

# Gender-sensitive education and training for the integration of third-country nationals

**Why?** The number of women and men third-country nationals entering the European Union in recent years has placed migration high on the political agenda of the EU and its Member States. Their effective integration is key for cohesive, inclusive and economically sustainable societies.

Education is a powerful tool to facilitate integration and equality. Both education and training enable third-country nationals to acquire knowledge and skills and enhance their sense of well-being and belonging. Education and training can also help build societies that both embrace and capitalise on differences.

**Why does gender equality matter?** Embedding a gender equality perspective in all policy sectors, including in the integration of third-country nationals and in education and training, is a legal and political obligation for the EU institutions and Member States. Gender-sensitive policymaking can contribute to the development of policies



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and measures that respond to the distinct needs and interests of diverse groups of women and men third-country nationals. It can also serve to further advance gender equality in the EU.

## About EIGE's study on gender-sensitive education and training for the integration of third-country nationals in the EU

This factsheet is based on a small-scale study that looks at existing efforts to consider gender equality and women's empowerment in the design and implementation of policies and actions for the integration of third-country nationals through

education and training. The research focuses on five Member States: Germany, Greece, France, Italy and Sweden. The data was collected in 2017-2018.

More information is available at [eige.europa.eu](http://eige.europa.eu)



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In 2018, 7.5 % of the total population living in the EU Member States were born outside the EU, with 51 % of them being women and girls.

Developing integration and education policies that do not exclude or discriminate against women and girl third-country nationals is crucial to ensure that no one is left behind.

## Do EU Member State policies on migrant integration and education take gender equality into account?

A gender perspective is missing in the majority of national policies and measures.

The dual approach to gender equality, which involves gender mainstreaming throughout the policy process as well as specific actions to remedy gender inequalities, is rarely implemented in the policy areas of migrant integration and education. The EU has been committed to this dual approach since 1995. The majority of national policies EIGE assessed as part of this study were designed using a gender-blind 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and women and girl third-country nationals are not recognised as target groups facing gender-specific challenges. A few of the identified exceptions are presented here.

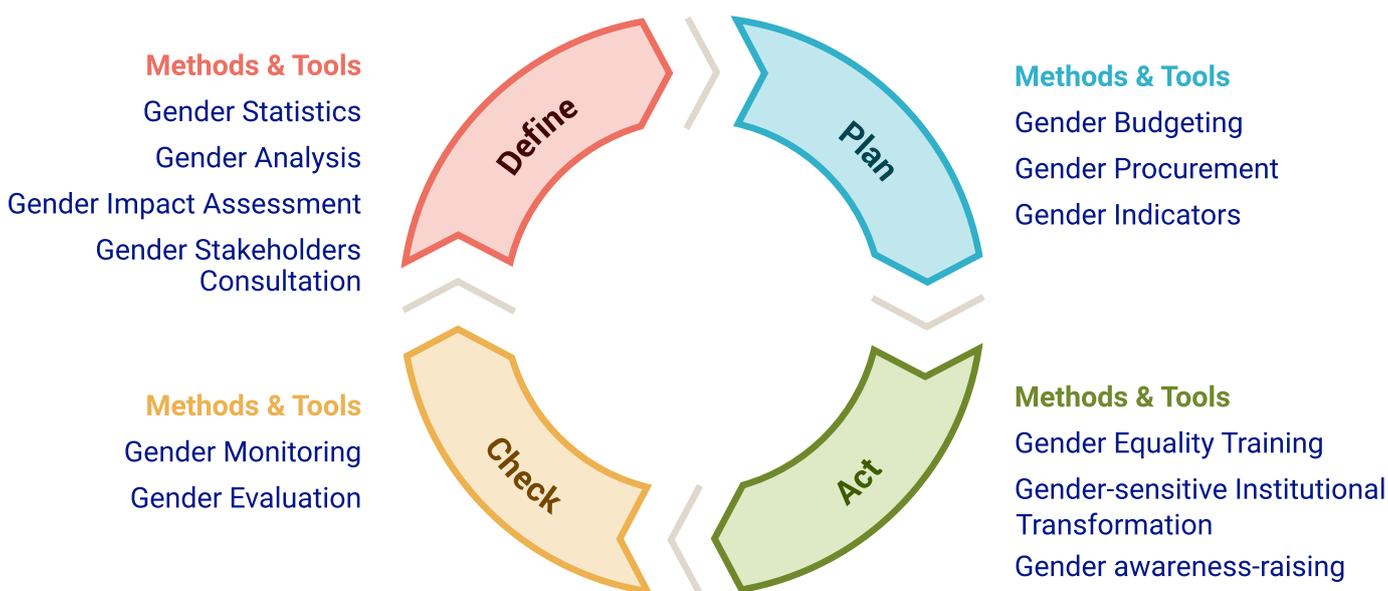
There are important gaps in the availability and use of reliable and comparable sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on third-country nationals.

