

# Mapping of gender training policies and practices in the European Union

## Summary of findings



This publication summarises the interim findings of the two-year study on 'Gender training in the European Union: Mapping, research and stakeholders' engagement (2012-2013)'. It maps the policies and practices of gender training in the European Union. The study was undertaken by ICF GHK on behalf of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The report was prepared by Katerina Mantouvalou, Aleksandra Duda and Pat Irving.

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# Foreword

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an independent European agency<sup>1</sup> whose mandate is to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, by providing support to the EU institutions and Member States. The establishment of EIGE strengthened the institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality in the European Union, and facilitated the exchange of practices, promotion of dialogue on gender equality issues, the collection and analyses of data on gender issues, development of methodological tools to support the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas, and awareness-raising among EU citizens. A key function of EIGE work is to support capacity building as part of the support system for gender mainstreaming and the Institute seeks to improve capacity by sharing knowledge, skills and experience in the field of gender mainstreaming. Gender training was prioritised in the Institute's activities as a potentially powerful tool to improve knowledge and skills, address stereotypes, tackle underlying values and generate extensive sustainable change.

In 2011 EIGE launched a study on Gender training in the European Union: Mapping, research and stakeholders' engagement (2012-2013) as a part of its work to support and develop gender mainstreaming methods, tools and good practices. Gender training was defined as an educational tool with the purpose of making policy-makers and other actors in the EU and Member States more aware of gender equality issues, build their gender competence and enable them to promote gender equality goals in their work at all levels. Thus the study was designed to support and promote gender competence development, with a view to generating improvements in the implementation of gender mainstreaming across the EU.

This publication presents the key findings from the first year of the study, conducted by ICF GHK. It maps the policies and practices on gender training in the European Union and Croatia and sets out the main conclusions and recommendations. By sharing knowledge, tools and experiences in the field of gender training EIGE seeks to support effective gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming strategies and their positive influence on the EU's social development.

Virginija Langbakk

Director

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

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<sup>1</sup> EIGE came into being as an agency of the European Union in December 2006 (Regulation [EC] No 1922/2006) and gained its administrative independence in June 2010.



# Introduction

## Mapping the provision of gender training in the European Union and Croatia

The first year of the study on gender training in the European Union has focused on mapping gender training activities, tools and trainers related to gender training in the EU-27 and Croatia. It identifies good practices on gender training in the EU-27 and Croatia and opens a discussion on the quality standards for gender training in the European Union.

The overall objective of the study is to contribute to a smoother and more effective implementation of gender equality policies and initiatives across the EU.

During the first year the researchers aimed to answer the following questions:

- To what extent is gender training a strategic priority for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in Europe?
- What are the practices of gender training in the European Union and internationally?
- What good practices can be identified in gender training in the European Union?
- Is there evidence available on the effectiveness of gender training projects?
- Who are the main gender training actors and what type of resources are available to them?
- What are the main gaps in the provision of gender training in the European Union?
- How might a European exchange of knowledge and practices improve the effectiveness and efficiency of gender training in individual EU Member States?
- Is there a need to set standards and quality principles for gender training?

Methodologically the study involved three main strands of research: background research on gender training in international and European organisations; in-country research conducted across the EU Member

States and Croatia; and case studies focusing on practices with potential.

The research team consulted a wide range of actors engaged in gender training, including institutions providing the training and individual gender trainers, institutions/organisations commissioning gender training, researchers (institutions and individuals) engaged in the area of gender training, and also other relevant practitioners and recipients of gender training. The research covered a wide range of types of gender training activities including general awareness-raising, specific training courses and workshops; networks of trainers; online repositories of resources, and discussion networks; and communities of practice.

Throughout the study, a number of gender training resources have been collected and analysed, such as training materials, guidelines for gender trainers or institutions commissioning gender training and evaluation reports.

