



National Policy Report – Greece

**WP4 - FINAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY AND
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON GEP
IMPLEMENTATION AT HEIs WITH A FOCUS ON
STUDENT'S INVOLVEMENT**

PROMoting Gender mainstrEaming iN acaDemia through thE enhancement of gendeR equality and iNclusion in hiGher education

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Executive Summary & Policy Briefing

- Project Overview

The PRO-GENDERING initiative aimed to ensure that Gender Equality Plans remain effective and productive by helping higher education institutions (HEIs) enhance their ability to put these plans into action and assess their impact. Students played a key role in the project, which supported them in better understanding gender equality but also contributed to creating a more inclusive and diverse academic community that embraces change from within. Overall, the project sought to bring about lasting cultural and structural changes in HEIs regarding gender equality.

To achieve these objectives, the consortium conducted qualitative and quantitative research to map the current trends, needs and challenges around GEPs' design, implementation and evaluation, as well as their points of focus. Through the project, partners also developed the Handbook for Implementing and Monitoring GEP in HEI providing guidance on gender equality integration in HEIs and organised student-led activities on the topic. The handbook constitutes a material that can be adapted and used by different institutions. It is considered to be an introductory resource on Gender Equality Plans and a practical guide to support GEPs design, implementation and monitoring. The student-led activities brought together students from different departments of the same HEI who worked together, moving from passive recipients of awareness-raising activities to active contributors to institutional gender-equality efforts. The work done was supported by the Awareness Raising Toolkit (ART), a practical output of the PROGENDERING project, collecting examples, activities and tools useful for planning or implementing gender equality related projects. The active involvement of the students contributed to their familiarisation with the GEP of their university, the establishment of communication and cooperation pathways with the Gender Equality Committees and gave students a better understanding of the practical planning tools.

- Key Findings
 - The Handbook for Implementing and Monitoring GEP in HEI translated theory into practice
 - The Awareness Raising Toolkit (ART) supported concrete student action
 - Student participation strengthened ownership
 - Peer collaboration and student voice increased
 - Communication and referral pathways to the Gender Equality Committees enhanced
 - By raising awareness and establishing liaison with institutional structures, the active involvement of students in the implementation, monitoring and adaptation of the GEP to the academic reality has been strengthened

- Drawing from the PRO-GENDERING project experience, the following recommendations are suggested for HEI management and national policymakers:

RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Streamlined approval procedures for student-led gender equality initiatives

Develop defined approval pathways for student-initiated gender equality activities, with institutional accountability and reduced bureaucratic delays, including flexible timelines, simplified authorisation processes, and designated approval authority at department level.

02

Structured student voice in GEP design, implementation and monitoring

Establish structured mechanisms for ongoing student participation in Gender Equality Committees, including student representation in planning, regular consultation forums with student communities, and formal channels for feedback.

03

Intersectional framework in GEPs and their implementation

Mandate the integration of intersectional perspectives into national GEPs, including collecting gender-disaggregated data that also captures LGBTQIA+ identity, migration/refugee background, disability, and socioeconomic status, and targeted interventions for multiply marginalised groups.

04

Institutional culture of gender equality as the foundation for systemic progress

Position gender equality as a core institutional value embedded in institutional mission, vision, and values statements; establish cultural change initiatives that move gender equality from peripheral policy compliance to central institutional identity.

05

Comprehensive gender-disaggregated data collection and public reporting

Mandate collection and public reporting of comprehensive gender-disaggregated data across all institutional areas, and establish minimum standards for data categories, reporting timelines, and accessibility, with oversight by each institution's quality assurance mechanisms.

06

Active engagement of administrative staff in GEPs implementation and institutional data collection

Establish administrative representation in Committees, provide specialised training on gender-responsive administrative practices, and assign administrative units responsibility for collecting and maintaining gender-disaggregated data.

07

Targeted communication strategies using student-preferred channels

Create comprehensive communication plans for GEP activities using channels actively used by student populations rather than relying solely on formal institutional channels; ensure information is accessible, visually engaging, and clearly links GEP activities to student life and priorities.

08

Integration of gender perspectives into the curriculum and research policies

Establish institutional policies and incentives requiring faculty to integrate gender perspectives and gender-related material into curricula across all disciplines, support the development of programmes on gender-informed teaching, and create frameworks for evaluating gender integration in course design.

09

Accessible reporting and support for gender-based harassment, discrimination and violence

Establish multiple, accessible reporting channels for gender-based harassment and violence, ensure staff training in trauma-informed response, provide protocols for investigation and follow-up, and offer support services to survivors.

10

Campus culture of active bystandership in discrimination and harassment

Establish peer-led bystandership training programmes teaching community members to safely and effectively intervene when witnessing violence, build institutional messaging and peer culture that normalises intervention as community responsibility, and establish peer support networks.

11

Formal collaboration between HEIs and community organisations on gender equality

Establish partnerships between HEIs and external organisations to bring external expertise, lived experience, and accountability into institutional gender equality work, regular consultation mechanisms, and community advisory boards.

12

Establishment of degree programmes and research centres in gender studies

Develop degree programmes and units in gender studies at under- and postgraduate levels; establish research centres that conduct gender-focused research and provide expertise to institutions and policymakers; position gender studies as a field contributing to knowledge production and social progress.

1. Introduction and National Context

1.1 National Landscape

Despite progress in recent years, gender inequalities remain persistent in Greece, including within higher education. Women continue to experience disadvantages related to career progression, representation in leadership and decision-making positions, work-life balance and the unequal distribution of care responsibilities. Gender stereotypes and implicit biases also continue to influence institutional practices and academic culture.

The legal and policy framework for gender equality in Greek higher education has gradually been strengthened. The National Action Plans for Gender Equality have promoted the integration of gender equality into education, research and institutional governance. A particularly important development was Law 4589/2019, which required Greek universities to establish Gender Equality Committees. These Committees are responsible for preparing and supporting equality action plans, proposing measures against discrimination and sexism, organising awareness-raising and training activities, and supporting members of the academic community in cases of discrimination or harassment.

