



# THE POLICY BOOK

**FENCE**  
**FIGHTING GENDER BIAS**  
**AND CONTRIBUTING TO**  
**GENDER EQUALITY**



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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| <b>Project</b>        | <b>FENCE - FIGHTING GENDER BIAS AND CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUALITY</b>                                                                                                            |
| <b>Project number</b> | 2019-1-UK01-KA204-061999                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Title</b>          | <b>The Policy Book</b>                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>Date</b>           | September 2021                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Web site</b>       | <a href="https://fence-project.eu/">https://fence-project.eu/</a>                                                                                                                  |

Consortium of the FENCE project:



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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## 1. The FENCE project

The **FENCE - Fighting gENder bias and Contributing to gender Equality** - is an Erasmus+ K204 project, a strategic partnership for adult education that aims at mitigating gender bias in practice through equality awareness and gender competences.

FENCE's roots are connected to gender stereotyping which limits the development of the natural talents and abilities of women and men, as well as their educational and professional experiences and life opportunities in general. It addresses empowerment and capacity building actions for individuals, primarily public staff in local authorities and public bodies, social affairs services, and NGOs and CSOs members, leaders, representatives working in the field of gender equality or human rights promotion.

The project includes 7 partners from 6 countries: CAD-COMMUNITY ACTION DACORUM and INOVA - United Kingdom; DOCUMENTA - Spain; PROGRAMMA INTEGRA - Italy; XENIOS POLIS - Greece; CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION - Cyprus; GRIPEN EUROPE - Romania.

The main **objectives** of the project are:

- a. to empower specific key-actors (individuals) to fight gender bias through awareness of gender equality issues, gender competence building and the promotion of gender equality goals.
- b. to create and deliver innovative products and training tools based on differentiation methodologies and adult education approaches.
- c. to empower key-actors by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by IT and digitising the learning content.

The completion of these objectives have produced the following **outputs**:

- The Review Paper, the result of research conducted in the participating countries and containing literature review and analysis.
- The FENCE Curriculum, an e-learning course oriented to the training on gender equality competence and empowerment of individuals.
- The Digital Toolbox & Resources, including an online platform, an e-learning course and a mobile application.
- The Methodological Guide for Educators, giving the essential guidelines and support to adult educators in using the FENCE products and tools.
- The Policy Book, a document containing a combination of academic knowledge and policy drafting that will gather the results and learnings achieved during the project.



## 2. The FENCE Policy Book

The Policy Book is the last product of the FENCE project that, based on desk research, experts' contribution and the experience gained by partners under the project, includes evidence, conclusions, tips and suggestions on gender equality promotion<sup>1</sup>.

The Policy Book intends to present and disseminate widely the results achieved during the project, making all interested parties aware of gender equality issues, the fight against gender stereotypes, promotion of equality and how to address the challenges in policy making at national and EU level.



Women and girls comprise half of the planet's population; their empowerment is essential in expanding economic growth and promoting social development in a sustainable way. In many cases, the full participation of women in the workforce would add double-digit percentage points to national growth rates. Evidence from around the world shows that gender equality advancements have a ripple effect on all areas of

sustainable development, from reducing poverty, hunger and even carbon emissions to enhancing the health, well-being and education of entire families, communities and countries. Indeed, equality between women and men is seen by the UN "both as a human right issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development".

For instance, regarding the effects that gender equality would have on employment "improvements in gender equality would lead to an additional 10.5 million jobs in 2050, which would benefit both women and men. About 70% of these jobs would be taken by women, however female and male employment rates meet in the long run, reaching an 80% employment rate by 2050. New jobs occupied by women are particularly important as they can help to reduce poverty, one of the key priorities of the EU 2020 strategy. Women are generally affected by poverty more often than men because of lower employment and salary prospects. Hence, being in employment lowers the risk for poverty of women<sup>2</sup>".

<sup>1</sup> According to UN Women: "Equality between women and men (gender equality): refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development."

<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

<sup>2</sup> EIGE, 2016

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/economic-and-financial-affairs/economic-benefits-gender-equality>

The **Policy Book** incorporates:

- A description of the evidence obtained and results achieved by the Fence project.
- Additional significant contributions on the matter from external experts and peers working within the field.
- Relative policy recommendations and suggestions for EU policy makers.

The **activities** carried out to develop the FENCE Policy Book were:

1. Formation of a Policy Committee, consisting of one or two experts from the partner countries and responsible for defining and deciding on the construction and content of the Book.
2. Conduction of desk research by project partners on lessons learnt, evidence obtained and main critical points on gender equality related-topics emerged in the project implementation. This also includes a bibliography/sitography of useful sources on gender equality issues, gender stereotypes fight, ongoing challenges at European level provided by the Policy Committee members.
3. Questionnaires administered to Policy Committee members and other gender issues experts to deepen the following sectors:
  - Education and training - primary and secondary schools
  - Adult education
  - Policies

### 3. Lessons learnt by FENCE

The FENCE project represented a great opportunity to deepen the issue of gender equality in European countries.

During the research phase and the development of the FENCE curriculum, it has been clear that in all European countries involved in the project, discrimination and gender stereotypes still exist, albeit to different degrees and that although there are rules and laws to prevent and combat these phenomena in all countries - with differences from country to country- these are often inadequate or not applied. It is therefore clear that a cultural change is needed throughout the EU, but we can also highlight a positive aspect that emerges from this situation and that represents a key challenge: the fact that each



country is at a much different stage in relation to gender equality is also a good learning opportunity as inspiration can be taken from EU countries which are tackling gender inequality issues more effectively. For instance, while all partner countries have a legislative framework in place, significant gaps and disparities exist in the enforcement of laws designed to promote gender equality. This was marked in countries like Cyprus, and appears due partly

to financial constraints, partly due to a lack of political will.

The desk research conducted for the development of the Peer Review showed that although some progress has been made, there is still need for improvement. For example, there is still a serious opportunity and pay gap between men and women in the labour market where, for example, women earn less than men, with the same education level and experience, when doing the same job.

In **Cyprus** there is a gap between men and women, showing not only the existence of the gender pay gap phenomenon, but also how women are treated and their lack of opportunities.

