

GUIDANCE NOTE 12

Implementing gender mainstreaming

Topic overview

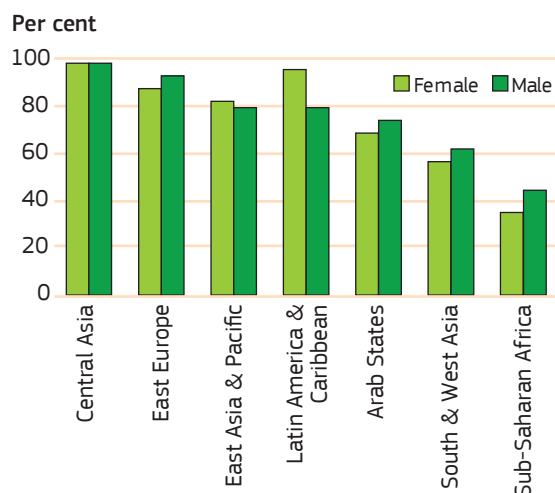
Gender equality is a goal in its own right and at the same time a key to and enabler of sustainable development. Gender equality is a principle that shapes the values and work of European development cooperation. A **careful gender analysis of the labour market** can prove useful to make vocational education and training (VET) systems more efficient and relevant to the demands for flexibility in fast-changing economic scenarios. However, implementation is still hampered, as can be seen from the level of gross secondary enrolment ratios around the world. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics estimates the percentage of female students worldwide in vocational programmes to be 44 %. According to UNESCO, the enrolment ratio for females is distinctively lower than that for males in five regions worldwide. Only in the East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean is the female gross enrolment ratio higher than that for males (see Figure GN12.1).

Barriers that women face in terms of accessing VET programmes and/or employment primarily have a basis in socio-cultural rules. Women are severely hindered in social and economic endeavours from lack of access to viable VET programmes, and social discrimination in many different forms constrains women's active participation in the labour market. Early marriage, household responsibilities, family restrictions, conservative social mindset and stereotypes, lack of sanitary facilities and sexual harassment are some of the serious obstacles that render the VET system and work environment inappropriate for women.

SUMMARY OF KEY ASPECTS

- Gender equality is a goal in its own right and a key to and enabler of sustainable development; it is a principle that shapes the values and work of European development cooperation.
- Barriers that women face in terms of accessing VET programmes and/or employment are primarily based in socio-cultural rules and result in women being confined to a narrower range of occupations. A gender-sensitive VET system should move beyond an employment-only focus to include elements of empowerment and self-confidence building.
- Gender equality is a development objective of countries around the world, as manifested by the ratification of international instruments on the rights of women and International Labour Organization conventions.
- Many economies in developing countries are traditionally characterised by rigid gender-based occupational segregation. Women are traditionally associated with the private domestic domain of the family and community as part of their traditional reproductive or care-giver role
- The starting point to develop a conceptual framework for a gender-sensitive VET project is to undertake a gender analysis, which helps identify the different situations, interests and needs of women and men.
- A gender-sensitive VET programme must be linked with nationally recognised qualifications from the National Vocational Qualifications Framework. It must also adhere to the learning outcome based methodology endorsed by the responsible VET authority.

FIGURE GN12.1 Regional gross enrolment ratios in secondary education in 2009



Source: UNESCO, 2013.

International Labour Organization conventions such as No. 100 (Equal Remuneration), 111 (Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)) and 142 (Human Resources Development) provide the international normative **framework on improvement of gender equality and women's employment**. At the European level, a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council requires member states to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women. It is important to be aware of the existence of two key instruments: the [United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) and the [Beijing Platform for Action \(PfA\)](#). By ratifying the CEDAW (see Article 11) and adhering to the PfA (see Critical Area for Concern: Women and the economy) countries have agreed to take concrete action and commit resources to ensure that women have equal access without discrimination to VET, among others. This is key information to consider while engaging in dialogue with partners. While the European Union (EU) promotes gender equality, it does so in a way that is fully coherent with what partner countries have also committed to do.

