

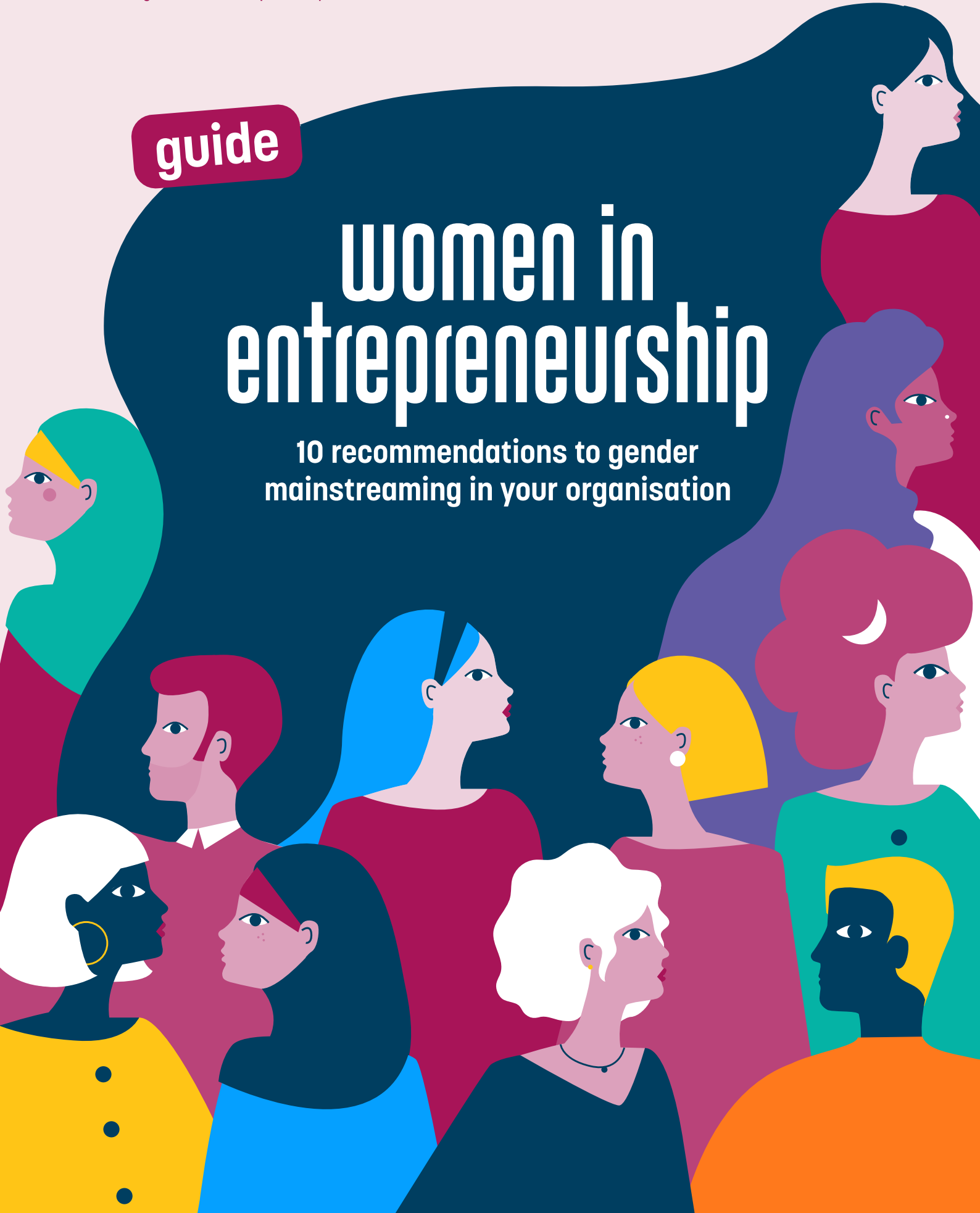
fowose

Fostering women social entrepreneurship

guide

women in entrepreneurship

10 recommendations to gender
mainstreaming in your organisation



editorial

Gender-inclusive entrepreneurship, not an option, a necessity



TStartup Heatmap's latest research (2020) on women entrepreneurs in Europe revealed that only **15.5% of founders or co-founders are women with women entrepreneurs receiving 38% less funding than their male counterparts when starting under the same conditions.** Even in cities with strong support ecosystems, **less than one in five start-ups ifounders are women.** Although women make up 52% of the total European population, only 34% of the European Union self-employed workers and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs are women (WEbarometer Report, 2021). Despite a growing number of gender equality plans in companies and public institutions, these statistics prove that **we are still a long way from achieving true gender equality in entrepreneurship.**

What do we mean by gender? **Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys,** as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes (Definition by the European Institute for Gender equality – EIGE).