Following these developments, gender equality has gained increasing visibility within the Greek higher education sector. Higher Education Institutions have increasingly adopted Gender Equality Plans addressing areas such as work-life balance, gender representation in leadership, recruitment and career development, the integration of gender perspectives into teaching and research, inclusive language, and the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

Nevertheless, the practical integration of gender equality into institutional structures, everyday academic practices and decision-making processes remains uneven. The national assessment conducted under PRO-GENDERING showed that important gaps persist in relation to the allocation of financial and human resources, the clarity of implementation and monitoring arrangements, the collection of gender-disaggregated data and the communication of GEP actions across academic communities. In some cases, monitoring mechanisms exist but their results are not made widely accessible, limiting transparency and broader institutional accountability.

The evidence collected through PRO-GENDERING also suggests that institutional procedures may create obstacles to the implementation of gender equality initiatives. Activities developed within universities often require extensive communication, formal authorisation and approval at several administrative levels. These procedures can limit the flexibility and speed with which students and staff are able to introduce new initiatives, particularly when they involve several departments or institutional actors.

Student engagement is formally recognised, as students' representation is provided for in Gender Equality Committees and are considered part of the institutional community responsible for implementing equality actions. In practice, however, their participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of GEPs remains limited and varies between institutions. The national assessment also identified relatively low awareness among students and staff of their university's GEP, its activities and the available support or reporting mechanisms.

Although students are directly affected by institutional policies and campus culture, their perspectives are not always systematically incorporated into gender equality processes. The PRO-GENDERING experience demonstrated the value of creating structured opportunities through which students could communicate with Gender Equality Committees and other responsible institutional actors. Such contact can enhance students' understanding of existing institutional mechanisms while enabling their experiences, concerns and priorities to be more clearly reflected in institutional actions.

The project findings further point to the importance of adopting a more intersectional understanding of gender equality. Factors such as LGBTQIA+ identity, migration or refugee background, disability and other forms of vulnerability are not always sufficiently reflected in institutional GEPs or their implementation. Addressing these gaps requires more inclusive data collection, stronger communication, targeted capacity-building and the active participation of different groups within the academic community.

The Greek national context can therefore be characterised by a strengthening legal and institutional framework and a growing formal commitment to gender equality, alongside continuing challenges related to implementation, resources, institutional flexibility, intersectionality and meaningful student engagement.

1.2 Overview of PRO-GENDERING Implementation

In Greece, the PRO-GENDERING project was implemented by KMOP – Education and Innovation Hub through a combination of capacity-building, awareness-raising, student engagement and dissemination activities.

Under WP2, KMOP EIH organised local and international workshops focusing on Gender Equality Plans and presented the *Handbook for Implementing and Monitoring GEPs*. The workshops involved participants from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds, including academic staff, educators, students, postgraduate researchers, and other stakeholders working in education-related positions.

Under WP3, the Awareness Raising Toolkit was introduced to students participating in the student-led small-scale projects. Ten students at bachelor's and postgraduate levels actively participated in designing and implementing the small-scale projects, with guidance from KMOP EIH and the involvement of academic staff. The students were supported through practical materials, examples and project-management tools intended to help them transform gender equality concerns into feasible student-led actions.

Implementation was complemented by communication and dissemination through the project website, social media, newsletters and KMOP's EIH institutional communication channels. Together, these activities sought to strengthen knowledge of gender equality, support practical engagement with GEPs and create stronger links between student communities and the institutional actors responsible for gender equality within universities.

2. Assessment of Institutional Utility and Impact of PRO-GENDERING

2.1 Utility of PRO-GENDERING Tools

The available evaluation findings indicate that the PRO-GENDERING tools and capacity-building activities were considered useful, relevant and applicable to participants' academic and professional realities.

Feedback from the WP2 workshops, received from 8 participants was particularly positive. A total of 93.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the workshop topics were interesting and relevant, while 91.7% considered the workshops well prepared and informative. The same percentage agreed that the materials and tools presented were relevant to their daily professional realities and met their expectations. Participants also referred positively to the quality of the research and the depth with which the topics were presented.

The findings suggest that the Handbook was valuable not only as an informational resource but also as a practical introduction to the implementation and monitoring of Gender Equality Plans. Participants reported that the knowledge acquired could be used in their professional work, while the workshops helped make the Handbook's content more accessible and applicable.

The Awareness Raising Toolkit and the related student-project activities were also positively assessed. Ten of the eleven respondents stated that the workshop helped them very much or sufficiently to understand gender equality and inclusion in higher education. All eleven respondents found the examples, activities and tools useful for planning or implementing their student projects. Ten respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the support and guidance provided during project development met their needs.

Particularly useful elements included the practical examples and project-management templates. The Gantt chart was specifically highlighted as a tool that helped students organise their workload, define tasks and allocate responsibilities more effectively. The combination

of thematic gender equality content with practical planning tools therefore strengthened both participants' understanding and their ability to translate ideas into concrete initiatives.

2.2 Knowledge and Capacity Shifts

Evaluation findings indicate a clear improvement in participants' knowledge and awareness of gender equality, inclusion and Gender Equality Plans.

Within the WP2 evaluation, 86.7% of eight respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned things they did not previously know. Similarly, 90.9% out of ten respondents to the WP3 evaluation stated that the activities had helped them very much or sufficiently to better understand gender equality and inclusion in higher education.

The qualitative responses reinforce these findings. Participants reported gaining new examples, ideas and practical knowledge that could be transferred to their academic, educational or professional practice. Some noted that the activities encouraged them to reconsider their previous views and practices, become more attentive to gender-related concerns and discuss these issues with students or colleagues.

The project therefore appears to have generated more than a simple increase in theoretical knowledge. It contributed to greater sensitivity towards gender issues and strengthened participants' willingness to apply and disseminate gender equality principles. The practical orientation of the tools also helped participants develop skills in project planning, organisation, collaboration and the communication of gender equality topics.

Nevertheless, the available evidence primarily reflects immediate learning outcomes and participants' stated intentions. It does not yet provide systematic follow-up evidence demonstrating the extent to which the Handbook or Toolkit have been incorporated into routine institutional or professional practice.

2.3 Student Engagement and Campus Culture

The student-led small-scale projects provided an important opportunity for students to participate directly in the promotion of gender equality within higher education.

Ten students actively contributed to the design and implementation of the projects. Their participation enabled them to move beyond the role of recipients of awareness-raising activities and become active contributors to the development of gender equality initiatives. Students worked together on project ideas, shared responsibilities and applied practical project-management tools.

The initiative also created connections among students who did not necessarily know one another before their participation. This supported peer exchange, cooperation and the development of a collective, bottom-up approach. By providing students with the means to formulate and communicate their own priorities, the projects increased the visibility of students' voices in discussions on gender equality.