The project covers gender training initiatives in the 27 EU Member States and Croatia, and at the EU and international level. In the background stage of the research, gender training resources and initiatives from international organisations were also covered. The reference period for the study covers 2005 to date, although some information dating further back is presented when it is considered relevant.

This summary presents the main findings of the report on mapping the provision of gender training in the European Union and Croatia.

## Training for gender mainstreaming: Why it matters

Gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important strategy in the achievement of equality between men and women. The European Union has shown strong political commitments to gender mainstreaming, followed by a number of Member States.

Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself but a political approach to integrating gender concerns into policy decisions, legal frameworks, activities and programmes. It can be defined as:

'(re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by actors normally involved in policy-making'<sup>2</sup>.

Such an approach involves taking account of gender issues at all stages of policy processes, including the development of strategies and plans, the design, implementation and evaluation of work programmes, and the development and reform of institutional structures and processes.

Making progress on gender mainstreaming requires actions that address gaps in knowledge and expertise and building the capacity of people working in public administration and government. It requires policy-makers who are capable of identifying and addressing gender equality issues as part of their day to day business. Without sufficient knowledge of gender equality issues, it is impossible to mainstream gender in policies and programmes. Gender training, therefore, is used as an educational tool to support policy-makers in their effort to integrate gender considerations into all policies and programmes. The aim of gender training is to ensure that key actors involved in policy-making are gender-aware, building their gender expertise and enabling them to promote gender equality goals in their work at all levels. Gender training resources and good practice, and sharing of experience and expertise, are also vital in promoting effective gender mainstreaming.

**What is gender training?** Gender training is an educational tool that supports policy-makers in their efforts to integrate gender considerations into all policies and programmes.

**Who are the key actors involved in gender training?** Gender trainers, policy makers and researchers are the main actors involved in gender training.

**What are gender training resources?** Among others, gender training resources include training materials, guidelines for gender trainers or institutions commissioning gender training and evaluation reports.

In recent years there is growing awareness of the value of gender training as a tool for effective mainstreaming. As discussed below, Member States have introduced initiatives to increase the capacity of people working in public administration and government. For example, in 2009 the Swedish European Social Fund (ESF) Council introduced the ESF Jämt to support gender mainstreaming within the ESF: the details of which are described below.

### ESF Jämt, SWEDEN

In 2009 the Swedish European Social Fund (ESF) Council introduced a three year project in order to address knowledge gaps in the integration of gender considerations in ESF funded projects. The main purpose of ESF Jämt is to offer regional level support in the form of counselling, training and monitoring activities for existing and prospective ESF funded projects in order to increase the quality of gender mainstreaming within these projects. Currently eight project supporters working at the regional level and a national coordinator provide services within the ESF Jämt initiative. There is also a steering group composed of gender experts, a chairperson, and a national coordinator that are responsible for strategic decisions of this initiative.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe (1998), *Gender mainstreaming: conceptual framework, methodology and presentation of good practices, Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming, EG-S-MS (98) 2, Strasbourg, p. 13.*



# Main findings

## Gender training is a strategic priority for effective mainstreaming in a small number of EU Member States

Gender mainstreaming is a policy commitment in most Member States. It is identified, at least in principle, as a priority area in the current national Equality Strategy or Action Plan of 16 Member States<sup>3</sup>. Of these, many mention gender training at national, regional and at the local or municipal levels in their priority actions for the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. In some cases, as indicated in the box below, equality plans also make direct reference to concrete actions that need to be taken to build capacity among members of staff in public administration. In these cases the commitment to gender mainstreaming is backed up by the explicit recognition of the competence development of staff as a precondition for its successful implementation.

Training for gender mainstreaming, as well as strengthened information provision on gender equality, forms a key part of the **Finnish gender equality action plan**. All ministries are required to provide training on gender mainstreaming for their directors and staff.

The **Greek gender equality strategy** includes gender equality actions and gender mainstreaming activities, and capacity building is a priority for civil servants and officials in public administration. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) is implementing training and awareness-raising, tailored to the needs of public administrators and officials, in many of the 20 projects identified in the national programme.

