



National Policy Report – Poland

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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The report was prepared in Polish as a post-consultation document following the national stakeholder meeting organized by the University of Social Sciences (SAN). At the same time, the project, its source documentation, and a portion of its deliverables operate within an international consortium under official English terminology.

The report adopts the principle of retaining the original names of key project deliverables, documents, and abbreviations, such as Gender Equality Plan (GEP), Handbook, Awareness Raising Toolkit (ART), National Policy Report, Work Package (WP), or Project Result (PR). Descriptive and analytical concepts have been translated into Polish where applicable. A detailed list of terms is provided.

Table of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
PRO-GENDERING	Official name of the international project aimed at strengthening gender equality, inclusiveness, and student engagement in higher education.
Gender Equality Plan (GEP)	An institutional document and process used for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating gender equality initiatives within a university.
university / higher education institution	An institution offering higher education programs and/or conducting research.
work package (WP)	A distinct component of a project encompassing a specific scope of activities and deliverables.
project result (PR)	A tangible output or outcome developed within the framework of the project.
Handbook / GEP implementation guide	A project deliverable supporting universities in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating GEPs.
Awareness Raising Toolkit (ART) / educational toolkit	A tool targeted primarily at students, containing activities, lesson plans, and resources to support awareness-raising actions
Raport Krajowy / National Policy Report	A report prepared under WP4, containing findings, impact analysis, and policy recommendations.
national consultation meeting / roundtable	A stakeholder gathering designed to discuss the report, validate findings, and refine recommendations.
formal compliance trap	A situation where an institution possesses the required document, but it fails to translate into actual change in daily academic practice.
equality fatigue	The potential emergence of disinterest, weary detachment, or resistance toward equality initiatives, especially when presented as a formal obligation.
student equality ambassadors	A role for students who support educational and communication activities, while institutional responsibility remains with the university.
monitoring and evaluation	A systematic process of data collection, progress tracking, and effectiveness assessment of implemented actions

Methodology and Limitations of the Report

The report was developed on the basis of available PRO-GENDERING project materials, including PR1 / Google Slides Book, PR2 / Handbook, WP3 Awareness Raising Toolkit, WP4 Impact Assessment Strategy, National Policy Report Template, a previous version of the consultation report, roundtable notes, and the attendance list.

The section concerning consultations was prepared as a qualitative synthesis of findings. It does not constitute a verbatim transcript of the meeting, nor does it attribute specific recommendations to individual participants. This approach preserves the expert-consultative nature of the report and focuses attention on joint conclusions, tensions, and implementation recommendations.

Data regarding the local implementation of activities by SAN, material distribution, evaluation, communication reach, and examples of local impact still require confirmation by the SAN project team, unless explicitly verified in the provided materials.

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Executive Summary & Policy Briefing

This report constitutes the Polish-language version of the National Policy Report prepared within the framework of the PRO-GENDERING project from the perspective of the University of Social Sciences (SAN) as the Polish project partner. The document incorporates findings from the national consultation meeting / National Stakeholders' Roundtable, which took place on July 20, 2026, at SAN in Warsaw.

The purpose of the report is to present the activities and deliverables of PRO-GENDERING, map their potential within the Polish context, identify implementation barriers, and formulate recommendations regarding Gender Equality Plans (GEP) in higher education.

The primary shift following the roundtable involves moving the report's focus more strongly from formal policy recommendations toward practical implementation: objectives, metrics, responsible personnel, communication, accessibility, onboarding procedures, training programs, tools for students and staff, and initiatives embedded into the daily operations of the institution.

Findings:

- GEP should be approached as an organizational process rather than merely a document required for project or grant compliance.
- Higher education institutions require clearly defined goals for equality initiatives, tangible outcomes, indicators, and a designated individual or team responsible for monitoring.
- Communication regarding GEP and inclusion should be plain, practical, and grounded in benefits and shared values, rather than solely framed in the language of formal obligations.
- Initiatives must be designed with user experience in mind, considering students, academic staff, administrative personnel, prospective students, and other stakeholders.
- Accessibility, inclusive communication, onboarding procedures, preferred names and pronouns in forms, and the accessibility of materials for persons with disabilities carry particular importance.
- Student engagement must rely on a genuine assessment of needs, rather than the assumption that students will participate in additional, voluntary activities without their integration into the academic curriculum.

- Gender equality discussion clubs can serve as a valuable tool, but within SAN, they should be adapted to student realities—for example, as part of coursework, workshops, onboarding modules, or practical training sessions.

Training for administrative and academic staff is essential, provided it is conducted in a psychologically safe manner: avoiding the shaming of individuals who are still acquiring inclusive language and practices.

Recommendations:

- Define the objectives of equality initiatives at SAN, along with the measurable and qualitative outcomes to be achieved.
- Appoint an individual or a small team responsible for GEP, monitoring indicators, coordinating communication, and collecting feedback.
- Conduct a needs assessment among students and staff, treating students as a focus and testing group for the proposed initiatives.
- Develop straightforward GEP communication: a concise FAQ, an information webpage, clear language communications, and materials not restricted solely to PDF format.
- Implement a pilot workshop or module titled "Equality in Practice," supplemented by short videos, exercises, and materials for individuals who do not wish to strongly affiliate socially with the topic but require practical information.
- Incorporate inclusivity across attraction, recruitment, and onboarding stages for students and staff, as well as within daily institutional procedures.
- Introduce practical mechanisms: preferred names and pronouns in forms, accessible materials, anti-discrimination procedures, and support for pregnant individuals and those balancing family roles with studies or work.
- Frame messaging around shared values—safety, respect, accessibility, and the quality of studying and working—rather than focusing exclusively on differentiating categories.