A particularly significant institutional effect was the contact established between students and the Gender Equality Committees of their universities. Through this interaction, students gained a better understanding of the existing institutional mechanisms for gender equality and strengthened communication with the actors responsible for institutional action. This dialogue increased the possibility that students' experiences, needs and perspectives would be considered in future policies and institutional initiatives.

The projects thus contributed to closer interaction between student communities and institutional structures. However, the experience also demonstrated that student initiatives must operate within complex administrative environments. Formal approval procedures and the need for communication across multiple institutional levels could delay implementation and reduce the flexibility of student-led action.

2.4 Notable “Success Stories”

The aforementioned development of stronger links between student participants and university Gender Equality Committees was a notable outcome. This contact enhanced students’ knowledge of institutional mechanisms and created a more direct channel of communication between the student community and those responsible for gender equality policies. It represents an important step towards making institutional planning more responsive to students’ realities.

A second positive development concerns the continuation of the students’ work beyond the initial project activities. Participants remained involved in the further development and enhancement of their project in cooperation with their university’s Gender Equality Committee and KMOP’s EIH PRO-GENDERING focal points. This provides an early indication that the student-led initiative may have potential for continuity and further institutional engagement.

At organisational level, the findings of PRO-GENDERING also informed KMOP’s EIH subsequent work. In response to identified gaps concerning intersectionality and the limited inclusion of additional vulnerability factors in GEPs, KMOP EIH participates in the GEPINC project, focusing on the inclusion of further vulnerability factors in GEPs, including LGBTQIA+ identities, migration/refugee background, and disability. Furthermore, the identification of implicit gender bias as an important concern contributed to the development of an Implicit Association Test on Gender, Career and Family, to map unconscious stereotypes relevant to traditional gender roles. These examples demonstrate how the project’s findings have informed related organisational initiatives, even though systematic evidence of tool adoption within participating universities remains limited.

3. Reach and Dissemination of PRO-GENDERING

3.1 Direct Engagement

The local and international GEP workshops generated evaluation feedback from 73 participants. Of these, 41 Greek participants provided feedback following the international online workshop.

The respondents represented diverse academic and professional profiles. They included approximately 42 teachers, educators or members of academic staff; 15 students and postgraduate researchers; three researchers; and 12 other stakeholders working in education-related positions.

The Handbook was presented during both the local and international workshops. It reached 13 participants through the local workshop and 99 participants through the international event. The audiences included academic staff, educators, students, researchers and other stakeholders working in education-related fields.

The Awareness Raising Toolkit was shared with the students involved in the WP3 small-scale projects. Evaluation feedback concerning the Toolkit was collected from 11 respondents: 10 bachelor's or postgraduate students and one member of academic staff. Ten students actively participated in designing and implementing the small-scale projects.

These figures demonstrate that the project directly engaged both institutional and student-level audiences. Its reach extended beyond students to include academic staff, educators, researchers and wider education stakeholders, enabling the project to address gender equality from different perspectives.

Care should nevertheless be taken when presenting the figures, as the 73 workshop evaluation respondents, the 112 participants reached through the Handbook presentations

and the 11 Toolkit respondents represent partly overlapping groups and should not be added together as a single total.

3.2 Indirect Reach

PRO-GENDERING activities were disseminated through a combination of project and institutional communication channels, including the project website, project social media pages, newsletters and partners communication channels.

The Handbook was promoted through the second project newsletter and the project website, reaching 548 people. A dedicated social media post concerning the Handbook reached a further 29 people. Promotion of the international online workshop through the project's social media channels also reached 548 people.

The Awareness Raising Toolkit was promoted through the fourth project newsletter, the project website and social media. The website-related communication reached 35 people, while the dedicated project social media pages reached 72 people.

In addition, newsletters published through KMOP's EIH website reached an estimated audience of approximately 3,000 people.

The available figures indicate substantial online visibility, particularly through KMOP's EIH website and the project's newsletter and social media activities. However, the individual figures refer to different communication products and may include overlapping audiences. They should therefore be reported separately rather than combined into a cumulative total of unique individuals.

4. Barriers and Sustainability Needs Identified from PRO-GENDERING

4.1 Barriers and Obstacles

The main barriers identified through implementation were institutional and procedural rather than a direct rejection of gender equality objectives.

The research findings revealed the limited resources available for the implementation of GEPs, including staff with heavy workloads, lack of a dedicated budget and respective working hours. At the same time, GEPs need to be expanded to cover further needs of all the actors of the academic communities, clear objectives and timelines, increased number of activities for the communication of the plans and their actions, as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Students reported that implementing initiatives within the academic environment often required extensive communication and approval at several administrative levels. University decision-making and authorisation procedures were not always sufficiently flexible to accommodate student-led and small-scale initiatives. These procedures could slow implementation, create uncertainty and reduce the time available for substantive activities.

A related challenge was the limited implementation period available for the WP3 student projects. More time would have allowed for greater face-to-face interaction, stronger coordination among participants and more opportunities to engage with institutional actors.

Communication also emerged as an area requiring improvement. Gender equality activities and Gender Equality Plans need to be communicated through channels that are regularly used by students and young people. Conventional institutional communication methods may not be sufficient to reach or actively involve the wider student community.

The findings further point to substantive gaps in the scope of institutional gender equality approaches. Factors such as LGBTQIA+ identity, migration background and other intersecting

vulnerabilities may not be adequately reflected in GEP provisions and implementation. Unconscious biases associated with gender roles also continue to influence attitudes, representation and institutional practices.

A key cultural challenge that emerged through the policy roundtable pertained to the lack of essential progress and integration of gender equality as a core narrative in day-to-day life, which remains persistent in academic institutions as well. Despite the legal provisions and the establishment of Gender Equality Committees and Gender Equality Plans, some participants underlined that gender equality remains an executive and managerial notion, rather than an integral part of the academic culture. Furthermore, the event shed light on the lack of progress reports that are publicly available for all actors to be informed on the implementation and evaluation of the different actions.

Although the evaluation did not document strong explicit resistance to gender equality topics, institutional complexity, limited flexibility and implicit stereotypes may reduce the practical impact of gender equality measures. These barriers were addressed through dialogue, awareness-raising, practical tools and closer communication between students and Gender Equality Committees.

4.2 Sustainability Needs

The continuation of PRO-GENDERING's results will require the integration of its tools and participatory methods into existing institutional structures rather than reliance on isolated project activities.