The **Portuguese gender equality action plan** calls for the dissemination of gender mainstreaming and training of public officials in gender mainstreaming and equality.

The **Swedish gender equality strategy** re-affirms policy commitments to for gender mainstreaming within government departments. Ministries are required to develop action plans for gender mainstreaming in their respective areas of responsibility. Policy commitments to gender mainstreaming and training and corresponding actions also exist at the local and regional levels.

Particularly where gender mainstreaming is a legal requirement, there has been a strong impetus to provide gender training for staff at all levels in public administrations. Some countries, e.g. Germany and Spain, have made the provision of training on gender issues mandatory in the public sector.

In **Germany** gender mainstreaming is a 'leading principle' in the common rules of procedure for federal ministries. In addition, the federal equal opportunities law states that all staff of a ministry or unit, in particular those in leadership positions, are responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and need to attend training in order to effectively fulfil their role.

In **Spain** according to the 2007 law on effective equality between women and men, all examinations for entering the Civil Service include knowledge of the principle of equality between men and women (Art. 61, para 1). The same article stipulates that all offices of public administration will provide training on equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men, and on the prevention of gender-based violence (Art. 61, para 2). The law also includes specific provisions regulating the inclusion of the protection of gender equality in all exams needed to enter and progress within Spain's judicial system.

<sup>3</sup> Further details are provided in the full report and the country factsheets available at: <http://www.eige.europa.eu/>

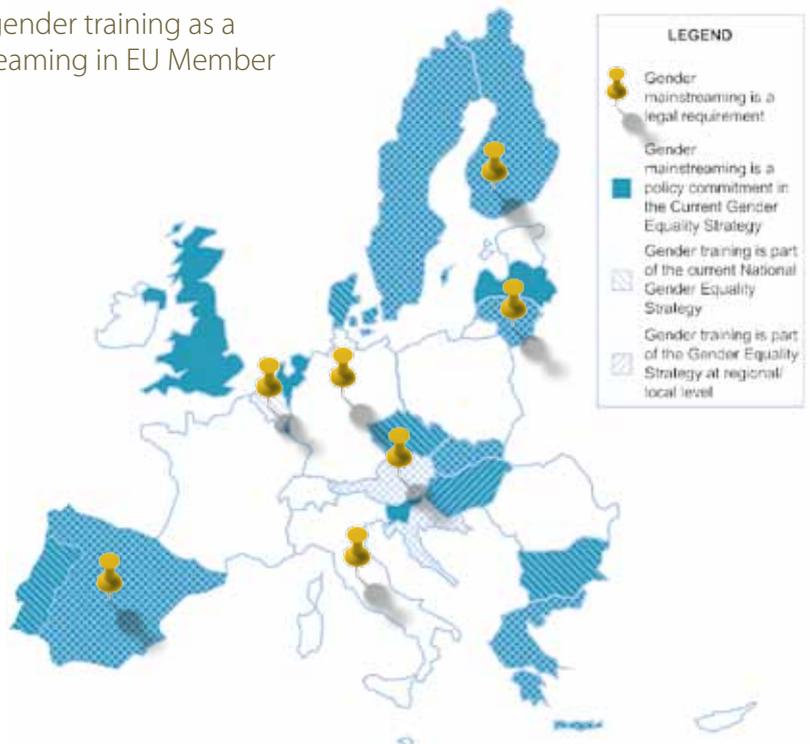
## Gender training is a low priority for most Member States both in policy and in practice

However, in many cases references to training are not followed by concrete actions and strategies in this field. In practice, despite the policy commitment to gender mainstreaming, improving gender competence appears to be a low priority for most Member States and is only applied as a soft policy. In most countries public officials show limited interest in or demand for gender training. The reluctance to acknowledge the need for gender training was also found to be an issue in some cases, and the lack of importance placed or even the denial that gender equality is an issue to be addressed in certain policy areas. Furthermore, even where training is provided,

public sector employees are usually not incentivised to attend the training. Therefore, gender knowledge gaps often remain unaddressed.

