



Reflections from
the conference

European conference
**Advancing gender
training to support
effective gender
mainstreaming**

**13-14
November
2012**

Vilnius, Lithuania



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About EIGE:

The European Institute for Gender Equality is an EU agency that supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality, by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable information on gender equality in the European Union. More information: <http://www.eige.europa.eu> Neither EIGE nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the content of the information contained in this publication.

Advancing gender training to support effective gender mainstreaming — Reflections from the conference



1. Introduction: why is there a need to talk of gender training?

Gender mainstreaming is recognised as an important policy strategy in the achievement of equality between men and women. This strategy is not a goal in itself but a political mechanism to implement, monitor and evaluate the integration of gender concerns into all policy decisions, legal frameworks, activities and programmes. However, due to theoretical and practical knowledge gaps, and despite

strong political commitments to gender mainstreaming, progress towards gender-aware policies in the European Union remains slow.

Providing training, expertise, guidelines and resources as well as sharing good practices are all useful methods of enabling effective gender mainstreaming. Gender training is a key tool particularly for building capacity and providing practical gender analysis skills.

'Gender mainstreaming is about institutional change, it is about changing the very norms and values of key organisations, to reflect the commitment to an ownership of and a drive for gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is about societal change, it is about restructuring inequalities of resources, of power, of status and standing and respect, inequalities that diminish the potential of women and damage the contribution of men.'

Niall Crowley, Board Advisor, Equinet, former Head of Equality Authority in Ireland

'Gender mainstreaming requires working differently. This is really a big issue for civil servants. That requires that they are supported in this, otherwise the training will not be very efficient. There is no natural trend towards equality, and I think this is also a challenging message that we should pass on when we do training. If we do nothing, we will not reach equality. This should really be a proactive goal. We should get concrete examples; we should have a continuous training that should be part of all phases.'

Nathalie Wuiame, Managing Director, Engender asbl and CESEP



2. Connecting the people to advance gender mainstreaming competence



The European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) mandate is to support gender mainstreaming and to contribute to improving the competence of the persons in charge to mainstream gender equality in the European Union.

EIGE's 2-year project **gender training: mapping, research and stakeholders' engagement**

(2012–13) will make available practical information related to competence development and gender training programmes from all across the EU and will bring the relevant actors together.

On 13 and 14 November 2012, in Vilnius, Lithuania, the institute organised a European conference **Advancing Gender Training to Support Effective**



Effective Gender Mainstreaming. Around 150 gender mainstreaming professionals and interested policymakers from EU institutions and Member States engaged in the following discussions:

- gender training as a strategic priority in the EU;
- institutional mechanisms for the effective integration of gender considerations;
- methodological considerations for effective gender training;

- effectiveness of training programmes;
- future directions of gender training programmes.

Through panel discussions, workshops and other events the conference became a platform for networking and face-to-face exchange of information and good practices between the EU institutions, Member States, gender trainers and researchers working in the field.





3. Progress towards the implementation of gender mainstreaming remains slow

In the opening panel session on ‘Gender-aware policymaking: policies and actions to support the implementation of mainstreaming in the EU’, senior policymakers from EU institutions and EU Member States presented recent efforts to strengthen the

integration of gender considerations across policy areas. They also discussed the practical challenges in their efforts to strengthen the capacity of public sector organisations to mainstream gender equality.



‘The initial analysis of the situation carried out by our institute a few years ago shows that the extent of gender mainstreaming activities varies significantly between organisations and across Member States. Over time, progress in all Member States is patchy, countries can leap forward quite rapidly and lose momentum at a similar pace depending on political priorities.

Is it only policy rhetoric or are we witnessing the progress of real organisation-wide systems and resources in place, to ensure that gender is “everyone’s business”?’

Virginija Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality



A moderated discussion helped to identify reasons why progress towards the implementation of gender mainstreaming remains slow:

- lack of political commitment;
- limited financial resources due to the financial crisis;
- knowledge and capacity gap; and
- insufficient institutional framework to promote the integration of gender considerations in policies and programmes.

‘The successful application of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament can certainly serve as a good example, but in itself will not replace the lack of gender mainstreaming in other decision-making institutions, either at EU or national level. Therefore, there is a need for a renewed effort to encourage and convince lawmakers at European and national levels to mainstream the gender perspective into all community and national policies.’

Mikael Gustafsson, Chair of FEMM Committee, European Parliament

4. Gender training in the European Union and Croatia: where are we now?



EIGE presented the results of EIGE's ongoing project 'Gender training in the European Union: mapping, research and stakeholders engagement (2012–13)'. In 2012, the focus was on mapping gender training activities, tools and trainers related to gender training and exploring the state of the art in the EU-27 and Croatia.

