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Key barriers, opportunities, and good practices for entrepreneurship and innovation

Internal report for WP1 T1.2.

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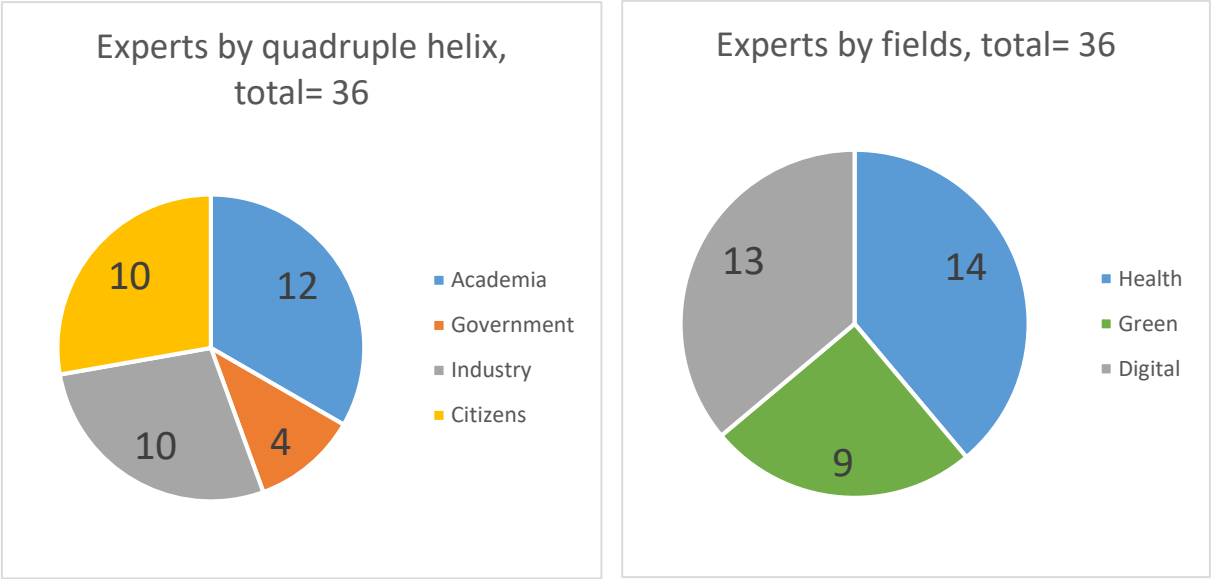
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Barriers, opportunities and good practices for gender equality in entrepreneurship and innovation

Knowledge of gender-related barriers and opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation is important in order to propose solutions and strategies for overcoming existing barriers. In each of the GILL consortium countries, several interviews were conducted with experts based on the quadruple helix of stakeholders from academia, government, industry and civil society, especially those active in the areas of green and digital transformations and health, to find out what barriers and opportunities the experts considered important in their field of activity or, more generally, in society and at different levels (individual, institutional, societal). This discussion of barriers and opportunities was followed by a discussion of possible solutions to the problems or specific activities that should be implemented or that exist already and can be considered good practice.

This chapter summarises the key findings from the analysis of 36 interviews with experts from the health, green and digital fields and from the target groups defined in the quadruple helix of academia, citizens, industry, government which were chosen for the interviews by the GILL partners (see Graphs below). The interviews were collected by 12 GILL partners (ATIT, AUTH, CU, ENOLL, ENOLL, FGB, GAC, HHN, IoTDIH, ISAS, UCPH, USAL in each of the 10 consortium countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom) between April and June 2023.



Prior to the data collection, between January and March 2023, the ISAS team prepared the necessary tools for the collection of expert interviews in the consortium countries, for the follow-up analysis of good practices and for the ethical aspects of the research. These documents including an interview guide, an analytical template, and an informed consent are attached in Appendix 1. For each interview, interviewers were asked to complete an analytical template in English with pre-defined themes. In some interviews, more than one good practice was discussed and this was reflected in the analysis. The analysis was therefore carried out on the basis of these fully anonymised analytical templates. Ethical standards defined by local national law and data protection rules were followed.

The interviews were conducted in the national languages and the analytical templates were completed for each interview in English. Based on the analytical templates the ISAS team prepared a

code book focused on the barriers and opportunities and the process of preparation and implementation, its objectives, the target group of the good practice, and impact assessment and evaluation process of the good practice. Good practices were then coded based on the three categories according to how they support Gender Responsive Smart Innovation and Entrepreneurship. These categories are fix the numbers, fix the institutions and fix the knowledge.