Gender mainstreaming in our society has been embraced at international level as a strategy to achieve full gender equality. It involves integrating a gender perspective into the preparation, implementation and evaluation of regulatory measures and expenditure programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination. **When applied to entrepreneurial support structures, gender mainstreaming aims to create a gender-inclusive ecosystem.**

Impact entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for achieving gender equality and a key to empowering women, as it has long been recognized as a driving force for economic growth and innovation. Indeed, it provides women with

opportunities for economic independence and financial sufficiency towards greater independence and better living conditions while breaking gender norms preventing them from reaching their potential. **Entrepreneurship is a way for women to become true actors of change. Entrepreneurship embodies the fundamentals of freedom: freedom of choice, freedom of life, freedom in building your own path.**

However, despite significant progress in recent years, gender disparities persist in entrepreneurial endeavours, with women entrepreneurs often facing specific challenges and barriers to success. **To address these disparities, gender mainstreaming in entrepreneurial support structures is crucial to unlocking the power of inclusivity and fostering an environment in which all entrepreneurs can thrive.**

The Empow'Her's 2019 European study, which provided data on the challenges faced by women as social entrepreneurs, revealed that support structures had a key role to play: **63% of women social entrepreneurs who responded to the study felt that women's lack of self-confidence hindered their development as entrepreneurs** and 87% were willing to participate in a dedicated programme for women social entrepreneurs.

True empowerment measures will help to address the increasing desire of women to access entrepreneurship opportunities. The mobilisation of all involved actors and in-depth studies of the legal context in Europe and abroad constitute the main pillars of **the FoWoSE (Fostering Women Social Entrepreneurship) project aiming to increase the integration of gender at all levels, at structural level and at program level.**

Iliana BALABANOVA

*President of the European Women's Lobby
President and cofounder of the Bulgarian Platform of the EWL*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Iliana' followed by a stylized surname.

introduction



Our findings

There is a **general lack of inclusivity in entrepreneurship**, and especially social entrepreneurship towards women. Support structures and social economy organisation (SEOs) do not sufficiently integrate gender equality at structural level and project level, which **reduces opportunities for women entrepreneurs**. Indeed, if the people in charge of supporting and training women social entrepreneurs are not themselves trained and lack the tools to support these women, women's access to entrepreneurship is hampered. Furthermore, structures with expertise on gender equality issues have not had the opportunity of sharing their formalised good practices with other actors.

This guide is therefore intended to address this lack of sharing of gender mainstreaming practices.

What is this guide about?

This is a pedagogical tool that aims at **enabling organisation to better integrate gender into their organisations and their support programmes**. The tool includes a self-diagnosis that helps organisations assess their structure and their level of gender mainstreaming. Then, based on the results, up to **10 easy-to-implement recommendations** are provided to change and improve the practices.

How was this tool developed?

In response to the lack of tools, we launched the **FoWoSE project (Fostering Women Social Entrepreneurship)**, a **European consortium project funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme**. This tool is based on the **expertise** of each consortium partner and on our **research** as part of the FoWoSE project. *Learn more about the project at the end of the guide.*

In order to make the content developed by the project partners more accessible and user-friendly, we have created this pedagogical tool to help organisation better integrate gender.

Who is it for?

This guide is intended for **managers/leaders of entrepreneurial support structures** who wish to and/or are responsible for better integrating gender into their organisation. Staff can also take the test but they might know all the answers. If this is so, you can ask your manager and this could be an excellent way to start working on your gender action plan and involving all parties.

If you are willing to assess gender mainstreaming in your organisation, **this is the tool for you!**

We provide solution for better gender mainstreaming, but our recommendations and challenges are not exhaustive. This document is not a one-size-fits-all and can be adapted according to the needs of each organisation or a desire to go further in its approaches. To deepen your approach to gender mainstreaming, you can hire an external consultant with gender expertise to tailor a gender plan for your organisation.

Tag us on social media:

#FoWoSEChallenge



glossary

Bias: Preference, predisposition or inclination towards or against one thing, person or group, often based on prevailing stereotypes. These biases are often unconscious, they are learned, and become deeply ingrained and can influence behaviours that could lead to unfair treatment of certain gender groups.