At human-resource level, universities need designated staff members or focal points who can support students, coordinate gender equality activities and maintain communication between students, academic staff, university management and Gender Equality Committees. Continued mentoring will be particularly important for sustaining student-led projects and enabling new student groups to use the Toolkit.

At a structural level, the Handbook and Awareness Raising Toolkit should be incorporated into regular institutional activities, including staff development, student orientation, training programmes and the work of Gender Equality Committees. Universities should also establish clearer and more accessible procedures for proposing, approving and implementing student-led gender equality initiatives.

Sustainability will further depend on maintaining opportunities for co-creation. Students, academic staff, administrative personnel and equality bodies should be involved in the design and review of gender equality activities. Regular consultation could help ensure that institutional actions reflect the experiences of different groups and incorporate intersectional perspectives.

Communication resources will also be necessary. Dedicated communication plans should use channels familiar to students and present GEP actions in accessible and engaging formats. Continued dissemination of the Handbook, Toolkit and student-project results would help preserve their visibility beyond the project period.

Finally, modest financial resources will be required to support training, communication materials, student activities, facilitation and the updating of project tools. Longer implementation periods and small institutional funding schemes for student-led initiatives could considerably strengthen continuity and impact.

The ongoing cooperation between student participants, Gender Equality Committees and KMOP EIH provides a promising foundation for sustainability. At the same time, KMOP EIH participates in relevant projects, including [GEPINC](#), [MAGENDA](#) and [MAGNETISE](#), where the materials can be promoted and re-used in relevant activities. Nevertheless, long-term continuation will depend on formal institutional ownership, dedicated responsibilities and the allocation of appropriate time and resources.

5. Mapping External Good Practices Nationwide

5.1 External good practice #1

<i>Name of initiative/practice</i>	Inclusive gender equality achievements in Research and Innovation
<i>Implementing institution</i>	University College Cork, Ireland
<i>Target audience</i>	University staff, students, researchers
<i>Brief description</i>	UCC was named an EU Gender Equality Champion under the HORIZON-WIDERA-2025-GENDER programme, awarded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DGRTD) and managed by the European Research Executive Agency (REA). The award recognises transformative, measurable progress in inclusive gender equality, particularly where initiatives intersect with race, disability, and caregiving responsibilities. Key achievements include: four new family Leave policies covering foster care, surrogacy, fertility treatment, and domestic violence; a Menopause Support policy (2024); inclusive staff networks (Race Equality, Disability & Neurodiversity, and Carers'); the renaming of two buildings after Iris Ashley Cummins and Ellen Hutchings, and three rooms after women pioneers in academia; a sector-leading Bystander Intervention programme that has reached over 20,000 participants

	nationwide; and a significant increase in women's representation in senior academic roles.
Evidence of success/impact	Women now constitute 30% of Full Professors at UCC — double the 15% recorded in 2019 — and half of Senior Post-Doctoral Researchers. The Bystander Intervention programme has achieved national reach (20,000+ participants), demonstrating impact well beyond the institution. The EU Champion award follows UCC's institutional Silver Athena Swan award and the first Silver departmental Athena Swan award (School of Food & Nutritional Sciences). The award is explicitly designed by the European Commission to create a 'community of champions' that inspires systemic change across European HEIs, giving UCC a formal leadership role in the sector.
Comparison with PRO-GENDERING outputs	UCC's practice is notable for its intersectional approach: rather than addressing gender in isolation, it explicitly links gender equality to race, disability, neurodiversity, and caregiving, moving closer to a DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) model than a standalone GEP. This inclusive approach complements the actions of the PRO-GENDERING project and its outputs, which could be further enriched by incorporating UCC's intersectional framing, while UCC's staff networks offer a structural model for sustaining student and staff engagement beyond one-off project interventions. The Bystander Intervention programme also addresses a gap not covered by current PRO-GENDERING outputs, namely, active bystander training as a tool for preventing gender-based violence and harassment in academic settings.

Policy takeaway	Policymakers should encourage HEIs to move beyond standalone Gender Equality Plans towards integrated DEI frameworks that explicitly address intersectionality. National higher education authorities should fund and recognise sector-wide programmes (such as bystander intervention training) that can be adopted by multiple institutions, not just pioneered by one. The renaming of buildings and spaces after women pioneers is a low-cost, high-visibility symbolic intervention that reinforces cultural change alongside structural reforms.
References	• UCC receive prestigious EU award for inclusive gender equality achievements in Research and Innovation: https://www.ucc.ie/en/news/2026/ucc-receive-prestigious-eu-award-for-inclusive-gender-equality-achievements-in-research-and-innovation.html • Meet Europe's Gender equality champions in Research and Innovation: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/meet-europes-gender-equality-champions-research-and-innovation-2026-02-03_en

5.2 External good practice #2

Name of initiative/practice	School-Level Biennial EDI Action Plans (Based on a three-year Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan)
Implementing institution	Aalto University, Finland

Target audience	All university schools (6 schools), academic and research staff, students
Brief description	Rather than a single top-down university-wide plan, Aalto University operates a cascaded model: a three-year university-level Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan sets overarching goals, and each of its six schools translates these into an annual/biennial school-specific action plan prepared by a dedicated School EDI Task Force (or equivalent), led by the School Development Manager. Actions are tailored to each school's specific demographic profile and development needs. For instance, the School of Engineering focuses on bias-aware Tenure Track recruitment, requiring every recruiting manager to study a Handbook on Diversity and Quality in Recruitment. Progress is monitored annually and fed back into the university plan.
Evidence of success/impact	Aalto's approach is highlighted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) as an exemplary practice for large institutions, specifically for 'turning equality objectives into concrete practices in everyday life.' The model resolves a common implementation gap in HEIs: institution-wide GEPs that remain aspirational documents without school-level accountability. Annual review cycles create a built-in learning loop, while the practice has generated permanent equality networks across faculties.
Comparison with PRO-GENDERING outputs	PRO-GENDERING's student small-scale projects bear a structural resemblance to Aalto's school-level plans, as both devolve ownership of gender equality work to sub-institutional units, making it contextually relevant.

