



Handbook

**Self-assessing the gender
approach when teaching and
doing social entrepreneurship**

**HANDBOOK
3/5**



Co-funded by
the European Union

This handbook is part of a series that aims to equip social entrepreneurs, organizations, and stakeholders with practical strategies for integrating gender awareness into their work. By fostering a gender-inclusive mindset, we can drive positive change and sustainable growth

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Handbook overview

Introduction

This is a set of 5 handbooks on gender mainstreaming and peer-learning methodologies to help Social Entrepreneurship (SE) stakeholders foster more gender-inclusive local and European ecosystems. These handbooks provide practical tools and methodologies for embedding a gender perspective in SE practices. They will remain freely accessible and available in German, Greek, Romanian, Portuguese and French.

These handbooks are part of the Cooperation for a Gender-Equal Social Economy (Coop4Equality) project, funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme Running until July 2026, this project aims to enhance the role of women and gender minorities in the European social economy, fostering gender inclusivity, sustainable growth, and equal opportunities.

Project Partners:

- [Empow'Her Global](#), France
- [Nova SBE Leadership for Impact Knowledge Center](#), Portugal
- [Fundatia Ashoka](#), Romania
- [Pranado gGmbH](#), Germany
- [Digital Leadership Institute](#), Belgium
- [Stimmuli for Social Change](#), Greece

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This is handbook number 3. Apart from this handbook you may find information about the remaining 4 handbooks:

1

Sustainably creating a gender-aware mindset in the social entrepreneurship field

This handbook aims to empower social entrepreneurs with practical strategies to develop a gender-aware mindset, fostering inclusivity and equity in their ventures. By addressing key mindset shifts and providing actionable tools, it equips readers to overcome barriers and create lasting social impact.

2

Reinforcing empathy-based methodologies in social entrepreneurship

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a resource for social entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, and all those interested in using empathy as a foundation for developing solutions to social problems.

3

Self-assessing the gender approach when teaching and doing social entrepreneurship

This handbook aims at supporting and guiding members of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem with specific self-diagnostic tools, and further equip them with a methodological approach, useful tips, and key performance indicators (at the external & internal level) that can help them define an action plan and track their progress on a gender lens integration within their project or initiative.

4

Implementing peer to peer & co-development mechanisms among social entrepreneurs

This handbook introduces two impactful methodologies designed to foster support and growth among women entrepreneurs: cross mentoring and co-design sessions.

5

Bringing out a gender-inclusive model of high-growth and scalable social enterprises

This handbook equips readers with the necessary tools to critically reflect on various aspects of scaling, including the decision to scale, the reasons for scaling, and the methods of scaling. It encourages readers to reflect upon and implement gender-inclusive practices in their own social enterprises.

Summary

Handbook 3: Self-assessing the gender approach when teaching and doing social entrepreneurship



Handbook 3 begins with a list of key concepts around the examined topic, such as self-assessment, gender equality, support structure, gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment, gender lens and gender responsive evaluation.

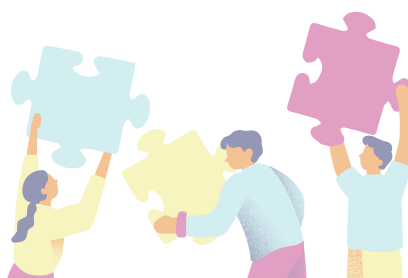
Next, the handbook presents a specific case study, drawing on the inspirational testimonial of a social entrepreneur who built her project from scratch with a gender sensitive lens.

After, the handbook is enriched with a series of self assessment tools for different stakeholders of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem (coaches, mentors, entrepreneurs and support structures).

A list of key performance indicators and evaluation methods can also support stakeholders to measure to what level their organization integrate a gender lens.

Then, a step by step roadmap to navigate change towards a more inclusive organization with an exemple is given to illustrate how to internally and externally promote gender mainstreaming.

The handbook closes with an annex with a useful ressource with key tips to promote gender mainstreaming, a list of references used for its development and a catalogue of further readings focusing on diagnosis and mainstreaming of gender equality within an organization and/or support structure.