CEO: A chief executive officer, the highest-ranking person in a company or other institution, ultimately responsible for taking managerial decisions.

Equality: Equality is the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment.

Gender: Refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men - such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed.

Gender-based discrimination: Gender discrimination describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male or female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities.

Gender focal-point: The work of a gender focal point is to support gender mainstreaming by advocating, advising and supporting professional staff and monitoring and reporting on progress - if necessary through the use of/support from consultants or external specialists.

Gender lens: The deliberate 'application' of a lens - seeing something through the eyes of a woman and then seeing the same thing through the eyes of a man. By applying the lens, it reveals how your activities may be experienced by different gendered groups. Applying a gender lens may reveal that your activities advantage certain gender groups, whilst disadvantaging others.

Gender mainstreaming: The integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, with a view to promoting equality between all genders, and combating discrimination.

Gender-neutral: The term 'gender-neutral' means that something is not associated with either women or men. It may refer to various aspects such as concepts or style of language.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.

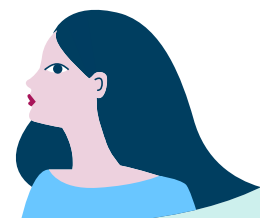
Sexism: Sexism is linked to beliefs around the fundamental nature of women and men and the roles they should play in society. Sexist assumptions about women and men, which manifest themselves as gender stereotypes, can rank one gender as superior to another.

Stereotypes: A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Support structure: A support structure is an organisation that offers entrepreneurial and managerial support, services, support programmes and possibly a place to work.

Trainers: Trainers are internal or external professionals that help entrepreneurs with their project by giving them advice, trainings... When we speak of trainers we also mean coaches and mentors.

Workplace harassment: Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, colour, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, older age (beginning at age 40), disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.



how to use this tool?

You are about to assess gender mainstreaming in your association.

Please be as **objective** as possible in order to identify the status of gender mainstreaming in your organisation and to be able to better integrate gender into your structure.

All questions are listed randomly.



For each question, we suggest 4 answers:

'Yes, absolutely'

You fully agree with the question, your organisation is already doing this.

'Not yet or in discussion'

You haven't implemented this action yet but you have already thought about it and/or are planning to do so.

'Yes, to some extent'

You have implemented something similar, you are on the right direction or you have in fact already implemented this action but feel that you still have lots to do.

'Not at all'

This action is not implemented at all in your organisation. It is not in your current plans to implement such action or, even if you have considered doing so, you can't allocate the resources needed.

now it's your turn!

1. Does your organisation arrange training or onboarding sessions to help external trainers better adapt their posture and content to women entrepreneurs?	
2. Do you consider your workspace to be accessible and inclusive to all? (office equipments, toilets, sanitary products, breastfeeding rooms etc.)	
3. Is the representation of women and men in leadership positions equally distributed in your organisation?	
4. Does everyone in your organisation have equitable access to trainings, regardless of their job positions?	
5. Does your organisation carry out surveys to meet the needs of your women entrepreneurs and adapt the programs according to the feedbacks collected?	
6. Does your organisation have a community building strategy for your women entrepreneurs?	
7. Is there an allocated human resources person in your organisation?	
8. Are men and women paid equally for the same job?	
9. Does your organisation have a DEI (diversity/equality/inclusion) clause in the contract signed by your partners and stakeholders?	
10. Does your organisation have a formal training policy on gender for its staff?	
11. Have you ever noticed or have you had reports of gender discriminatory behaviour?	
12. Does your organisation have an official and accessible to all policy on work-life balance? (out of office hours, days off, working time management, etc.)	
13. Does your organisation have a designated gender focal point?	
14. Does your organisation monitor trainers and trainings?	
15. Does your organisation have an equal employment opportunities policy (EEO)?	