Report element	Status post-roundtable
PR1 / Google Slides Book	confirmed in the project documentation
PR2 / Handbook	confirmed in the project documentation
WP3 Awareness Raising Toolkit / ART	confirmed in the project documentation

Number of persons invited to the roundtable	25 - working data from the consultation version
Number of persons who confirmed participation	15 - working data from the consultation version
Number of persons present at the roundtable	12 - based on the attendance list
Roundtable feedback	included in sections 5, 6, 8 and 9, as well as in Appendix C
Local SAN activities beyond the roundtable	to be confirmed by the SAN project team

1. Introduction and National Context

1.1 National Landscape

PRO-GENDERING is a project promoting the integration of a gender perspective into academia by strengthening gender equality and inclusion in higher education. The project focuses on higher education institutions' capacity to implement, monitor, and evaluate GEPs, as well as on educating students and empowering their role in building a more inclusive academic culture.

Under WP4, the report's purpose is to assess the impact of tools and initiatives developed in WP2 and WP3, identify barriers and best practices, and subsequently translate findings into policy and institutional recommendations. The report was prepared from the perspective of SAN as the Polish project partner, rather than as a comprehensive diagnosis of the entire higher education sector in Poland.

The Polish context for implementing gender equality in higher education is complex. On one hand, higher education institutions operate within a European framework of requirements and standards, where a GEP has become a critical prerequisite for participation in research and innovation programs, notably Horizon Europe. On the other hand, the topic of gender equality can be socially and politically sensitive, which may hinder calm, objective, and data-driven dialogue on institutional change.

PR1 materials indicate that within the Polish legal framework, gender equality is rarely explicitly referenced in higher education regulations. Simultaneously, the National Action Plan for Equal Treatment 2022–2030 may indirectly influence higher education institutions, particularly through priorities concerning education, data collection, and research.

A crucial aspect is that while institutions may possess documents, strategies, or procedures, the real challenge remains their visibility and application in daily academic life. Thus, the issue

lies not solely in a lack of documentation, but also in limited communication, low awareness of GEPs among students and staff, and the absence of straightforward mechanisms to translate formal declarations into practice.

1.2 Overview of PRO-GENDERING Implementation

The report retains the core of the PRO-GENDERING project, which is gender equality and GEP implementation. At the same time, it adopts a broader understanding of gender equality, aligned with a modern institutional approach: it encompasses not only the representation of women and men, but also work-life balance, safety, combating violence and harassment, inclusive language, the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals, accessibility, the diversity of student and staff experiences, and intersectionality.

The roundtable reinforced this direction of interpretation. Participants pointed out that an overly narrow, dichotomous understanding of gender could limit the practical utility of the project. Therefore, it is recommended that the GEP retain gender equality as its central axis, while simultaneously being implemented within a broader paradigm of accessibility, safety, inclusivity, and the quality of the academic experience.

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

PRO-GENDERING was designed as a project combining diagnosis, institutional tools, educational initiatives, and policy recommendations. In the first phase, PR1 / Google Slides Book was prepared, which served as a diagnostic baseline. Subsequently, a Handbook concerning GEP implementation and monitoring was developed, alongside an Awareness Raising Toolkit targeted primarily at students and educators.

From the perspective of SAN, the primary objective is to translate this logic into the Polish context of a non-public higher education institution: how to utilize European solutions without mechanical replication, but rather adapting them to internal resources, organizational culture, and student engagement methods.

2.1 Utility of PRO-GENDERING Tools

The Handbook and ART fulfill distinct yet complementary functions. The Handbook functions primarily as a resource for higher education institutions, administration, GEP coordinators, project teams, and personnel managing equality processes. Conversely, ART possesses particular potential as a tool for student engagement: it contains activities, scenarios, and participatory methods designed to translate abstract GEP terminology into educational practice.

Following the roundtable, however, it must be clarified that the mere availability of tools is insufficient. Materials should be translated into simple working formats: short workshops, checklists, worksheets, lesson plans, instructions for facilitators, student materials, and concise guides for staff. Participants also noted that communication should not rely exclusively on PDFs, as they do not guarantee accessibility, legibility, or practical utilization of the materials.

2.2 Knowledge and Capacity Shifts

Based on the available materials, it can be concluded that the project enhances knowledge not through general declarations on equality, but by transitioning to concrete tools: GEP, monitoring, data, indicators, procedures, student initiatives, and evaluation. The roundtable confirmed that specifying objectives, outcomes, and communication language is essential.

From the perspective of organizational psychology, knowledge alone is insufficient. Change requires a language for addressing challenging topics, psychological safety, a structured framework for action, and a sense of agency. A "no shame in learning" approach is particularly crucial: training sessions should support individuals who are still acquiring inclusive communication skills, rather than reinforcing the fear of making mistakes.