The same difficulties are noted in **Romania** where progress towards gender equality moves at a much slower pace than other EU member states. It seems that Romania is characterised by its traditional and conservative perceptions regarding gender roles and stereotypes. A significant improvement in the gender equality actions has taken place with the Romanian policy guidelines on gender equality, that entered into force on May 2 (Government Decision no. 262/2019) concerning opportunities and equal treatment of women and men. Also, it is important to highlight the positive points; the full-time equivalent employment rate has rapidly increased for women and men since 2010. Also, there is an enhancement of female participation in politics, as it is proved by the shares of women ministers and members of parliament that have markedly increased (EIGE Romania, 2020).

It is quite surprising to find out how rare gender equality programmes were implemented in the **United Kingdom**. Currently in the United Kingdom there are no guidelines on how to challenge gender violence and inequality, but it was not expected that under the desk research only 4 main initiatives would be found. It has come clear that the gender equality training in the United Kingdom is highly fragmented and requires more attention.

In **Greece**, for example, the legislative framework seems adequate, nevertheless, it has to be reinforced based on the needs that have emerged, like the needs of both genders during the pandemic, and the changes that have to be adopted in this context (World Economic Forum, 2021).

### How to Help Achieve Gender Equality and Combat Gender Stereotypes:

- Education, especially primary education, is the groundwork for achieving a better development of students into knowledgeable adults. It is only through education, awareness-raising and the head-on tackling of ingrained ideas of 'women and their roles' that this can be overcome. It is important to rebuild the educational system in order to combat gender stereotypes and discrimination. **Teachers** need to be trained on how to use appropriate language, avoid gender stereotypes and help students with their career choices according to their abilities and not their gender. Additionally, educators should focus more on gender equity in the classroom environment, as classrooms are a crucial part of our society. Primary education, for example, constitutes the baseline to achieve gender parity, and then positively think of a better involvement of students, as informed and aware adults.
- It is crucial to develop new, innovative tools, using the ICT tools to combat gender stereotypes and gender bias in the workplace.
- The gender equality content is sectoralised (equality in management, in science, in school) and aimed mostly at a) applying legislation, i.e. complying with the law, and/or b) remedying possible situations in these areas. In other words, a remedial approach when a preventive approach should also be promoted, with the aim of making people (men and women) aware of the number of micro-biases and assumptions that we all put into practice in our daily interactions.
- Gender equality starts not only at school but even at home. The role of family is crucial, as parents can promote a healthy mentality towards children helping in the prevention of adverse behaviors, as violence against women. It would be of crucial importance to introduce gender-related programmes to be attended by parents. Parents and teachers should prioritize the importance of the objectivity of children's behaviour regardless of gender.



- The legislation framework not only has to ensure a respectful attitude in both genders but also it must be constantly updated in order to cover the real needs and reciprocate to the contextual situation.

**Aspects that most hinder the achievement of gender equality and promote gender stereotypes:**



- The casual gender bias embedded in attitudes is hard to shift; these attitudes are passed on from generation to generation and it is only through education, awareness-raising and the head-on tackling of ingrained ideas of 'women and their roles' that this can be overcome.

- The advertising industry is culpable, in some cultures, of using images of women that perpetuate the idea of women as sex objects or home-makers with a limited roles elsewhere. The mass media seem to have a huge influence on the perpetuation of gender discrimination. Media, including the Internet and social media

play a major role as both a source of information and as a shaper of opinions. Thus, the persistence of gender stereotypes in media content, the prevalence of sexist speech in social media, the scarcity of counter-stereotypes appear to be usual phenomena arising issues that need to be urgently addressed (Council of Europe, 2021). This is changing but it will take a while to have a major impact so that women are accepted on the same terms as men.

- Lack of promotion of gender equality in the labour market. There seems to be a general acceptance that women are less represented in some professions than others, and it can be hard to challenge the status quo and break into a male dominated field. Furthermore, there is a separation based on gender on tasks that men and women could implement. In this way, despite attempts to fight gender traditionalism, there are still professions that are not considered ideal for a woman, while at the same time, men and women face the prejudice that some hobbies/sports are not suitable for them.
- Some women experience a lack of confidence and self-belief, which can make it difficult for them to challenge gender equality issues.
- Institutional awareness exists but there is a lack of strong and sustained support for the necessary structural reforms. There aren't any common strategies for gender equality with clear objectives, outline the role of public institutions which will establish monitoring indicators as well as public reporting mechanisms. Hence, it is meant that people decision making positions and leadership roles either in society or in an organisation (e.g. teachers, parents, bosses, or supervisors working in an organization, etc.) very often procrastinate on tasks, decisions or actions that could be implemented to promote gender awareness and bring up a positive change.

## 4. Lessons learnt and experts' contribution: recommendations by FENCE

In the following section, the contributions (opinions, proposals and recommendations) provided by gender-related issues experts from the 6 project partner countries on education and training: primary and secondary schools; adult education; policy.

### 4.1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Good practices: training programmes/courses on gender-related issues

| Course                                                   | Overview                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Country        | Website                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gender Diversity Training                                | The course aims to build an understanding of gender identity, gender in the workplace and gender expression. The course starts with the building of fundamental knowledge around gender. The topics of the course focus on a range of aspects including transgender identity, differences between equality and equity, LGBTQIA+, gender pronouns, among others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | United Kingdom | <a href="https://diversitybuilder.com/gender-sensitivity-equality-training/">https://diversitybuilder.com/gender-sensitivity-equality-training/</a>                                                                                                                                                               |
| FREE training                                            | The FREE project developed and implemented innovative tools and training to help develop the skills needed to tackle gender-based discrimination. The focus of this project was in supporting parents and teachers to work together to fight discrimination, and to adopt the 'whole school approach' to tackle gender-based discrimination.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | United Kingdom | <a href="https://www.projectfree.eu/">https://www.projectfree.eu/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Gender Equality Workshop                                 | This course focuses on teaching gender equality in schools but also offers training in places such as foster homes, prisons, secure hospitals and even corporations. Nevertheless, the aim of this course is to start the gender equality conversation at school in order to reduce the effects of inequality as the root of numerous social problems including domestic violence, unequal pay and career discrimination later on in life.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | United Kingdom | <a href="http://GenderEqualityinSchoolsWorkshop(2020dreams.org.uk)">Gender Equality in Schools Workshop (2020dreams.org.uk)</a>                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Children and Young People's Services Champions programme | This programme entails tailored support including online learning modules, resources and tools as well as advice. It aims to provide better support for vulnerable lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQIA+) children and young people in order to improve well-being and mental health. The course focuses also on working with organisations to evaluate and improve existing policies and practices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | United Kingdom | <a href="https://www.stonewall.org.uk/">https://www.stonewall.org.uk/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Gender Equality in employment                            | The Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training in cooperation with the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute implement a yearly project regarding gender equality in employment. More specifically, teachers and students are called to be informed and sensitized on the subject, as well as to express themselves through painting on the issue of equal opportunities and choices in professional careers, regardless of gender. The link provided invites educators and students to take part in an art contest and its aim is for participants to study about gender equality and express their thoughts and emotions through art. | Cyprus         | <a href="https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=1431:-l-r&amp;catid=34:2010-06-02-08-27-34&amp;Itemid=65&amp;lang=en">https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=1431:-l-r&amp;catid=34:2010-06-02-08-27-34&amp;Itemid=65&amp;lang=en</a> |
| Breaking the Mould                                       | The Breaking the Mould report examines the working patterns of women and men employees in Cyprus, the impact of existing measures to reconcile work and family                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Cyprus         | <a href="https://medinstgenderstudies.org/breaking-the-mould-">https://medinstgenderstudies.org/breaking-the-mould-</a>                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## FENCE. FIGHTING AGAINST GENDER BIAS AND CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUALITY

|                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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|                                                                                            | life, as well as attitudes and behaviours of women and men in relation to domestic task and care responsibilities. The aim of the Breaking the Mould project is to promote flexible working arrangements for men and women in Cyprus, and encourage companies and particularly SMEs to implement simple, family-friendly measures.      |        | <a href="#">promoting-gender-equality-in-cyprus-2/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Gender Equality in Education                                                               | Educational and informative material to be used by schools to educate educators and students on gender equality                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Cyprus | <a href="https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=915&amp;Itemid=387&amp;lang=en">https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=915&amp;Itemid=387&amp;lang=en</a>                                   |
| Manual on language sexism                                                                  | The Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality recently developed a Manual on language sexism in the Public Administration of the Cyprus Republic and implemented various seminars to transfer the work produced and the conclusions drawn regarding the subject.                                                                   | Cyprus | <a href="https://www.ncy.ac.cy/genderstudies/documents/%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%97%CE%93%CE%9F%CE%A32.pdf">https://www.ncy.ac.cy/genderstudies/documents/%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%97%CE%93%CE%9F%CE%A32.pdf</a>                                                                           |
| Anna Lindh Foundation                                                                      | A forum promoting intercultural dialogue both within the island and in the region, simultaneously creating synergies and building bridges among citizens. It also seeks to make more known the ALF's activities aiming to bring people together and create understanding, as well as the opportunities the Foundation offers.           | Cyprus | <a href="https://www.annalindhoundation.org/network-news/womens-workshop-building-healthy-relationships-and-enhancing-gender-equality">https://www.annalindhoundation.org/network-news/womens-workshop-building-healthy-relationships-and-enhancing-gender-equality</a> |
| Children First - EU project (CSI as a partner representing Cyprus)                         | An EU project with the aim to educate school children (aged 12-18) in order to prevent and address dating violence from an early age by undermining gender stereotypes, norms and roles that are the main causes of dating violence.                                                                                                    | Cyprus | <a href="https://childrenfirst.info/">https://childrenfirst.info/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| He for She                                                                                 | Through PwC's partnership with the UN Women's HeForShe initiative, an innovative new curriculum has been designed to educate and engage men as gender equality advocates. By learning and understanding the issues surrounding gender equality, men can actively make a difference and support women.                                   | Cyprus | <a href="https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/he-for-she-make-your-commitment.html">https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/he-for-she-make-your-commitment.html</a>                                                                                             |
| Resources of the Women's Institute                                                         | Information and resources on Education projects and training materials of the Women's Institute in Spain. ES language                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Spain  | <a href="https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/areasTematicas/educacion/programas/home.htm">https://www.inmujeres.gob.es/areasTematicas/educacion/programas/home.htm</a>                                                                                                         |
| Equality Space of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training                        | The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training's Equality Space is a tool for consultation and awareness-raising in the educational community, and aims to contribute to build a fairer and more egalitarian society for women and men. It provides news and practices on the subject. ES language.                                  | Spain  | <a href="https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/igualdad/presentacion.html">https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/igualdad/presentacion.html</a>                                                                                                                               |
| Plurales: Educando en Igualdad - Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades | Web portal of the Women's Institute with information, training courses and resources on gender equality issues. ES language.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Spain  | <a href="http://www.inmujeres.gob.es">www.inmujeres.gob.es</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Programa de Igualdad y Educación Afectivo-Sexual del Gobierno de Canarias                  | The Equality and Affective-Sexual Education Programme aims to implement an educational model based on the principles of coeducation, and to respond to the needs of the comprehensive development of students through a multidimensional vision that considers equality as a value of the first order. The web site offers resources to | Spain  | <a href="https://www3.gobiernodecanarias.org/medusa/ecoescuela/educarparalaigualdad/pla-de-igualdad-en-los-centros-educativos/">https://www3.gobiernodecanarias.org/medusa/ecoescuela/educarparalaigualdad/pla-de-igualdad-en-los-centros-educativos/</a>               |