16. Does your organisation take into consideration the needs of women entrepreneurs when designing and implementing programs and community support systems?	
17. Does your organisation use gender sensitive communications (inclusive language, role models etc.)?	
18. Does your organisation consider gender quota when selecting a new provider?	
19. Does your organisation offer parental leave or other parent-protecting policies, in addition to the legal obligations?	
20. Does your organisation conduct training to encourage staff to develop new skills?	
21. Does your organisation have a clear and accessible to all policy against discrimination and harassment?	
22. Does your organisation support the promotion/networking/capacity building of women entrepreneurs? i.e by planning events for female entrepreneurship or running specific schemes dedicated solely to women entrepreneurs.	
23. Does your organisation offer flexible working options?	
24. Does your organisation help its internal trainers deconstruct their gender biases when supporting men and women entrepreneurs?	
25. Are the leadership of your organisation trained on gender issues?	
26. Does your organisation have an internal gender sensitive charter shared with all staff?	
27. Has your organisation established a selection quota between men and women entrepreneurs?	
28. Does your organisation carry out anonymous staff surveys to detect any violence or harassment in the work environment?	
29. Have you implemented a risk assessment tool for health, safety and wellbeing in your workplace and identified the risks with your staff?	
30. Are staff trained to identify and act appropriately in case of gender discriminatory situations?	

results

Based on your answers, we suggest recommendations on areas that can be improved within your **organisation and programmes**.

If your score is high enough, you will see the sentence *«congratulations, you do not need specific recommendation on this topic»*. This means that you **meet the standards** for good gender mainstreaming. However, there is always room for improvements and challenges!

If your score is lower than expected, you will read the sentence *«you seem to need help to improve your policy on this topic, click here to learn more»*.

This means that you **need improvements** to better integrate gender in your organisation and/or your programmes. Clicking on the button will take you directly to the recommendation page.

Once on that page, you will have all the information you need to understand and put into practice the topics.

To go even further, we have created level 1 and 2 challenges to quickly apply our recommendations.

Leadership

Health and safety

Equal opportunities for staff

Education and training for staff

Equal opportunities for beneficiaries

Education and training for trainers

Discriminations

Enterprise development and supply chain

Work life balance

Community of entrepreneurs & engagement



How are the scores calculated?

Each answer is given a score and each category is composed of 3 questions. When added up, they can amount to up to 9 points per category. We have judged that above 6 points, you have mainstreamed gender in your organisation. You can still refer to the recommendations and challenges to go even further!

leadership



Overview of the key area

Equitable and inclusive corporate leadership (both in numbers and in practice) is an essential and integral part of making gender equality and women's empowerment a key strategic priority for any organisation, large or small. It publicly signals the goals and objectives of the CEO and senior management team in promoting gender equality in entrepreneurship and creates a high level framework that defines how this commitment will fit into the company's sustainability strategy, day-to-day operations and organisational culture.



Recommendation

Provide the organisation's leadership with training on the importance of women's participation in management, on managing gender stereotypes and biases and on creating an inclusive working environment.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Number/percentage of women on the organisation's board.
- Number/percentage of women considered for each management vacancy.
- Number of high-level public commitments and statements of support by the CEO for gender equality.



Challenge 1

For your organisation's next recruitment process, **use gender-neutral job descriptions, diverse interview panels, and blind résumés.** This can help with removing deep-rooted biases from the selection process.

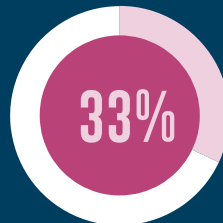


Challenge 2

If you wish to commit to gender issues, **you can formalise it in a charter** signed by all staff, managers and leaders to promote and achieve gender equality in your organisation.



Some data



In 2022, Grant Thornton's Women in Business research showed that **women hold 33% of top leadership positions in Europe**

Sources: Grant Thornton's Women in Business report 2022:
[How businesses can open the door to diverse talent](#)

Women account for a little over one quarter of board members of publicly listed companies in the EU (28%), and for less than one fifth of senior executives (18%) in 2019. In other words, **although representing approximately half of all employed persons in the EU, women continue to be under-represented amongst managers**

Sources: [Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, 2020](#)

equal opportunities for staff



Overview of the key area

Inclusion and equality are about the equal treatment of individuals and groups and represents opportunities for women and men in the workplace. Although legislation and company policies often include these principles, organisational culture and structure, habits, implicit prejudices and stereotypes can lead to indirect discrimination or unequal treatment of women and men. Eliminating all forms of discrimination in company policies, strategies, culture and practices, in terms of recruitment, opportunities, pay and benefits, is a crucial step in any organisation's journey towards gender equality.



Recommendation

In order to achieve equal opportunities for all staff, regardless of gender, we recommend that you focus on salaries, hour adaptability and recruitment.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Number and percentage of women compared to men represented in a specific type of contract or in a particular job category.
- Number of women in team management.
- Gender pay gap.