2.3 Student Engagement and Campus Culture

Student engagement remains one of the primary themes of the project. Without students, a GEP remains predominantly an institutional document. With their involvement, it can become an integral component of daily academic culture: a subject of discussion, a point of reference for action, a mechanism for voicing needs, and a catalyst for co-creating solutions.

At the same time, feedback from the roundtable indicates that voluntary discussion clubs should not be the sole recommended form of engagement with the student community. Some students may lack the time, emotional capacity, or financial resources to participate in extracurricular activities beyond their degree program. Therefore, student initiatives should be integrated into standard institutional touchpoints: orientation, onboarding, selected courses, mandatory or semi-mandatory workshops, faculty office communications, and support systems.

2.4 Notable “Success Stories”

- preparation of PR1 as a baseline diagnosis and foundation for subsequent project deliverables;
- development of the Handbook as an institutional tool for higher education institutions implementing and monitoring GEPs;
- development of ART as a tool for activating students and supporting the transition from knowledge to action;
- description of the Polish model of discussion clubs as a practical form of education and dialogue;
- execution of the national consultation meeting, which enabled the verification of the report, refinement of recommendations, and stronger alignment with the practical context of a non-public higher education institution.

3. Reach and Dissemination of PRO-GENDERING

3.1 Direct Engagement

The available materials allow for mapping activities across three levels: consortium project activities, initiatives involving SAN / the Polish partner entity, and consultative actions on SAN's side. Figures regarding local project activities require confirmation by the SAN project team. Data concerning the roundtable has been supplemented using the attendance list.

Level	Activity	Description	Data Status
Consortium	PR1 / Google Slides Book	Baseline diagnosis on institutional readiness for GEP implementation and monitoring.	Confirmed in project materials
Consortium	PR2 / Handbook	Manual for GEP implementation and monitoring.	Confirmed in project materials
Consortium	WP3 / ART	Set of educational and participatory tools for students and facilitators	Confirmed in project materials
Poland / ART	Gender equality discussion clubs	A model of regular, moderated meetings on gender equality, stereotypes, representation, violence, and agency	Confirmed in ART; local adaptation subject to SAN's decision
SAN / Poland	Roundtable 20.07.2026	Consultation meeting dedicated to validating the report, refining recommendations, and gathering expert insights.	Completed; 12 participants present

Roundtable Category	Significance for the Report	Number
Invited Persons	Direct reach to stakeholders	25
Persons Who Confirmed Participation	Potential attendance and level of engagement prior to the event	15
Persons Present	Basis for describing consultations and post-roundtable findings	12

3.2 Indirect Reach

Indirect reach encompasses the public availability of the PRO-GENDERING website, newsletters, publicly accessible PDF materials, SAN communications, social media posts, and potential material downloads. Based on the available data, it remains impossible to reliably calculate the total indirect reach.

Following the roundtable, the need to analyze communication in terms of target audiences, clarity, legibility, and accessibility emerged particularly strongly. In practice, this highlights the necessity of testing communications with their intended users and employing simple plain-language assessment tools, such as text legibility tests.

4. Roundtable Consultations – Process and Main Conclusions

4.1. Nature of the Meeting and Use of Feedback

The roundtable was consultative in nature. The objective of the meeting was not merely to present the report, but to collect expert, practical, and critical feedback regarding its contents. Participants shared insights from their professional, organizational, educational, psychological, HR, DEI, student, and social perspectives.

Comments gathered during the roundtable were incorporated into the report as a thematic synthesis. Key updates focus on: putting greater emphasis on practical implementation, clarifying objectives and outcomes, and strengthening recommendations concerning communication, accessibility, student needs assessment, and process management.

4.2. Main areas of feedback

Feedback Area	Conclusion from Roundtable	Impact on the Report
From Document to Practice	A document alone is insufficient. Change must target the daily habits of the organization.	Strengthened recommendations regarding the process, process owner, indicators, and periodic monitoring.
Objectives and Outcomes	The project and its activities should feature clearly defined objectives alongside qualitative and quantitative outcomes.	Added a recommendation to define objectives, outcomes, and metrics prior to implementing activities.
Communication	Clear communication tailored to all groups is required, built upon benefits and shared values.	Emphasized plain language, FAQs, readability testing, and avoiding exclusive reliance on PDFs for communication.
Accessibility and Systemic Inclusivity	Inclusivity should encompass forms, personal data, onboarding, educational materials, and procedures	Added recommendations regarding preferred names and pronouns, material accessibility, and implementation procedures
Faculty and Staff	Training in inclusive communication is needed for administrative and academic staff.	Included workshops, refresher training, and a psychologically safe framework for individuals acquiring new skills.
Student Community	Students should serve as focus and testing groups; activities must address their actual needs.	Revised recommendations regarding discussion clubs, framing them as an adaptable tool rather than the sole solution.
Process Management	Implementation requires a designated owner, a stakeholder map, an executive sponsor, and ambassadors.	Added an implementation structure: sponsor, process owner, project team, and ambassadors.
Practical Actions	Practical, concise initiatives yield the highest value: "Equality in Practice" workshop, short videos, tools, and campaigns.	Added an implementation roadmap for SAN alongside post-project priority actions.

