

**Effective gender equality
training: analysing the
preconditions and
success factors**

**Main
Findings**



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This publication summarises the findings of the in-depth study of gender-equality training performed in the framework of EIGE's 2-year project, Gender Training in the European Union: Mapping, Research and Stakeholders' Engagement. The in-depth study looks at the preconditions and factors contributing to effective training delivery. The study was undertaken by ICF Consulting Services Ltd. (previously: ICF GHK) on behalf of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

ICF Consulting Services Ltd. (previously: ICF GHK)



The work on this publication was coordinated by EIGE's Gender Mainstreaming Team.

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The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality.

Further information can be found on the EIGE's website (<http://www.eige.europa.eu>).

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Main findings

European Institute for Gender Equality, 2014



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Foreword

Equality between women and men is recognised as a fundamental principle of the European Union (EU) and a precondition for its sustainable development. As EIGE'S Gender Equality Index shows, **the EU is only halfway towards a gender-equal society; with an average EU score of 54** (where 1 stands for no gender equality and 100 for full gender equality). The European Commission's annual gender equality report for 2013 shows, under current rates of progress, it will take almost 30 years to reach the EU's target of 75 % of women in employment, 70 years to make equal pay a reality and 20 years to achieve parity in national parliaments. This report aims to support speeding up the change.

In December 2013 the Council of the European Union issued *Conclusions on the Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality*. The conclusions recognised the need to develop and strengthen the gender mainstreaming expertise of civil servants. This was listed among the necessary preconditions for improving gender equality in EU Member States. The Council called on Member States to strengthen expertise in gender equality and gender mainstreaming among public officials. This includes the provision of gender equality training on a regular basis.

EIGE wishes to support the efforts of EU Member States to develop the gender mainstreaming competence of staff in public administration. The research in this report, based on in-depth analysis of case studies, helped to identify the preconditions

and success factors contributing to effective gender training. This publication is part of EIGE's broader effort to help improve learning and experience exchange processes within and among the Member States and to facilitate renewed attention to capacity building on gender mainstreaming in the European Union.

Gender equality training makes a difference. EIGE's research provides evidence of the effectiveness of gender equality training at an individual, organisational and societal level. Provided it meets certain quality conditions, gender equality training facilitates a positive change in the process of policymaking and produces more efficient actions in the area of gender equality policy implementation. The long-term impact of gender equality training enables the narrowing of gender gaps in different policy areas.

EIGE's research gives an in-depth analysis of the conditions that need to be met for gender training to bring about desired outcomes. It shows that training needs to be institutionalised, systematic and of a high quality if it is to achieve long-term effective change.

We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this publication, and especially to the research team. Using the main findings and recommendations highlighted by this report, EIGE will continue its work on gender mainstreaming and gender equality competence development. We are confident that action based on good knowledge and skills will bring us closer to achieving gender equality objectives in the EU.

Virginija Langbakk
Director

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)



Introduction

Promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination in the countries of the European Union has been a long-standing policy focus of the European Union.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to achieve equality between women and men, based upon the realisation that no political area or subject is 'gender neutral'. It is used to integrate gender concerns into all policies and programmes of the European Union and the Member States. According to the Council of Europe, 'gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking' ⁽¹⁾ (1998:15).

Gender equality competence refers to the skills, attributes and behaviours that people need in order to mainstream gender effectively. It implies theoretical and practical knowledge of the various tools that can be used for this process. It requires recognition of the fact that no political and organisational action is gender-neutral and that women and men are affected by policies in different ways ⁽²⁾.

Still, progress in implementing gender mainstreaming strategy has been slow, despite numerous political commitments. Gaps in the gender equality competence of civil servants are among the main reasons.

Gender equality training is an educational tool with the purpose of making policymakers and other actors in the EU and Member States more aware of gender equality issues, building their gender competence and enabling them to promote gender equality goals in their work at all levels.

In December 2013 the *Council Conclusions on the Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality* recognised the need to develop and strengthen the gender equality expertise of civil servants. It called on Member States to:

'strengthen expertise in gender equality and gender mainstreaming among public officials across different sectors, including through the provision of gender equality training on a regular basis, taking into account the needs of participants ⁽³⁾.'

The European Institute for Gender Equality (hereafter, EIGE or the Institute) supports EU institutions and Member States in their efforts to develop the gender equality competences of civil servants

⁽¹⁾ Council of Europe (1998), *Gender Mainstreaming — Conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices*.