## FENCE. FIGHTING AGAINST GENDER BIAS AND CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER EQUALITY

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                       | implement Equality Plans in Educative Centres. ES language.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| DigiFem                                                                                                                               | The Digi-Fem programme is an open on-line Course that aims to develop digital skills and tools for young female entrepreneurs enhancing and promoting the importance of female entrepreneurship. In the context of DigiFem, there have been designed Open Educational Resources (OER) and learning pathways focusing on fields such as business planning.                                                                                                        | Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy | <a href="http://www.digifem.eu">www.digifem.eu</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Awareness and Training of Executives and Teachers of Preschool and Primary Education, on issues of gender equality and discrimination | The implementation of this project, which is organised by Public Administration National Center in Greece, the Ministry of Education and Religions, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, aims at raising the awareness and training among the staff and teachers of Preschool and Primary Education, on issues of gender equality and gender discrimination, utilizing the know-how and experience from the implementation of previous related projects. | Greece                          | <a href="https://www.kethi.gr/programmata/eyaiasthitopoiisi-kai-epimorfosi-ton-stelehon-kai-ton-ekpaideytikon-tis-prosholikis-kai-tis-protobathmias-ekpaideysis-se-themata-isotitas-ton-fylon-kai-emfylon-diakriseon">https://www.kethi.gr/programmata/eyaiasthitopoiisi-kai-epimorfosi-ton-stelehon-kai-ton-ekpaideytikon-tis-prosholikis-kai-tis-protobathmias-ekpaideysis-se-themata-isotitas-ton-fylon-kai-emfylon-diakriseon</a> |
| Diotima                                                                                                                               | Diotima provides a series of services aimed at supporting and empowering women (e.g. psychological support, counselling services etc.) In parallel, "Diotima" runs in Greece many training programmes/courses, all of which are gender-related. Indicatively, it is mentioned the "Women going digital: Empowerment of the digital skills of unemployed women" programme that concerns the gender digital divide.                                                | Greece                          | <a href="https://diotima.org.gr/">https://diotima.org.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| National Centre For Public Administration And Local Government – Combating stereotypical perceptions                                  | This seminar prioritized the uniqueness of each student regardless of gender. Every child has its own talents, as well as its own problems, and by acknowledging both these strengths and weaknesses, the process of shaping its identity is being facilitated and validated discarding gender stereotypes and prejudices.                                                                                                                                       | Greece                          | /                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Rainbow School                                                                                                                        | Rainbow School is an empowerment group for LGBTQI+ teachers that gradually took the form of an organized activist group, aiming to demand institutional change for more inclusive schools. In order to achieve these goals and in general to change the stereotypical perceptions of society on gender equity and inclusion issues in Greece, Rainbow School works on educating teachers, students, parents, institutions and the general public.                | Greece                          | <a href="https://rainbowschool.gr/">https://rainbowschool.gr/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| PWN Romania                                                                                                                           | As a dynamic non-profit international network of professional women, the Global Professional Women's Network uses the mentoring program as a tool to promote the professional progress of women in each phase of their career and helps them follow professional career paths.                                                                                                                                                                                   | Romania                         | <a href="https://pwnbucharest.net/programs/mentoring.html">https://pwnbucharest.net/programs/mentoring.html</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| ANES and UNICEF                                                                                                                       | UNICEF agreed with ANES to support the development of training and information sessions for representatives of County Commissions for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and teachers on gender integration approach, with an emphasis on gender integration in education.                                                                                                                                                                                    | Romania                         | <a href="https://www.unicef.org/romania/press-releases/anes-and-unicef-partner-ensure-equal-opportunities-all-children-romania">https://www.unicef.org/romania/press-releases/anes-and-unicef-partner-ensure-equal-opportunities-all-children-romania</a>                                                                                                                                                                             |

|                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |                                                                                                           |
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| "Gender school" project                                                                | The project is the result of a collaboration conducted between the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research (Indire) and was aimed to implement a national education and training plan on equality and respect for gender differences to overcome stereotypes concerning the social role, representation and meaning of being women and men, girls and boys, through the training of school staff and teachers and the inclusion of a gender approach in educational and teaching practice. | Italy | <a href="https://www.indire.it/progetto/gender-school/">https://www.indire.it/progetto/gender-school/</a> |
| "Gender Studies and Policies" Master course, Roma Tre University of Rome               | Launched in 2001 at the University of Roma Tre, it was the second Italian Master's programme on gender issues. It's divided into 11 modules: Historical-Philosophical; Theoretical-Political Outlines of Feminisms, Gender, Difference; Law, Rights, Justice; Interculture; Strength; Sciences; Communication; Politics; Power/Potency; Arts; Narratives. It's also possible to enrol in single modules.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Italy | <a href="http://www.masterstudiepolitiche.it/">http://www.masterstudiepolitiche.it/</a>                   |
| "Diversity Management and Gender Equality" Master course, Giacomo Brodolini Foundation | The training course addresses all aspects of Diversity and Inclusion - multicultural differences, generational differences, sexual orientation differences, gender equality, disability inclusion - while maintaining a transversal focus on gender equality aspects. Thematic lessons and expert testimonies are integrated with a planning activity on challenges suggested by the partner enterprises. At the end of the course, participants will be able to design and implement interventions to foster the development of inclusive workplaces.                                                                | Italy | <a href="https://mastergedm.it/">https://mastergedm.it/</a>                                               |

#### 4.1.1. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

##### a) Gender-related topics that should be included in training programmes/courses

Gender equality education needs a multidimensional approach. First, there is a need for reconsideration of the school curricula and learning materials (schoolbooks, tools, activities and resources) to mitigate the unequal representation of genders and the reproduction unconscious gender discrimination. Therefore, there is a need for an analysis of what is done and what is used in teaching processes in order to change and update the distorted and non-inclusive or discriminatory elements. Experts have stressed the importance of the establishment of regularly attended training programs and courses that make points in the following areas:

- Gender-related stereotypes and bias, even unconscious, regarding gender roles in all aspects of everyday life, including gender roles in the classroom. Gender stereotypes are very important in deconstructing our gender norms and behaviours so this topic should be tackled through non-formal education activities with children and through educational textbooks, gender and sex education in schools and with educators/teachers who they often perpetuate such stereotypes within the school environment. Speaking about gender roles is also important for the co-responsibility, reconciliation and equal distribution of tasks amongst men/boys and women/girls.
- Affective and sexual education (how to deal with the other sex, difference between sex and gender, gender identity - LGBTQi+, etc.)  
It was mentioned that the primary issue all students should learn is to comprehend the biological differences of sexes and then, cultivate with the concept of the social dimension of gender and all its expansions.
- Inclusive and no discriminatory language and communication.

- Activities and tools to prevent and fight gender violence (verbal, physical, mental and sexual).



#### Tips for:

##### • Teachers

Recognising possible implicit gender stereotypes that they express in the classroom and ways to tackle this, training on a more gender-sensitive language, training on how to recognise signs of GBV or abuse, good practices on how to actively break gender stereotypes in their lessons. Not statistics but practical ways to achieve the above.

##### • Students

Informal and non-formal education on what gender stereotypes are, how to be more aware about gender issues.

why they are detrimental for all genders and how to avoid them, how to be more aware about gender issues.