4.3. Key revision following the roundtable

Overall Conclusion

The most significant shift following the consultations is the move away from viewing a GEP merely as a document to be published, towards designing an overall experience: how a student, candidate, academic staff member, administrative worker, or an individual in a vulnerable position learns what actions to take, where to seek support, and which mechanisms genuinely function within the institution.

5. Barriers and Sustainability Needs Identified from PRO-GENDERING

5.1 Barriers and Obstacles

- The primary barrier remains the transition from a formal document to actual institutional practice. This risk can be defined as the "formal compliance trap": an institution may possess a GEP, satisfy formal requirements, and publish the document, yet it fails to impact the daily experience of students, academic staff, administration, and decision-makers.
- Low visibility of the GEP among students and staff;
- Lack of comprehensive data regarding implementation and project reach;
- Absence of clearly defined project objectives and intended outcomes;
- Lack of a designated individual or team responsible for monitoring and coordinating activities;
- The risk of treating the GEP merely as a static document rather than an ongoing process and daily practice;
- Over-reliance on PDF files and formal communication channels that fail to engage recipients;
- Social resistance, polarization, and the fear of making mistakes in inclusive communication;
- The risk of designing initiatives for students without prior assessment of their actual needs;
- The risk of shifting responsibility for change onto students or student ambassadors without offering proper support, remuneration, succession planning, or necessary resources.

The roundtable also highlighted tensions surrounding purely voluntary activities, such as discussion clubs. While valuable in themselves, they should not serve as the primary or sole instrument if students' economic and life circumstances constrain their capacity to participate. Under such conditions, initiatives should be integrated into the study curriculum, onboarding processes, or other mandatory institutional touchpoints.

5.2 Sustainability Needs

- Annual review of the GEP or equality initiatives;
- Designation of an individual responsible for the GEP, indicator monitoring, and communication coordination;
- Development of a stakeholder map: students, candidates, academic staff, administration, leadership, external partners, and service users;
- Assessment of student and staff needs prior to designing initiatives;
- Concise implementation materials: FAQs, checklists, worksheets, lesson plans, short guides, and videos;
- Training sessions alongside refresher courses for academic staff and administration;
- Procedures and tools supporting preferred names, pronouns, material accessibility, and safe reporting of issues;
- Integration of initiatives into natural institutional processes: recruitment, onboarding, initial classes, dean's office communication, and support systems.

6. Mapping External Good Practices Nationwide

6.1 Practices Must Be Adapted, Not Copied

Good practices should not be treated as off-the-shelf templates for mechanical implementation. Each higher education institution possesses its own organizational culture, management model, decision-making dynamics, resources, history, and strategic objectives. These factors determine which practices are feasible, credible, and effective.

As a non-public university, SAN (Społeczna Akademia Nauk) may have a different level of administrative and organizational maturity compared to large public universities. While it may operate with a smaller budget and a more compact administrative apparatus, it simultaneously benefits from faster decision-making processes and greater operational flexibility. Consequently, good practices from the University of Warsaw (UW), Jagiellonian University (UJ),

the National Science Centre (NCN), and corporate entities should be viewed as sources of inspiration rather than copy-paste models.

Following the roundtable, an additional benchmark category should be highlighted: good practices do not need to originate solely from academia and business. Valuable insights can also be drawn from civil society organizations, accessibility design communities, youth organizations, cultural institutions, and educational initiatives that effectively communicate socially sensitive topics using clear, practical language.

6.2. Academic and Public Good Practices

Institution	Key Takeaways	Adaptation Potential for SAN Post-Roundtable
University of Warsaw	Visible equality infrastructure: website, knowledge base, support systems, research, and procedures.	A straightforward web page or section featuring the GEP, available support, FAQs, procedures, and resources for students.
Jagiellonian University	Clear objectives, actions, metrics, responsibilities, and timelines.	A simplified matrix: activity – process owner – deadline – indicator – status.
National Science Centre	Equality embedded directly into evaluation, funding, and academic career progression.	Accounting for career breaks, maintaining transparent criteria, and incorporating narrative elements into academic performance reviews.
Orange Polska	Long-term reporting and public communication regarding accountability.	An annual equality mini-report or a dedicated section within the university's overall annual report.
ING Bank Śląski	D&I maturity assessment and an inclusive organizational culture.	A concise audit or self-assessment evaluating the institution's overall equality maturity.
Allegro.eu	Diversity policy tied directly into HR, recruitment, anti-discrimination, and monitoring.	Standardized guidelines covering recruitment, committees, promotions, reporting mechanisms, and training.
Civil Society & Educational Organizations	Hands-on expertise in inclusive communication, accessibility, and engaging with diverse user groups.	Practical resources for inclusive communication, expert consultations, and testing language legibility and accessibility directly with target audiences.

7. Policy Recommendations

The recommendations have been formulated diplomatically, as their objective is to support the university and decision-makers rather than attribute blame. Following the roundtable, they have been oriented toward practical implementation: focusing on goals, designated leads, indicators, accessibility, communication, needs assessment, and actual student touchpoints with the institution.