Barriers and risks

The most important barriers mentioned by most experts were those related to **culture, values and norms, especially those related to gendered norms**. Thus, the main barriers were those related to **gender stereotypes and expectations**, behaviour expected of women and men, values expressed in language, unconscious biases used in different situations, etc. For example, many experts spoke about prejudice, gender-insensitive language, androcentrism - where masculine characteristics are seen as the norm against which women are measured. Some experts mentioned the intersectionality of personal characteristics - gender, race or ethnicity, education, etc. - which reinforces and multiplies the disadvantages women face in the labour market, in entrepreneurship, in innovation and in society at large, including in private life.

Specifically, digital transformation experts described **biases against women in male-dominated industries and the stereotype about women's lack of technical skills**, such as engineering, or leadership; prejudices that can lead to discrimination in funding, hiring, partnerships and recognition. They also point to the fact that developers are predominantly white men and that gender stereotypes are replicated in the development and use of digital technologies and AI. This is manifested in language, job descriptions that suit men, and a focus or narrow definition of innovation as only technical. As a result, the experts experience low trust in women entrepreneurs in ICT, under-representation of women in IT start-ups and, as a consequence, poorer access of women to finances supporting their businesses and innovations.

Experts who are professionally involved in supporting the business environment, innovation, supporting women entrepreneurs, etc. mentioned in particular the **male bias in entrepreneurship and innovation**. They expressed that entrepreneurship is too much focused on economic growth, financial gain, risk and competition which are not values that would be traditionally associated with femininity in our culture. This leads to comparisons where women's entrepreneurship, which often doesn't share the abovementioned values, is perceived as inferior, less successful and less prestigious than men's. Other experts also mentioned unsystematic support for women's businesses (e.g. start-ups) or a lack of support/promotion of women specifically in entrepreneurship and innovation. Furthermore, experts identified in relation to gender stereotypes and male bias in entrepreneurship and innovation, the issue of women (and even more so, for example, women with a migrant background) being often treated as exceptions to the rule. This happens informally, as they are often in a token position in various situations, or even formally, as various support mechanisms are designed for women only, perpetuating the stereotype that women need special support to succeed.

Another issue was the **lack of gender sensitivity and willingness to address the issue of gender inequality on various levels**. On the one hand, it was discussed as a lower gender sensitivity to structural sources of gender inequalities of men compared to women. On the other hand, less willingness to discuss gender equality was also noted, as some groups, such as students, expressed the feeling that the problem has already been widely discussed without significant progress.

In relation to the cultural and gendered setting of the society and the masculine bias, another important issue mentioned in interviews was the role of **socialisation in leading women to the false belief that they are incapable of learning/performing difficult tasks** (e.g. to be good in the IT sector and other masculinised fields). It was pointed out that from a very early age we are exposed to gender stereotypes, which are also embedded in social institutions, and we act and judge others according to them. Socialisation was often linked to the low percentage of women in typically male fields of study

(IT, technology, science such as physics, mathematics, etc., so-called STEM field) and gender segregation, which is also reflected in the labour market in general.

Horizontal and vertical gender segregation was identified as another strong barrier, already present in the education system, but also significantly present in the labour market and in business. Women are disadvantaged not only in the areas in which they work and do business but also because they are under-represented in decision-making and leadership positions (both at business and political level) and because important decisions are taken without taking into account women's life experiences. In general, gender segregation in the labour market and in business is supported by gender stereotypes, socialisation, women's isolation (if they are in a highly masculinised environment), and lack of women's networks and their access to men's clubs.

Other barriers included **women being less willing to take risks and lacking confidence**. Some experts, specifically in the context of entrepreneurship, pointed to women's lower willingness to take risks (e.g. to take out or consider loans). In particular, experts who focus on supporting women in masculinised fields then point to women's lower self-confidence and the fact that women often believe that they have no chance of succeeding in certain fields. In this context, experts discuss the lack of mentors and role models to show women that they can succeed in masculinised fields and that they have the knowledge and skills to do so.

Other barriers, which were also frequently mentioned, related to **work-life balance policies and the gender division of labour in the home**. In particular, it was mentioned that women are expected to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities and, therefore reduce their work activity; if they refuse to do so, they are criticised for being bad mothers. It was also reflected that family and social policy frameworks, such as the conditions and support for maternity/parental/paternity leave, also affect the real life of families and can reproduce gender stereotypes. **Discrimination against women with children** in the labour market has also been described, particularly in access to typically male fields such as ICT.