⁽²⁾ Blickhäuser Angelika and von Bergen Henning (2007) *Fit for Gender Mainstreaming*, Berlin. Available at: Blickhäuser Angelika and von Bergen Henning (2007) *Fit for Gender Mainstreaming*, Berlin. Available at: http://www.gendertoolbox.org/toolbox/toolboxEN/Downloads/5_What%20Materials/Engl_PDFsMaterials/5.1.3%20What%20is%20gender%20competence_eng.pdf

⁽³⁾ Council's Conclusions on the *Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality*, adopted on 10 December 2013. Available at: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2017605%202013%20INIT&r=http%3A%2F%2Fregister.consilium.europa.eu%2Fpd%2Fen%2F13%2Fst17%2Fst17605.en13.pdf>



As part of this effort in 2011 EIGE launched a 2-year project on gender equality training in the European Union ⁽⁴⁾.

Through this project EIGE sought to expand knowledge of gender equality training as a tool for gender mainstreaming, to support the transnational learning and knowledge-sharing process and to improve the framework for capacity-building in the European Union and its Member States.

During the **first year** of the study the researchers mapped gender equality training activities, tools and trainers in the EU ⁽⁵⁾. Building on these findings, the in-depth study conducted in the **second year** examined the key features that contribute to effective gender equality training, why gender equality training is not always effective, and the extent to which effective gender equality training contributes to the implementation of gendermainstreaming strategies in the EU.

What are the critical success factors that ensure that gender equality training contributes to effective gender mainstreaming? What is the impact of effec-

tive gender equality training programmes from an individual, organisational and societal perspective? These were the **key research questions** asked. To respond to them, an **in-depth analysis of the five selected case-studies** in Germany, Greece, Austria, Finland and Sweden was conducted ⁽⁶⁾.

The evidence gathered helped to identify what institutional changes and conditions are essential for gender equality competence development to be an effective tool for implementing gendermainstreaming strategies. Additionally, the impact of gender equality training was explored from an individual and organisational perspective. Researchers also attempted to examine the wider societal perspective though unfortunately this was not without considerable difficulties ⁽⁷⁾.

Thus, the study provides both research data and practical information to the civil servants at the EU and Member State level on how to best build the gender equality competence of staff in public organisations. It also explicitly demonstrates why this is essential.

⁽⁴⁾ The terminology of the study evolved in the course of this 2-year project. Initially the research team referred to 'gender training' as a tool for effective mainstreaming and later refined the terminology to 'gender equality training' to stress that the aim of the activity is not only to make people more gender aware but also to achieve gender equality. It also gradually became clear that training is only one (admittedly the most widely used) form of the gender equality competence development initiatives carried out in the EU. Therefore, the study team adopted a more inclusive terminology: 'gender equality competence development' to refer to the initiatives being carried out to improve the gender knowledge and skills of civil servants and policymakers, initiatives which encompass gender equality training.

⁽⁵⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (2012), Mapping gender training in European Union and Croatia. Synthesis report. <http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/mapping-gender-training-in-the-european-union-and-croatia-synthesis-report>

⁽⁶⁾ The five case-studies included: (1) In-house training activities provided by the Department for Gender equality Policies and Legal Matters at the Division for Women and Gender Equality (Austria); (2) The Training and Consulting Project of the Gender Mainstreaming Development Programme Valtava (Finland); (3) Gender-training activities coordinated by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (Greece); (4) The Government of Berlin's approach to gender competence building (Germany); (5) Training for local authorities by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sweden).

The researchers looked for cases where gender equality training was better institutionalised and had been a strategic priority for the implementation of gender mainstreaming for approximately 5 years, so that sufficient time had passed to ascertain the impact of the training programmes. The Greek case-study was also selected to examine the resistances that the General Secretariat for Gender Equality faced in its effort to institutionalise gender equality training as a tool to effective gender mainstreaming and to further explore how identified challenges were addressed.

⁽⁷⁾ The research team looked at how the training participants perceived the effectiveness of gender equality training. The evidence of attitudinal and organisational changes introduced after participating in training programmes was also collected. As explained later in the text, it was difficult to objectively assess the actual long-term impact.



Gender equality is on the political agenda but improving the specialised knowledge of civil servants is rarely prioritised

Initial research on gender equality training in the EU revealed some important issues in the provision, scale and implementation of gender equality training.

At least some form of commitment to gender mainstreaming exists both at the EU level and in all of the Member States ⁽⁸⁾. Still, gender equality training — as a tool for building the competences of relevant players — **is a low priority, both in policymaking and its implementation**. With the exception of the recent Council Conclusions ⁽⁹⁾, key policy documents do not explicitly focus on the relevance of building the gender equality competence of public administration staff in the EU.