Target Audience	Recommendation	Priority	Minimum Implementation
University Leadership	Treat the GEP as a strategic process rather than a one-off formal document.	High	Designate an executive sponsor, a process coordinator, and an annual review cycle for activities.
University Leadership	Define the purpose of equality initiatives along with qualitative and quantitative outcomes.	High	A single-page objective canvas: purpose, target group, and key success indicators.
GEP Leads	Assign a process owner, deadline, indicator, and baseline resources to each activity.	High	A matrix: objective – activity – owner – deadline – indicator – status.
GEP Leads	Design the process from the ground up using CX/EX principles (student, candidate, staff, and faculty experience).	High	Journey-mapping workshop: recruitment, onboarding, studying/working, reporting mechanisms, and support.
Administration	Simplify and clearly communicate anti-discrimination procedures and support pathways.	High	A single webpage or tab: where to report issues, who is responsible, and what to expect.
Administration/ IT	Accommodate preferred names, pronouns, and the needs of transgender individuals across forms and systems.	High	Form and system audit; pilot a preferred name/pronoun field where technically feasible.
Academic Staff	Integrate equality, inclusion, and accessibility into teaching wherever substantively relevant.	Medium/High	Brief lesson plans and field-specific examples (e.g., web accessibility in graphic design).
Faculty and Staff	Enhance inclusive communication competencies without shaming individuals acquiring new skills.	High	Initial workshop followed by a refresher session a few months later; concise resources and message templates.
Students	Treat students as a focus and testing group for planned initiatives.	High	Focus group session, brief needs survey, and pre-publication material testing.
Students	Embed equality initiatives into the regular curriculum rather than relying solely on extra-curriculars.	High	Introductory study module, "Equality in Practice" workshop, or integration into select courses.
Academic Community	Anchor communication in shared values: safety, quality of	High	Communication campaign centered on a clear message

	study/work, respect, and accessibility.		transcending political and ideological debate
SAN / Project Team	Launch a pilot "Equality in Practice" workshop.	High	Hands-on workshop + short videos + practical tools for individuals hesitant to formally engage with the topic
National Agencies & Granting Bodies	Emphasize the quality of GEP implementation rather than mere formal compliance.	High	Introduce mandatory reporting on progress, consultations, metrics, and document visibility.

7.1. Detailed Recommendations

1. Higher education institutions are recommended to transition from a static, formal GEP to a dynamic organizational process encompassing diagnosis, implementation, communication, monitoring, and evaluation.
2. Each GEP should be assigned a designated process owner, baseline financial or time allocation, metrics, and a review schedule.
3. Initiatives should be preceded by an assessment of student, academic staff, and administrative needs to ensure solutions are not designed solely on unverified assumptions.
4. GEP communication should utilize plain language, incorporate legibility testing, and avoid exclusive reliance on PDF documentation.
5. Core inclusivity mechanisms should be integrated across forms, onboarding processes, IT systems, and support procedures.
6. The role of ambassadors should be developed alongside clear institutional support, mentorship, succession planning, and formal recognition or compensation.
7. Periodic training sessions and workshops should be provided for academic staff, administration, and students, focusing on equality, anti-discrimination, inclusive language, responding to violence, and navigating difficult conversations.
8. An annual GEP implementation report—even in a concise format—should be made mandatory, covering actions taken, metrics, data, feedback, and plans for the upcoming year.
9. Regular stakeholder consultations should be conducted, such as an annual equality forum or review meeting, to align ongoing initiatives with real needs.
10. Gender equality considerations should be integrated into broader institutional dialogue concerning organizational culture, psychological safety, well-being, accessibility, and the overall quality of education.

8. Proposed Implementation Roadmap for SAN

The following implementation roadmap serves as a practical response to the feedback gathered during the roundtable. It requires neither a large budget nor an extensive administrative structure. Instead, it relies on small, repeatable steps that facilitate a smooth transition from report to action.

Timeframe	Objective	Minimum Actions	Outcome
0–3 months	Establish process fundamentals	Designate a process owner; prepare an objective canvas; gather data from SAN; draft a basic stakeholder map.	Clear ownership, defined purpose, and identified gaps.
0–3 months	Assess needs	Conduct a brief survey and/or focus group with students; consult with administration and academic staff.	Recommendations grounded in real user needs rather than unverified assumptions.
3–6 months	Simplify communication	Create a GEP FAQ; publish a single dedicated support page; perform plain-language testing; release materials in non-PDF formats.	Students and staff know where to find information and support.
3–6 months	Launch a pilot initiative	Deliver the "Equality in Practice" workshop; produce short video resources; provide practical exercises and tools for students and staff.	A scalable, practical template is established.
6–12 months	Implement systemic mechanisms	Audit forms and systems; accommodate preferred names and pronouns; update onboarding procedures; ensure material accessibility.	Inclusivity functions seamlessly across institutional touchpoints.
12 months	Close the loop and refine operations	Issue a concise annual report covering actions taken, metrics, feedback, and recommendations for the upcoming year.	The GEP becomes an ongoing organizational learning process.