Another important barrier is the **lack of political will and commitment to promote gender equality and diversity**. In particular, it was highlighted that the issue of gender equality is not perceived as a crucial issue for politicians. Furthermore, where there are already efforts by political representatives and stakeholders to promote gender equality and diversity, changes are too slow. The **under-representation of women in politics** was also identified as a problem.

Another important barrier is the **lack of support for women entrepreneurs and innovators**, such as a lack of infrastructure and support for women entering male-dominated fields and a lack of inclusive programmes, as well as a lack of support from their own families. A related important barrier is the **lack of access to finance, microfinance and other types of funding for women entrepreneurs and for different types of support organisations** and projects. Almost all experts have experience with grant funding (often EU funding, national grant competitions, etc.) for projects and activities promoting gender equality. When they do find and successfully obtain funding for their activities, it is usually short-term funding, which makes it impossible to implement long-term activities after the end of the project and to sustain long-term support for specific gender equality issues.

The prevailing view among experts is still that the most important barriers are related to the cultural and social environment of society, where gender stereotypes prevail and men and women are expected to perform different activities and have different levels of commitment in the family and at work/business. This also influences what actions, strategies or opportunities they see as important to strengthen gender equality and promote gender diversity.

Opportunities

The most frequently mentioned opportunity was the **need for cultural change**, which can be achieved, for example, through the use of **female role models**. There was also a strong call for **gender**

sensitisation at different levels (awareness campaigns, awareness-raising activities, training programmes, etc.) and for different stakeholders (workplace management, men and people working in different support and funding structures). Benefits were also seen in promoting gender diversity at the organisational level (companies, universities, etc.). Creating opportunities for under-represented groups to network, share experiences and talk openly about challenges and increasing communication and sharing of results were the calls made by the experts representing citizens. These measures were perceived as a chance for entrepreneurs and innovation by some of the experts; as one interviewee from the digital industry in Romania pointed out: "*Having more women in this field also means that digital products are better adapted to female markets and buyers.*"

Policies that directly promote the inclusion of women in innovation were another area where barriers could be removed. Policies were proposed in different areas, such as **gender quotas in leadership in politics as well as in the economy**. It is important to mention that there are differences among countries in the level of debate on gender quotas. While gender quotas are implemented in practice in politics and business in many countries, in Spain and Czechia, for example, the debate on gender quotas still creates tensions and discussions about compromising meritocracy. Other concrete measures mentioned were positive action, equality certificates, promotion of inclusive practices and gender mainstreaming in strategic and equality plans, etc. European policies on gender equality are seen as a good starting point and a very helpful tool for transforming the gender order in society and for change at national, company and local levels. For example, the requirement for all institutions applying for EU-funded projects to have a gender equality strategy has been highly valued as an impetus for change in many universities and research institutions. The **inclusion of gender diversity in the research teams and gender equality in the content of the research as criteria** for project evaluation is also an effective way of increasing the representation of women and attention to gender equality in innovation.

The experts interviewed supported emerging **support systems for women entrepreneurs** (e.g. mentoring programmes, networking, building women's self-esteem, and inclusive leadership model) at all stages of their entrepreneurial career, not just for start-ups. **Digital skills** were also identified as very important and an area where these measures would be highly beneficial. A focus **on the young generation** and supporting them to start new ventures and innovations, to support women to enter non-traditional fields of study and to start careers in STEM and ICT sectors through talent retention measures as well as the use of social media and role models were also mentioned as valuable measures by the experts. In addition to networking and support for training and education, financial support was identified as a significant development opportunity. **Financial resources**, such as micro-credits, targeted at women and other under-represented groups were called for by experts.

An important area of opportunity discussed was **work-life balance and the need to normalise the model of women combining paid work and caring, as well as men providing care**.

The very **definition of innovation** was also discussed and challenged, again linked to the cultural context. For a long time, innovation has been understood as more technical and taking place in the private sphere, whereas women predominate in public sector employment and innovation could also be non-technical, for example social.

Table 1 below summarises the barriers discussed in the interviews and described in the first part of this chapter. It also includes strategies for solutions and examples of tools and good practices discussed in the expert interviews conducted in the GILL countries and analysed in the following part of this chapter.