As laid down by the G20 Training Strategy (ILO, 2010) VET is an important means of pursuing the overall goal of equality of opportunity and treatment for

women and men in employment and occupation. **Opportunities offered by VET in the labour market** are an important means for women to achieve greater equality with men: the more skilled the female workforce is, the wider women's choices in labour markets will be, and the more likely they are to secure equal treatment.

As of January 2016, a new gender action plan — 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: Transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016–2020' (EC, 2015) — provides guidelines for focused and coherent action to **reach gender equality objectives through EU development cooperation** with partner countries. Action will be focusing in four pivotal areas:

- ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity;
- promoting the economic and social rights/empowerment of girls and women;
- strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation;
- shifting European Commission (EC) services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.

The second pivotal area, promoting the economic and social rights/empowerment of girls and women, includes an objective for specific action regarding VET (see Table GN12.1).

A **gender-sensitive VET system** needs to be aware of the existing differences in women's and men's access to VET programmes and employment, and be capable of improving the equity outcomes of education whilst meeting the knowledge, skills and occupational competence demand. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to forge ahead with gender equality. To this end, state and non-governmental actors such as ministries and their administrative bodies have to be supported in applying gender-sensitive approaches and integrating specific gender-oriented initiatives where and when necessary, at the local, national and supra-national levels.

TABLE GN12.1 VET-related objectives, indicators and activities under the new EU gender action plan

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination	13.1 Primary completion rate for girls and boys (SDG 4.33) 13.2 Secondary completion rate for girls and boys (SDG 4.35) 13.3 Tertiary enrolment rates for women and men (SDG 4.37) 13.4 Literacy rate of 15- to 24-year-olds, women and men (SDG 4.5) 13.5 Percentage of pupils enrolled in primary and secondary schools providing drinking water, adequate sanitation and adequate hygiene services (SDG 6.4) 13.6 Personnel in research and development (per million inhabitants) (SDG 9.63) 13.7 Number of children enrolled in primary education with EU support (EURF) 13.8 Number of children enrolled in secondary education with EU support (EURF) 13.9 Number of teachers trained with EU support (EURF) 13.10 Ratio of females to males who have benefited from VET/skills development and other active labour market programmes with EU support (EURF)	• Support legislation and national capacity full coverage of quality and non-discriminatory education for learners of all ages • Ensure a safe, free of sexual and gender-based violence environment that responds to child protection principles • Provide education (both formal and non-formal) that addresses gender stereotypes and allows for lifelong learning • Promote gender-equal role models in the transition from education to the labour market through curricula and gender parity among teachers • Support vocational and professional training for girls and boys that enable them to be change agents

Source: EC, 2015.

Note: EURF = EU Results Framework; SDG = Sustainable Development Goal.

Rigid **gender-based occupational segregation** restricts the occupational choices of women and men to those traditionally regarded as appropriate activities for them. Occupational segregation limits and constrains employment choice and opportunities. Equal access to employment is limited by gender-based occupational segregation, with women being most disadvantaged. At a societal level, rigid labour market segregation is believed to limit societies' capacity to respond to the new economic opportunities and risks presented by the global economy (EC, 2006). The concentration of men and women in different types and levels of activity and employment normally results in a situation such that women are confined to a narrower range of occupations (see Box GN12.1) and at lower levels than men.

Gender-based occupational segregation is a common feature of labour markets at all levels of development; under all political systems; and in diverse religious, social and cultural settings. Gender-based occupational segregation is based on traditional beliefs or gender stereotypes of appropriate functions for men and women. These beliefs are based on the core reproductive roles of women and men. Women are traditionally associated with the private domestic domain of the family and community, and men with the public domain as primary breadwinners.

Work in female-dominated occupations (cleaner, salesperson, waitress, secretary, receptionist, etc.) is related to similar activities women perform in the home as part of their traditional reproductive or

BOX GN12.1 Women in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has been carrying out a major land reform, designed to give property rights to small farmers over the past five years. While women are in theory equally as entitled as men to their share of land, this does not always hold true in practice. Responsibility for overseeing distribution of land is usually left to tribal elders, who may ignore a young woman's property rights. The lack of opportunities in densely populated rural areas such as the Fergana Valley in the South is pushing many young people off the land. Many women when they leave do not inherit any land and do not receive any compensation. Most of them end up in the big cities looking for work.