9. Elaborating on Recommendations Following the Roundtable

9.1. From Obligation to Benefits and Daily Practices

One of the strongest conclusions from the consultations was the shift in focus from documents and obligations toward the daily habits of the organization. Participants emphasized that a Gender Equality Plan alone is insufficient if it is not reflected in language, procedures, student services, recruitment, onboarding, and responses to difficult situations. For this reason, the final version of the report should communicate the benefits more strongly: a greater sense of safety, better information accessibility, more predictable procedures, reduced anxiety about reporting needs, and enhanced quality of studying and working.

Framing the narrative in this way is particularly crucial in light of potential resistance or equality fatigue. If initiatives are presented strictly as formal requirements, part of the community may perceive them as an added burden. Conversely, if they are presented as tools that facilitate the university's daily operations, it becomes easier to link them to values shared across diverse groups: respect, transparency, accessibility, quality of education, and overall well-being.

9.2. Designing Initiatives Around User Experience

The roundtable clearly demonstrated that equality initiatives should be designed not only from the perspective of formal documentation, but also through the lens of user experience. This entails analyzing how various stakeholder groups interact with the institution in practice: candidates during recruitment, first-year students, individuals contacting the dean's office, teaching staff, administrative personnel, transgender individuals, pregnant students or staff, persons with disabilities, and individuals who do not yet possess the language to express their needs.

In practice, it is recommended to review core institutional touchpoints to ensure they are clear, accessible, and inclusive. This applies to forms, email communications, regulations,

procedures, onboarding materials, websites, IT systems, candidate and student documentation, and classroom delivery methods. In this sense, the GEP should function not merely as a strategic document, but as a practical audit tool for the academic experience.

9.3. Students as Co-Designers, Not Just Recipients

The consultations underscored the imperative of genuine engagement with students. It is insufficient to assume that specific activities—such as discussion clubs—will prove attractive or logistically viable for them. A portion of the student body may lack the time, resources, or readiness to participate in extracurricular activities, particularly those who work, commute, balance studies with caregiving responsibilities, or prefer not to publicly associate with equality initiatives.

Consequently, it is recommended to treat students as a focus and testing group for designed solutions. This involves conducting concise needs assessments, testing messages, inviting students to evaluate materials, and embedding equality initiatives into standard academic touchpoints: orientation sessions, onboarding, selected course modules, communication with year tutors, dean's office interactions, and informational resources. This approach reduces the risk of symbolic gestures and increases the likelihood of creating practically useful interventions.

9.4. Accessibility, Language, and Institutional Systems

Accessibility emerged as another major area expanded following the roundtable. This extends beyond architectural accessibility to encompass language, data, forms, procedures, and educational materials. Participants highlighted the necessity for plain language, message readability testing, moving beyond reliance on PDF files, accommodating preferred names and pronouns on forms, and establishing procedures or overrides to support transgender individuals regarding personal data management.

From an implementation perspective, equality measures must address administrative systems and processes directly. Even the most compelling educational campaign cannot substitute for practical solutions: clear reporting pathways, anti-discrimination procedures, accessible resources,

support for pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, concise overviews of rights and responsibilities, and transparent guidance on seeking help without fear of judgment.

9.5. Ownership, Roles, and Continuity

The consultations confirmed that long-term sustainability hinges on assigning a designated individual or team to oversee the process. Participants noted that staff juggling multiple competing responsibilities cannot consistently monitor indicators, update materials, drive communication, and coordinate ambassador initiatives. Recommendations must therefore articulate an architecture of accountability: an executive sponsor, a process coordinator, student/staff ambassadors, substantive oversight, succession planning, and baseline resource allocation.

Regarding ambassador roles, it is critical to avoid symbolic titles that overburden the most highly engaged individuals. Ambassadors require proper preparation, ongoing support, clear boundaries of responsibility, and formal recognition—whether organizational, educational, or financial. Without these structures, initiatives risk relying entirely on uncompensated emotional labor and personal commitment, which are difficult to sustain over time.

Roundtable Conclusion	Implication for the Report	Example of Practical Application
A document alone is insufficient.	The report places greater emphasis on the GEP as an ongoing process and daily practice..	An annual cycle: objective – actions – process owner – monitoring – adjustment.
Focus must be on benefits, not just obligations.	Recommendations should be framed using the language of utility and safety.	FAQ: "How does the GEP benefit students, academic staff, and administration?"
Communication must be clear and accessible.	The report recommends testing plain language and moving away from exclusive reliance on PDFs.	A concise webpage, infographic, short video, or university portal announcement.
A designated lead is essential.	Recommendations regarding a process owner and monitoring mechanisms have been strengthened.	A GEP Coordinator + Executive Sponsor + a concise annual report.
Student input is required prior to implementation.	Added emphasis on needs assessment and solution testing.	Mini focus groups or a student survey prior to rolling out initiatives.
Initiatives must not depend solely on voluntary extracurriculars..	Discussion clubs are treated as one possible format rather than the sole solution.	Integrating the topic into onboarding, coursework, or mandatory institutional touchpoints.

10. Minimal monitoring and metrics system

The roundtable confirmed the need for more concrete monitoring of results. A baseline monitoring system need not be extensive or costly. However, it should address several fundamental questions: whether the academic community is aware that the GEP exists, understands its objective, knows the support procedures, finds the materials accessible, is reached by the initiatives, and whether the implemented solutions actually improve the daily experience of students and staff.