Assessing the scale of training activities, programmes and the number of participants in gender training across the EU is a challenging task as data is not systematically collected at any level of governance. Estimates based on the information provided by interviewees or collected through desk research, however, suggest that participation rates in training programmes remain low and gender capacity building activities have not been implemented on a wide scale. In cases where gender training is tailored, directly relevant to the every-day work of training participants and supported with evidence on the effectiveness of training activities, there seems to be more interest in attending it.

Policy commitments to gender training as a tool for effective mainstreaming in EU Member States and Croatia





## National machineries usually have a coordinating role in the design of gender training programmes

In most countries national machineries have a coordinating role in the design of gender training programmes. However, in some cases such as the Czech Republic and Italy, responsibility has been devolved to the Ministry, regional or municipal level. This approach allows authorities to create tailored gender training, but makes it difficult to centrally collect information about the availability and use of relevant programmes and activities. In some Member States non-government actors, such as trade unions and research institutes, provide gender training, albeit targeting different stakeholder groups.

## The global economic crisis has affected the provision of gender training in a number of Member States

Stakeholder interviews identified a number of reasons why gender training is low on the political agenda. A lack of resources for gender training activities was identified as a key issue, given that equality strategies or action plans do not usually dedicate resources for gender training programmes. Since the 2008 global economic crisis, the momentum for gender mainstreaming as a process has slowed and this has affected the provision of gender training in a number of countries. In some countries, gender mainstreaming policy may have been regarded as a 'luxury' afforded in times of prosperity. In Ireland, for example, the commitments in relation to gender training and gender mainstreaming in the 2007 Women's Strategy were not implemented due to budgetary constraints. However, there is no clear evidence about the overall impact of the global economic crisis on gender training in budgetary terms as data on resources allocated to gender training in Member States before and after the crisis are scarce.

## Gender training programmes tend to be short, one-off modules, though examples exist in some EU Member States of systematic gender training

With a few exceptions, gender training sessions are optional and tend not to be tailored to the specific policy areas of work of the participants. Generic gender training is usually aimed at awareness-raising for policy-makers specialising in certain policy fields, and at broadening their understanding of various aspects of gender equality/mainstreaming in their area of work. The most common form of awareness raising is to use short, one-off, training modules. A need for tailored or problem and issue-specific gender training and good practice examples has been identified in a number of Member States.

At the same time, there are interesting examples where tailored and advanced level training focused on specific issues and work areas. Health professionals in Spain, for example, have organised gender training over a number of modules covering health research, public health interventions in health care, and gender mainstreaming in health policy. Another example in Finland, the city of Vantaa developed tailored training and support on specific gender mainstreaming methods and practices linked to gender budgeting.

In many countries however, going beyond introductory gender training sessions appears problematic because of the lack of commitment of the management within an organisation and at the highest level of policy-making. In addition, funding for a long-term and more in-depth approach to gender training is insufficient. It is also not clear whether gender trainers have the necessary thematic knowledge to tailor training programmes to specific policy areas and whether training resources are available to address the needs of commissioning organisations for more sector-specific training programmes.

Only a limited number of EU Member States offer systematic provision for gender training. The vast majority of Member States introduce gender training activities, to support gender mainstreaming, but these are usually small-scale and ad hoc in countries without strong policy or legislative commitments.

The vast majority offer some form of basic gender equality training; and often this is part of the induction programmes for new employees entering the civil service.

### **Compulsory gender training module in Luxembourg**

Since April 2011, a compulsory training module in gender equality has been introduced for all new civil servants in Luxembourg as part of the initial training delivered by the National Institute of Public Administration (INAP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Equal Opportunities. The training consists of two, three hour modules. It aims to give participants a general overview of the areas where gender inequalities persist and the policies that could be introduced to address these issues. The feedback from participants is positive; this training module seems to play a role in raising awareness of gender issues among new staff.