	However, Aalto's model is institutionally mandated, annually reviewed, and tied to leadership accountability, whereas PRO-GENDERING's student projects are voluntary and time-limited. The PRO-GENDERING Handbook could serve as a starting resource for schools developing their own action plans, and the Awareness Raising Toolkit could be adopted at school level to drive grassroots engagement.
Policy takeaway	National policy should require HEIs to implement GEPs not only at the institutional level but also at faculty/school level, with named responsible persons and annual reporting. A cascaded accountability model, starting from institutional plan, leading to a school plan and individual measures, is scalable regardless of university size and prevents GEPs from remaining paper exercises.
References	• Aalto University - Developing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Aalto University: https://www.aalto.fi/en/aalto-university/developing-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-aalto-university • EIGE - Gender Equality in Academia and Research - GEAR tool, Finland: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/legislative-policy-backgrounds/finland • Aalto Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the School of Electrical Engineering: https://www.aalto.fi/en/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-the-school-of-electrical-engineering

5.3 External good practice #3

<i>Name of initiative/practice</i>	Gender Equality and Diversity Plan
<i>Implementing institution</i>	Instruct-ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium)
<i>Target audience</i>	Research staff, communities
<i>Brief description</i>	Instruct-ERIC is a pan-European research infrastructure in structural biology that makes high-end technologies and methods available to all European researchers. In 2024, it received the Newcomer Gender Equality Champion award. The award recognises Instruct's publicly available Diversity & Gender Equality Plan (DGEP 2024–2025), the second iteration following the inaugural GEP (2022–2023). The DGEP was developed by a Diversity and Equality Working Group (DEWG) drawn from Hub staff, which conducted a 2024 gender distribution survey across Instruct's decision-making bodies and a confidential diversity and equality audit of all Hub staff. A review of the 2022–2023 GEP found that 58% of measures were fully implemented and a further 33% partially completed. The 2024–2025 DGEP is structured around five thematic areas aligned with European Commission GEP requirements: (1) work-life balance and organisational culture, including flexible working and enhanced parental policies; (2) measures against gender-based harassment and violence, including annual staff training and updates to the harassment policy; (3) gender balance in leadership and decision-making, including recommendations for Executive Committee

	appointments; (4) gender equality in recruitment and career progression, including gender-neutral vacancy language, mixed-gender recruitment panels, and unconscious bias training; and (5) gender diversity in research and training, including systematic monitoring of gender distribution among access users, internship applicants, and R&D award recipients, with award criteria reviewed to promote diversity. The plan is publicly available on the Instruct-ERIC website, reviewed on a biennial cycle, and extends aspirationally to Instruct's network of Centres and Facilities across 17 member countries.
<i>Evidence of success/impact</i>	A 100% internal staff survey response rate showed that all employees believe Instruct is committed to gender equality and that its policies support a gender-equal organisational culture. The internship scheme demonstrates concrete pipeline impact: 64% of awards made to women in a field historically dominated by men. The ERIC received the Newcomer Gender Equality Champion award, becoming the first ERIC to earn this distinction. Instruct now plans to extend its monitoring of gender equality to its wider network of centres and to organise gender equality in science workshops across the structural biology community.
<i>Comparison with PRO-GENDERING outputs</i>	Instruct-ERIC's practice is distinctive because it comes from a research infrastructure rather than a university, demonstrating that GEP frameworks developed in the Horizon Europe context apply equally to non-HEI research organisations. This is particularly relevant for PRO-GENDERING, which targets HEIs, as it shows how the

	same GEP logic can be adapted for distributed, multi-site organisations and different Member States. The internship scheme's emphasis on early-career researchers (PhD and postdocs) directly parallels PRO-GENDERING's focus on students as agents of change. However, where PRO-GENDERING mobilises students as active participants in producing gender equality outputs (e.g. small-scale projects), Instruct's approach treats early-career researchers primarily as beneficiaries of support schemes. The two models are complementary: PRO-GENDERING's Awareness Raising Toolkit could be adapted for use within research infrastructures like Instruct to build bottom-up engagement.
Policy takeaway	Gender Equality Plans should be an integral part not only of universities but of all Horizon Europe-eligible research organisations, including ERICs and other research infrastructures. The Instruct case shows that even organisations can achieve measurable cultural change through sustained commitment and a dedicated working group. Policymakers should incentivise the extension of GEP monitoring from central offices to distributed facilities and partner organisations; the 'multiplying effect' across a network is where systemic change at sector level becomes possible.
References	• ERIC Forum - Instruct-ERIC received the Newcomer Gender Equality Champion award: https://www.eric-forum.eu/2025/03/26/instruct-eric-received-the-newcomer-gender-equality-champion-award/ • Meet the EU Gender Equality Champions in R&I Wall of Fame, 2024 Champions: https://research-and-

	innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/prizes/eu-award-gender-equality-champions/meet-eu-gender-equality-champions_en • Instruct-ERIC, Diversity & Gender Equality Plan: https://instruct-eric.org/download/?file=Instruct-ERIC_DGEP_2024_PUBLIC.pdf&do=do
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6. Policy Recommendations

6.1 Establishment of streamlined approval procedures for student-led gender equality initiatives

Develop defined approval pathways for student-initiated gender equality activities that maintain institutional accountability while reducing bureaucratic delays, including flexible timelines, simplified authorisation processes, and designated approval authority at department level.

The programme's implementation in Greece identified institutional and procedural barriers as significant obstacles to gender equality initiatives, particularly those led by students. While formal procedures exist to maintain institutional quality control, such procedures often require extensive communication and multiple levels of approval, creating delays that undermine student motivation and project viability. Students reported that implementing initiatives required navigating complex decision-making hierarchies and authorisation processes that were not sufficiently flexible to accommodate time-sensitive, small-scale activities. These procedural burdens fell disproportionately on student-led projects, which typically operate within compressed timeframes and require rapid organisation and implementation.

The evidence from the project demonstrates that streamlined procedures can coexist with institutional oversight. HEIs should establish clear, defined pathways specifically for student-initiated gender equality activities, to reduce administrative delays while maintaining accountability. By implementing different approval levels based on project scope, HEIs can move quickly on student ideas while maintaining institutional control. For example, small changes to an existing gender equality activity would need only department approval, but launching an entirely new initiative would require full Gender Equality Committee review. Such action would ensure that students are not blocked by bureaucracy for minor projects, while the institution would still oversee major new directions.

6.2 Institutionalisation of structured student voice in GEP design, implementation and monitoring

Establish structured mechanisms for ongoing student participation in Gender Equality Committees, including student representation in planning, regular consultation forums with student communities, and formal channels for feedback on GEP implementation, and ensure that student input is documented and transparently reflected in institutional decisions.