#### b) Suggestions to policy makers for promoting awareness of gender equality among learners in primary and secondary schools

- To make sex education compulsory from primary school to promote healthy relationships, empowerment, teach consent, acceptance, etc. Also, assign a committee in each school (composed from a sociologist, psychologist, gender expert and educator) to conduct sex education training with both teachers and students and to assist and offer support in case of gender-based violence. In this matter, another step would be to change all textbooks and make them more sensitive towards gender-related issues and guarantee gender representation in school activities.
- To dedicate a lesson embedded in the school curriculum that focuses precisely on issues of gender: gender stereotypes, occupational segregation, the gender pay gap, GBV etc. A dynamic team of experts coming from the background of education and gender (combined) could design and pilot this lesson, which would be implemented through informal and non-formal education. This way, we would avoid having yet another boring lesson for students, but it would be an interactive and engaging activity that aims to cultivate their critical thinking rather than expecting them to submit a test at the end of the year.
- To implement better the existing legislation on protection from sexual abuse (ratified Lanzarote Convention), the ratified Istanbul Convention and relevant instruments which provision training for people of all ages and especially children in these issues.
- To ensure and monitor equal access and treatment for men and women in order to offer equal opportunities to learners to discover and develop their skills, competences and talents, regardless of their gender. Education Law including Gender Equality as a core subject in the school programmes.
- To include in the school curriculum mandatory workshops concerning the understanding of what is meant by consent or what are sexual and reproductive health rights. These workshops would be better designed in age-appropriate ways so as to effectively influence students to view all genders equally and positively and as a non-binary concept.
- To establish a legislation framework that will enhance the apprenticeship programmes, mentorships, networking, or scholarships for female students in science, technology,

engineering and mathematics. This is but a first step towards addressing gender imbalance in education in subjects characterised by gender traditionalism.

- To establish a requirement for teachers and trainers to train on gender equality issues in order to be able to transmit to the pupils fundamental terms and concepts such as gender, mental gender dimension, LGBTQI+ community, equal opportunities, etc. (as a result, students will be also well-informed to defend all the minorities human rights claiming).

### 4.1.2. ADULT EDUCATION

#### a) Critical aspects of adult education programmes/courses on gender-related issues in the project partner countries

Most experts, from all the countries involved in the survey, record a lack/shortage of courses and programs dedicated to gender issues within adult education pathways. Moreover, when they do exist, they are inadequate in terms of both quantity and quality.

Following, the main points to be improved in each country:

**Italy** is still behind on a lot of aspects and issues related to gender equality, including in the world of education at all levels and in the work one. Training programmes do not have a gender approach, except for specific courses on the matter, and the trainers are not trained on these issues. There should be mandatory training courses for trainers and modules on these issues should be included in all training programmes.

The experts from the **United Kingdom** register an importance of legal knowledge as lack of knowledge means that individuals can get away with creating gender-related issues. It is also noted the tendency of avoiding sensitive subjects and great emphasis on being politically correct. Specific critical elements hindering the diffusion and attendance of these types of courses and programmes addressed to adults:

- Not free or widely available.
- Not well targeted (too academic).
- Not practical enough (training on how to tackle inequality).

In **Cyprus**, experts noted that the number of courses offered for free is limited, while the topics are many times superficial and outdated. Also, the target learners are almost exclusively women, while men should be educated too.

- It was mentioned by experts that the courses provided in Cyprus cover only the 'basics' on gender-related issues. For example, courses on empowering women to achieve their career goals or courses aiming at raising awareness for violence against women are very relevant and important and should not be undermined, however in Cyprus is crucial to promote courses dealing with transgender women issues, abortion rights, sex work and sex health issues/stigma, and in general courses to benefit the most 'marginalized' women in our society.
- There are some very good adult training programmes/courses available on gender-related issues that were created as part of other EU-funded projects and from public/semi-public institutions/organizations dealing with gender-related issues. However, there is a lack of organised intervention from the government and the Ministry of Education. What is needed

in Cyprus is a school reform where gender and sex education will be taught in schools to children, from trained teachers on the topic.

In **Spain**, there is a scarce provision of this type of training, it's usually aimed at women and, on average, topics are not covered in depth.

The experts point out a distinction between courses and training aimed at "practice", i.e. training for those professionals who will be responsible for implementing equality legislation in different areas, especially in the workplace, and, secondly, general training for adults. The former is very comprehensive and appropriate. The latter is often a complement and a formal requirement to improve one's CV or to access certain positions. On the other hand, whoever is interested in training in equality can find available material. That is to say, there is a wide range of material on offer but, due to the complexity of the subject, it tends to have only basic content or, on the contrary, it offers a lot of content but with a heavy legislative burden that is difficult to understand or transfer to a day-to-day context.

Experts stated that the adult training programmes on gender-related issues are not sufficient in **Greece**. There are some available programmes and courses in the format of workshops and webinars organized by both public and private organisations with relevant activation, but most of them are fragmentary or they have very limited and biased content body. Although, in the in recent years there has been an increasing awareness on gender studies/ training programmes/ courses and generally on discrimination issues.

In **Romania** there is no sufficient number of adult training programmes on gender-related issues. There are fragmentary initiatives that are insufficiently promoted and distributed. As a result, most people are not even aware of the available courses. These courses are organized rarely or not at all. There is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women, as it requires the involvement of all sectors of society.

#### b) Gender-related topics that should be included in adults training programmes/courses:



- Knowledge about systemic mechanisms of exclusion and understanding of the genesis of stereotypes and prejudices.
- Gender stereotypes and bias also in language and communication (sexist views or comments; critical look at the media that influence the creation of knowledge and opinion).
- Factors of gender inequality and roles, in private and public dimensions. Focus on life-work balance, gender pay gap, etc. to

remove structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work.

- Legislation and rights.
- Soft skills aimed at managing and communicating the value of diversity in professional contexts and in team working.

- Gender-based violence, addressed in at least two major strands: prevention and counteraction strategies; from policies to economic impacts.
- LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion.
- Guides with resources: films, books, documentaries, organisations, etc. that can be consulted by anyone who wishes to do so, as well as information on how to act and participate in the improvement of real gender equality.
- Intersectionality dimensions (religion, migration, etc).



