

Institutional Transformation

Step 9: Developing gender equality competence

Key aspects

Experience shows that the effects of measures like gender equality training can fade quickly if they are only delivered as a one-off session or if they constitute the only measure for introducing gender mainstreaming.

- plan and develop the requisite gender equality competencies in a systematic fashion
- synchronise competence development closely with the overall gender mainstreaming strategy

Gender equality competence comprises commitment, methodological expertise and specialist knowledge:

- **Commitment** refers to the recognition of gender equality as the aim of both the organisation and of one's own work; it means taking responsibility for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within one's own area of operations.
- **Methodological** skills imply the ability to implement gender mainstreaming using the appropriate [methods and tools](#). It also includes the ability to identify and procure the required gender-disaggregated data and to utilise this in one's own work.
- **Specialist** knowledge comprises both the theoretical understanding of gender as a social construct and an in-depth knowledge of gender relations as social structures. It also covers knowledge of empirical facts about gender aspects within the organisation's policy area and sphere of activities as well as the ability to correctly classify and interpret [gender-disaggregated facts and data](#).

Many organisations have their own personnel or units who are responsible for human resources management. They are also responsible for the development of gender equality competence. However, it is still recommended that they work in close cooperation with the [gender mainstreaming support structure](#).

Preconditions of effective gender equality training

An in-depth study on gender equality training in the EU identified the main factors that contribute to effectiveness of gender equality training:

Institutional preconditions:

- existence of a legal framework and policy commitment to gender mainstreaming
- existence of an organisational strategy for gender equality competence development that would set a clear framework for action
- sufficient funding is provided for the fulfilment of the organisational strategy
- staff actively encouraged to attend gender equality training
- existence of an adequately resourced accountability system

Key factors that increase the impact of gender equality training on individual participants:

- motivation to participate and work for gender equality
- the relevance of the training programme to day-to-day activities of the participants
- sufficient skill and competence of gender equality trainers
- participatory approaches used to deliver the training programme
- relevant guidance materials



[EIGE synthesis report on effective gender equality training](#)

Strengthening commitment

It is vital that all staff members are aware of their respective tasks and responsibilities and that these are understood to be mandatory. [Accountability](#) for gender mainstreaming is primarily established by the senior management of an organisation. However, it is also the responsibility of the human resources staff to clearly communicate the tasks and responsibilities for implementing gender mainstreaming and to strengthen staff commitment. All the tools of human resources management that are typically used within an organisation should also be used for this purpose – this can include job descriptions, team meetings or performance appraisals.

Developing a competence development plan

A competence development plan should be based on a needs assessment and should contain:

- the aims of competence development in accordance with the gender mainstreaming strategy
- the participants and group composition
- the course content, tailored to suit the gender mainstreaming methods and tools that are to be applied as well as the fields of intervention and working routines
- scope, duration and time schedule

In addition, to ensure sustainability, it should also be determined beforehand how the results and effects of the competence development measures are to be reviewed and when follow-up measures are to take place.

Integrating gender equality competence development with the organisation's regular training scheme should not result in a loss of its importance. A dual track strategy may be used as an intermediary measure to prevent this. This strategy addresses gender issues both in general professional development courses as well as in specific gender training sessions.

Assigning a gender trainer

Gender trainers should possess both comprehensive knowledge on gender theory and other specialist subjects as well as didactic skills such as building awareness and dealing with resistance. They should also be able to precisely adjust training content and methods to fit in with a certain organisation's mode of operation, culture and working procedures. Quality criteria for gender equality competence development may be used to guide the search and commissioning of gender trainers.

Quality criteria for gender equality competence development

Quality criteria for gender equality competence development are a helpful tool, both for planning and commissioning respective measures as well as for quality assurance.

EIGE: Guiding Standards for Gender Equality Competence Development Initiatives



ProEquality: Quality Standards for Gender Equality and Diversity Training in the EU

Read more on EIGE's website

Gender equality competence development, promotion of standard setting materials and guidelines as well as exchange of knowledge and the distribution of resources (e.g. training manuals, toolkits, guidelines etc.) and good practices, was a priority area for the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Results of an EU-wide study, examples from different member states and practical information material can be found on EIGE's website.

[EIGE-Website: Online tool on Gender Equality Training](#) →

Examples

In Finland, the "Gender Glasses" project provided the national administration with a training series in three phases as part of the process of implementing gender mainstreaming.

[View example](#) →

In Estonia, a gender training programme has focussed on training the trainers.

[View example](#) →