Although the Greek law formally recognises student representation in Gender Equality Committees, in practice students are foreseen to be involved with one representative. Students are directly affected by institutional policies and university culture, yet their perspectives are not systematically incorporated into gender equality processes. The project's experience demonstrated significant value in creating structured opportunities through which students could communicate with Gender Equality Committees, enhancing student understanding of institutional mechanisms while enabling their experiences, concerns and priorities to be more directly reflected in institutional actions.

To close this gap, Gender Equality Committees should establish formalised structures for regular student engagement, moving beyond passive representation to active co-creation. This may include scheduled consultation fora where students can share their experiences of university life and institutional barriers, formal mechanisms for student input into annual GEP reviews, and documented processes that show how student feedback has been addressed. Additionally, Gender Equality Committees should allocate dedicated time and resources for meaningful student participation, recognising that students may require different engagement modalities than traditional committee structures. By institutionalising student voice, HEIs can strengthen the legitimacy of their gender equality efforts while ensuring that institutional actions remain responsive to the lived experiences of all community members.

6.3 Adoption of an intersectional framework in GEPs and their implementation

Mandate the integration of intersectional perspectives into national GEPs, including collecting gender-disaggregated data that also captures LGBTQIA+ identity, migration/refugee background, disability, and socioeconomic status, targeted interventions for multiply marginalised groups, and establish accountability mechanisms.

The PRO-GENDERING assessment identified a critical gap in current gender equality approaches: factors such as LGBTQIA+ identity, migration or refugee background, disability and other forms of vulnerability are not sufficiently reflected in institutional GEPs and their implementation. Current policies address gender inequality in isolation from other dimensions of inequality that compound disadvantage within the academic environment. Students with multiple vulnerability characteristics experience complex barriers that single-axis gender equality frameworks cannot adequately address. The absence of intersectional data collection further obscures these experiences, making it impossible for policymakers to assess the actual reach and effectiveness of gender equality measures.

Adopting an intersectional framework requires action at both national and institutional levels. National policymakers should update gender equality legislation to explicitly reference intersectionality and mandate comprehensive data collection practices. At the institutional level, HEIs should redesign their data-collection systems to capture multiple dimensions of identity and social position, ensuring that GEP evaluation does not mask disparities affecting subgroups. Additionally, Gender Equality Committees should include representatives of LGBTQIA+ communities, migrant and refugee populations, and students and staff with disabilities, bringing lived experience to priority-setting. Relevant gender equality initiatives should be co-developed with members of respective communities to ensure relevance.

6.4 Cultivation of institutional culture of gender equality as the foundation for systemic progress

Position gender equality as a core institutional value embedded in institutional mission, vision, and values statements; establish cultural change initiatives that move gender equality from peripheral policy compliance to central institutional identity, including leadership modelling, community engagement, and visible recognition of gender equality work, not only in the academic environment, but in society in general.

The national stakeholders' roundtable consultation identified a critical observation. Although Gender Equality Plans and formal institutional commitments exist, the essential components of gender equality in academic life show limited progress. This challenge is associated with the gap between institutional rhetoric and lived institutional culture and the general place gender equality holds in society in general. When gender equality is perceived as a compliance requirement managed by a committee rather than as central to institutional identity and values, it remains marginal to institutional priorities.

Shifting institutional culture requires visible commitment from institutional leadership that positions gender equality as essential to institutional mission and identity, varying from the gender used in someone's title to day-to-day practices. Institutional leaders should articulate in their communications, budget decisions, and strategic priorities why gender equality matters, not just as a legal obligation or moral imperative, but as central to providing quality education, fostering inclusive environments, and fulfilling institutional responsibility to all community members. Leaders should model gender-aware behaviour, demonstrate engagement with gender equality initiatives, and visibly recognise and celebrate contributions to gender equality work. Institutional ceremonies, awards, and public recognition should highlight gender equality achievements alongside academic and research accomplishments. Additionally, cultural change initiatives should involve all community members, not just Gender Equality Committees, in discussing what gender equality means at their institution and why it matters. When students, academic staff, and administrative personnel collectively define and own gender equality as institutional identity, progress accelerates because initiatives are no longer dependent on a few committed individuals but are supported by community investment and involvement.

6.5 Comprehensive gender-disaggregated data collection and public accountability reporting

Mandate collection and public reporting of comprehensive gender-disaggregated data across all institutional areas (student enrolment and completion, academic staffing and leadership, administrative positions, harassment and discrimination reports), and establish minimum standards for data categories, reporting timelines, and accessibility, with oversight by each institution's quality assurance mechanisms.

Significant gaps emerged in relation to the collection of gender-disaggregated data and the communication of GEP actions across university communities. The PRO-GENDERING research revealed that in some cases, GEP implementation and assessment reports are not widely available, limiting transparency and broader institutional accountability, despite the existence of monitoring mechanisms. This data collection gap raises concerns, as institutional leaders lack evidence on which to base strategic decisions, the actual reach and effectiveness of gender equality measures cannot be assessed, and disparities affecting specific populations remain invisible.

Establishing institutional and national standards for gender-disaggregated data collection would create a foundation for evidence-based gender equality policy and practice. Gender Equality Committees and their supervising actors should develop standardised data collection frameworks that specify the minimum data categories to be collected (for example LGBTQIA+ identity, migration background, disability status), the reporting frequency and deadline, and the requirement that data be made publicly accessible through institutional reports. HEIs should also design systems that collect data regularly, rather than fragmentarily, integrate gender-disaggregated reporting into existing accountability mechanisms, and ensure that data collection extends across all institutional areas. Reports should be publicly available to enhance transparency and enable all stakeholders to assess institutional progress on gender equality. Additionally, institutions should analyse their data disaggregated across multiple dimensions simultaneously (e.g., gender and discipline, gender and position level, gender and migration status) to identify patterns of intersectional disadvantage that single-axis analysis would obscure.

6.6 Active engagement of administrative staff in GEPs implementation and institutional data collection

Actively involve administrative staff as essential parts of gender equality implementation and data management. Establish administrative representation in Gender Equality Committees at decision-making level, provide specialised training on gender-responsive administrative practices, and assign administrative units responsibility for collecting and maintaining gender-disaggregated data on staffing, hiring, promotion, and role distribution.