Table 1: Barriers, opportunities, tools, and good practices

Barriers (Category)	Specific problems to be addressed	Strategies (examples)	Tools (examples)
Cultural setting of society, its values, and norms (including gender norms).	Gender and other stereotypes in expectations, behaviour towards women, values and language, unconscious bias, prejudices	Structural change - norms and language	1) awareness rising activities, campaigns (different promotion channels aimed at different target groups), 2) gender equal education from early age, 3) educating people about diversity, inclusion, unconscious bias, and discrimination, 4) encouraging and equipping people from dominant groups to be strong allies, advocates, and accomplices for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, 5) gender dimension as transversal topic in strategic plans,
	Socialization leads women to the very wrong belief that they are not capable of learning/ complete difficult tasks		1) specific tools aimed at young people, 2) more entrepreneurship topics in schools, 3) gender-equal education from an early age or from the very beginning of their careers, 4) improving visibility of women
	Violence against women, sexual harassment, sexism Discrimination (gender, other)	Prevent discrimination, promote inclusive practices	1) Lowering gender pay gap, 2) promote inclusive practices, 3) prevent discrimination, 4) accommodate different groups' needs, 5) complex approach
Horizontal and vertical gender segregation	Women dropping out of technology education, low representation of women in these fields in the labour market	More women in STEM education/labour market	1) education and thus changing the view of the male sectors, 2) stimulation of the talent retention, 3) elimination of ideas about "male" and "female" professions
	Low representation of women (and other groups) in decision-making positions, glass ceiling	Ensure greater representation of women	1) gender quotas, 2) education about the importance of quotas, reducing prejudices about the incompetence of such "incumbents", 3) training for the management about gender equality, 4) representation of disadvantaged groups in events, networking, at the political level etc.

	Homosocial practices (i.e., masculine networks, Old boys club)	Reducing inequalities in access and creating a more equal environment	1) reducing vertical segregation, 2) diversity management and leadership, 3) achieving more equal access to finance, 4) Financial resources targeted at women, 5) Networking, raising up community, 6) Creating opportunities for underrepresented groups to connect, share experiences, speak openly about challenges, 7) subverting masculine expectations
Masculine bias in the entrepreneurship and innovation field	Entrepreneurship connected with masculine characteristics (power, prestige, money, freedom), which leads to the fact that women do not see themselves as entrepreneurs	Encouraging women to identify with the idea of the entrepreneur, broadening their understanding of entrepreneurship	1) role models, competitions for women entrepreneurs, 2) promote a more inclusive business environment so that women feel more comfortable there, 3) use of intersectional perspective
	Women's lower willingness to risk-taking and lack of self-confidence	Support and improve women's self-assessment and self-confidence	1) Developing programs, mentoring, role models, 2) advise services for women entrepreneurs to discuss business projects, financing etc., 3) promoting women's self-esteem,
	Persistent gender stereotypes with regard to women's ability to succeed in a masculinized field	Reducing stereotypes, demasculinizing the environment	1) change discrimination in funding, hiring, partnerships, and recognition, 2) increasing confidence in women's capabilities, 3) improving access to finance, 4) mentoring
	Too much focus on growth, financial gain, risk and competition	Broadening understanding what innovation and success in business can mean	1) not to evaluate a business according to economic success, innovation, but also according to other criteria, e.g. social or ecological opportunities, 2) broaden understanding that innovation can also be social innovation
Lack of finance	Lack of access to finance/microfinance/funding.	Improving access to microcredit	1) Create new adapted financing for new entrepreneurs and for those who are already in business and want to develop their business
Work-life balance	Problem of reconciling entrepreneurship with care responsibilities, traditional attitudes towards gender roles	Measures to improve the combination of work and care, involving men in care	1) systematic work-life balance policy measures, 2) involving men in care, 3) reducing the burden of domestic work on women, 4) Reducing stereotypes about family roles, 5) eliminating direct discrimination
(Political) Will and willingness to promote support for gender	Equality is not sufficiently promoted; overlooking gaps in achieving equality (the view that	Focus on different groups of women, on different stages of their entrepreneurship	1) gender dimension as a transversal topic, 2) gender equality plans, 3) Conducting evaluations, audits, and ensuring accountability to determine the level of inclusion,