Data broken down by sex and other characteristics is the first step for gender mainstreaming. This data helps tailor education and training measures that respond to the distinct needs of different groups of women and men third-country nationals. Without gender statistics, policymakers' efforts to design, implement and evaluate gender-responsive policies and measures are seriously constrained. This affects every stage of the policy cycle, from [gender analysis](#) to [gender planning](#), to selecting [relevant indicators](#) to measure progress and enable gender-sensitive [monitoring](#) of migrant integration outcomes.

As one of the founding values of the EU, gender equality should contribute significantly to integration policies and measures, including these of education and training.

The application of gender mainstreaming in all stages of the policy cycle would ensure migrant integration and education policies address the specific needs of both women and men.

Figure 1. Gender mainstreaming methods and tools for each stage of the policy/programming cycle



## What education and training initiatives work on the ground?

### Adult women refugees and asylum seekers

#### POINT • **Potentiale integrieren**

In Germany, POINT • was a pilot project that took place between January 2017 and December 2018 and provided tailored vocational and training advice to participants. Some 100 women refugees, mainly from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Afghanistan, benefited from the project. To be able to obtain meaningful employment, women refugees received personalised advice by qualified job coaches and POINT sisters (volunteers of German and migrant origin) who acted as guides and mentors in everyday life and in communicating with institutions and employers. Coaches assisted women with the qualification process and helped them to access funding opportunities. Women could also take part in monthly POINT café meetings to discuss the integration process and life in Germany.

### Women migrants with lower levels of education and women migrating for family reasons

#### Mirjam

In Sweden, the project Mirjam facilitates the labour market inclusion of newly arrived women with low educational backgrounds who have been granted residency permits on humanitarian grounds (refugees and asylum seekers) or for family reunification. Most participants are from Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The project is in line with the Public Employment Service's mission to reduce gender disparities in the labour market and offers activities including coach-

ing, study visits and mentoring. During coaching sessions, participants learn about the Swedish labour market, existing education opportunities and financial support for studying, as well as their rights and duties as Swedish residents. Participants can also take Swedish language courses and visit a variety of workplaces, including those dominated by men in order to counteract gender segregation and stereotypes in the labour market. Women are put in touch with role models, who provide guidance on the job market and further studies.

#### Torino, la mia città

In Italy, the project 'Turin, my city' (Torino, la mia città) has since 2000 been supporting mostly North-African Arab-speaking women with lower levels of education to better integrate into their local communities. Many of the project beneficiaries have arrived in Turin for family reunification purposes. The project strengthens the women's sense of belonging in Turin. Participants attend the Italian language courses, mathematics and civic education lessons. The women also attend sessions with experts on migration and legal issues, health and social advisors, school experts and cultural mediators. Free childcare services are provided at the premises. Visits to historical sites in Turin and the surrounding areas are organised on a regular basis to make women migrants more familiar with the city and encourage their participation in Turin's social and cultural life.

**Gender-specific actions help target different groups of women third-country nationals and meet their distinct needs and interests.**



## Women migrants and refugees leading integration initiatives

Moving away from the categorisation of women solely as vulnerable and in need of protection, there are also initiatives where women migrants and refugees lead the education and integration process, supporting other women migrants as well as their families and communities. One such example is the **Melissa Network** in Greece.

The **Melissa Network** was founded by a group of women migrants in Athens in 2014. The women, many of whom arrived as refugees, continue to manage the programme. The Melissa Network supports women from more than 40 countries, but most come from Afghanistan, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Somalia.