Key concepts

- Self-assessment:** The process of enabling social entrepreneurs and /or members of any SE organization to identify strategies to strengthen gender equality/diversity, consider strategies to make change, and highlight opportunities for improvement within their work in the SE ecosystem.
- Gender equality:** refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men as well as of girls and boys. According to EIGE's definition, equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male (EIGE, 2024).
- Gender mainstreaming:** refers to the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, with a view to promoting equality between all genders, and combating discrimination (EIGE, 2024).
- Gender impact assessment:**
 - i) 'The process of comparing and assessing, according to gender relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy'.
 - ii) 'Gender impact assessment is the estimation of the different effects (positive, negative or neutral) of any policy or activity implemented to specific items in terms of gender equality'.
- Gender lens:** is the approach of taking the existing differences between women and men into account when analysing a situation or when developing specific approaches or programmes (ESCWA, 2022).
- Gender responsive evaluation:** an assessment process aimed at evaluating from a gender perspective the relevant processes, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts of an intervention. It also focuses on measuring progress towards achieving intended gender-related objectives and goals set out in policies, programmes and projects (EIGE, 2024).
- Support structure:** A support structure is an organization that offers entrepreneurial and managerial support, services, support programmes and possibly a place to work for entrepreneurs (FoWoSe, 2023).

Case study: Integrating a gender approach when learning social entrepreneurship with Empow'Her

To illustrate the positive impact of a support programme that integrates a gender focus in its curriculum here is a testimonial of an entrepreneur who benefited from this approach in the construction of her project idea through the incubation programme SEGIE at Empow'Her, a programme that supports entrepreneurs in creating gender-inclusive businesses.

Here is **Chloé Besson's** testimonial with her project **Let's Talk about Sex (LTAS.)**



Empowering uni students with
accessible, personnalized, safe, confidential & reliable
sexual health education, with the LTAS multilingual 24/7 chatbot.



1. Why did you want to join a programme with a gender approach?

I chose this programme because sexual and emotional health is directly linked to gender issues. During my research, many young people, mostly women, told me that they were unable to find educational solutions that reflected their reality. Integrating this dimension ensured that the LTAS project was truly inclusive and responded to the diverse needs of students, beyond traditional norms.

2. How did this contribute to the design of your project?

The gender approach allowed me to think about my project with a more comprehensive and equitable vision, integrating tools to avoid biases as much as possible and making the chatbot and workshops more accessible to everyone, regardless of their identity.

3. What are the key points of that gender approach that stood out to you and still influence the development of your project?

- *The need to use inclusive and caring language that accurately reflects the diversity of life experiences and identities.*
- *The programme taught me that the gender approach is not a 'layer' to be added to the process, but a framework for thinking that transforms the way each stage of the project is designed and implemented.*

4. If you measure the impact of your project, how do you incorporate the concept of gender into your assessment?

We plan to measure the impact by analysing the diversity of the profiles participating in the workshops, in order to verify that LTAS benefits women, men and non-binary or LGBTQIA+ people equally. Currently, based on our overall observations, this is the case, and we are working to ensure that it remains so.

A framework to analyze the gender focus of your organization

To get started on your assessment, it is important to understand from where you are starting. Especially If you are part of an organization or are not the only one to take decisions in a group.

The following questions will help to understand how your organisation integrates gender today and their will to improve in this regard.

In order to question the collective you could integrate these questions to a questionnaire or have a discussion around these questions with the decision makers of your organizations

Understanding

To what extent is your organization sensitized and understands the issues of equality in entrepreneurship?

Ambition

What is their willingness to work on the subject?
What is the level of priority of the issue in your organization ?

Practices

What is implemented in your ecosystem to promote gender equality?

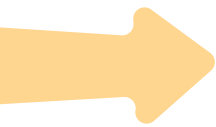
This 3-stage analysis will help you to understand the root causes of the problems in your organization. In other words, **do we have to work on the knowledge (*understanding*), advocate to put the topic as a priority (*ambition*), or support the development of inclusive *practices*.**



A framework to analyze the gender focus of your project - example for entrepreneurs

For entrepreneurs

For entrepreneurs who want to integrate a gender lens in their project, be it at the premises of their project's creation or once they've always had an established business, here are key tips to help you approach the topic of gender.