### **Gender training as part of the compulsory social policy module in Greece**

In Greece since 2006, gender mainstreaming has been part of the compulsory training provided to new civil servants. The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA) is the strategic agency in the country for the training and education of public sector employees. Training sessions on gender mainstreaming are part of the social policy module. According to the 2010-2011 EKDDA activity report, in one year the centre coordinated 145 programmes that covered a range of social policy issues, including gender mainstreaming, and trained 2 876 people.

Given that integrating gender concerns is one of the funding requirements of the ESF, gender training is usually offered to individuals involved in the implementation of EU funded programmes.

### **Agency for gender equality with the ESF, Germany**

In March 2009, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany established the Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF as a support structure for achieving gender equality – a desired outcome of the European Social Fund (ESF). It was created in response to the lack of gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming within the German federal ESF in the previous funding period. The Agency is a private organisation involving four internal gender / ESF experts, the founders of this initiative, and three external experts specialising in the strategy, labour market policy, and gender budgeting. As the support structure, the Agency has committed to building transferable gender / ESF skills and competences of the responsible actors. To achieve this, the organisation fulfils the following sets of tasks and objectives: consultancy; public relations; and networking.

Gender training in most countries is typically delivered through face-to-face seminars or workshops. At the international and EU levels, online or combined online and face-to-face training methods are prevalent. Time pressures and long distances are the main factors that have encouraged organisations to develop online training modules. With some exceptions, the online gender training tends to be introductory and generic. While some interviewees perceive e-learning as inadequate in developing a full understanding of gender stereotypes and issues, there were also interviewees who believed that e-learning can be as (or even more) effective as traditional forms of training. Further research is required on the effectiveness of the online and face-to-face training courses.

Interviews with gender trainers and policy-makers suggested that practical examples should be central in gender training. Yet, training programmes are sometimes abstract and inappropriately tailored to the needs of participants. This in turn limits the application of new knowledge gained through the training in everyday work. Therefore, in some countries, both gender trainers and policy-makers expressed



the need for more concrete tools and relevant good practice examples, as well as for support from gender trainers in relation to specific projects or policy areas.

Needs assessments prior to training and the application of participatory and experiential learning that includes practical examples from participants' work experience, can help to explore and address the demand for more specific training themes.

### **The question of how to accommodate diversity in training programmes remains open**

In recent years, gender trainers in some Member States have begun to incorporate broader approaches such as intersectionality and diversity in gender training programmes. In the academic and gender trainers' circles, the focus on these concepts emerged from the recognition of limitations that arise when approaching gender as a single analytical category, without reflecting on how inequalities are underpinned in real life (e.g. ethnicity, class, sexuality). Yet, the theoretical complexity of the concepts and their interrelation make it difficult to include them in training activities. In addition, there is an on-going debate about the extent to which these concepts marginalise gender equality. Some risks exist when one aspect of identity is prioritised over another and gender mainstreaming might be subsumed under broader antidiscrimination measures. It is important to ensure that gender training moves beyond a generic one-size-fits-all methodology and that gender and diversity mainstreaming approaches do not erase each other<sup>4</sup>. Further research, analysis and reflection on how to accommodate diversity in training programmes are necessary.

### **Gender training resources tend to be generic – not tailored to specific policy areas**

Consistent with the discussion on the type of gender training courses, most of the resources used for

gender training purposes are generic; they are not tailored to specific policy areas. In the majority of Member States, some resources can be found on web sites of various institutions such as ministries, equality bodies, and research centres. However, these are not systematically collected and made available to gender trainers, researchers and policy-makers.