It is recommended that SAN or a similar institution carry out monitoring using a lightweight annual matrix. Indicators should combine quantitative and qualitative data: participant count, number of initiatives, and overall reach, alongside qualitative feedback, identified needs, barriers, examples of progress, and post-training evaluation. This approach prevents reporting from becoming a mere headcount of activities that ignores their practical utility.

Monitoring Area	Baseline Indicator	Data Source	Frequency
GEP Visibility	Percentage of individuals who know where to find the Gender Equality Plan and whom to contact with questions.	Brief survey targeting students, academic staff, and administration.	Annually
Communication Clarity	Readability rating of communications and the count of materials produced in plain language.	Readability testing, user feedback, and periodic communication reviews.	Upon updating materials
Resource Accessibility	Number of key resources available in formats other than static PDFs or fully digitally accessible versions.	Website, system, and document audit.	Annually
Support Procedures	Existence of a single, visible pathway outlining where to report issues, who is responsible, and expected outcomes.	Review of the university website, regulations, and student/staff guidance.	Annually
Preferred Name & Pronouns	Ability of forms and select systems to accommodate preferred names and/or pronouns where technically feasible.	Audit of administrative forms, systems, and operational procedures.	Annually or upon system upgrades
Training & Refreshers	Number of individuals trained alongside post-training evaluation of practical utility.	Attendance records, post-training surveys, and follow-up evaluations.	After each session and annually
Student Engagement	Number of students involved in consultations and the number of recommendations implemented based on their feedback.	Focus groups, surveys, consultation sessions, and meeting minutes.	Every semester

Qualitative Impact	Documentation of 2–3 concrete operational changes made to procedures, communication, or institutional practices.	Concise GEP annual report	Annually
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10.1. Proposed Annual Cycle

A minimal annual cycle can consist of five steps: a concise needs assessment, selecting 2–3 priorities, implementing small-scale actions, gathering feedback, and preparing a single-page summary for university leadership and the academic community. This approach is far simpler than a full-scale audit yet sufficient to keep the initiatives active in practice and prevent the GEP from becoming a dormant document.

In the first year, the priority should not be building an expansive program, but rather establishing the fundamentals: who is responsible, where information is located, what key gaps exist, what students and staff actually need, and which actions can be executed without major financial investment. Only once these foundations are in place should more extensive initiatives be developed.

11. "Equality in Practice" Pilot Initiative

One of the most practical ways to follow up on the project is to launch a pilot module titled "Equality in Practice." It should be designed as a brief, concrete, and low-barrier learning opportunity that requires no prior knowledge or strong personal identification with equality topics from participants. The objective of the module would be to demonstrate that equality and inclusion apply to everyday situations: communication, forms, student services, material accessibility, addressing stereotypes, reporting difficulties, and fostering safety within group settings.

The pilot could be developed in two distinct tracks: one for students, and another for academic staff and administration. The student track should be integrated into the onboarding period or an existing course to avoid relying solely on voluntary extracurricular participation. The track for faculty and administrative staff should focus on inclusive language, safe communication, managing difficult situations, supporting individuals with diverse needs, and navigating practical support procedures.

Pilot Component	Proposal	Post-Roundtable Rationale
Purpose	Translating the GEP and equality initiatives into everyday institutional practices.	Participants emphasized that a formal document is insufficient without a shift in organizational habits.
Target Groups	First-year students, academic staff, administrative personnel, and student-facing staff.	Feedback highlighted the need for education across all levels, rather than focusing solely on already engaged groups.
Format	Brief workshop, micro-learning video, practical worksheet, FAQ, and conversation script.	It was noted that PDFs alone are inadequate; more accessible and practical formats are required.
Content	Preferred names and pronouns, resource accessibility, inclusive communication, reporting procedures, and addressing stereotypes.	These specific areas were explicitly identified as requiring practical, actionable tools.
Methodology	Situational examples, case studies, brief exercises, and real-world institutional communication reviews.	Participants recommended grounding both the message and actions in concrete scenarios while offering testable tools.
Evaluation	Brief pre- and post-session survey evaluating utility, clarity, and one action item for immediate implementation.	Consultations stressed the necessity of clear metrics and tracking output effectiveness.

11.1. Minimal Pilot Scenario

A baseline pilot scenario can consist of four elements. First, a brief introduction: what the Gender Equality Plan is and why it applies to the daily operations of the university. Second, working through situational examples: an unclear form, lack of information about support procedures, difficulties related to preferred names, digitally inaccessible materials, or stereotyping comments during lectures. Third, practicing constructive responses and communication methods. Fourth, collecting a single recommendation from participants: what the university can simplify, clarify, or communicate better.

Implementing the pilot does not require a full training program. A single module, one test group, and a brief evaluation are sufficient. Crucially, the pilot should yield a tangible result: an updated FAQ, a revised form, a list of recommendations for the dean's office, a lesson plan, a webpage with procedures, or a plan for the following semester. This ensures the initiative serves as concrete proof of moving from consultation to practice.