In addition to knowledge and awareness, participants should be equipped with tools to change their environment or interact on equal terms, feeling confident and supported in their actions.

**c) Most appropriate method of delivery adults training programmes/courses**

Points most experts agree on are:

- Short course, in order for all the adults to be able to participate regardless of the professional and personal responsibilities and time limitations.
- Face to face or blended courses with suggested materials (videos, articles, movies, readings) that can be consulted when wanted, depending on each participants' needs/timetable.  
Positive aspects of a blended learning model: the most suitable way to augment adults' experience, as it offers convenience, flexibility and a more comprehensive understanding of the course.  
Positive aspects of face-to-face training: its emphasis on human interaction that allows learners to promote and facilitate the fertile dialogue on gender issues and interaction among participants or peers.
- It is important that the courses are not just a 'one off'. If you want to bring change, participants have to have the chance to actually 'digest' what they have been taught and change their behaviour.
- Non-formal and informal methodology that will give the opportunity to participants to really interact and engage in the training, and not be just passive recipients of theoretical concepts that will forget after a while. For example, role-play activities that put one in the shoes of a woman who undergoes sexual harassment in the workplace. Why is it wrong? What should the person do? Etc. It can be a long course divided in short, thematic sessions.



In conclusion, experts have argued that, in the end, what matters is the implementation and wide availability of such courses, regardless of their form. Although, technology and e-learning gain more and more ground and undoubtedly offer open opportunities. Blended learning is also a decent option, as it combines the interaction and the direct contact of face-to-face learning and the comfort of distant learning.

**d) Suggestions to policy makers for promoting adult education on gender issues:**

- To introduce clear and certain rules, including possible penalties or punitive measures and funds dedicated to their actual implementation and monitoring.
- To introduce compulsory training activities for trainers and educators on gender equality (including sex education); compulsory training



- on gender equality and gender bias in university and adult education; compulsory equality training for all employers and employees in companies.
- To introduce resources and frames aimed at sustaining and monitoring women's access to job market & careers as well as to enhance companies/entrepreneurs to hire and promote female employees in decision making positions.  
Proposal: once in a while (for instance, twice a year) employees of all companies (of any type) should be evaluated concerning their mentality and behaviours on equity issues. In case of detecting gender (or other) stereotypes, essential changes in the company policy must intervene.  
A very strict employment law would help, so that every position in any public institution or private company will take in consideration, via a contest, both a female and male perspective when hiring.
- Parental leave equally divided between partners (mandatory).
- To invest in prevent and fight gender-based discrimination and violence. More specifically, it was mentioned that it's best to invest in developing a system for safe reporting of abusers by the victims.
- To invest in high-quality communication campaigns for the elimination of inequality and gender stereotypes that would directly appeal to the target audience.  
For instance, the Cyprus Family Association – FPA made a really catchy video about sexual consent and has used humour and analogy to communicate the concept of consent.

**e) Recommendation addressed to VET providers/trainers**

- To focus on providing ideas for practical and pragmatic ways and inspirational case studies of tackling day to day gender bias (rather than theory).

- To attract more men to attend gender equality training / to organize classes with an equal number of participation between men and women.
- To use appropriate language and avoid gender stereotypes.
- Design lessons showing the consequences of gender inequality to both genders and what is the role of both genders in society.



➔ In the public sector: it is too important for the empowerment of the public to be adopted effective policies by the VET providers/trainers, firstly for all the employees, both men and women, cooperating in the same working place, to be paid under the same equal terms of employment and to take part equally in the part of decision making. Secondly, it could be much effective for the employees to get informed and motivated on the issue of gender equality through relevant training programmes and seminars, organised and implemented by the responsible organisation department (i.e. HR Department) or by a specialised on the employees' treatment and proper information commission.

### 4.2. POLICY

#### a) Fundamental policies to promote gender equality

Needed policies, legislation and strategies to achieve effective gender equality

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Municipal/public kindergartens and within workplace (companies and offices).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Policies supporting work-life balance (e.g. 4-days/week; equal parental leave; minimise overtime).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Rules preventing gender gaps in access to employment, career opportunities (access to senior positions and decision-making committees) and reward systems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Institutional communication to raise awareness on gender equality.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Communication, awareness-raising and eventual fines to combat sexist and discriminatory language towards both women and the LGBTQIA+ community in particular in the media and public discourse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Law ensuring and monitoring employment rights and in-work benefits for parents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Sharing parental leave.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Effective fight against gender-based violence: clear laws, certainty of punishment, aggravating circumstances for gender-related crimes, tools for reporting in safety, communication campaigns, immediate police intervention in case of reports of violence, creation of public support networks and free psychological support, public or public-supported anti-violence centres and for hosting victims of violence and their children, etc. |
| Advocacy through associations to fight against discrimination. In general, laws, recommendations and regulations should be reinforced to change the structures that support the exercise of heteropatriarchy and that are not beneficial to either men or women. In addition to penalising women socially and economically.                                                                                                                      |

Good practices related to policies, legislation and strategies to achieve effective gender equality