Identifying the need to collect and disseminate information on gender training in the European Union, this study collected tools and resources from EU Member States and EU and international organisations. These resources are available via EIGE's database of gender training resources (available at: <http://www.eige.europa.eu>). The database provides access to both generic and more tailored training material, especially in the areas of employment and social affairs, education, justice, freedom and security and health. More specialised resources on specific subjects such as gender statistics, power and decision making exist, though it is rather limited. EIGE's database of gender training resources also includes tools that were developed to train the trainers.

Much of the progress and useful resources in training on gender mainstreaming are related to development assistance and are thus situated in the foreign affairs ministries of the EU 27 Member States. This development was influenced by the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Development cooperation specialists in the various Ministries of Foreign Affairs tended to lead the way in designing gender mainstreaming strategies backed by gender training and practical tools and resources sector by sector. For example, as part of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, the various partners have prepared a training manual on gender and climate change<sup>5</sup>. The manual is addressed to policy makers and climate change scientists to help them understand and better address the gender dimensions of climate change. It is a practical tool to increase the capacity of policy-makers to develop gender-aware climate change policies and strategies.

4 Eveline, J., Bacchi, C., Binns, J. (2009) 'Gender Mainstreaming versus Diversity Mainstreaming: Methodology as Emancipatory Politics', *Gender, Work and Organisation*. Vol. 16 No. 2 March 2009.

5 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) et al. (2009), *Training manual on gender and climate change*, [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/eng\\_version\\_web\\_final\\_1.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/eng_version_web_final_1.pdf)

## Gender training programmes are not systematically evaluated though qualitative evidence suggests that they support effective mainstreaming

Evaluations that assess the results, reach and implementation of gender training, and offer evidence of effectiveness, emerge as weak points in most of the initiatives reviewed through the study. In some cases training programmes monitor procedural impacts (e.g. number of beneficiaries, number of programmes delivered) and assess trained staff's satisfaction with the training programme received. However, there have been few systematic attempts to evaluate the outputs, outcomes and impacts of gender training on organisations, on the every-day work of staff in public administrations, and – what appears to be more problematic – on behavioural changes among training participants. Knowledge on how to develop indicators and measure impact appears to be limited. Consequently, there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of training and the long-term impact on policies and programmes, including the changes in the organisation or ways in which this new knowledge becomes a part of working routines.

The research team identified a number of promising practices that show the potential benefits of gender training programmes (outlined in the full report and case studies). Having concrete examples of the benefits of gender training (and gender mainstreaming) is potentially a powerful resource that demonstrates to policy-makers the importance, relevance and usefulness of this work.

One such example is the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) training for selected members of staff involved in preparing budgets in the city of Vantaa. Stakeholder interviews suggested that the training programme had contributed to achieving greater equality between men and women, in both decision-making and services. It has also minimised the (potential) negative impacts of policies and services on one or the other gender.

### Gender equality results of the 'Gender Impact Assessment' training in the city of Vantaa, Finland

As part of the training programme on 'Gender Impact Assessment' (GIA) in the city of Vantaa, a GIA was undertaken in the social and health care sector. The GIA in this area revealed that women with illegal substance abuse problems in Vantaa did not attend drug rehabilitation services, because they did not want to admit publicly that they have a drug problem (due to social stigma, etc.). Consequently, the health and social service department of the city designed a service, where female addicts did not have to attend institutional drug rehabilitation services, but could receive similar support at home. As a result, more women have started to use this service. At the same time, it has been found that providing such support at home, instead of in an institution, is more cost-effective. This demonstrates that training on GIA – and gender mainstreaming in broader terms – can result in positive outcomes for both citizens and public authorities.

However, more research needs to be conducted to explore the extent to which gender training brings change at a policy and programme implementation level.