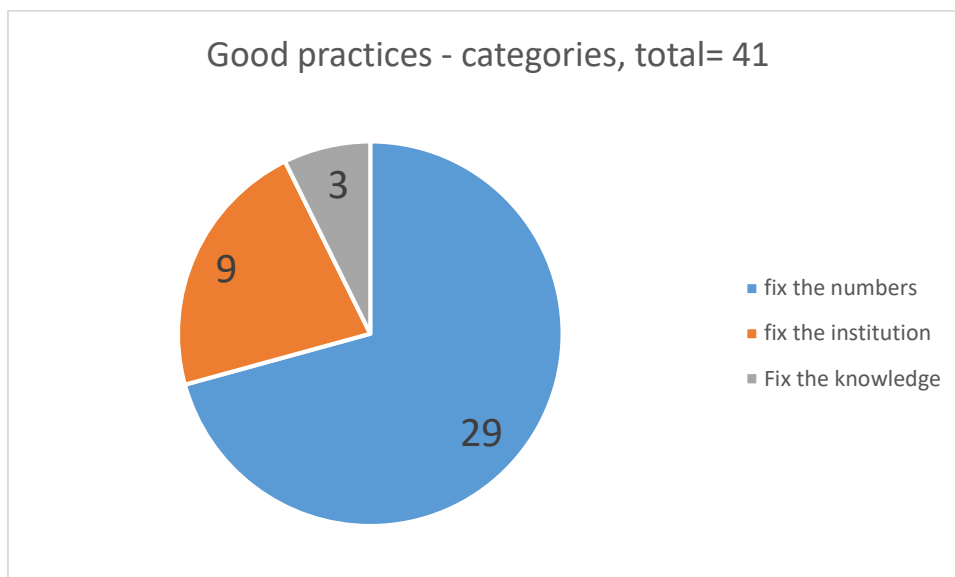
equality and diversity, form of support	equality of opportunity in business has already been achieved)		equality, and effectiveness of initiatives, 4) support for entrepreneurship at all stages, 5) peer reviews, sharing of best practices, policy summaries, templates/instructions for fair meetings, networking and communities, survey tools, and dynamic dashboards.
	Equality is not promoted by all actors - only some, or only some problems addressed	Ensure holistic approaches	1) Increasing women's representation also among important actors (policymakers, etc.) - e.g. gender quotas
	Low priority of gender equality	Emphasise the importance of gender equality and why it is important for society	1) Training for people working in support or funding structures, 2) gender equality certification
	The approach to tackling inequalities is not systematic	A systematic approach to understanding and solving	1) linking political, social, health, religious dimensions, 2) linking the public (feminised) and private sectors
	Changes happen too slowly, do not match current needs	Adapt changes based on knowledge of current needs	1) support real change, not just the declared one
Lack of empirical evidence	Lack of data about gender inequalities in the labour market / entrepreneurship	Improve the volume and quality of data collection	1) collecting and monitoring gender-disaggregated data as base for measures, 2) Data monitoring and transparency, 3) Conducting evaluations, audits and ensuring accountability to determine the level of inclusion, equality, and effectiveness of initiatives
	Lack of attention to women and other groups in research	Incorporating diversity in perspectives and experiences and methods	1) more diversity in research a) incorporating not only male (research subjects) perspectives, b) incorporating not only Western societal perspectives, c) incorporating more methodological approaches, not only quantitative, d) encouraging diversity in teams, e) gender dimension of the knowledge, 2) diversity in research as relevant criteria for evaluating the quality of competing projects

Good practices

It is possible to classify the good practices into three strategic approaches to gender equality that have been developed and used in previous research:

1. **Fix the Numbers** focuses on increasing the participation of women and underrepresented groups.
2. **Fix the Institutions** promotes inclusive career equality through organisational structural change.
3. **Fix the Knowledge** or "gendered innovations" promotes excellence in science and technology by integrating sex, gender and intersectional analysis into research.

It is essential to recognise that all three levels of analysis are necessary and interrelated, as efforts to increase women's participation will not be successful without integrating methods of sex and gender analysis into knowledge production (Schiebinger, Klinge, eds. 2010). Based on the 36 interviews collected, 41 good practices were identified and described, which can be grouped into the three strategic approaches defined above.



1. Fix the numbers

There were 29 (out of 41) good practices that can be summarised in the category Fix the numbers. These good practices mostly focus on training and empowerment of women in terms of supporting women's self-confidence, developing specific skills, especially those that will help them to succeed in business, providing a safe space for discussion and exchange of experiences, including between junior and senior entrepreneurs, etc. These good practices also focused on the representation of women, mostly in occupations or fields where women are underrepresented.

