress towards gender equality and men have always been part of that journey. As a founding member and

corporate Champion within the UN HeForShe movement, Barclays committed to engaging men in the drive to increase the number of women in senior leadership.

By empowering Male Allies, it has created a powerful network of global advocates, pledging to take action to be effective allies for women at work, accelerate gender parity and achieve a more equitable workplace.

“At Barclays, we aim to build a culture that makes everyone feel included, providing equality of opportunity for talent at all levels and from all backgrounds to grow.

Increasing the number of women in senior positions is extremely important to me, and

it’s integral to our long-term goal. There is still much more to do. We need to speed up progress by improving the effectiveness of our existing initiatives and sharpening our ability to understand data and listen to colleagues.

Ultimately, we are trying to build an organisation that is more equal at all levels. We do this both because it is right and because it makes us a more effective organisation. I know that social change is slow and incremental, but what makes the difference is the commitment of individuals to making change happen. Our Male Allies play a vital role in accelerating that change.”

Jes Staley, CEO



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1. Mckinsey/delivering through diversity report

2. HA report <https://ftsewomenleaders.com/>

3. <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-management/>

Key Stages of Implementation

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Step 1 Identify early adopters and senior advocates

Identify early advocates, those who are already involved in positive work on gender or are visible role models challenging gender bias, in particular senior leaders.

At Barclays, thousands of male colleagues wanted to help achieve gender equality, but there was no clear initiative in place to give them opportunities to make a difference. So they created one. Chapters of Male Allies driving gender equality initiatives were formed voluntarily in key global locations and

in business-aligned groups. They supported the principles of HeForShe, and encouraged others to pledge to take action towards gender parity.

Executive sponsorship was also important. Led by the CEO, Barclays senior leadership team fully supported the focus on Male Allies. Jes Staley, Barclays CEO and HeForShe Champion, became the accountable executive for the gender agenda, and reported regularly on the steps being taken by the business to improve gender equality, as well as the steps he personally was taking as a male ally. This included gender reporting in business reviews – results on a gender diversity dashboard were discussed at the CEO Monthly Business review meetings with the Group Executive Committee.

Male Allies are empowered to directly support their female colleagues and challenge inequality in their day-to-day working lives.

Step 2 Involve men in the conversation

The UN says: 'It's not a women's issue, it's a human rights issue.' Refocusing a colleague network on to gender can ensure men are more actively involved.

Barclays' colleague diversity network, 'the Women's Initiative Network', originally focused on women. In 2017, it was relaunched as 'Win, the gender network'. This was a step to breaking down perceived gender barriers and empowered more men to become engaged. Win became a home for cohorts of Male Allies – many developed within the network and others in business units. A series of Male Allies events were held across the globe, sharing information and ideas, and building support.

These events opened the door for more men to join the conversation and better understand the challenges women were facing. The network ensured that it had

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both a senior male and female sponsor moving forward, and focused not only on key dates like International Women's Day but International Men's Day too.

Male Allies are empowered to directly support their female colleagues and challenge inequality in their day-to-day working lives. It is a way of giving men permission to strive for equality, establishing a platform for their work.

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Step 3 Develop impactful tangible actions

By taking positive steps and leading by example, Male Allies can help transform environments to become a more equal playing field.

Sharing the small steps that allies can take can encourage more men to make change happen and challenge inequality. Barclays

encouraged colleagues to pledge their support for gender equality and over the past five years these pledges have evolved into the following tangible actions to ensure all voices can be heard, irrespective of gender.

Male Allies:

- Mentor a female rising star or are reverse-mentored by one
- Act as role models, visibly challenging gender bias
- Actively develop female talent, hold career conversations and provide guidance
- Create ex-officio roles for aspiring female leaders
- Champion flexible working and role-model it themselves, enabling all colleagues to balance work and life without having to scale back
- Understand gender data in their area around the three critical levers: hiring, promotions and retention
- Ensure there is no bias in hiring decisions and actively provide targeted opportunities for female colleagues to progress
- Recognise the impact of intersectionality – that the many elements of an individual's identity overlap and therefore the disadvantages they face in society are compounded.

Step 4 Promote the work and insights of male allies

Use events and communications channels to profile Male Allies and promote their insights. This raises awareness and builds momentum both internally and externally.

Highlighting the experience of Male Allies and sharing their stories encourages others to become agents of change. Barclays developed an online portal, 'men@barclays', which explains what it means to be aware of inequalities in the workplace. It shares resources and guidance on how Male Allies can partner with female colleagues to tackle gender inequalities in everyday lives.

International Women's Day, International Men's Day, Barclays own Citizenship and Diversity Awards, and cross-network intersectional events are opportunities to showcase the views, insights and achievements of Male Allies. This reinforces

to women that gender equality remains a key strategic priority across Barclays and inspires men to gain perspectives on how respective experiences differ from those of the different gender.

Conclusion

Male Allies play an important role in facilitating the empowerment, development, progression, and ultimately the success of female colleagues.

Opening up conversations and building understanding of different perspectives are part of the responsibility everyone has to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality. Cultural change does not happen overnight, but the small changes made by Male Allies can have a ripple effect throughout an organisation.

Barclays experience has shown that empowering men to be involved in the drive towards gender equality can only accelerate the pace of that change.

Resources

Interviews of Barclays colleagues demonstrating the importance of sponsorship and allyship:

[!\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a_img.jpg\) **10 colleagues from around the globe share how Barclays is promoting gender diversity in the workplace.**](#)

Interview including Jes Staley, Barclays CEO and Gender Executive Sponsor, and HeForShe Champion:

[!\[\]\(248b91fcdac4810ffd15cf33fb6aec6f_img.jpg\) **British Vogue publisher Vanessa Kingori MBE and former Paralympic athlete Bonnie St John joined Barclays' Group CEO Jes. They share thoughts on the importance of sponsorship for women's careers – and why 'nuance and flexibility' are essential.**](#)

Barclays Diversity and Inclusion Report:

[!\[\]\(c1168d6a8b365d11e842ece304635fa7_img.jpg\) **An overview of the Group's approach to building a more inclusive company, including a progress report on each of our five pillars of diversity and inclusion**](#)

Other partners focused on male allies:

[!\[\]\(d3e32d099174a7c248ec1f564ee4f69c_img.jpg\) **https://www.catalyst.org/research/engaging-men-resources/**](https://www.catalyst.org/research/engaging-men-resources/)

[!\[\]\(40770d9ed6ed4f1222ebf89a1396e8b2_img.jpg\) **https://www.everywoman.com/male-allies**](https://www.everywoman.com/male-allies)

[!\[\]\(ccd39a0dc6d5afcc151e1371f9462f58_img.jpg\) **https://diversityproject.com/events/2021/male-allyship-how-men-can-become-better-allies-women**](https://diversityproject.com/events/2021/male-allyship-how-men-can-become-better-allies-women)

Contact

To support our focus on embedding a culture of inclusion, we encourage more colleagues to become allies. We support them to take conscious steps to make everyone feel they belong and develop empathy towards another group's issues. We are happy to share our experience of supporting allies.

For more information please contact:

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