

Achieving Impact with Gender Equality Plans

Six facilitating factors & a model for change

<https://www.inspirequality.eu/>

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Funded by
the European Union

*INSPIRE Final Conference
Brussels, 16-17 April 2026*

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35 case studies across Europe



1st wave **14 in-depth** case studies across 8 countries

- 134 semi-structured interviews, site-visits, focus-groups
- In-depth reports and comparative analysis

2nd wave **21 light-weight** case studies

- 90 targeted interviews & focus groups
- Systematic collection of data on each of the 6 factors through questionnaire

1. Strategic Organizational commitment

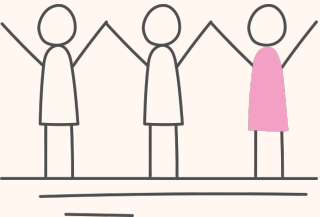
2. Comprehensive data for decision making

3. Advanced Gender knowledge

4. Inclusive community for change

5. Enforceable legislation

6. Supportive cultural and social context



Explaining Outcomes & Impact

1. Strategic organisational Commitment

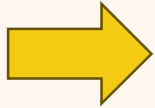
2. Evidence-based, reflexive approach

3. Gender knowledge

4. Inclusive community for change

5. Enforceable legislation

6. Supportive cultural and social context



Outcome

Career Progression

GBV

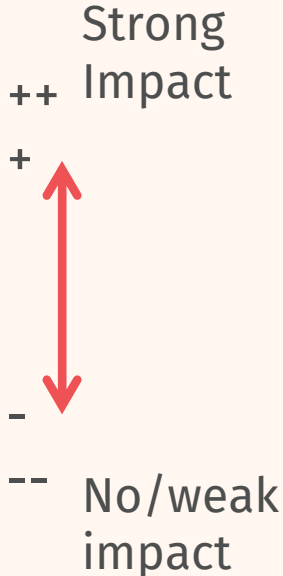
Factors do interact and affect outcomes and impact in a variety of ways

INSPIRE Change Model



4. Inclusive community for change

Scope, coordination, sustainability



Change Practice

Work allocation, formal recognition
Voluntary equality or care work

Affect Power

Middle managers
Staff, students

Affect Status

Senior academics involved
Early-career women

1. *Strategic Organisational Commitment*

How does it contribute to change?

- **Strategic Vision**
Align inclusive gender equality with organizational goals → legitimize change & overcome resistance.
- **Resources**
Dedicated financial, human, physical resources = indicator of genuine commitment.
- **Effective Communication**
Leaders must match words with actions → credibility builds trust.
- **Gender Expertise**
Gender competence essential for setting goals & addressing power dynamics.

2. *Comprehensive Data* for Equalities Decisions-making



How does it contribute to change?

- **Reveals Inequalities**
Data collection & analysis identifies scope and nature of inequalities → informs priorities and concrete actions.
- **Enables Monitoring & Evaluation**
Tracks progress of actions (monitoring) and outcomes and impact (evaluation), legitimises actions
- **Entry Point for Engagement**
Quantitative evidence builds trust, especially in STEM contexts, building urgency of change. Qualitative data builds relevance especially for minoritised groups
- **Reflexive Use**
Data must guide decision-making based upon on a Theory of Change
→ data collection without purposeful interventions to transform power and status hierarchies might be harmful rather than beneficial



3. *Advanced Gender Knowledge*

How does it contribute to change?

- **Unveiling & tackling organisational gender regimes**
Provides a systemic understanding of inequalities and exclusions → Tailored design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of GEPs under social justice lens. Most effective interventions are integrated into a theory of change.
- **Experiential and Practitioners' knowledge**
Experiential knowledge from marginalised groups and practitioners on how discrimination and organisations work is essential to de-gender “neutral” organisational processes.
- **Epistemic authority**
Gender and practitioner knowledge is valued and thus can address existing hierarchies and revert exclusions.
- **Training and capacity building**
Training spreads knowledge and supports organisational learning



4. *Inclusive Community of Change*

How does it contribute to change?

- **Scope and reach**
Equality work requires collective problem ownership across all levels, from bottom-up initiatives to middle managers, senior academics, and top leadership.
- **Coordination**
Each group or actor contributes according to its position and influence, balancing centralised support with decentralised implementation to align organisational culture, practices, and values around equality and inclusion.
- **Sustainability**
Equality work must be organized across staff categories in ways that are manageable, valued and formally recognized with adequate compensation schemes to avoid burn-out and guarantee sustainability.
- **Inclusion**
Inclusion beyond participation—intersectional differences reshape power, allowing marginalised voices to influence priorities and challenge inequality structures.



5. *Enforceable Legislation*

How does it contribute to change?

- **Resources for implementation**

Without sufficient funding and staffing to implement policies, they are likely to remain inconsequential

- **Compliance mechanisms**

Audits provide quality standards and ensure accountability. Certification signal commitment, drive competition, promote shared standards and visibility of GE/EDI efforts.

- **Credible sanctions**

Linking funding and prestige to equality compliance transforms power and status hierarchies. Penalties signal the value / resources attached to equality.

6. *Supporting Context*

- cultural, political and social



How does it contribute to change?

- **Cultural norms & gender roles**
Beliefs about gender roles shape what is seen as legitimate and desirable in organisations.
- **Political climate and progressive social policies**
Progressive and supportive environments provide legitimacy for gender equality.
- **Alliances and coalitions for GE**
Wider feminist networks and student activism pressure institutions to reform.
- **Higher Ed Transformation**
Marketisation and competition can hinder change unless equality is embedded in core values.

Where to go from here...



- Book to be published before end of 2026 with Routledge
- Open Training Unit (OTU) 3: Achieving impact with gender equality plans. Six facilitating factors for change (Manual, PPT, Video).
<https://inspirequality.eu/training>
- Several individual publications regarding INSPIRE Change Model, GEPs, ...

Thank you!

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Funded by
the European Union

This project has received funding under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101058537.