Good practised analysed included:

- **Organising events, meetings**, etc. of women (entrepreneurs, academics, women in IT, etc.) either with other women with similar life experiences or with women in senior positions who can give advice and tips on how to develop their careers. These meetings, therefore, include **female role**

models. The main objective of the events and meetings is to support and share knowledge for women while raising awareness of the successes and challenges women face in the specific field.

- **Communication campaigns** aimed at presenting women in leadership positions as role models to encourage other women to work in masculinised fields and in leadership positions.
- **Competitions and training programmes** focusing on providing women with specific skills to improve and expand their businesses.

Good practice 1: Empowering Women in Agrifood (EWA), Czechia

Institution: cats2cats

Objective: To increase the number of women entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector; to support and empower women in agri-food entrepreneurship with specific skills to start, run and grow successful businesses.

Action: An international competition open only to women entrepreneurs with an active agri-food business; those who go through all the phases of training and mentoring will present their project to an international jury, which will choose the winner (€10,000 for the first place) or the women could find an investor.

Impact evaluation/opportunities/benefits: Highlighting the different approaches of men and women to entrepreneurship => men in mentoring evaluated women entrepreneurs in terms of economic stability, cash flow, etc., which pushes them to grow. However, women often assess the success of their business in terms of non-economic factors (positive impact of the business on the environment, creation of a community with shared values and beliefs, etc.). According to EWA participants, you are simultaneously confronted with new issues and problems (expansion, patenting, etc.), but you have intensive support from mentors.

Barriers for successful implementation:

- Lack of female mentors and investors who understand women's entrepreneurial experience
- Focus of the international competition on innovation - women do not see innovation as the main goal of their business.
- Women entrepreneurs do not want to take as many risks as is expected in the international competition.
- Participation in EWA is time-consuming, which discourages many women.

Quote: *"The problem is the emphasis on innovation, but what is innovation? Innovation is when I bake muffins and use unusual combinations (...). And women have a completely different perspective on their business. And that is not tolerated here. If you do not want to be a big company, multinational or global, you have less chance of getting an investor in EWA. "* (expert, CZ)

Link: <https://cats2cats.org/ewa/>

- Some good practices focused on **networking - not just the meeting**, but targeted networking, e.g. between businesswomen and investors. One good practice focused on networking between immigrant women and potential employers.

Good practice 2: Swans initiative: More Fatmas in the management floors! Germany

Institution: Swans Initiative (NGO)

Objective: Representation of women with a migrant background living in Germany in companies and in positions where they are underrepresented.

Action: Training and networking of women with migrant backgrounds and cooperation with large companies to help them get into positions where they are underrepresented.

Impact assessment / opportunities / benefits: They were the first in the German-speaking area to create a specific offer for this group, so they have a long experience with this kind of support, a wide and strong network and a lot of enthusiasm. Evaluation is based on informal feedback from the women supported.

Barriers for implementation: Public misunderstanding of the target group, as many individuals and institutions see them as an organisation for international students, expats and/or newcomers who have recently fled. It seems too far-fetched to many to think that there are women who have grown up in the country, whose families come from abroad, but who, like everyone else, have the right to be perceived and accepted as natural Germans and members of this society.

Quote: "We are the first and so far only organisation in the German-speaking world to take an explicitly intersectional approach to the issue of diversity in the academic labour market. In other words, we support people affected by several dimensions of diversity at the same time, including not only gender but also ethnic and social origin, religion and race or skin colour". (expert, DE)

Link: <https://www.swans-initiative.de/>

- Specific projects at the company level or projects realized by NGOs aimed at **increasing the number of women (who are under-represented), usually in masculinised fields, such as IT.**

Good practice 3: Czechitas – women into IT, Czechia

Institution: Czechitas

Objective: To help women and children discover the world of information technology, learn programming, coding and working with data, and inspire and train new talent to increase gender diversity and competitiveness in IT.

Action: Long-term courses, digital academies - leading to employment, popularisation activities, podcasts, presentations at conferences in Czechia and abroad, mentoring, free/affordable workshops for interested women, career development activities (how to write a CV, how to present yourself on LinkedIn, how to network, how to prepare for a job interview, self-confidence support, e.g. how to ask for a better salary).

Impact evaluation: Number of women who have successfully completed the programme and managed to retrain (1,000-2,000). The aim is to reach 100,000 by 2025.

Benefits: Improvement of women's working conditions by increasing their salaries, as well as better possibilities to reconcile work and family life.