Some gender equality training is provided in almost all Member States. **Most training tends to be generic, occasional**, usually, the declared aim of such training is to increase the awareness of policymakers specialising in specific policy fields, and to broaden their understanding of various aspects of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in their area of work. In reality, going beyond introductory sessions appears problematic for a number of reasons, among them the **lack of commitment and funding for long-term and in-depth approaches to competence development**.

The mapping study identified a number of obstacles to delivering tailored and advanced gender equality training at the national level. These are summarised in the box below. Tackling these obstacles is closely related to meeting the preconditions for effective gender equality training, identified through the in-depth study on gender equality training.

Key obstacles to delivering tailored and advanced training

- Lack of political will.
- Failure to acknowledge gender as a relevant dimension in everyday work.
- The resources allocated by the authorities that commission gender equality training tend to suffice for generic training only.
- Difficulties reaching participants 'in need': those who have least gender knowledge do not demonstrate willingness to attend gender equality training.
- Difficulties in finding gender equality trainers with sufficient expertise on specific policy fields.
- Resistance to gender equality-related change within organisations.
- Limited commissioned training time.
- Limited gender equality training resources that are tailored to different policy areas.
- Limited knowledge of the benefits of gender equality training.

⁽⁸⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (2014), Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality. Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States. http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/MH0213481ENC_0.pdf

⁽⁹⁾ Council of the European Union (2013), Conclusions on the Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality



Tailored training materials linked to specific policy areas do exist. However, most often they address the integration of the gender dimension in the fields of employment, social affairs, education, justice, freedom, security and health ⁽¹⁰⁾. Practical resources are only scarcely available in other policy areas.

Building on these findings, the research team developed the following hypothesis for the in-depth study: **the effectiveness of gender equality training increases if certain institutional preconditions and content-related factors are met.**

⁽¹⁰⁾ For more information on tailored training materials see EIGE's database of gender equality training resources (<http://eige.europa.eu/resources/gender-training>) and an online toolkit developed as part of this study on methods and tools for capacity-development in gender mainstreaming (EIGE, forthcoming).



Main findings

Institutional preconditions need to be met to make gender equality training work

All the case-study countries (Germany, Greece, Austria, Finland and Sweden) have strong legal and policy frameworks in favour of gender equality. To varying degrees, gender equality training in these countries is in the process of being **institutionalised**.

The case-study research identified five institutional preconditions to be met to make sure that gender equality training is effective.

Institutional preconditions for effective gender equality training

1. Existence of a legal framework and policy commitment to gender mainstreaming that sets concrete gender-competence development goals.
2. Existence of an organisational strategy for gender equality competence development that sets a clear framework for action (goals, actors, resources, responsibilities, time-frames, etc.).
3. Availability of sufficient resources for the fulfilment of the organisational strategy.
4. Staff being actively encouraged to attend gender equality training, either through introducing attendance requirements or adopting innovative engagement strategies.
5. Existence of an adequately resourced accountability system to monitor and evaluate implementation.

Precondition One: Existence of a legal and policy framework for gender mainstreaming that sets concrete gender competence development goals

Institutionalisation refers to a process of formalising gender equality competence development within a country and/or an institution, through a set of policy commitments, obligations and procedures to ensure the systematic, consistent and regular provision of gender equality training.

Embedding the development of gender competence, e.g. through training programmes, in national strategies for gender equality signals collective acknowledgement of the importance of gender knowledge and awareness. It also entails a longer-term framework for competence development action.

The investigated case-studies indicate that institutionalisation of gender equality training legitimises change. It also ensures the sustainability of improvements because it frames a more systematic and consistent use of gender mainstreaming tools and the transfer of gender equality knowledge.



Precondition Two: Existence of an organisational strategy for gender-competence development

To ensure the effective implementation of the legal and policy framework, the development of gender competence must be integrated into the institution's (gender equality) action plan. In doing this, an institution sends a clear signal of:

- a collective commitment to the advancement of gender equality and mainstreaming;
- the willingness to prioritise gender capacity-development as an internal process and
- the scope of their ambition to change.

If the institution's action plan defines the roles and responsibilities across the different levels, managers become responsible for supporting, sharing and promoting the commitment to gender equality. This leads to a more systematic effort to identify and address any existing knowledge and capacity gaps that stand in the way.