Challenge ①

Establish a **remote work policy**, and ensure its proper implementation and enforcement. A remote work policy is a set of principles and rules which regulates working conditions (with expectations and guidelines) to protect staff when working outside of the office.



Challenge ②

To ensure that your organisation provides equal opportunities, you can **measure the pay gap between staff within your organisation to determine whether there is 'equal pay for equal skills'** and then set up a **pay grid** to justify the salaries and positions of staff.



Some data

28%
women

72%
men

In April 2019, the boards of largest listed companies across the 28 EU Member States had 28 % women and 72 % men.

Source: [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#)

equal opportunities for the beneficiaries*



Overview of the key area

According to the WeBarometer, **women generally have less access than men to information because they are often excluded from mixed networks**. In addition, 'poor support systems' from their families and relatives is highlighted as a critical issue preventing women from starting a business, along with 'unwillingness to take risks' and 'low self-confidence'. Although women tend to resort more to support schemes when they become entrepreneurs, they find it more difficult to take the leap.

For these reasons, and to encourage more women to engage in an entrepreneurial journey, it is essential that communication strategies target them in an attractive and non-stigmatizing way.



Recommendation

To attract and select more women entrepreneurs, we recommend that you consider women's specific needs when designing your support programmes. This means using gender-sensitive communication, adapting your selection criteria to take gender into account, working on your pipeline of entrepreneurs throughout the year.



Challenge ①

Create a registration or entry questionnaire to understand the specific needs of the cohort before the programme starts.



Challenge ②

Modify your selection process and adapt your criteria by integrating gender. If you are used to holding pitches, try another selection method (on file, on video, a question-and-answer format etc). Or add a «gender and inclusion» criterion to your selection grid: a bonus of 10 points if you consider that the person fits into the category.



Some data

According to a survey led by IntoTheMinds over 840 entrepreneurs in Europe, the motivations to start a business depend on the gender of the entrepreneur:

➔ Women business creation is less opportunistic since only **20.1%** of them declare to have identified an opportunity on the market (against 32.7% for men).

➔ **43.3%** women tend to do more specific training before starting their business (against 31.8% for men).

discriminations



Overview of the key area

Gender discrimination is not always intentional, but can be the result of a lack of information, personal bias, a non-inclusive corporate culture, a lack of support structures to promote gender equality, or simply a lack of commitment to eliminating discrimination at work.

Collecting, monitoring and analysing sex-disaggregated data on a regular basis can help to identify sex discrimination in its direct and indirect forms. In addition, analysing the organisation's policies and operations from a gender perspective is an important starting point for identifying gaps, risks and opportunities. Once the baseline analysis is in place, a company can create an action plan with objectives and activities to achieve the desired change.



Recommendation

In order to prevent any form of discrimination, we recommend that you create an internal barometer to measure discrimination and evaluate it on a regular basis.

Example

if, according to the barometer, someone is using suppression techniques, you can intervene by saying:
«I thought what Sofia said was interesting, can you continue?»



What indicators should be monitored?

- Number of promotions for women compared to men. If women are being passed over for promotions or are being promoted at a slower rate than men, it could indicate gender discrimination within the company.
- Numbers of recruitments of women compared to men.



Some data

12,7%
in 2021

The gender pay gap in the EU stands at 12,7% in 2021 and has only changed minimally over the last decade. It means that women earn 13,0% on average less per hour than men.

Source: European Commission - The gender pay gap situation in the EU



Challenge ①

Use the EU guidelines for **gender neutral language** and **gender inclusive language** to create a policy that suits your organisation.



Challenge ②

Create a **non-discrimination policy** according to what you feel is best for your organisation.

work life balance



Overview of the key area

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment are closely linked to achieving a balance between work and family, a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities and investment in the care economy. Investing in family-friendly and work/life balance policies ensures that staff with care responsibilities are supported and valued. It has a strong business value too as it increases staff retention and engagement, reduces absenteeism and lowers overall recruitment costs.



Recommendation

To improve your staff's work-life balance, you need to pay attention to their working hours: do they do overtime? Do they prioritise work over family? etc. This will help to avoid burnout and take better account of staff with family responsibilities.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Duration and rights of maternity, paternity and family leave
- Number and percentage of women and men applying for and taking advantage of these benefits.
- Number and percentage of women and men taking advantage of flexible working arrangements.



Challenge 1

Give your staff two separate phones if necessary (one personal and one business) and if this is not possible, encourage your staff to turn off work email notifications when they are out of the office or working hours.