Barriers for implementation: They have to constantly look for funding. They want to keep participation fees low; lack of data in Czechia; limitations in legislation and funding. Lack of own capacity to lobby for change.

Quote: "We make these girls aware of what's available to them in IT. We tell them that IT is a creative job that has a certain social impact and does well. We also point out that it is possible to combine work and family and that there are flexible working hours. " (expert, CZ)

Link: <https://www.czechitas.cz/>

Box 4: Greenlight for girls, established in Belgium, currently worldwide

Institution: Greenlight for girls

Objective: To encourage girls worldwide to pursue STEM careers and studies and to increase the number of women in these fields.

Actions: Through hands-on science workshops organised worldwide, STEM is presented as something exciting and practical accessible and fun. The events (called G4G days) are targeted at young girls. During the COVID pandemic, the G4G lab (digital learning programme) was developed to ensure the programme's continuation. The website provides a wealth of resources for listening, learning and watching from and about STEM, with a special section dedicated to "science fun" topics. In addition, G4G resources and events are also used and attended by STEM teachers, enabling them to discover modern ways of teaching STEM that children enjoy.

Impact evaluation: More than 438 online/face-to-face events have been organised with more than 58,000 participants. Participants evaluate each event, intervention and programme.

Barriers of implementation: Fundraising (G4G is a non-profit organisation)

Link: <https://www.greenlightforgirls.org/>

2. Fix the institution

Another group included nine good practices focusing on changing structures/policies aiming at breaking down structural barriers in institutions, mainly workplaces. This type of fix focuses on institutions and organisations where change should occur to promote gender equality (Recalde, Vesterlund 2020). Since 2010, the European Commission has moved towards promoting gender equality at the institutional level in funding projects, encouraging research organisations and universities to implement multi-annual action plans to address institutional barriers, such as recruitment, promotion and retention policies, management and research evaluation standards, and work-life balance policies. In line with this development, six of the nine good practices were identified by experts in the field of higher education, as the focus of the good practices was mainly on academic institutions setting up gender equality committees and developing gender equality strategies and plans.

Good practised analysed included:

- **Gender equality plans, gender equality policies and quotas** for the under-represented gender. These activities aim to systematically increase the number of women in certain positions within the institutions, such as senior management, but also to increase gender diversity and strengthen gender equality in other areas of the organisations. In Spain, for example, Murcielaga provides training to companies and helps organisations develop gender equality plans (see Box 5).

Box 5: Training for companies to improve gender equality, Spain

Institution: Murcielaga

Objective: To promote gender equality in companies and workplaces.

Actions: Training for companies on gender equality issues and development of gender equality plans for companies and other organisations. Creative ways to run workshops; for example, they invited a cartoonist who has written a book about micro-misogyny. They use comics as prompts so the conversation flows easily.

Impact evaluation/opportunities/benefits: The EU requirement for universities to implement gender equality plans to be eligible for funding has been a major driver for universities to adapt and use their service. Outcomes are not specifically monitored.

Barriers for implementation:

- Time capacity, funding and fundraising;
- Not enough participants to keep activities going;
- The world of entrepreneurship is not a welcoming space because of the vertical methodologies that prevent small platforms like theirs from growing because they want to apply horizontal methodologies.

Link: www.murcielaga.com

- Some good practices focused on a specific group, intending to identify **their needs and design and develop policies and other activities to support their better working conditions**. An example is a good practice focusing on migrant women in agriculture in Italy (see Box 6), which also adopts an intersectional perspective.

Box 6: Cambia terra, Italy

Institution: ActionAid

Objective: To promote the rights of women workers in agriculture through the empowerment of workers and the co-creation of community-based social services responsive to their needs and to promote the leadership of migrant women in agriculture in southern Italy; To counteract the stereotypes about migrant women, who experience extreme vertical segregation.

Action: Multidimensional and transformative approach in response to multiple human rights violations against women workers, based on supporting women agricultural workers and raising awareness of their rights and creating sustainable responses to their needs through forms of cooperation and shared responsibility at the community level.

Impact assessment / Opportunities / Benefits: Regular employment under decent working conditions for the migrant women involved. Reduction of prostitution. Institutional and community networks for the social inclusion of foreign female agricultural workers and sustainable agricultural development are strengthened. The accessibility and quality of social services for foreign female agricultural workers are improved through community welfare.

Barriers for implementation: The risk and limit is economic sustainability of the programme over time.