Precondition Three: Sufficient resources are provided for the fulfilment of the organisational strategy

The case-studies underlined the importance of devoting adequate resources to gender equality training. Policymakers need to bear in mind that learning to integrate gender concerns into everyday activities is a long-term process. Therefore adequate resources — both human and financial — are necessary for arranging training sessions as well as ensuring that their impacts lasts.

Although challenging, it is necessary to make sure that staff members are able to allocate sufficient time for gaining gender equality knowledge and capitalising on it in their work.

Precondition Four: Staff being actively encouraged to attend gender equality training

Where gender equality training is optional, attendance rates are usually low. With the exception of Sweden, this was confirmed in all case-studies. There are two main reasons why participation rates remained low: (1) there is evident disparity between perceived and actual knowledge of gender equality; and there is (2) limited understanding of the relevance of integrating gender to day-to-day work.

Resolving the issue of low participation is key to delivering effective training. Even where gender equality training attracts adequate numbers of participants, it may not reach the individuals with the greatest knowledge gaps. Compulsory training is among the innovative strategies that have been rarely but rather successfully used. Further options include obligatory gender mainstreaming training for new employees, particularly those in decision-making positions. Where relevant, knowledge of gender mainstreaming issues could be added to civil servants' job descriptions.

Precondition Five: Existence of an adequately resourced accountability system to monitor and evaluate implementation

The success of gender equality training relies not only on setting concrete objectives, but also on having clearly defined, specific accountability mecha-



nisms in place. Such mechanisms ensure that the training sessions take place, that they are of a high quality and that they are followed up.

A designed accountability system can be organised to involve single staff members or wider networks. Allocating adequate resources is essential: for a single staff member it could be too large a task to enforce their organisations' gender-mainstreaming strategies and ensure progress in competence development. Organisations also need to make sure that the departure of responsible staff does not automatically result in the loss of institutional memory.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of training programmes is an essential remedy to 'fix' the identified failures and foster positive and long-lasting results of learning initiatives. Measuring the extent to which training brought about change within or outside of the organisation proved to be difficult and/or subjective. Still, it is necessary for gender mainstreaming to be taken seriously and for gender equality goals to be more than mere talk.

Gender equality training makes a difference

In the course of the study the effectiveness of gender equality training was defined as the extent to which training led to its desired outcomes. Its conceptualisation went beyond a simple measurement of immediate outcomes based on participants' satisfaction. The researchers made an effort to track more substantive and longer-term changes resulting from the knowledge and skills gained through training. This included looking at impacts at the individual, organisational and broader societal level.

Gender equality training changes individual perceptions and ways of working

In-depth study indicated that at an **individual level**, the main impacts of gender training were:

- raised awareness and shifted perceptions about the importance of gender (i.e. perceiving gender equality as something that can benefit everyone);
- encouraged individuals who had an interest in gender equality to use practical resources and introduce gender considerations in their work;
- improved the technical skills of participants to use gender mainstreaming tools such as gender analysis and gender budgeting.

Austrian interviewees felt that gender equality training led staff to approach gender budgeting differently. A public sector representative commented on a shift in attitudes as a result of the training:

'Generally the awareness towards gender equality has significantly risen. Departments generally accept that they have to consider gender, they regularly ask voluntarily for support for their projects.'

The researchers were able to identify **factors** that potentially increase the impact of the training on individuals. These start with making sure that staff members are motivated enough to improve their knowledge, which extends to hiring gender trainers with adequate qualifications.



Motivating training participants to attend training programmes and effectively use the knowledge gained in their day-to-day work was a key factor identified in the case-studies. In those cases where training was not compulsory, those who went to training had an initial interest in gender equality issues and were keen to develop the relevant skills in order to mainstream gender in their day-to-day work. Where training programmes were compulsory for all members of staff within an organisation, the varying levels of participants' motivation posed a challenge to gender trainers.

Tailoring the content of training programmes is a potentially effective way to engage (even the most sceptical) participants and increase the positive effects of the programmes. Participants need to see the relevance of the training to their day-to-day work and understand how gender mainstreaming links to their responsibilities. If participants are unclear about the relevance of the training then they are unlikely to engage. It is important that the trainers understand the policy and organisational context in which the participants work. Finding gender trainers with expertise and in-depth understanding of different policy areas was a challenge that was commonly mentioned by those who commission gender equality training.

Integrating gender considerations into all types of professional training programmes and activities to promote learning in the workplace (e.g. theme days/events) was reported to have been an effective way to reach a wider audience. Through such activities institutions could reach — and raise the gender knowledge of — a wider circle of staff members than through specific gender equality training programmes. Such measures also helped to bring about a more specific awareness of the relevance of gender in specific policy areas. However, as men-

tioned above, finding trainers with policy-specific gender expertise is not easy.