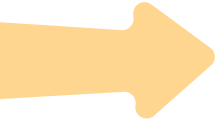


a. **Understanding** of the topic of gender inclusivity

i. Ask yourself: What are the issues facing women in our society?

ii. Where does my business stand in relation to these issues?

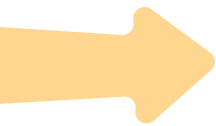
b. What is your **ambition** on the topic - to what extent do you want to integrate this topic in your project



i. Ask yourself: Is the aim of my business inclusive?

ii. Does my business's mission and purpose include a commitment to gender equality and inclusion?

iii. Do the policies and practices of my business respect and accommodate women specific needs?



c. **Analysing good practices** and what is already done in your sector on gender inclusivity

i. Ask yourself: How is gender inclusivity addressed in my market sector?

ii. Where does my business stand compared to my sector?

Furthermore, you can continue to infuse a gender approach throughout the whole process of the structuration of your project. Think of it throughout every stage. *For example, in your benchmark, the construction of your product or/and services, the key stakeholders of your projects etc...*

Indeed the gender approach of your project needs to be addressed on all levels of your project and all along your chain value.

Self-diagnostics to analyze the gender focus of your organization

You can further your analysis with self diagnostics based on a series of key internal and external indicators. These self assessment tools will help to evaluate on which aspect of your organization you need to focus on to improve your gender lens. Here are 4 examples of diagnostics you can use as three different types stakeholders : coaches or mentors, entrepreneurs, and support structures.



Self-assessment of gender mainstreaming for coaches/mentors

Understanding the scoring system:

- 5 points: You completely agree with the question and are already doing so.
- Between 3 and 4 points: You have implemented something similar, you are on the right track, or you have actually already implemented this action, but you feel that you still have a lot to do.
- Between 1 and 2 points: You have not yet implemented this action, but you have already thought about it and/or plan to do so.
- 0 points: This action has not been implemented at all. It is not in your current plans to implement such an action or, even if you have considered doing so, you cannot allocate the necessary resources.

Results:

- Between 0-16: You seem to need help improving gender integration in your organization.
- Between 17-33: Although some elements are already in place, you need to go further in taking gender into account in your organization.
- +34: Congratulations, gender has been well integrated into your organization



Self-assessment of gender mainstreaming for coaches/mentors

Context	Question	Score
Under-standing gender bias	I never unconsciously offer different advice or support to female entrepreneurs than to male entrepreneurs based on gender bias?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Am I aware of the gaps and barriers to financing that women face because of their gender?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	I never assume that female entrepreneurs should launch certain types of projects (e.g., impact projects, clothing brands, care-related projects)?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Adapting your support	Do I ask questions about gender-related challenges as part of my support?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I give women entrepreneurs advice on overcoming prejudices in financing, hiring and networking?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I encourage women to take risks and pursue growth in the same way that I encourage men?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Creating inclusive networks	Do I present women entrepreneurs with a variety of financing, customer and partnership opportunities?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I actively challenge all-male expert committees, round tables and management teams in entrepreneurial spaces?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Long-term impact	Do I feel that my support contributes to gender equality in entrepreneurship?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I continue to learn about gender dynamics in entrepreneurship in order to improve my support?	0 1 2 3 4 5

Score ____/50

Self-assessment of gender mainstreaming for support programs

Context	Question	Score
Support program	Has your organisation established a selection quota for male and female entrepreneurs?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	In your program monitoring and evaluation practices, do you include specific indicators related to gender equality and do you collect data disaggregated by sex whenever possible?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do you include modules on entrepreneurial posture in your support programs?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation analyse the training and coaching expectations and needs of men and women separately?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do you ensure gender diversity among your external stakeholders (trainers, coaches, experts, etc.)?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation organise training sessions or have tools to help external trainers better adapt their approach and content to female entrepreneurs?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do you carry out quality control on content developed by external trainers, in particular by ensuring that gender bias is not reproduced in the content offered?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation organise events with a diverse range of speakers?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	When you organise community events, do you adapt the schedules to suit the availability of your female entrepreneurs?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do you dedicate training and/or networking time exclusively to women?	0 1 2 3 4 5
		Score ____/50