Link: <https://www.actionaid.it/informati/pubblicazioni/cambia-terra>

The aim was also to improve working conditions and to motivate companies to employ, for example, women with caring responsibilities, thus adapting working conditions to this specific group of workers (and generally increasing the number of people in a vulnerable position on the labour market).

These good practices focus not only on improving the situation of a specific group but also on institutional change at the level of private companies or universities, e.g. a good practice focused on the creation of gender commissions or associations that identify essential issues in the promotion of gender equality and diversity and propose measures to address them. Within private companies, it may be a specific HR measure aimed at a particular group of workers (e.g. carers). At the level of cities and municipalities, good practices focus on identifying the needs of different groups living in a city according to their gender, age, health status or living situation, intending to meet these needs in the further development of the city.

3. Fix the knowledge

Three good practices can be classified under the category of 'embedding knowledge' or 'gendered innovation', which promotes excellence in science and technology by integrating sex, gender and intersectional analysis into research. Not surprisingly, two of the three practices were identified by experts from academia and one by an expert from the government. These specific and complex projects require a lot of human and financial resources, as well as a significant knowledge base, and are therefore better suited to government and university actors.

Good practises analysed included:

- Two good practices focused on **tackling male bias and promoting gender equality in grant competitions and application assessment procedures**. These good practices were mentioned by experts in Italy and Czechia. National Foundations for applied research in these countries encourage gender equality by requiring that submitted applications have a gender-balanced team, evaluating the impact of the project and its results on men/women and generally introducing gender equality as a criterion in the evaluation of research projects (see Box 7).

Box 7: Gender dimension in research evaluation, Czechia

Institution: Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TACR)

Objective: To increase the participation of women in applied research and to promote awareness among research teams of the gender-sensitive approach to innovation.

Actions: Monitoring of statistics on the gender composition of research teams and designing the gender balance of the research team and the gender of the principal investigators as one of the assessed criteria. s.

Impact assessment: Data show that the measure has significantly increased the proportion of women in research teams and among PIs compared to other grant competitions administered by TACR that did not include this criterion.

Barriers for implementation:

- Gender equality is still considered secondary to the research quality and excellence criteria.
- Limited budget to fund permanent expert positions to cover this agenda at TACR
- Working with project evaluators can be particularly challenging, as some may be very reluctant to include gender balance in teams or gender in knowledge as part of the quality assessment of the project.

Link: <https://www.tacr.cz/en/gender-equality-in-research-and-innovation/>

- The third good practice in this category is based in the UK at Coventry University, where research has focused on **improving knowledge of health inequalities, particularly in preterm birth**, by race and ethnicity. The project is intersectional, collecting data from various participants, not just white middle-class women.

Conclusions

The prevailing view among the experts consulted in the 10 countries of the GILL consortium is that the main barriers are related to the cultural and social environment in which men and women are stereotyped and expected to perform different activities and have different levels of commitment in the family and in the workplace. This also influences what actions, strategies or opportunities they see as important to strengthen gender equality and promote gender diversity. Gender stereotypical cultural beliefs and norms, masculine bias, gender segregation, lack of funding and microfinance, lack of policies to support work-life balance and lack of political will and empirical evidence to remove these barriers are the main problems identified by the experts. The opportunities reflected in the interviews largely correspond to these barriers and highlight the role of key actors, such as the EU, in setting standards that can be further disseminated to national, local and organisational levels.

In terms of efforts to overcome existing barriers, projects focusing on fixing the number of women under-represented in certain fields and occupations and in management positions predominate. Also in this category are 'fixing the women' activities, which focus on training women in different types of skills. However, we also identified a group of good practices that aimed to fix the institutional structures of inequality, mostly in the academic and/or public sector, but also in some companies, aiming to make working conditions more compatible with caring responsibilities and to combat male and racial bias. Only three good practices focused on fixing knowledge by introducing gender-sensitive criteria in research. Overall, the implementation of good practices depends on the cultural context of the society, the will of key actors to address these issues, and the financial and human resources available, which also determine the sustainability of the activities implemented.

Overcoming the culture based barriers is the main challenge for achieving gender equality in entrepreneurship and innovation. For this, stable and sustainable institutional structure is important to support gender equality including sufficient human capacity and funding. Most activities known to the experts so far are those fixing the numbers. Further objectives should be focused on strengthening the institutional and knowledge fixes as well as development of the cultural fix. Also, sharing good practices and lessons learned from them is a good venue forward.

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