Women are over-represented in the informal economy, which is estimated to account for over a third of the whole. More women in Kyrgyzstan finish their education than men, but this higher educational attainment does not translate into success in the jobs market. In the formal sector, women tend to cluster in certain economic sectors such as health, education and culture. There is also a large and growing pay gap between the earnings of men and women. In 2000, women earned about 32 % less than men on average; by 2003, the gap had grown to 36 %.

One positive sign is the success of women entrepreneurs. In the changed economic conditions after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many women took the initiative and set up as traders, travelling to neighbouring countries to bring goods back to Kyrgyzstan.

Source: ETF, 2010.

care-giver role. A **gender-sensitive VET system should move beyond an employment-only focus** to include elements of empowerment and self-confidence building. It should present different role models, widen women's and girls' self-perceptions on their occupational abilities and include non-formal VET programmes to support the development of women's cooperatives and employment in informal micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

In the absence of positive changes in all of these areas, the good intentions of providing VET opportunities

without discrimination so often stated in financing proposals will not be fulfilled — and consequently the **gender gap may well be widened** in terms of provision of VET programmes and consequent employment opportunities (EC, 2006). Successful VET system reforms need to address current gender-based inequalities in the economy, and ensure that both men and women have equal access to new technologies and opportunities being introduced (see Box GN12.2). A careful gender analysis of the labour market can prove useful in making VET systems more efficient, effective and relevant to the demands for flexibility in fast-changing economic scenarios.

In order to **integrate specific gender-oriented initiatives**, it is necessary to collect gender-specific data on the situation of target groups seeking employment. Furthermore, a gender analysis helps identify the different situations, interests and needs of women and men (see Box GN12.3). Finally, an analysis has to be made of the current capacity of the VET system in terms of numbers of male/female graduates produced in each occupational area.

Talking to people in the field such as VET teacher unions, trade unions, employer and women's

BOX GN12.2 Easing the transition to work for women in Bangladesh

Integrating women or men into areas of specialisation in which they were previously under-represented is important to diversifying opportunities for VET. The National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Bangladesh sets clear priorities and targets for breaking gender stereotypes. The strategy was developed by a Gender Working Group consisting of 15 representatives from government ministries and departments, employers, workers and civil society organisations. It provided an overview of the current status and nature of gender inequalities in VET, highlighted priority areas for action, explored a number of steps to promote equal participation of women in VET programmes, and outlined the way forward.

Source: Government of Bangladesh, 2012.

BOX GN12.3 Selected key questions for a macro-level gender analysis

- What commitments to gender equality of access to VET have been made by the government?
- Are comprehensive labour and employment policies in place which reflect commitment to equal opportunities in VET and employment, and provide equal benefits and protection for men and women?
- What other necessary measures are in place to help guarantee the effectiveness of gender-sensitive VET systems, e.g. affirmative action, specific programmes to attract women to VET, investment to modernise VET programmes in feminised occupations, incentives to employers, sensitisation of labour market institutions, credit schemes and accompanying measures to support women's entrepreneurship?
- Has an analysis been made of current female/male employment/unemployment which provides clear indications of female/male employment/unemployment by sector and by level?
- Has a similar analysis been made for current female/male unemployment?
- What information is available on women's and men's work in the informal economy?

Source: EC, 2006.

organisations is the next action in the process of developing a training model specifically for women. Consultations must be carried out over a number of months.

Another important action is the **selection of public and private VET providers**. This has to be done early to ensure that all parties are involved in the planning as well as implementation stages. When selecting partners, look for organisations that would be committed to the VET project's goals and focused on developing a sustainable VET model which could be replicated by the private sector. Special attention should be paid to actions to attract female learners to all types of VET programmes (see Table GN12.2).