Self-assessment of gender mainstreaming for Entrepreneurs

Context	Question	Score
Leadership and decision-making	Do I perceive gendered expectations/perceptions when I present myself as an entrepreneur?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I notice differences in the way people (investors, partners, customers) treat entrepreneurs based on their gender?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Funding and investment	Have I encountered gender-related barriers to accessing funding?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	I never adapt my presentation or strategy to meet traditional gender expectations?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Recruitment and team culture	Are my team, suppliers, and partnerships gender-diverse?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I guarantee or wish to guarantee equal pay and opportunities for all employees regardless of gender?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Approach to customers and the market	Do I consider how my product/service may have a different impact on people of different genders?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	I never reinforce gender stereotypes in my marketing or branding?	0 1 2 3 4 5
Networking and collaboration	Do I seek out and support women entrepreneurs?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do I actively oppose gender bias in professional networks and communities?	0 1 2 3 4 5
		Score ____/50

Self-assessment of gender mainstreaming for internal policies

Context	Question	Score
Internal policies	Does your organisation have a training policy that includes gender for all its employees?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation have clear procedures and practices in place to ensure that your working environment is free from gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment (non-discrimination policy in place, contact person trained in gender issues, disciplinary mechanisms, etc.)?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Do you have a transparent internal salary scale, based on levels of responsibility, that applies to all employees?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation have an official work-life balance policy that is accessible to all (office closing times, days off, working time management, etc.)?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Is the representation of women and men in management positions fairly distributed within your organisation?	0 1 2 3 4 5
	Does your organisation have an equal opportunities policy in place for recruitment (gender-neutral job descriptions, gender-diverse selection panel, etc.)?	0 1 2 3 4 5
		Score ____/30



All these different diagnostics will help you to define where you stand currently in regards to gender mainstreaming.
Tip: In order for the diagnostic to be the most adaptable to your context you can build your own from these examples.



Based on the results of your self-diagnostic and your reflections around the Understanding, Ambition and Practices framework you can start to establish what you need to improve in your organization and what you wish to start with.
Tip: Drawing back on the key indicators linked to your area of improvements start to investigate the existing data that exists in regards to gender in your organization. This will help to have a baseline starting point and a target to measure your progress once you have launched your action plan.

Indicators for a gender analysis in your organization

To set up your action plan first you need to identify which are the **key indicators** on which you can and wish to bring change. Here is an example of a list of indicators and **evaluation methods** to have in mind that will help you navigate how to measure the achievements of gender equality in your organization.



	Indicators	Exemple measurement methods of the indicators
Inclusive internal policies	Recruitment/Career	Men and women are paid equally in the same positions
	Discrimination	Number of gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment reported Employee satisfaction scores related to inclusiveness and diversity.
	Gouvernance /Decision making	Percentage of women in leadership positions at all levels of the organization, including the board of directors and executive team.
	Internal training	Number of individuals trained on gender bias
Gender analysis your services	Activities	Your activites by nature do not reproduce gender bias
	Beneficiaries	Men and women benefit equally from your organization
	Communication	Customer feedback and satisfaction scores related to inclusiveness and diversity in products, services, and brand messaging
	Impact measurement	You have specific indicators related to gender equality and collect sex-disaggregated data where possible.
Value Chain Inclusiveness	Selection of suppliers	Diversity and inclusion criteria incorporated into supplier selection and contracting processes. Percentage of women-owned businesses in your supplier base.
	Tracking the product journey	Evaluation of supplier relationships for fair treatment and opportunities for women-owned businesses

*It is important to note that these **KPIs must be customized to fit the unique characteristics and dynamics of each organization**. The requirements for gender equality and inclusiveness can vary significantly depending on **the industry, geographical location, and the specific nature of the business operations**. By aligning the KPIs with the sector's specific requirements and priorities, organizations can maximize the impact of their gender equality efforts and contribute to positive outcomes for both their business and the broader community.*

Set up a roadmap & follow up on your improvements

Now that you know what are your areas of improvement through the self diagnostic and you have chosen the indicators and evaluation methods to measure your achievements you can set up an action plan.

