

Gender training: Factors contributing to its effective implementation and challenges



When it comes to gender training, bad training is often worse than no training at all!

Gender mainstreaming has been on the political agenda at international and European levels since 1995. It was one of the policy commitments for most EU Member States, responsible staff for its implementation often lack gender knowledge and the specific skills to implement gender mainstreaming. EIGE is currently carrying out a study on Gender training in the EU. Mapping, research and stakeholder engagement (2012 - 2015). The aim of this study is to improve the quality of gender training in the EU by sharing knowledge, tools and experiences. Based on evidence gathered throughout EIGE projects, this document outlines some examples of approaches to gender training that have worked and points to the main challenges that need to be addressed when planning to support gender mainstreaming with training activities.

What factors contribute to effective gender training?

Integrating gender training into national gender equality policy

Some EU Member States are demonstrating a commitment to gender mainstreaming facilitated by the explicit recognition of competence development of staff as a precondition for its successful implementation. These commitments are often detailed national action plans.

Finland: Training for gender mainstreaming, as well as strengthening information provision on gender equality forms a key part of the Finnish gender equality action plan. All ministers are required to provide training on gender mainstreaming for their direct and staff.

Luxembourg: The National Gender Action Plan for 2009 - 2014 includes a commitment to further develop training in gender mainstreaming (July 2011) at two staff levels: category 6-8 (senior) of gender training.

Portugal: The Action Plan for Equality - Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination (2011-2015) calls for the dissemination of gender mainstreaming and the training of public officials in gender mainstreaming and equality.

Proper resources should be allocated by all EU governments and Courts to support their gender mainstreaming goals, including gender training that goes beyond generic one-off courses.

Talking gender training to the context and participants' needs

Gender training will have the most impact and relevance when it is designed to the professional, social and cultural context where it is being conducted. It should also take into account the background and needs of those being trained. Participatory and experiential learning approaches to gender training are often more effective than learning from analytical modules, as they enable more personal reflection and discussion. Where possible practical examples from participants' own experiences should be used, and there must be enough time to discuss any questions that arise.

There is a need both for generic and more in-depth gender training to address the different needs of training participants. Training should focus on the practical application of gender mainstreaming by developing the capacity of leaders to integrate gender considerations into their respective field of work. Tools, good practice and activities that are tailored to the policy areas of interest to those individual concerned and contribute more effectively to behavioural, organisational, political, and programme level changes are at the heart of gender training.

Spain: Professionals responsible for planning and managing health services and those responsible for the health care of equality bodies can participate in a course, which consists of four units that focus on gender perspectives in areas such as health, health research, public health interventions in health care, and gender mainstreaming in health policy.

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Factors contributing to effective implementation of GT

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