In general, the **approach** that makes gender equality training effective could be described as **mixed**. It combines theory with practice and facilitates participatory discussions. Purely theoretical training was the least welcomed by the participants. Though there are good arguments for retaining some background theory and concepts ⁽¹⁾, making it clear how to apply the theory in the workplace is a key success factor.

Participatory and experiential learning facilitated the development of the practical skills of gender mainstreaming and made it easier to better tailor the training. Case-studies, role play and group discussions were considered to be effective ways to demonstrate the importance of gender in the participants' day-to-day work. Group exercises were also seen as essential in learning how to use the knowledge in practice ⁽²⁾. Such an approach stimulated participants' feedback to trainers' suggestions and allowed them to develop their own ideas and proposals ⁽³⁾.

Whilst trainers' skill is an important factor in ensuring the effectiveness of all types of training, the approach to **quality assuring their skills and competences** varied across the case-studies. In those cases where gender equality training was part of a programme that had formal evaluation activities, an element of quality control appeared to have been

⁽¹⁾ The case-studies reviewed have integrated both practical and theoretical components, including a critical examination of key concepts, theoretical feminist debates and practical examples.

⁽²⁾ Some trainers in the case-studies stressed the importance of allowing space for sceptical attitudes and negative experiences to be voiced during a training session, without allowing certain views to dominate a session.

⁽³⁾ Ferguson, L. and Forest, M. (eds.) (2011), Final Report Advancing Gender+ Training in Theory and Practice, OPERA Final Report. Available at: http://www.quing.eu/files/results/final_opera_report.pdf



put in place. In such cases, efforts to improve the training programmes were made, with programme managers adjusting their approach to training or trying to address identified or unaddressed needs.

Gender equality training changes organisational policies, procedures and practices

The research indicates that gender equality training can have the following impacts at an organisational level:

- initiation of new policies, strategies, procedures, practices and activities to mainstream gender;
- gender-related improvements in decision-making processes;
- positive changes in the organisational culture;
- changes in outputs and the public image of the organisation.

In Sweden, recent interactive research on the latest round of training showed that the Programme for Sustainable Equality (HåJ) has generated broad and lasting effects. Approximately 50 % of project managers indicated that the training measures had effects on and led to new political decisions. About a quarter of the project leaders believed that the training has led to actions that resulted in the redistribution of resources between men and women. Importantly, new questions started to be asked about the day-to-day work. All this was clearly related to the action on gender equality training and efforts to change operational procedures.

A number of **factors** can improve the effectiveness of training and lead to a positive impact at an organisational level. These include systematic training needs analysis that explicitly considers organisational goals, encouraging training participants to share acquired knowledge with their colleagues, and political will among senior managers to apply the new knowledge for the good of the organisation.

Training needs analysis ensures that the appropriate behaviours and knowledge gaps have been identified and targeted for change. Ensuring that newly gained individual knowledge is translated into positive organisational outcomes is essential.

Sharing with colleagues **the knowledge** gained through training is an essential next step to ensure that training has an increased impact at an organisational level. Usually resources allocated to gender equality training are limited and they do not allow for the training of members of staff. Trained managers and members of staff should have the opportunity to cascade their knowledge to others within their organisation thus contributing to building gender equality competence and awareness across the organisation.

The contribution of gender equality training to shaping more equal societies is present, but undocumented

At a societal level the long-term impacts of gender equality training ideally include narrowed gender gaps in different policy areas due to the improved knowledge, motivation and the capacity of civil servants and the public service as a whole to produce change towards gender equality.



However, evidence of societal-level impact over the longer term was difficult to identify through the case-study research for these main reasons:

- training programmes are not systematically evaluated and long-term impacts are not assessed;
- it is difficult to isolate the factors that contribute to change in the long term; and
- authorities that commission training fail to develop indicators and/or monitor their implementation.

Further research is required in this area, but current findings indicate that existing evaluation frameworks and methodologies might not be suited to assessing the long-term impact of competence development programmes.

Despite these challenges, the research team identified interesting examples where knowledge gained through training made a difference in the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming, and improved the services provided to individuals at a wider societal level, illustrated by the example below.

Staff members in youth centres in the city of Kalmar (Sweden) were given training to develop their capacity to integrate a gender perspective into their everyday practices.