## The knowledge, skills and expertise of gender trainers vary considerably

The emergence of the profession of 'gender trainer' reflects the increasing recognition of gender mainstreaming as a key mechanism for achieving gender equality at the EU and international levels. Gender trainers are considered as 'central actors' in organising gender training programmes. They assist policy-makers to develop the skills and competences required to mainstream gender in the policy-making process. However, stakeholder interviews with policy-makers suggested that some commissioning authorities have difficulties in finding trainers with the right methodological skills and thematic knowledge to design appropriate training courses reflecting their policy focus.

Addressing this need, the research team developed a database of gender trainers and training organisations



in the European Union and Croatia that is available via EIGE's web site. EIGE's database of gender trainers and training organisations provides access to a wide pool of gender trainers with different methodological and thematic expertise in Europe. The database will help commissioning authorities to find trainers that have the relevant experience in their policy areas.

Based on information collected for the database, gender trainers come from a wide range of sectors. Most of them appear to be affiliated with a private company, civil society organisation or university. Some are independent consultants. Most of those who provided information about their qualifications have at least an advanced education degree and their qualifications varied immensely. Trainers have followed different training paths to achieve their present level of qualification, expertise and experience. The lack of agreement on quality standards for gender training further underpins these differences.

In their professional activity, gender trainers apply a range of skills across 20 identified fields of expertise. The most popular are gender analysis, research, statistics and indicators, tools development, gender impact assessment, gender budgeting, project planning, policy development and reform, and monitoring and evaluation. They also work across a wide range of policy areas, with the most frequent ones concerning education and training, employment and social affairs, equality between men and women, violence, and gender stereotypes.

### **To maintain quality there is a need for the standardisation of training programmes**

The literature on gender training provides a long list of skills and competences that gender trainers should acquire. However, there are no standardised gender trainers' qualifications and no generally agreed standards governing the content and curricula of gender training courses. Some efforts have been made to map the skills, competences and experiences of gender trainers and to establish quality standards (e.g. in Austria, Germany and Poland, and at the international level). In addition, a number of resources and tools for trainers exist to improve the quality of training. However, the question whether the establishment of quality standards or minimum standards is necessary

(or possible) remains open. Below is an example of the basic competences for gender trainers.

#### **Basic competences for gender trainers**

The basic competences for gender trainers to successfully engage in these processes include:

- an understanding of social processes, group dynamics, mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion,
- an understanding of the role of leadership and governance, and
- an awareness of how one deals with 'diversity' within oneself.

Compendium of Theory, Practice and Quality Standards for Gender Workers.

A Gender Worker Development Programme, GemTrEx project

Available in EIGE's database of gender training resources at: <http://www.eige.europa.eu>

### **Communities of Practice are an effective approach in knowledge sharing in improving the quality of training provided across Europe**

The research evidence suggests that Communities of Practice (CoPs) can foster, transfer and exchange knowledge between various groups of gender trainers and make it accessible and relevant to its audiences (individuals, experts, policy-makers, practitioners). It also appears there is a high level of interest and need for this kind of activity. In particular, CoPs could address issues that have been identified as especially challenging for gender training by previous research in this area. The issues include dealing with resistance to gender training, balancing theory and practice, providing more advanced level training, or developing accreditation and the certification of gender work. Such cooperation could also address trainers' resistance towards sharing their tools and methodological approaches. The main obstacles for a CoP to serve as an effective approach to social learning can be language barriers, a lack of a knowledge-sharing culture in some settings, and difficulties with measuring impact on the policy making process.

# Conclusions and recommendations

## **Making gender training a strategic priority**

Although gender mainstreaming has been on the political agenda at the international and European levels since 1995, in practice progress in implementing mainstreaming has been rather slow, ad hoc and issues of capacity and knowledge gaps remain across the EU. In many cases the national policy documents do not sufficiently recognise that capacity development is needed to effectively undertake gender mainstreaming. In general, although there are some key exceptions, this, along with competing priorities, financial issues, and political constraints, has limited the scope of gender training. Austerity measures introduced by Member States have the potential to undermine positive progress and developments in the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in some Member States.