The report of the study provides information on the policies and practices in the EU-27 and Croatia, identifying the challenges in building the competence of public servants, suggesting some ways forward in the EU. The findings reveal the following.

- Gender training is not sufficiently recognised as an effective tool to implement gender mainstreaming and is not institutionalised enough.
- There is a serious lack of monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of gender training in implementing gender equality.
- Gender training resources and programmes tend to be generic and not tailored to specific policy areas, characteristics that might hinder their impact on gender mainstreaming strategies.
- The absence of common criteria for gender trainers or minimum standards for gender expertise can have a negative impact on the general quality of gender training. The research emphasises the need for a discussion on quality standards for gender training in the European Union.

The research team has identified the following examples of gender training programmes that seem to have worked.

- Encouraging and supporting the participation of women in positions of political responsibility and representation at regional and local level, Greece (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/encouraging-and-supporting-the-participation-of-women-in-positions-of-political-res>).
- European Social Fund (ESF) Jämt, Sweden (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/esf-j%C3%A4mt-sweden>).
- Gender Academy and innovative methods to share experiences between gender mainstreaming professionals, ILO (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-academy-and-innovative-methods-to-share-experiences-between-gender-mainstrea>).
- Gender glasses, Finland (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-glasses-finland>).
- 'Gender Impact Assessment' training in the city of Vantaa, Finland (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/gender-impact-assessment-training-in-the-city-of-vantaa-finland>).
- In-house seminar on gender budgeting, Austria (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/inhouse-seminar-on-gender-budgeting-austria>).
- Support structures for sustainable gender mainstreaming within the ESF, Germany (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/support-structures-for-sustainable-gender-mainstreaming-within-the-esf-germany>).

Twenty-eight country fact-sheets summarise research findings on the delivery and commissioning of gender training in each EU Member State and Croatia.

EIGE's database of gender trainers and gender training organisations features up-to-date profiles of gender trainers and organisations who offer gender training across the EU and Croatia. This database aims to help find gender trainers with specific thematic knowledge, skills and expertise to design training courses tailored for different needs and policy areas.

An easily searchable **EIGE database of gender training resources** contains several hundred items of practical materials, including manuals, handbooks, guidelines, monitoring or awareness-raising



instruments that can be used for gender training purposes.

A video 'Starter kit for sustainable gender equality', prepared by SALAR (Swedish Association for Local Authorities and Regions) is a great example of the type of innovative and attractive tools that can be used for raising people's competence and understanding of the ways to mainstream gender in very specific fields of public activity, such as cleaning snow or making sure that public transportation is safe for women. This is one of the type of resources you can find in EIGE's database of training resources.

A set of **thematic reference sheets** guides institutions who wish to commission gender training to improve the competence of their own staffs.

- Gender training: Factors contributing to its effective implementation and challenges.
- Gender training: Step-by-step approach to quality.
- Good practices in gender training.



The **online discussion reflections paper** provides an overview of EIGE's first online discussion forum (organised on 25 and 26 September 2012 on EIGE's newly established **EuroGender** platform) and summarises the contributions of the participants on the needs and the ways to improve quality and increase gender training effectiveness.

'EIGE's objective to collect tools, methods and good practices in gender mainstreaming addresses a clear need in Europe, but EIGE alone cannot affect and change the gender equality policy arena.'

Virginija Langbakk, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality

5. Current issues, potential solutions: discussions in the working sessions

WORKING SESSION I

Gender training in the EU: challenges and successes

The first working session examined the experiences of policymakers and training practitioners in the European Union, including successful training initiatives and institutional and personal resistance to gender training. Participants considered specific

examples of what works and what serves as obstacles in the field of gender training and created a list of tips for gender training. These are presented below.



'The challenge is that equality is a political goal and that it needs accepted and shared values and objectives within the organisation ... Doing gender mainstreaming is challenging your own institutional set-up.'

Nathalie Wuiame, Managing Director, Engender asbl and CESEP



Workshop I

Participants' recommendations for effective gender training programmes

Policy/legal framework

- Embed the commitment to gender mainstreaming in legislation.
- Ensure political will at high level, but also buy-in from women's organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs).
- Have a gender mainstreaming strategy in place before gender training programmes are developed.
- Incentivise gender competence as an element of career progression as well as through awards and certificates.
- Develop quality standards for trainers and training programmes.