By using the 4R method of analysis, which breaks down service use by sex, they realised that:

boys and girls devoted their time to different activities;

some activities (e.g. baking and watching films) equally appealed to both girls and boys; and

unintentionally, the youth centres promoted activities preferred by boys, disadvantaging girls.

Building on these findings, the Funkabo community youth centre served as a pilot for a new programme. The activities that were introduced were both better suited to girls and appealed to both girls and boys.

The kitchen of the youth centre was enlarged and a new film room was set up — promoting activities that appealed equally to girls and boys. A new area in the middle of the centre was organised for socialising. Some of the stationary pool and table tennis tables that previously dominated the space were removed. In their place a multi-use room was developed in which games equipment could be easily dismantled/reconstructed to better accommodate the wishes of both girls and boys.

Training for staff was important in transforming their view on gender equality. Through developing the gender competence of staff members, concrete changes were achieved in how the youth centres functioned.

Source: <http://includegender.org/jamstalldhetipraktik/new-rooms-for-gender-equality>



Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the study results, a series of recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of gender equality training programmes have been developed. These derive from the institutional preconditions identified at the earlier stage of the project and the newly identified additional factors that relate to the design of gender equality training programmes.

Specific legal requirements and policy objectives around gender mainstreaming that recognise and provide for gender competence development are essential. To create new drivers and stimuli to improve gender mainstreaming competence, policy-makers could consider setting up internal standards and performance management systems. Meaningful incentives to civil servants to develop skills and knowledge on gender equality could ultimately result in their greater motivation to integrate gender considerations in day-to-day work.

Concrete gender equality action plans and gender equality structures within organisations are key. Their successful implementation and operation largely depends, however, on the level of possessed gender equality competence. It is essential that knowledge and skills gaps are identified and addressed. Those responsible for gender equality training should take a close look at the skills, competences and knowledge of gender trainers to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of the organisation ⁽¹⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁴⁾ ELGE is developing materials to help select good gender trainers.

In some cases making gender equality training compulsory for all staff members might be essential in order to reach those who have the least knowledge, most resistance and/or who occupy important positions. Integrating gender considerations into other types of professional training programmes and activities is yet another way to make a wider circle of staff members gender aware.

Accountability mechanisms are helpful in making sure that training is of a good quality, tailored to the specific needs of the organisation and individual staff members, and helps to achieve gender equality objectives. Monitoring and evaluation of training programmes should go beyond measuring participant satisfaction. They should aim to systematically assess the impact of the training on individuals, organisations and society at different points in time so as to improve the results of the competence development process.

Taking into account the context and the needs of the organisation is essential when designing the training programme. When participants can relate to their own realities or work objectives during the training sessions they become less sceptical, more engaged, more receptive to gender equality and, in the end, more ready to introduce gender considerations into their daily routines.

In all types of training, the skills of the trainers have a definite impact on the training outcomes. Gender equality trainers should see themselves, and be seen by participants, as facilitators of the organisational



change process. Such a process should eventually lead to positive outcomes in terms of more gender equality. To be able to design a tailored learning process, gender equality trainers should take steps to ensure that they have a good understanding of the policy context and the institutional setting within which the training is provided, and tailor the content of the training to the roles and responsibilities of their audiences.

The essential element of making sure that gender equality brings about desired outcomes rests with the policymakers and institutions that commission gender training. Staff members need to acquire sufficient gender equality knowledge to be able to formulate and realise gender equality goals. Learning gender mainstreaming is a complex matter; therefore institutions should aim to introduce learning processes that are systematic and adapted to concrete needs. It is necessary that gender equality competence development is part of a comprehensive process designed to achieve concrete gender equality objectives as opposed to gaining 'undefined' gender awareness.

Member States and individual institutions decide on the approach that best responds to their needs

and realities. The findings of this in-depth study, based on the analysis of the different national contexts, demonstrate that there are common principles that help change to happen through gender equality training. The failure to take account of these principles in organising the process of capacity-building impedes the implementation of gender mainstreaming and limits the positive effects of improved knowledge and skills.

In times of scarce financial and human resources, as well as other challenges facing the efforts for gender equality, it might be difficult to meet all the listed preconditions for effective gender equality training and to take into account all the abovementioned factors at once. Taking things step by step, but engaging in a gradual process of building up the gender equality competences of relevant staff members, will make a significant difference and help to create a favourable environment for further gender equality action.

Focusing momentum on smaller, but definite improvements might help to create gender equality training processes and practices that have the potential to reshape future policies and programmes to bring about more gender equality.

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