Here is a recap of all the different steps:



1- Decide where you start off from and what is your **ambition** drawing on the current practices of your ecosystem to inspire you. *To draw inspiration from for support structures use Annex 1*



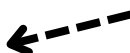
3- Define the **key indicators** for your organization and **evaluation methods** to measure your improvements based on a baseline methodology of before and after.



2- Take the **self diagnostic test** to understand where you stand in regards to gender mainstreaming and taking into account what you need to improve.



5- **Measure your achievements** using the same evaluation method as you used before the roadmap was set in place.



4- Define a **roadmap** and **specific actions** to reach your **goal**. Don't forget to define a responsible person of this action and a deadline to reach the goal.



7- **Make achievements** - to motivate your team and inspire other stakeholders !



6- Depending on your results, **define your next steps** :

- if you achieved your goal, set up a new one !
- if it did not work, reflect on what didn't work and think of a different action plan or another goal that might be more achievable.



Here is an example to illustrate this step by step methodology

Name: Amina, entrepreneur

Business: Ethical Fashion Brand

Problem: Her textile supply chain includes workshops where women are underpaid, have no decision-making power, and work in poor conditions. There's little to no female representation in leadership roles within the suppliers' companies.



Step 1 : Decide where you start and what your ambition is

Amina recognizes that although her brand promotes "ethical fashion," the upstream suppliers (small factories and textile producers) operate under patriarchal norms that suppress women's rights. **Her ambition is to create a gender-responsive value chain where women are fairly paid, have decision-making power, and access leadership training.**

She draws inspiration from other fashion brands in the region that have implemented women-led cooperatives and gender-inclusive codes of conduct.

Step 2 : Self-diagnostic test

Amina takes a Gender Mainstreaming Self-Assessment test for entrepreneurs and finds:

Her direct team is gender-balanced, but her suppliers have no gender policies, no gender-disaggregated data is collected and no procedures are in place to prevent gender-based discrimination or harassment

Areas to improve: Supplier engagement, data collection, capacity-building for women workers.





Step 3 : Define key indicators and evaluation methods

Amina decides to track the following indicators:

Indicator	Baseline (Before)	Target (After Roadmap)	Method
% of women in leadership roles at suppliers	5%	25%	Surveys, HR reports
Existence of gender policy at supplier level	0	100% of top 5 suppliers	Policy review
Wage gap between men and women	25%	10% or less	Payroll audit
# of training sessions for women workers	0	6 per year	Attendance sheets



Step 4: Define roadmap and actions

Amina decides to set up the following action plan

Action	Responsible	Deadline
Host a gender awareness workshop for suppliers	Amina's Sustainability Officer	Oct 15, 2025
Create a Supplier Code of Conduct including gender equality clauses	Legal Advisor	Sept 30, 2025
Launch a pilot women's leadership training programme	HR Manager	Nov 1, 2025
Collect baseline gender-disaggregated data from all suppliers	Supply Chain Analyst	Sept 10, 2025



Step 5 : Measure achievements

After 6 months, **Amina re-assesses using the same tools and indicators:**

- 3 out of 5 suppliers now have a gender policy
- Women now hold 18% of leadership positions
- Wage gap reduced to 15%
- 4 leadership training sessions delivered

Step 6 : Define next steps

Since the goal of 25% women in leadership wasn't fully reached, Amina reflects and realizes:

- One major supplier refused to engage
- Training sessions need to be more flexible to women's schedules

Next steps:

She will replace the resistant supplier with a women-led cooperative and adapt the training schedule to better suit the women's needs. She also decides to include childcare support as part of her next goal.