Methods of training

- Set clear goals of training programmes, demonstrate relevance to trainees.
- Standardise compulsory gender training for all new staff.
- Make training programmes target-group oriented: high level for management; focused on specific issues for operational and frontline staff.
- Involve men in training programmes.
- Make training programmes context specific: policy area; institution; culture; social norms.
- Raise the issue of power structure between men and women.
- Use concrete examples to strengthen message.
- Provide evidence of the economic and social benefits of gender mainstreaming.
- Make the content of training sessions relevant, interesting and fun.
- Bring emotions: make people personally involved and committed to gender equality.
- Enable people to come to their own conclusions.

Evaluation and results

- Develop outcome indicators for evaluation.

WORKING SESSION II

Strengthening the support for gender mainstreaming in the EU: the case of the ESF institutional mechanisms

In the second working session participants examined how to improve support mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in EU Member States. The case of gender mainstreaming mechanisms within the ESF was used as the basis for discussing good prac-

tice examples of institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender mainstreaming. In the group activity participants explored how to effectively integrate gender considerations into ESF activities. Their suggestions are presented below.



'Capacity building targeting individuals has to always be sort of combined with capacity building that targets the organisational processes and structures.'

Anne-Charlott Callerstig, Researcher, Linköping University



Workshop II

Participants' recommendations for effective gender mainstreaming within the ESF

- Prepare a comprehensive and coherent gender mainstreaming strategy.
- Establish gender experts/agencies that offer training (and other forms of support) to mainstream gender in ESF projects.
- Make gender training part of a wider framework of capacity building.
- Develop tailored training programmes.
- Face resistance.
- Translate gender theoretical knowledge into practical ESF knowledge.
- Ensure sustainability of gender training programmes.

WORKING SESSION III

Accommodating diversity in gender training programmes

The third working session examined how to accommodate diversity in training programmes. This question has featured in the academic debate on gender training for some time but remains a contentious issue. This working session examined the advan-

tages and disadvantages of different approaches and explored how policymakers and trainers can choose suitable approaches to accommodate diversity in a particular context. Workshop III participants' recommendations are summarised below.



'Gender training should not be used as a substitute for consistent and strategic change in pursuit of gender equality. Effective gender training is based on a broad and integrated strategy for personal and organisational development towards gender equality.'

Christian Raschke, Gender Trainer, Vielfalt Gestalten, Germany



Workshop III

Participants' recommendations for diversity accommodation in training programmes

- Question the binary construction of gender/sex to include people with diverse individual identities.
- Communicate complexities of diversity to public administration, possibly through an EU-wide approach to diversity in training programmes.
- Raise training participants' awareness of the existence of diverse groups and the exclusion mechanism at work.
- Question training participants' own assumptions about culture and identity.
- Ensure that gender trainers are aware of the complexity and multiplicity of identity and of multiple discrimination issues.
- Introduce self-assessment/reflection mechanisms for gender trainers to provide diversity-sensitive trainings.

WORKING SESSION IV

Gender training in the EU: effectively developing capacity for gender mainstreaming

The last working session explored how to improve the effectiveness of gender training in the EU. The questions of whether training should be practical or theoretical, abstract or tailored was explored and specific examples of effective tools and methods for

gender training were presented. The workshop also examined the issue of the minimum standards for gender training. The main conclusions in relation to effective design, delivery and impact of gender training are listed in a table below.



'Gender training should not be used as a substitute for consistent and strategic change in pursuit of gender equality. Effective gender training is based on a broad and integrated strategy for personal and organisational development towards gender equality.'

Christian Raschke, Gender Trainer, Vielfalt Gestalten, Germany



Workshop IV

Participants' recommendations for effective design, delivery and impact of gender training programmes

Design

- The needs analysis determines the goals and sets the parameters for evaluation.
- It is important to link theory to practice.
- The training should establish learning agreements to ensure ownership.
- Considering the duration of gender training is an important point in planning training activities.

Delivery

- 'Trainer profile': a gender-sensitive professional trainer with facilitation skills.
- Logistics and organisation of a training course: short and flexible, structured and targeted, lasts around 2 days.
- The method: outcome-orientated participative approach that allows time for self-reflection and uses of a variety of training methods.

Impacts

- Impact should be embedded in the design of gender training and measure:
 - relative changes for individual participants.
 - relative changes at institutional level in relation to original objectives.
- Qualitative impact assessment currently exists. however, quantitative measures are also necessary (these exist in a small number of cases, e.g. Finland).
- It is easier to measure outputs than outcomes and impact (a gap that EIGE could fill).

Download the summaries and access the working sessions here: <http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/summaries-of-presentations>.

6. Conclusions and ways forward: what new directions for gender training are ahead of us?



In the panel discussions of Day II, participants explored new directions to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Europe and proposed ways forward in light of the EU and Member States' commitments to gender mainstreaming strategy.