Annex A. PRO-GENDERING Action Map

Action / Initiative	Level	Target Group	Evidence / Source	Significance for the Report
PR1 / Google Slides Book	Consortium	Universities, staff, students, decision-makers	PR1 PRO-GENDERING	Baseline diagnosis and data for recommendations
Analysis of 17 GEPs	Consortium	Universities from 6 countries	PR1	Identification of scope, limitations, and GEP best practices
Key Informant / Stakeholder Interviews	Consortium	Stakeholders from 6 countries	PR1	Qualitative insights into implementation, barriers, and accountability
Online survey	Consortium/ Poland	Students, staff, administration	PR1	Data on equality awareness and GEP
PR2 Handbook	Consortium	Universities and individuals responsible for GEP	Handbook	Institutional tool for M&E, GEP and procedures
WP3 ART	Consortium	Students, facilitators, staff	ART	Tool for student activation
Gender equality discussion clubs	Poland/ ART	Students	ART, Poland section	Model adaptable by SAN
Roundtable July 20, 2026	SAN / Poland	Stakeholders, experts, decision-makers	Attendance list and notes	Validation of the report and recommendations

Annex B. List of Roundtable Participants

No.	Name and Surname
1	Mariola Badowska
2	Marcelina Kurzyk-Olędzka
3	Milena Krawczyk
4	Martyna Równiak
5	Dominika Moskal
6	Krzysztof Kurp
7	Wyspian (Przemysław) Madej
8	Katarzyna Zielińska-Jaworska
9	Nina Szczygieł
10	Dominika Błazejewska
11	Weronika Omalańczuk
12	Aneta Głodowska

The list includes individuals present in accordance with the provided final attendance roster. Individual statements were not attributed to specific persons in the report; feedback was used in a synthesized form.

Annex C. Integration of Roundtable Feedback into the Report

Roundtable Feedback	Revision in Report
A document alone is insufficient; daily organizational habits need to change.	Reinforced the concept of the GEP as a process and added an implementation map for SAN.
Frame around benefits, not just obligations.	Added a recommendation to communicate based on shared values, safety, and the quality of study and work.
Plain language and readability analysis needed.	Added an FAQ, plain language principles, message testing, and phased out PDF as the sole medium
Monitoring, indicators, and designated responsibility required.	Expanded recommendations to include a process owner, objective charter, and key metrics.
Address accessibility, institutional systems, preferred names/pronouns, and onboarding.	Added recommendations regarding forms, IT systems, onboarding procedures, and resource accessibility.
Treat students as a focus group; do not automatically assume attendance at discussion clubs.	Revised the recommendation on discussion clubs to adapt them to real-world conditions and embed them into curricula.
Train academic staff and administration, but without shaming learners.	Incorporated psychological safety into training design, workshops, and refresher sessions.
Practical interventions needed: workshops, videos, campaign materials, and tools.	Introduced the "Equality in Practice" pilot initiative alongside practical communication formats.

Annex D. Data Requiring Confirmation by SAN

Area	Data to Be Provided	Purpose
WP2	Did SAN conduct local GEP workshops? Dates, participant counts, target groups, evaluation.	Implementation section, direct engagement, and tool utility.
WP3	Did SAN implement or support a student project? Name, description, student participation count, outcomes.	Student engagement section and local success stories.
Handbook	How was the Handbook distributed? To how many individuals and across which groups?	Reach and tool utility evaluation.
ART	How was ART distributed? Was there a Polish version? Were discussion clubs utilized?	Reach, student engagement, and long-term sustainability of initiatives.
Evaluation	Surveys, qualitative feedback, quotes, post-event reports.	Impact assessment and shaping future recommendations.
Communication	Posts, newsletters, website, reach metrics, download counts, page views.	Indirect reach and assessment of communication effectiveness.

Annex E. Project and Benchmarking Sources and Documents

- PRO-GENDERING. (2024). Google Slides Book / PR1 - Developing a handbook to foster a gender equal culture at HEIs.
- PRO-GENDERING. (2024). Handbook on Implementing Gender Equality Plans in Higher Education Institutions / PR2.
- PRO-GENDERING. (2025/2026). Awareness Raising Toolkit / WP3.
- PRO-GENDERING. (2026). WP4 Impact Assessment Strategy - Final Impact Assessment Study and Policy Recommendations.
- PRO-GENDERING. National Policy Report Template.
- Roundtable Conclusions. Consultation notes provided following the meeting.
- Roundtable - Pro-gendering - list of participants. Final attendance roster.
- European Commission. She Figures 2024.
- Eurostat. Tertiary education statistics.
- EIGE. Gender Equality Index.
- University of Warsaw. The UW "Równoważnia" platform and the Inclusive Gender Equality Plan
- Jagiellonian University. Gender Equality Plan for JU.
- National Science Centre. Supporting gender equality; NCN Gender Equality Plan.
- Orange Polska. CSR and integrated reports; sustainability reporting disclosures.
- ING Bank Śląski / Responsible Business Forum. Diversity IN Check; ING integrated reports.
- Allegro.eu. Diversity Policy; ESG and annual reports.
- Schein, E. H. Organizational Culture and Leadership.

- Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture.
- Hofstede, G. Culture's Consequences / cultural dimensions framework.

For the version intended for publication, it is recommended to supplement the sources with full links, access dates, and detailed bibliographic data.

www.pro-gendering.eu