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>National Machinery for the Advancement of Women (NMWR)</b> under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, founded in 1994. The Equality Unit of the NMWR implements gender mainstreaming through participation in several multidisciplinary committees of | Cyprus |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| other ministries. This participation aims to include a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of policies dealing with family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, employment, demography and women's entrepreneurship.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |
| The <b>Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training (GECEVT)</b> and the <b>Equality Authority of the Ombudsperson's Office</b> . The legal basis of the GECEVT is the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law of 2002 (L.205.1/2002 and L.150.I/2014). Its mandate is to monitor enforcement, training, awareness and research, and to provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination, including legal aid. | Cyprus         |
| <b>School Violence Observatory program</b> for the prevention and management of school violence.<br><a href="https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=3007:-2020-2021&amp;catid=34:2010-06-02-08-27-34&amp;Itemid=65&amp;lang=en">https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=3007:-2020-2021&amp;catid=34:2010-06-02-08-27-34&amp;Itemid=65&amp;lang=en</a>                                               | Cyprus         |
| The <b>Equal Pay Act 2021</b> , law establishing mechanisms to guarantee equal pay and to be able to identify and correct existing wage inequalities in companies between men and women, the pay gap.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Spain          |
| <b>Royal Decree 901/2020</b> regulating the equality plans and their registration to achieve equal treatment and opportunities between women and men in the company, and eliminating discrimination based on sex. <b>Royal Decree 902/2020</b> deals with equal remuneration between women and men also through the so-called "principle of remuneration transparency" that companies must integrate.                                                                           | Spain          |
| <b>Association "Mujer y talento"</b> (Women and Talent Association) created by a group of companies in Cantabria that seeks to stimulate, attract and develop the talent of girls, young women and women through high-impact programmes. It works especially in areas where there is an access gap and a difference in equal opportunities between women and men.<br><a href="http://www.mujerytalento.com">www.mujerytalento.com</a>                                           | Spain          |
| The <b>Gender Equality Law 2011</b> seeks to eliminate discrimination in employment, training and recruitment on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy or gender and to promote the payment of equal remuneration to male and female employees who perform work of equal value                                                                                                                                                                                            | United Kingdom |
| The <b>Equality Act 2010</b> legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.<br><a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | United Kingdom |
| The <b>Gender Recognition Act 2015</b> reviewed the legal processes by which transgender (trans) persons can have their preferred gender formally recognised                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | United Kingdom |
| Together Women, charitable organization providing holistic services to women and girls with multiple and complex needs across Yorkshire, Humberside and the North of England.<br><a href="https://togetherwomenproject.eu.rit.org.uk/">https://togetherwomenproject.eu.rit.org.uk/</a>                                                                                                                                                                                          | United Kingdom |
| The <b>National Council for Combating Discrimination</b> (Consiliul Național pentru Combaterea Discriminării) (CNCD): independent equality body, promoting equal treatment of all persons, without gender discrimination                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Romania        |
| The <b>National Equality Committee</b> and the <b>National Equality Adviser</b> promote the Italian policies on equal gender opportunities at work. The National Committee for Equality intervenes in the promotion of positive actions to ensure gender equality in representation and working conditions. The Equality Advisers (women) act within national, regional and provincial administrations, with the task of monitoring, but also of promoting good practice.       | Italy          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| As part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) to boost national development in the aftermath of the pandemic, gender equality is one of the three cross-cutting priorities in terms of inclusion. Within the NRRP, which aims to boost national development in the wake of the pandemic, gender equality is one of three cross-cutting priorities in terms of social inclusion. To counter the multiple dimensions of discrimination against women, which the pandemic has helped to highlight, the Italian Government announced the adoption of a <b>National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2026</b> .                 | Italy  |
| <b>1522</b> is the telephone number of a public service promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Department for Equal Opportunities. The number is free of charge and active 24 hours a day. It receives requests for help and support from victims of violence and stalking through specialised operators.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Italy  |
| The " <b>Unique guarantee committee for equal opportunities, the enhancement of the workers welfare and against discrimination</b> ", made up of representatives from main Trade Unions and Ministry of Economy and Finance. It has the task of proposing, advising and monitoring to prevent and combat discrimination not only due to gender, but also to disability, ethnic origin, language and sexual orientation. Protection is extended to remuneration, career advancement, safety, access to work, prevention and combating of bullying, by promoting training and refresher courses aimed at improving the working environment. | Italy  |
| <b>National Centre For Public Administration And Local Government</b> – Combating stereotypical perceptions, one-session training programme addressed to administrative staff coming from all the education grades and especially focused on raising awareness in regards with fighting gender discrimination and biases                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Greece |
| The <b>Greek Association of University Women (EL.E.GY.P.)</b> - The ELEGYP holds every year a series of events about women in academia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Greece |
| <b>Innovation Center for Women</b> , by the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry aimed at the thematic cooperation between governmental and social actors and market participants and their commitment that the adoption of technology and innovation will not increase social and economic inequality, but it will enhance more women to study in STEM and to participate in companies.<br><a href="https://ypergasias.gov.gr/7687-2/">https://ypergasias.gov.gr/7687-2/</a>                                                                                                                                                               | Greece |

## b) Elements that are not addressed in existing policies and strategies of participating countries

Elements to be improved in **Spain**:

- Reconciliation of work, family and personal life: adaptation of working hours, teleworking, aid for the hiring of personnel for domestic and care work (this reality is normally experienced by women and there is still no adequate legislation for it, which leads to inequality in terms of salaries, access to management positions, etc.).
- Obligation in education legislation to educate in equality, to sensitize and not to fall into erroneous role distribution in terms of activities, training, etc.
- Modification of policies that lead to women having more precarious and lower paid jobs, with the result that their contributions are lower when it comes to receiving a pension.
- Elimination of gender bias in research and health care, promoting scientific research so that treatments for "biologically" female diseases are known and sought.
- Equal valorization of women's contributions to history, art and science, as well as their contribution to social cohesion and everyday tasks.

- Even if there is good legislation in Spain, there's need of funding and human and technical resources to be able to comply with the law.

In **UK** there's a range of different gaps and elements which are not addressed in existing policies and strategies, amongst these:

- Child friendly policies, affordable and accessible childcare, and the impact child bearing and rearing can have on a woman's career.
- The gap in the business care around gender equality.
- The inheritance laws that discriminate against single women; Divorced women invisible in discourse- often preface to poverty.
- Women and maternity, they are often isolated as companies don't have good programs for returning mothers.
- The business case- understanding the value that diversity can bring to the bottom line.
- There will always be gaps as we all need to continue learning and this can only be done by open, honest discussion and constructive criticism taking on board diverse views.
- Impact on women's career through child bearing and rearing - more value paid to transferable skills women have obtained as mothers; more child friendly policies; affordable and accessible childcare for children from 0-16/18 - e.g. youth clubs. Sometimes parents have more problems with teenagers than babies.

**Cyprus** signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2017, however there are still gaps that are extremely visible in its actual implementation. In particular, the system has not de facto adopted the Convention, as there are gaps both within the police as well as other support systems that fail to support women-victims of GBV. There is often a lack of seriousness in reporting cases of GBV, or inadequate addressing of the reports by the police. It is worth mentioning that during the start of the pandemic, where governments worldwide imposed lockdown policies, GBV reports have increased significantly. In Cyprus, reporting of GBV has seen a 30% increase since the start of the pandemic, which of course does not represent the actual number, as many cases go unreported because the victims are too afraid to report or feel that they will not have the support that they need.