Challenge 2

Encourage and normalise parents taking parental leave, especially the fathers, by appointing male executives as ambassadors.

Some data

According to a report by the National Women's Business Council (NWBC) work-life balance can have a significant impact on the success of women entrepreneurs.

The report states that work-life balance is critical to helping women entrepreneurs manage their personal and professional lives, reduce stress, and avoid burnout. Another study by the Center for Women's Business Research found that women entrepreneurs who prioritize work-life balance are more likely to achieve growth and profitability in their businesses.

Source: «Women's Entrepreneurship: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs through Work-Life Balance», the National Women's Business Council.

health and safety



Overview of the key area

The key area “Health and safety” highlights the right of staff to safety and freedom from violence in the workplace, as well as the fact that women and men may sometimes have different needs when performing certain tasks. For example, the body structure of most women is different from that of most men, which means that some work equipment must be designed accordingly. Preventing and responding to safety risks and sexual harassment in the workplace is essential to creating a safe and discrimination-free working environment.



Recommendation

To provide a safe environment for your staff, we recommend that you address any gender discriminatory behaviour and be very clear about what is not acceptable. Having an anti-gender and workplace harassment officer and anti-harassment policies in place should also help.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Number of complaints of sexual harassment.
- Number of sexual harassment cases that are resolved without further victimising the survivors.
- Staff views on the organisation’s ability to prevent and deal with sexual harassment cases.



Challenge ①

If you do not have a human resources manager responsible for enforcing non-discrimination, then **designate a trusted person, a gender focal point, to whom staff can turn if they face a problem of violence or harassment at work.**



Challenge ②

Conduct anonymous staff surveys to find out what people think about their safety at work and how they rate discrimination at work.



Some data

+23% people

More than one in five people (almost 23 per cent) in employment have experienced violence and harassment at work, whether physical, psychological or sexual, according to a new joint analysis, the first of its kind, by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Lloyd’s Register Foundation (LRF) and Gallup.

Source : Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey, International Labour Organization (ILO), Lloyd’s Register Foundation (LRF) and Gallup, 2022

education and training for staff



Overview of the key area

This principle includes everything related to the rights and opportunities of staff to access quality education and training as part of their job. Effective training programmes that support women's professional development are also complemented by networking and mentoring initiatives.



Recommendation

To ensure that your staff is trained and develop new skills, we recommend that you make training sessions available to all, as well as assess their skills and objectives in order to regularly adapt trainings.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Hours of role-based training (disaggregated by gender).
- Hours of mentoring (disaggregated by sex).
- Hours of gender-related training (disaggregated by sex).



Challenge 1

Ask staff what kind of training they would like to receive by **creating an idea box** where they can suggest training courses.



Challenge 2

Organise an annual review of each member of the organisation's career plan and/or include a gender-sensitive component in the onboarding process.



Some data

Women focus on education and training, men engage more in work-related training.

In 2017, the EU-28 average of women and men aged 25-64 years participating in education and training in a 4-week period was 12 % and 10 % respectively, well below the Europe 2020 target of 15%.

The EU trend followed similar lines among those in or out of work: 13 % of employed women and 10 % of employed men were engaged in education and training; among unemployed people, it was 11 % of women and 9 % of men.

Source: [Gender Equality Index 2019: Work-life balance, EIGE, 2019](#)

education and training for trainers



Overview of the key area

The objective of training the trainers is to strengthen your teams' skills integrating the needs of women entrepreneurs' into your entrepreneurship support programmes. As a support structure, your role is to convey more gender inclusive values internally and to your ecosystem. To do this, you need to train your service providers and staff to transmit these values in their daily support.



Recommendation

Training your trainers on gender should contribute to greater inclusion in your programmes. We recommend that you train them as part of their onboarding process and help them deconstruct their gender biases.



Testimony

«As a support manager, the FoWoSE project has enabled me to boost my self-confidence and my ability to provide the best possible support for women in their entrepreneurial careers. I have concrete, simple tools that are easy to use, as well as feedback from various European partners, which helps me to improve my day-to-day practice.»

Eva Sibel,
Support and Pedagogical trainer

Challenge ①

During your next major partner meeting, mention your wish to address gender bias issues by co-constructing a training course or charter on the subject with them and organise mandatory training for trainers on gender bias.