Procedure

STEP 1: Identification and preparation

In VET programmes particularly, girls and women remain under-represented because **traditional perceptions of appropriate roles for women** in the workplace remain largely unchallenged. The topic of women and VET seems to have lost some of its lustre and momentum in developed countries, and is experiencing stagnation in developing countries. There is a need for revitalisation and continuous attention at all levels of discussion, research, development and policy decisions.

TABLE GN12.2 Attracting female learners to VET programmes

ASSUMPTION	Government will support the strategies to increase the overall number of learners benefiting from both formal and informal VET and give attention to unqualified youth and girls
RISK	Students (particularly female and other disadvantaged groups) do not find VET programmes attractive or useful in increasing their economic well-being and do not want to participate in a VET programme
RISK LEVEL	Low
MITIGATING MEASURE	Equitable access and new programmes will be prioritised. Guidance and counselling materials, which fully explain the various options in technical colleges, will be prepared to encourage enrolment. Initiatives that target unqualified youth will serve as examples of good practice and will be reviewed to determine successful strategies.

- Conduct an initial stocktaking. Who are the stakeholders and partner organisations? What are their activities? What is their capacity? What are their roles and needs?
- Ensure that a benchmark survey or baseline study is gender sensitive.
- Identify gender-related goals and priorities based on available information and consultation with stakeholders.
- Conduct a gender-sensitive social analysis or assessment.

It is possible that resistance will emerge to undertaking **gender equality–promoting measures**. Acknowledge this resistance and design a position to deal with it. Useful resources in this regard include the EU Gender Action Plan 2016–2020 (EC, 2015) and the [Resource Package on Gender Mainstreaming in EU Development Cooperation](#).

CHECKLIST BEFORE PRECEDING TO STEP 2

1. Have the **EU gender equality objectives** been considered (see Gender Action Plan, etc.)?
2. How will the project link with the **country's gender equality objectives** either in general (National Development Plan) or by sector (VET strategy)?
3. Have **stakeholders** who have a gender competence been identified and engaged in consultations, e.g. ministry of gender equality, civil society organisations that work on the rights of women and those with VET activities? Have women and men been consulted?
4. Has a **gender analysis** been carried out (or elements from an existing gender analysis been considered, or elements of gender analysis methodology been included in the context analysis) to identify gender equality gaps in VET?
5. Have **problems been identified** and strategies which target the identified gender gaps and problems been preliminarily considered?

For more detailed guidance and references, see *Toolkit on mainstreaming gender equality in EC development cooperation*, Section 1, [Chapter 5](#) (EC, 2009).

STEP 2: Design and appraisal

- Plan for **developing capacity to address gender issues** and to monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes.
- Set up a **monitoring and evaluation system**. Adopt a gender-sensitive logical framework or results framework; select and design gender-sensitive project performance indicators.
- Decide how to organise **reporting and feedback processes**.
- Identify who will **collect and analyse information**, who will receive it, and how it will be used to guide implementation.

Experience has shown that challenges to better participation of female cohorts in VET programmes also relate to the VET staff body — the **presence of female VET teachers**, sensitivity to gender disparities while teaching, etc. This issue usually does not emerge from analysis or in risks and assumption. Knowing the lessons learned from the sector (even beyond the country), this is an issue that needs to be considered; it is also quite important in the context of sustainability of actions of the VET programme.

STEP 3: Implementation

- Develop capacity to **integrate, monitor, and evaluate gender-related issues**.
- Monitor **progress against outcome targets** set for the period of project implementation.
- **Feed results back** into the VET system to allow for mid-term corrections.
- **Assess progress and make corrections** if needed to obtain expected gender-related outcomes.

Developing the VET programme in line with industry needs means that the **skills developed match current needs** — so not only were skill gaps filled in factories, but the probability of employment of female learners was vastly increased.

STEP 4: Completion

- Deliver the intended **gender-sensitive VET services**.
- Assess the outcomes and **impact of gender integration** in the overall context of the project.
- Derive and **share lessons learned** that can feed into overall VET system goals and objectives.
- Include **gender-differentiated results in reporting lessons** learned from implementation.