Furthermore, the experts reported the following critical points:

- Gender pay gap.
- Gender based violence (including LGBTQIA+).
- Existing policies and laws have been established by old, male, heterosexual men and do not reflect the actual needs of contemporary working women.
- No adequate legislation on the reconciliation of work, family and personal life (adaptation of working hours, teleworking, aid for the hiring of personnel for domestic and care work) which leads to inequality in terms of salaries, access to management positions, etc.
- Gender roles are still widespread (e.g. in health and science).
- Unequal valorization of women's contributions to history, art and science, as well as their contribution to social cohesion and everyday tasks.

In **Romania**, although there has been a significant improvement, there is no sufficient protection regarding many rights (e.g. for female employees, the world of work still suffers from significant gender discrimination).

Romanian experts have pointed out the following:

- The need for more and better equality policies affecting both the private (family) and the public sphere (including work).
- The rigidity and bureaucracy don't facilitate the complete and adequate enforcement of existing policies/strategies, and as a result it is usual for these initiatives to be partially and inefficiently implemented.
- Need for a policy regarding job announcements, where it is still allowed and widespread among the employers to create job descriptions clearly mirroring the candidate's gender.

In **Greece**, all the experts responded that there are important and noteworthy gaps in the existing policies and strategies in regards with gender-related issues despite the significant progress to address gender discrimination. Amongst the critical aspects:

- The approach to gender equality in Greece is characterized by an emphasis on legal matters, with little attention paid to quantitative indicators not delivering efficiently gender pay gap.
- The employers should be further encouraged to apply the suggested and the innovative policies adequately and not fragmentarily.
- The Country has one of the lowest rates of women's employment in the European Union and is the lowest ranking country in the Gender Equality Index for EU countries. The situation for marginalized groups, such as migrant and Roma women, is even worse.
- Lack of or poor public-private collaboration on gender equality promotion.
- Need for a regulation of the workplace sexual harassment policy.

**Italy** needs more effective policies to promote:

- Equal opportunities in work access and career, equal pay system, greater protection for women during maternity leave.
- The fight against sexist language and communication, against patriarchal and chauvinist culture.
- Support for single-parent families.
- Prevention and fight against gender-based violence, especially domestic violence (in 2018, 78% of murdered women were killed at home, mainly by partners or former partners, already reported by victims in 28% of cases).
- Fair representation in public decision-making bodies and in politics.
- Overcoming gender roles especially in the fields of education, care, health and science.

### c) Suggestions to policy makers on policies and strategies to promote gender equality

Firstly, one of the main reported needs is the effective and appropriate implementation of the already existing policies and legislative measures. Indeed, even when there are laws that theoretically protect women from inequality and discrimination, the biggest challenge is their actual implementation and monitoring.



Another important and transversal need is to ensure a constant training and updating of those professionals in order to have a system fully prepared to handle gender related issues and which holds everyone accountable.

- Provide rules and resources to support work-life balance. Equal treatment of men and women, both in terms of remuneration, career

opportunities and childcare rights and duties, would allow for a fairer distribution of tasks and the overcoming of gender roles.

- Ensuring equal reward systems. Addressing the gender pay gap is crucial as it would support coordinated and inclusive collective pay regulation and ensure the implementation of the principle of equal pay.
- Ensuring that maternity does not cause discrimination, guaranteeing the workplace for those returning from maternity leave as well as the career advancement possibilities but also seeking equality in parenting i.e. same duties and rights for men and women. Proposal of a 'keep in touch' scheme for all returning mothers should be put in place so that they do not feel out of the loop.
- Recognising and addressing all kinds of gender-based discrimination and violence.
- Developing more effective prevention mechanisms and clear guidelines and experts to offer psychological and legal support and safety to victims of gender-based violence, within the school environment.
- Aggravating circumstance for gender-related crimes (physical or psychological violence and murder/femicide).
- Ensuring protection by law for women who report violence, with a special focus on cases of sexual harassment and domestic violence.
- Promoting (compulsory) training of police and other stakeholders handling cases of gender-based violence, discrimination, harassment, unfair pay, etc. to respond adequately to these cases.
- Promoting (compulsory) education at an early age on equality. It means that policies on education and training include education in values, respect and equality.
- Promoting (compulsory) training for educators, teachers and trainers on how to deal with gender issues, to teach civic and sexual rights and their respect, to avoid discriminatory and sexist language and behaviour.

**d) Recommendation addressed to policy makers in order to promote gender equality in or through VET sector:**

- To ensure that legislation is followed through and enforced even providing for monitoring schemes and penalties for offender.
- Regular monitoring for the implementation of the legislation.
- Legislation should be accompanied by ad hoc funds and trained human resources.
- To raise awareness and inform public actors on how to treat people equally, offering the same opportunities to all genders and supporting them in taking part in decision making.
- To ensure equal pay and equal terms of employment for women and men.
- Mandatory in the workplace to attend seminars on gender equality.

- Government will offer grants to companies that follow this policy.
- To organize communication and awareness campaigns to increase the participation of women candidates in the elections.
- To introduce gender competence as a transversal skill into adult curricula.
- To introduce teaching on gender issues, affective and sexual education into school learning programmes.

➡ Policy makers, especially those who are carrying out by a government could contribute primarily and significantly in raising awareness and informing on how to treat people equally. More specifically, as in the issue of gender equality, a top-down policy is required, the policymakers should provide equal access to public opportunities and in the meantime in the economic sector to both men and women. In this way, it is feasible to accomplish a more sustainable economy and improve national well-being. The Governances are the key to renew the context of gender equality through meaningful changes, for example by adopting or/and reinforcing mechanisms in place within and across government institutions to be able to develop a new legislative framework, public funding programmes, equal employment and retirement terms, national budgets into concrete benefits for men and women.

➡ Policy makers and Governances should be the first to be characterised by a high-level self-awareness. Improving their self-awareness, as a starting point, would unquestionably bring positive changes in the decisions on gender issues and policies. The development of a better mentality in order to then act accordingly can be achieved through constant evaluations (self or group evaluations) implemented by gender equality experts in the workplace. Along with this, the next step could be to follow good examples of other countries that care most effectively about gender equity and human rights, in general.

To find useful tools and materials to help tackling gender inequalities and build gender competence, [visit the FENCE Curriculum](#). Register for your free account to access all materials.



Thank you for reading.