The stakeholders' consultation identified that administrative staff are not actively involved in Gender Equality Plans and should be more encouraged to participate in relevant presentations and take a central role in implementation. This observation reflects a widespread institutional pattern, where administrative personnel often refrain from gender equality initiatives despite their critical role in institutional operations. Administrators manage various processes, supervise facilities, control student records and academic accommodations, and often receive questions on various topics from the members of the academic community. Every one of these functions has gender equality implications. Yet because gender equality initiatives are often framed as academic or student-focused work, administrators often neglect to participate in planning or are not invited to training to recognise and address gender equality dimensions of their work. This creates a situation where gender-aware decisions in one area (such as policies in a Gender Equality Committee) can be undermined by gender-unaware practices in administrative operations.

Elevating administrative participation requires deliberate institutional action to recognise and support administrative contributions to gender equality. HEI leadership should ensure that administrative units and personnel are represented at decision-making level in Gender Equality Committees, not as observers but as participants with equal voice in priority-setting and strategy. Administrative departments should receive specialised training tailored to their specific functions, such as gender-responsive approach to different procedures, trauma-informed complaint handling for administrative staff supporting disciplinary processes, or inclusive facility management for those overseeing campus physical spaces. Critically, administrative units should be assigned clear responsibility for collecting, maintaining, and regularly reporting gender-disaggregated data on all institutional staffing, including students, hourly workers, contract employees, and part-time staff, not only permanent academic positions. By positioning administrative staff as essential partners in gender equality work and providing them with appropriate training, resources, and authority, institutions transform administrative operations from a potential barrier to an engine of gender equality progress.

6.7 Development of targeted communication and awareness strategies using student-preferred channels

Create comprehensive communication plans for GEP activities using channels actively used by student populations (social media, student newsletters, peer networks) rather than relying solely on formal institutional channels; ensure information is accessible, visually engaging, and clearly links GEP activities to student life and priorities.

The PRO-GENDERING assessment identified communication as a significant barrier to gender equality implementation, revealing that conventional institutional communication methods may not be sufficient to reach or actively involve the wider student community. The national research revealed relatively low awareness among university actors of their university's GEP, its activities and available support or reporting mechanisms. This awareness gap has various consequences, including students remaining unaware of available support when facing harassment or discrimination, student initiatives receiving limited visibility and peer engagement, and institutional action on gender equality being perceived as disconnected from student concerns.

Addressing this gap requires HEIs to invest in dedicated communication resources and shift their strategies to meet students' needs and preferences. This includes partnering with student communications channels (various social media, dedicated emails and newsletters) to amplify gender equality messaging; developing visually engaging content that communicates GEP activities in accessible language, and establishing consistent communication calendars that maintain visibility throughout the academic year. Communication should present GEP actions as addressing issues that directly affect students' lives, rather than framing gender equality as an abstract institutional value. By making gender equality visible and relevant to student concerns, HEIs increase awareness, strengthen student engagement, and create a university culture in which gender equality becomes normalised as a shared priority.

6.8 Integration of gender perspectives into the curriculum and research policies

Establish institutional policies and incentives requiring faculty to integrate gender perspectives and gender-related material into curricula across all disciplines, support the development of programmes on gender-informed teaching, create frameworks for evaluating gender integration in course design, and establish criteria recognising gender equality concepts in research evaluation and promotion decisions.

PRO-GENDERING identifies "*the integration of gender perspectives into teaching and research*" as one of several areas addressed within institutional Gender Equality Plans. However, the research showed that institutional commitment to this area remains uneven and the practical integration of gender perspectives into academic practice is inconsistent across HEIs. Gender perspectives should not be confined to gender studies courses but rather should inform disciplinary scholarship and teaching across the academic environment. Gender analysis in various disciplines reveals hidden assumptions, biases, and knowledge gaps that strengthen academic inquiry. Furthermore, exposing students to gender perspectives across their studies better prepares them to recognise and address gender inequality in their future professional practice, whether they work in policy, business, public administration, or other sectors.

Integrating gender perspectives into curricula and research requires deliberate institutional effort supported by both policy direction and practical resources. HEIs should establish explicit institutional policies stating that gender perspectives are valued and expected across disciplines, not optional or peripheral to academic work. Faculty development programmes should support academics in understanding how gender analysis applies to their specific fields and in redesigning courses to include gender-related material and examples. Competent actors should evaluate course proposals for gender integration, recognising both the explicit inclusion of gender studies content and the more subtle incorporation of gender perspectives into disciplinary analysis. Additionally, institutions should ensure that evaluation and promotion processes recognise gender equality material and gender-informed research as valuable contributions to academic knowledge, creating incentives for faculty engagement. At the same time, guidelines addressed to researchers should be developed, focusing on ways to integrate gender perspectives into research design and ethics, while considering gender implications of proposed research. Overall, such a consolidated response can enhance the relevance of education and research, while cultivating a culture in which gender equality is recognised as essential to academic excellence.

6.9 Creation of institutional mechanisms for accessible reporting and support for gender-based harassment, discrimination and violence

Establish multiple, accessible reporting channels for gender-based harassment, discrimination, and violence (including anonymous hotlines, confidential counsellors, online forms, trusted third-party reporting), ensure staff training in trauma-informed response, provide clear protocols for investigation and follow-up, and offer comprehensive support services to survivors including counselling, referrals for psychosocial and other forms of support, and disciplinary action for perpetrators.

While existing legal and institutional frameworks recognise that the responsibilities of Gender Equality Committees include preventing and addressing gender-based discrimination and harassment, and supporting members of the academic community who experience or witness such phenomena, the PRO-GENDERING research revealed relatively low awareness of the GEPs' priorities, activities and relevant actions. This awareness gap remains alarming in relation to awareness of mechanisms for reporting and responding to incidents of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, which directly affect student safety and wellbeing. The mentioned gap also illustrates that students experiencing such events may not know how to seek help or where to report, may lack trust in institutional mechanisms, or may fear negative consequences for reporting. At the same time, without clear, accessible reporting channels and transparent protocols, institutions struggle to identify the full scope of problems in the university.