In many Member States there appears to be a need to strengthen policy commitments to gender training at the policy framework level, and the arrangements for realising such commitments. In practice strengthening a commitment to gender training should have a positive effect on the development of gender training approaches.

## **Tailoring training programmes: an approach to take gender training to the 'next level'?**

A wide range of tools and resources for gender training are now available across the EU. However, the voluntary and ad hoc nature of most provision is worrying as is the lack of monitoring and evaluation about the take-up of such provision. Participation, outputs, outcomes and impacts are largely unknown. The research shows that to be most useful gender training needs to move beyond the generic level to include more in-depth training relevant to specific projects or policy areas. Practical examples and concrete tools

that can be used to develop examples of effective practice drawing on participatory and experiential learning, backed up by the systematic evaluation of effectiveness, should be part of this shift to tailored relevant provision if the sector is to have a better chance of influencing policy making and programme delivery in practice.

The policy shift towards diversity and intersectionality implies the need to accommodate these concepts in gender training. However, this area is far from clear cut and approaches on how to accommodate diversity in training programmes require further development through further reflection, analysis and research.

## **Standardising the quality of training**

The research has shown the wide variation in the backgrounds and professional qualifications of gender trainers. The areas of expertise offered by gender trainers across the EU are also varied, with clear concentrations in certain sub-sectors (such as education and training and employment and social affairs) which can reflect priorities to address inequalities in certain policy contexts. It could be argued that these differences have been important in responding to the demand for training, and have led to the development of a fairly large 'industry' of gender training professionals. At the same time, there is some evidence that the absence of common criteria or minimum standards for gender expertise can have a negative impact on the transformative effect of gender mainstreaming.

Furthermore, institutions and organisations commissioning gender training do not typically have reference frameworks that would help them to decide what training would be most effective for them. They also lack guidance through the process of finding and selecting high quality training services. Therefore, in practice quality standards for gender training and gender trainers should be explored further in order to



encourage the efficient and effective use of available human and financial resources to develop gender mainstreaming. Key findings emerging from the research include the need to identify trainers' skills and competences, offer training for gender trainers, and standardise content, methodology and assessment.

Progress has already been made in some Member States towards defining standards in gender training and provision. The opportunity exists to capitalise on these developments using peer learning methods to transfer experiences at the EU level. This would allow maximising the potential benefits and opportunities for harmonised standards from the outset.

## The way forward

To address the issues identified above actions in the following domains need to be considered:

- Sharing knowledge and experiences on effective approaches across different policy sub-sectors and the use of participatory and experiential learning between gender trainers and experts.
- Contributing to the on-going debate on quality standards for gender training at an EU level by building bridges between gender trainers, academic researchers and policy-makers.
- Furthering the existing work to define criteria for assessing gender training programmes and resources.
- Moving towards a certain level of institutionalisation and operationalisation of capacity building for gender mainstreaming. Gender training needs to be considered and designed as a part of a wider 'capacity building strategy' that includes post training activities, monitoring systems, and changes in the organisation.
- Supporting and promoting training for the trainers. Further consideration needs to be given to the need for the elaboration of an EU qualification / certification system for gender trainers and possibly develop an EU training programme for gender trainers (TPOT).
- Promoting dialogue on how to accommodate diversity and intersectionality in gender training programmes, conducting research and

disseminating research findings and tools in this field.

- Investigating and communicating the benefits of gender training.
- Continuing the work to collect the gender training tools and methods that would effectively address the needs of stakeholders and the challenges that they are facing with regard to mainstreaming gender.





[www.eige.europa.eu](http://www.eige.europa.eu)

Other outputs from the study are available on EIGE's web site (<http://www.eige.europa.eu>) and include:

- The final report of the mapping study;
- 28 country factsheets for the EU Member States and Croatia;
- Five reference sheets;
- A report on the reflections from online discussions;
- EIGE's database of gender trainers and gender training organisations;
- EIGE's database of gender training resources.

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