References and further reading

Belete S., Laberge I., and Quincke G., 2012. '[Integrating Basic Education, Life and Vocational Skills with a System Approach for Adult and Non-formal Education: Experiences, Lessons Learnt and Outlook from an Ethiopian Perspective](#)'. Paper presented at the Triennale on Education and Training in Africa, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, February 2012. Working document.

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Case study: Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme in Ethiopia

CONTEXT	Ethiopia's total population is estimated at 90 million people and the number of illiterate adults around 20 million, with the majority residing in rural areas. Ethiopia is undergoing a structural reform of almost all the components of its educational system including a VET sector reform and massive expansion of higher education. Driven by its specific socio-demographic situation (more than 30 million persons older than 15 are illiterate), the government made adult education a priority. The strategic framework includes the National Adult Education Strategy and the draft Master Plan for Adult Education. This strategic framework demands a transformation of the economy, which in turn demand a literate and skilled population, particularly women, as a precondition to become competitive and achieve growth and transformation. In this context the Ministry of Education adopted the Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE) approach, which seeks to combine adult literacy in a functional manner with other development sectors such as health, agriculture, environment, etc. This integrated approach draws on a combination of adult literacy methodologies and seeks cooperation across sectors and tiers of governance.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	The Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP) is a pilot project of the IFAE approach implemented by the Ministry of Education and funded by the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands with support from the German Adult Education Association Regional Office of East/Horn of Africa between 2008 and 2012. IWEP promotes an integrated approach that combines three separate components: • functional adult literacy education; • non-formal VET programme for livelihoods; • entrepreneurial support in the form of business skills training, business development support services and access to start-up capital. The target groups for the programme are illiterate, poor and unskilled or semi-skilled women, in the so-called lower tier of the informal economy. The project was implemented in rural, semi-urban and urban contexts, but due to the nature of Ethiopia, the majority of the 30 000 women in the target group lived in a rural context. The non-formal VET courses provided to the target groups most often take place through the family or community and are traditional in nature. In this context, IWEP designed and tested a number of conceptual frameworks to understand the complexity of the target groups' livelihoods and their limited basic education. The aim was also to create mutual understanding amongst the multitude of partners from different economic sectors and both government and non-governmental organisations.

ACTIONS TAKEN	Most IWEP groups (25 women per group) started with the literacy component on topics identified during local situation analysis exercises and using either the functional adult literacy or reflect approach. The best practices of these approaches culminated in what is now called the IFAE approach. Women started saving immediately so as to build up complementary capital for the IWEP's Women Entrepreneurship Fund, which could be utilised after finishing the non-formal VET course. Facilitators have been trained and continued with literacy classes two to three times a week. The results of the market assessments have been shared with the women, who usually had their own pre-determined ideas on the kind of business they want to engage in. The market assessment exercise and alignment with the women's interest therefore directly determined the kind of VET course that was to be conducted. Experts liaised with other members of the district technical team to conduct the VET course that was to enable the women to start these businesses. It was therefore important to incorporate topics on basic entrepreneurial skills development. Business development support services were rendered by technical partners, who visited the women's groups on a monthly basis to follow up on the success of their businesses and identify gaps and further training needs.
LESSONS LEARNED	• The combination of basic education (literacy and numeracy) with micro- and small enterprise development tools (including micro-finance) is very attractive, especially for women. • Prerequisites to make integrated approaches successful include well-conducted market assessments; and continuous research on and activation of new, innovative income-generating options geared to the living conditions of the target groups along all possible value chains. • Integrated functional adult education can help boost local economic development in many ways — e.g. more efficient agriculture, introducing crafts, promoting innovations, pushing proto-industrialisation processes along specific value chains in line with the locally available resource base, making decentralisation processes work. • The experience in Ethiopia, to which the new approach and policy framework for adult and non-formal education tried to respond, suggests a horizontal and vertical integration of all agencies and persons involved in the development of livelihoods in its widest sense. • The creation of literate (post-literacy) environments is essential to promote a culture of lifelong learning and to safeguard sustainability of the efforts.

Source: Belete, Laberge and Quincke, 2012.