Around 150 women and 30-40 children come daily to take part in this holistic integration initiative, which offers a safe place for women to learn Greek and English, benefit from psychosocial support, get information on their rights, obtain access to legal counselling and increase their skills and capacities.

The premises are free for women migrants and their networks to use as they wish and include childcare facilities.

**Women migrants and refugees act as integration leaders in their communities.**



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## Initiatives targeting other groups of third-country nationals

Highly skilled women, as well as men and boy third-country nationals, are rarely the target of specific actions. However, the following initiatives are worth mentioning.

### Gender equality and men and boy third-country nationals

In Germany, the project **Flucht, Migration, Integration — MoveMen** aims to empower men and boy refugees (15-27 years old), counter stigmatisation and raise awareness of the specific challenges men and boy refugees face. The project places gender equality at the core of its activities, which include discussions on gender equality, masculinity, displacement and integration, as well as creating networks and encouraging dialogue between young men refugees and practitioners and policymakers working on the integration of refugees.

### Highly skilled women third-country nationals: 'fast track' for newly arrived teachers

In Sweden, a training scheme has been running since 2016 offering a 'fast track' for newly arrived teachers and preschool teachers (who are mostly women). Through a course offered in five Swedish universities, newly arrived teachers can quickly obtain a formal qualification and enter the Swedish labour market in sectors with shortages of workers. The training includes Swedish lessons and a 6-month internship in schools. Some lessons are provided in the learners' native language to facilitate their understanding of the Swedish education system.

**Continuous and targeted support for different groups of women and men third-country nationals is crucial to ensure effective integration.**

## Can we do better?

The EU and the Member States can do much more to ensure the effective integration of women and men, girl and boy third-country nationals.

This section provides detailed guidance on how policymakers at the EU and Member State level can implement the dual approach to gender equality in their migrant integration and education policies.

Check out [EIGE's Gender Mainstreaming Platform](#) — an online toolbox on gender mainstreaming designed for policymakers and practitioners at the Member State and EU level.

### Define phase

- Improve the collection of reliable and comparable sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on third-country nationals.
- Conduct a gender analysis to assess existing inequalities and identify the integration needs of diverse groups of migrants by looking at how gender interacts with migration status, age, race, education level and other characteristics.
- Carry out gender impact assessments of migrant integration and education policies at the EU and Member State level.
- Consult migrant women and men during policy development, implementation and evaluation. Consultations should also include civil-society organisations, particularly grassroots initiatives in the fields of gender equality and migrant integration.
- Engage local authorities in needs-based planning, implementation and evaluation measures.

### Plan phase

- Include gender-specific objectives, targets and indicators in policies, programmes and projects on migrant integration and education in line with domestic and international commitments.
- Ensure gender-sensitive budgets are in place. These should provide dedicated and consistent funding for the implementation of gender-sensitive measures for migrant integration through education and training. This should include but not be limited to initiatives supporting women in vulnerable situations.
- Explicitly target women as beneficiaries in funding instruments for migrant integration and earmark funds for measures supporting their integration, including through education and training.
- Safeguard funding for independent civil-society initiatives, particularly women and/or migrant-led organisations.





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## Check phase

- Use available measurement frameworks, such as Zaragoza indicators and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) monitoring framework (SDGs 4, 5 and 10) to monitor the implementation of policies, track progress and ensure accountability in efforts to achieve gender equality, education and migrant integration goals.
- Evaluate integration programmes for migrants from a gender perspective to ensure that the content and responsible institutions are gender sensitive.

## Act phase

- Build gender equality competence and awareness among policymakers by introducing mandatory training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Strengthen capacity to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data on third-country nationals.

- Enhance capacity of teachers and educators by providing mandatory training on gender equality, diversity and intercultural competences.
- Strengthen intercultural competence of employers and staff working with women migrants, including work and guidance counsellors. Provide training on unconscious bias towards women migrants and refugees.
- Develop and support awareness-raising campaigns on gender and migrant stereotypes in education for host communities. Include gender equality, diversity and intercultural competences in school curricula to build mutual trust between third-country nationals and host communities and counteract racist and sexist attitudes.
- Promote the sharing of good practices on gender-sensitive integration through education at both EU and national levels to stimulate better outcomes for the beneficiaries of these initiatives, the Member States and the EU.

### European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.  
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