

Men and gender equality need each other



Gender equality discussions often engage mainly women, but actually men have a crucial role to play. In order to achieve gender equality, we need to be committed to address challenges for both sides. While most gender inequalities disadvantage women, there are also important issues to address that primarily affect men, ranging from higher suicide rates to lower levels of achievement in education and lower engagement in caring for children and other household duties.

“Everything we do has a gender perspective: we look at the different challenges, experiences and opportunities for women and men to access resources and use their potential”, explains Virginija Langbakk, EIGE’s Director. “This does not mean that the focus on the situation of women can be lessened, but it’s about having a more effective approach to the different challenges facing both genders”.

In many areas, women and men face very different challenges. For example, in the area of education women have already reached the educational targets set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy, which aim to decrease the school drop-out rates to below 10% and raise the number of 30-34 year-olds completing third level education to at least 40%. However, men are still lagging behind. Statistics show that in the EU-28 on average, there are significantly less men than women aged 30-34 with a tertiary degree (34% vs 43%) and more men are leaving school early (12% of men vs 10% of women). Unless the reasons behind these gaps are understood and addressed, Europe will struggle to reach its 2020 educational targets.

Another key challenge to overcome is men's involvement in household and caring activities. While women are currently more likely to perform the majority of these tasks, distributing care and housework responsibilities more equally is beneficial for everyone. For example, ensuring that men are meaningfully involved in their children's lives from very early on not only enables them to establish good relationships with their children, but it also has a broader positive impact, such as allowing both women and men to benefit from a better work-life balance.

From a wider perspective, it is not only fair, but also important that men are engaged in gender equality. "We need to involve more men in the creation of a more equal society by raising awareness about their role and demonstrating how gender equality can benefit their lives too," explains Ms. Langbakk.

One important area where men can play a positive role is the struggle against the ultimate form of gender inequality – violence against women. To inspire more men to get involved and be part of the solution, EIGE is encouraging men to join the White Ribbon Campaign - one of the world's largest male-led campaigns to end violence against women. White Ribbon Ambassadors are men who promise to never commit, excuse, or remain silent about violence against women. EIGE has already identified a number of high profile Ambassadors, from the President of the European Parliament to the Prime Ministers of Malta and Luxembourg. They have demonstrated their political commitment to raise awareness and act as role models, with the potential to change attitudes and create a culture in which violence against women has no place.

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To learn more about the White Ribbon campaign, please visit [our website](#).

To find more statistics on the situation between women and men in Europe, please explore our [Gender Statistics Database](#).