Challenge ②

Create a satisfaction survey to evaluate your trainers. Evaluations can be carried out by the beneficiaries.

enterprise development and supply chain



Overview of the key area

Human rights abuses can occur not only in poor and developing countries, but also in developed and rich economies. Respecting human rights is the responsibility of all actors, private and public, and ensuring that human rights are not violated by a company's activities is an essential first step. By creating business links with women-owned companies and influencing suppliers to respect human rights and promote gender equality, companies and organisations can have a positive impact on the lives of women and communities.

Respecting the dignity of women in marketing materials is also central to this principle.



Recommendation

To ensure that the development of your organisation and your stakeholders is aligned with your values, we recommend that you are very specific in their recruitment and very clear about your expectations and values when contracting new suppliers or external trainers.

What indicators should be monitored?

- Number and proportion of suppliers and customers/beneficiaries that have been selected according to gender equality criteria (e.g. using WEPS as a roadmap).
- Number and proportion of women-owned businesses in your supply chain and customer base.
- Ratio of men to women at management level in your suppliers and clients/beneficiaries.



Some data

What progress looks like:

- ➔ The organisation's supply chain involves relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses.
- ➔ The organisation's customers/beneficiaries include women-owned enterprises
- ➔ All business partners, beneficiaries and suppliers respect the organisation's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion.

Source : FoWoSE Methodology: A guide to gender mainstreaming for entrepreneurial support structure, 2022.

Challenge ①

Implement a gender-sensitive recruitment charter for contractors and suppliers.



Challenge ②

Conduct an audit of your suppliers and their company's gender sensitivity.

community of entrepreneurs & engagement



Overview of the key area

Organisations are increasingly investing in community development programmes to make a valuable, effective and accountable contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. Community engagement initiatives can vary from one company to another, depending on the sector of activity, strategy and area of expertise. Community engagement projects do not have to be philanthropic activities, but they should be about a cause that is close to the heart of the company and/or its staff and to which they have the knowledge and capacity to commit to, ideally over the long term.



Recommendation

In order to build an inclusive and committed community of entrepreneurs, we recommend that you include gender and women's needs in the overall management of your community. This means creating safe spaces where they can express themselves, create real, quality and sustainable relationships with the trainers and the group of entrepreneurs.



What indicators should be monitored?

- Number of women and girls who have benefited from positive impact through community engagement initiatives.
- Number of community stakeholders who have benefited from coalitions and broader initiatives.
- Number of positive changes in policy or practice that community advocacy has succeeded in bringing about.



Some data

Entrepreneurial communities allow entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. According to the WeBarometer in 2021, "networking programs and mentoring programs" are the top two types of enterprise support required for women entrepreneurs, as it provides access to economic and financial opportunities, tips and advices based on shared experiences, as well as useful connections for future collaboration or sale.

Source: WEbarometer : A survey of Women Entrepreneurs in Europe, WEgate, 2021



Challenge 1

Promote at least 3 role models from different back-grounds and cultures in your support programmes by inviting them to speak on your social media, by writing articles about their story on your website.



Challenge 2

Ensure that women are always represented in all your events: when organising an event, make sure that there is a gender balance. To go further, you can highlight a woman and her background, organise women-only events, ensure that networking events are included in the general agenda and make sure that the calendar matches women's availability.

to go further

Refer to the documents created in the framework of the FoWoSE project and on which this pedagogical tool is based:

- Read our guide to improving gender mainstreaming in entrepreneurship support structures
- [Check our toolbox to better integrate gender in your activities](#)



Request a more in-depth and personalised follow-up on gender mainstreaming in your organisation with the partners of the FoWoSE project.

If you successfully completed a challenge, feel free to post it on your social media using the hashtag **#FoWoSEChallenge** and share your progress!



fowose

about fowose

This Erasmus+ project aims at providing a solution to the lack of inclusivity in entrepreneurship, and especially social entrepreneurship, by acting directly on the organisations which support them on a daily basis. The objective is to strengthen gender mainstreaming at the operational and programme level for support structures in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

FoWoSE project stems from a common desire of its partners to increase gender-inclusivity in their practices and foster women's entrepreneurship in Europe, by creating specific support content for the organisations and enable them to share their good practices, thus providing better training and opportunities to women entrepreneurs. To this end, the project has developed methodological and training contents, which correspond to the needs of women.

In turn, these tools and methods will be disseminated at regional, national and European scale to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem that is more inclusive towards women

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[PULSE](#) - France, Paris

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[Women On Top](#) - Greece, Athens