Step 7 : Make achievements visible

Here are some of the ideas Amina had to make visible her achievement

- Share a case study on her website and LinkedIn
- Speak at a local women-in-business conference
- Publish an annual Gender Impact Report
- Feature supplier women leaders in her brand storytelling

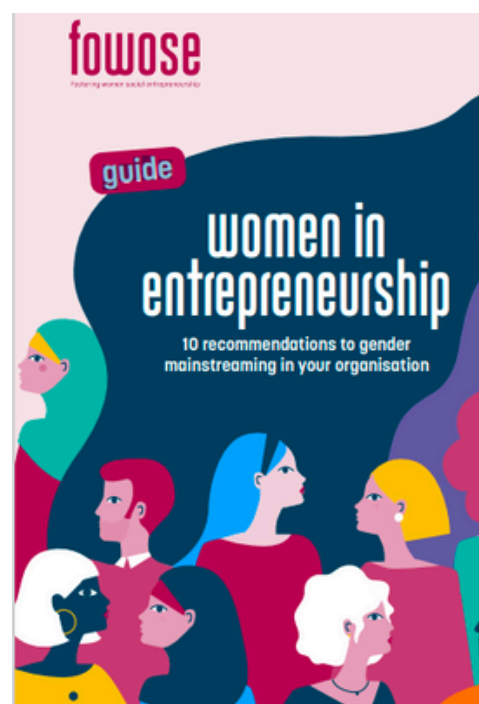
This visibility builds trust with customers and inspires peer businesses to take similar steps.

Annex 1 : the Women in entrepreneurship guide

It seems that many entrepreneurial support structures have difficulty in adequately integrating gender equality considerations into their structures and programmes. Additionally, organizations specializing in gender equality issues do not always have the opportunity to share their expertise with a wider audience and related actors.

The present handbook sheds light on a specific guide that was developed as part of the FoWoSe project's main results to address the previous challenges. The FoWoSe (Fostering Women Social Entrepreneurship) project has at its core the goal to bridge the gap in between these two worlds, by strengthening women's social entrepreneurship, developing and testing tools that will train and guide organizations that foster entrepreneurship. The project consisted of 5 European organizations working with women social entrepreneurs and/or on gender-inclusion issues, in order to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem to become more inclusive and give them practical tools to integrate gender considerations into every aspect of their structure and activities.

The **FoWoSe guide** is intended for managers/leaders of entrepreneurial support structures who wish to and/or are responsible for better integrating gender into their organisation. It includes a self-diagnosis that helps organisations assess their structure and their level of gender mainstreaming. Then, based on the results, **up to 10 easy-to-implement recommendations are provided to change and improve the practices.** Click [here](#) to find the interactive open source tool.



This support could be accessed through further analysis by following the steps of this guide, and by getting support from gender experts or allowing a member of your organization to allocate time to developing a gender inclusive action plan for your organization.

References & further readings

References:

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- [SEGIE project, How women needs are taken into account by businesses from the European social economy](#)

References & further readings

Further readings:

- Explore the **WGEA Gender Equality Diagnostic tool** that was designed to assist any organisation, regardless of industry, size or context across both public and private sectors, to develop a strategy to address and improve gender equality in their workplaces. With **17 gender equality focus areas**, the diagnostic tool provides a framework for determining where an organisation is on its gender equality journey and helps them identify **challenges** and opportunities for making progress. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019_WGEA_GE_Strategy_Guide.pdf
- Discover also the '**GEM (Gender Equality Mainstreaming) framework**', a practical manual and toolkit for assessing gender equality, and identifying, implementing and measuring gender equality mainstreaming strategies within companies, building upon the [environmental](#), [social](#) and [governance](#) (ESG) investment standard by mainstreaming gender across ESG criteria. The manual is applicable to a wide variety of investors (e.g. private equity funds, government donors, foundations) and capacity builders (e.g. accelerators, technical assistance providers, NGOs). Available at: <https://www.meda.org/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-social-inclusion/the-gem-framework/>
- Explore the **OECD-DAC framework (2019)** which provides guidance and a valuable technical tool for operationalising the concept of gender mainstreaming in evaluations. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/better-criteria-for-better-evaluation_15a9c26b-en & <https://www.arcolab.org/en/gender-genere-valutazioni-evaluation/>
- See also the following '6 Gender Quality Indicators' referring to gender equality in the workplace. Available at: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/pay-and-gender/6-gender-equality-indicators>



Coop4Equality



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