'There are reasons to be cheerful, we do have leadership, we do have champions, we do have a body of expertise, we do have a body of resources and support development. But there are significant challenges in terms of ownership, in terms of implementation, in terms of intersectionality.'

Niall Crowley, Board Advisor, Equinet, former Head of Equality Authority in Ireland

'Once you have the legal framework, the money and the general political willingness, it is not all. Gender mainstreaming requires having everybody on board.'

Jean Blatz, Policy Officer, Gender Equality Unit, DG Justice, European Commission

General recommendations from the conference participants

To address the issues identified throughout the conference, participants suggested that actions in the following domains need to be considered.



- Confronted by many challenges, gender training should be both a bottom-up and a top-down approach. There is an urgent need to secure access, to tackle resistance, and to build awareness and ownership of the process.
- New developments in areas such as diversity, gender training standards and certification and a tailored approach to different policy areas are needed to improve the gender capacity of public organisations in EU institutions and at Member State level.
- Sharing knowledge and experiences on effective approaches is a necessity and should be enhanced. Gender trainers and experts should work together and, thus, spaces to do so should be promoted.
- Due to its strategic position, the institute could contribute to the ongoing debate on quality standards for gender training at an EU level by building bridges between gender trainers,



academic researchers and policymakers and furthering the existing work to define criteria for assessing gender training programmes and resources. Further consideration needs to be given to the need for the elaboration of an EU qualification/certification system for gender trainers and possibly for the development of an EU training programme for gender trainers (TPOT).

- Institutionalisation of capacity building for gender mainstreaming is considered as a

necessary prerequisite by the vast majority of participants. The effectiveness of gender training in implementing gender equality policies needs to be highlighted.

- To guarantee long-term effectiveness, gender training needs to be considered as a part of a 'training continuum' and designed as a part of a wider 'capacity building strategy' that includes post-training activities, monitoring systems and changes in the organisation.

'When a process begins to lose energy, you have got to find a way of injecting new energy through some sort of new development or new evolution of the process. I think it is the 'hot issue' that tells us what the evolution is going to be. The two 'hot issues' were the issue of accommodating diversity and the issue of standard and certification. These might be the issues we can develop concrete initiatives on, that would give new energy to gender mainstreaming, a new phase for gender mainstreaming, and therefore a new demand for gender mainstreaming.'

Niall Crowley, Board Advisor, Equinet, former Head of Equality Authority in Ireland



EIGE's next steps: moving towards efficient and effective gender training

Building on the first year of the project and the opinions expressed by the conference participants, the second phase of EIGE's project will focus more particularly on the ways to improve the effectiveness of gender training in the European Union. During the qualitative study, the research team will explore, among other questions, how effective gender training is in securing the implementation of a long-term gender mainstreaming strategy, and to what extent gender training creates a transformative effect on the

individuals and organisations. The in-depth research study will aim to better understand the strategic and technical requirements for an effective implementation of gender training, and to identify the institutional factors that can help or hinder capacity building development.

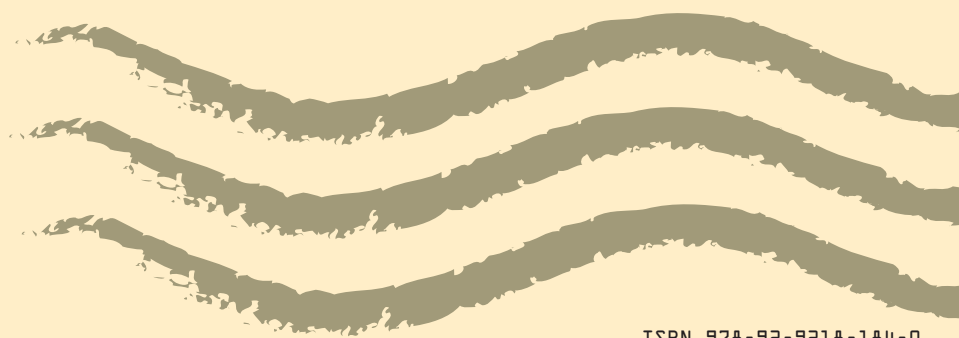
A second online discussion will be organised in 2013 and will invite gender trainers to exchange views on gender training standards and certification processes.

'We have to acknowledge the implications of a context of economic and financial crisis in relation to the practice of and commitment to gender mainstreaming. Because it is clear, at both European and Member States level, that gender mainstreaming has not been a part of the policy process that is grappling with this issue of crisis. It is clear that gender equality has not been a concern, nor an objective in the responses developed to the crisis ... We also know that if we rebuild the Europe out of the crisis that does not have gender equality as a core value, we will have lost some extraordinary progress in our society.'

Niall Crowley, Board Advisor, Equinet, former Head of Equality Authority in Ireland



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