Developing easy-to-navigate reporting and support mechanisms requires establishing multiple, accessible pathways through which students and staff can report incidents confidentially and without fear of retaliation. Options should include anonymous hotlines and online forms (for those who fear identification), designated confidential counsellors (for those seeking guidance before and/or after formal reporting), and third-party reporting mechanisms (allowing trusted advisors and witnesses to report on behalf of survivors). All staff involved in receiving reports should receive trauma-informed training to effectively respond and manage cases. Clear protocols should specify the investigation process, timeline, and communication with all parties, ensuring accountability while protecting survivor privacy and safety. Institutions should also offer comprehensive support services extending beyond investigation to include counselling, referrals for psychosocial and other forms of support, and other measures to support survivor recovery and continued engagement with institutional life. Institutional responses should be proportionate and documented, with clear

disciplinary consequences for confirmed perpetrators to demonstrate institutional commitment to academic safety. Finally, HEIs should periodically communicate data on reports received and actions taken, reinforcing to the community that reporting is taken seriously.

6.10 Development of campus culture of active bystandership in response to discrimination and harassment

Establish peer-led bystandership training programmes teaching community members to safely and effectively intervene when witnessing discrimination, harassment, or gender-based violence, build institutional messaging and peer culture that normalises intervention as community responsibility, and establish peer supporter networks.

The stakeholders' roundtable emphasised the importance of enhancing and encouraging active bystandership in incidents of discrimination and harassment as a key cultural shift needed in Greek higher education. Active bystandership, the act of witnessing and appropriately responding to harmful behaviour, is a critical lever for changing institutional culture. Research on harassment and discrimination in academic settings demonstrates that many incidents are witnessed by peers or colleagues who experience uncertainty about whether to intervene, fear of negative consequences for speaking up, or lack of knowledge about how to intervene safely and effectively. When witnesses remain silent, perpetrators receive an implicit message that their behaviour is tolerated or normalised. Conversely, when witnesses intervene, even through small actions like verbally objecting, showing support for the person experiencing the incident, or helping connect them to support resources, incidents are less likely to escalate and survivors are more likely to seek institutional help. Building a culture of active bystandership, therefore, addresses a significant gap in current gender equality responses, which often focus primarily on institutional mechanisms after incidents occur rather than on community prevention in the moment.

Cultivating active bystandership requires educating community members about how to safely and effectively respond to witnessed discrimination or harassment, normalising intervention through peer influence, and removing barriers to action. HEIs should implement peer-led training programmes that teach practical intervention strategies, such as how to express disapproval of someone's harmful comment, how to check in with someone who has been targeted, or how to help connect someone to support resources. Training should emphasise that effective intervention does not always require confrontation and can take many forms depending on safety and context.

Student peer educators and advisors should receive enhanced training and be positioned as resources to whom both witnesses and survivors can reach out. Institutional messaging should explicitly frame community members as responsible for preventing harm and supporting peers, positioning bystandership not as an individual choice but as a shared community value. By building bystandership into institutional culture, HEIs transform the community itself into an active safety mechanism rather than relying solely on formal institutional processes.

6.11 Establishment of formal collaboration mechanisms between HEIs and community organisations on gender equality

Establish partnerships between HEIs and external organisations (NGOs, women's groups, LGBTQIA+ and disability organisations, migrant networks) to bring external expertise, lived experience, and accountability into institutional gender equality work, along with regular consultation mechanisms, collaborative research projects, and community advisory boards to Gender Equality Committees.

The PRO-GENDERING project itself demonstrates the value of collaborative approaches; in Greece, the initiative was implemented by KMOP EIH, in collaboration with academic and professional partners, reaching diverse audiences including academic staff, educators, students, researchers and other stakeholders working in education-related positions. The project's success in bringing gender equality expertise, practical tools, and student engagement mechanisms to universities was strengthened by this multi-stakeholder approach. At the same time, the research conducted unveiled gaps around intersectionality and inclusion of multiply marginalised groups, suggesting that expertise from community organisations providing services to such populations (e.g. NGOs working with refugees and migrants, LGBTQIA+ and disability advocacy organisations) is essential for improving institutional gender equality policies and practices. Currently, many Gender Equality Committees operate primarily with internal institutional expertise, potentially missing crucial perspectives and knowledge.

Establishing formal collaboration mechanisms would strengthen institutional gender equality work by bringing external expertise, accountability, and lived experience into institutional decision-making. HEIs should establish community advisory boards or consulting groups that include representatives of external organisations, meeting regularly with Gender Equality Committees to provide input on priorities, review progress, and offer recommendations. Moreover, formal partnerships could support collaborative research and evaluation initiatives, bringing academic expertise together with community knowledge to generate insights relevant to both HEI and

community contexts. Such collaborations should be resourced appropriately, with staff and clear responsibilities and agreements. This formalisation can support HEIs to position themselves as accountable not only to internal stakeholders but also to broader communities, while strengthening the connection of the academic environment with the society.

6.12 Establishment of degree programmes and research centres in gender studies

Develop specialised degree programmes and academic units in gender studies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, staffed by qualified faculty with expertise in gender analysis; establish research centres that conduct gender-focused research and provide expertise to institutions and policymakers; position gender studies as an academic field contributing to knowledge production and social progress.

The stakeholders' consultation also identified the establishment of a school on gender studies as an institutional priority, recognising that while Gender Equality Plans and initiatives exist, the academic knowledge infrastructure supporting gender analysis is underdeveloped. Currently, gender studies in Greece often operate as a scattered set of courses or research projects within other departments, with limited dedicated programmes, faculty, and research capacity. This limited number of gender studies programmes sends a signal that gender analysis is peripheral to academic knowledge production rather than central to understanding human society and institutions.

Establishing relevant academic programmes and research centres requires commitment at both institutional and national levels. At the institutional level, HEIs should create formal degree programmes or academic units in gender studies, offering coordinated undergraduate and postgraduate options that provide students with structured exposure to gender analysis across multiple disciplines. These should be staffed by faculty with specialised expertise in gender studies, ensuring teaching and research quality. Institutions should also establish gender research centres or institutes that conduct original research, host scholarly networks, provide expertise for institutional policy development, and engage in knowledge dissemination to broader audiences. At the national level, the Ministry of Education should recognise gender studies as a valuable academic field in accreditation frameworks and funding priorities, creating incentives for institutions to develop these programmes. This could include dedicated funding for gender studies research, guidance on curriculum development, and support for faculty expertise development and recruitment. By investing in gender studies, institutions simultaneously build their own capacity for gender-informed policy and practice, contribute to knowledge production on gender issues, prepare

the next generation of scholars and professionals who understand gender, and demonstrate genuine institutional commitment to gender equality by positioning gender analysis as intellectually important, not merely as a compliance obligation.
