

# CLOSING THE GENDER GAP IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE



CULTURE OF  
INCLUSION IN  
ENTERPRISES



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# EQUALISER PROJECT



Co-funded by  
the European Union

The EQUALISER project strives to promote **gender equality** in the modern **workplace** by assisting private firms in implementing gender mainstreaming strategies.



EQUALISER aims to:

Raise awareness about workplace gender inequalities

Inform about the needs and gaps in organizational structure, processes, and practices contributing to this issue

Encourage decision-makers to make gender mainstreaming a continuous organizational process

Integrate a long-term change in the business culture, with fewer stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors

Create a safe and secure environment in which all employees can thrive and grow



The material presented is part of **EQUALISER project** and seeks to support the employees of an enterprise in their working context.

The material is developed in order to help the target group overcoming **gender knowledge gaps and stereotypes** in order to transform the working environment and change the relationship dynamics in the workspace.



# MODULES

**Module 1** - Discovering Gender Equality Concepts & Principles

**Module 2** - Beyond the Norm: Shattering Gender Stereotypes

**Module 3** — Balancing Act: Women as Employees and Caregivers

**Module 4** — From Glass Ceiling to Open Skies

**Module 5** — Respect & Resilience: Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

# MODULES

**Module 6** - Bridging the Divide: Understanding and Addressing the Gender Pay Gap

**Module 7** - Unleashing Women's Career Prospects

**Module 8** - A Catalyst for Change: Exploring EU Policies for Workplace Gender Equality

**Module 9** - Mindful Message: Gender-Sensitive Communicate

**Module 10:** A Practical Guide Addressing Gender Inequality Conflict & Promoting Respectful behavior

## MODULE 2

# Beyond the Norm: Shattering Gender Stereotypes





# MODULE 2 - TOPICS OUTLINE

- 01** Breaking barriers
- 02** Building opportunities
- 03** Activities
- 04** Conclusion - Summary
- 05** References

# Introduction

The aim of this module is to provide guidance and strategies for employers with regards to the employment of women and their rights to effectively balance their work & caregiving responsibilities. Breaking the barriers that impede women's career prospects is not only a matter of gender equality but also essential for economic growth and societal progress.

Strategies covered include understanding legal rights and building support networks within the family and community. By implementing these strategies and solutions, women can thrive in both their careers and caregiving roles, leading to a more equitable and balanced work-life dynamic .

# Beyond the Norm: Shattering Gender Stereotypes



Source: [Image by Freepik](#)

As a result, this module aims to:...

- ✓ Help employers identify barriers to gender equality
- ✓ Help employers describe the consequences of barriers to gender equality
- ✓ Help employers to provide solutions and opportunities to achieve gender equality and female leadership

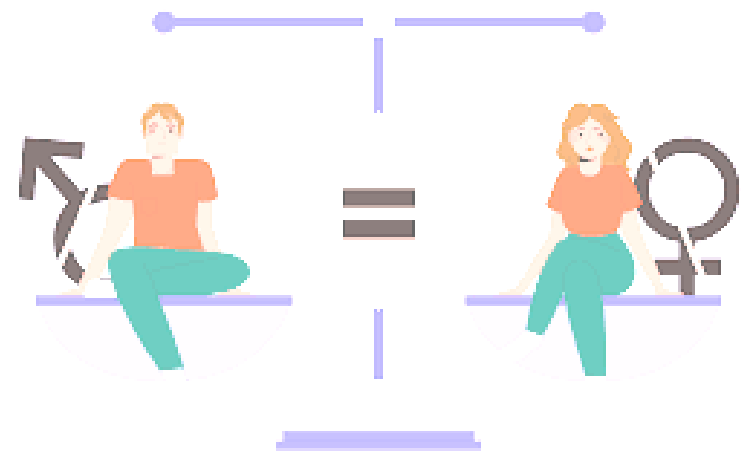
**Hiring and promoting  
talented women is the right  
thing to do for society and it  
is an economic imperative**

- Carlos Ghosn, Ghosn was the CEO of Michelin North  
America and Chairman and CEO of Renault -

# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Breaking Barriers

Over the past few decades, there have been significant strides in women's empowerment and gender equality, including in the realm of career prospects. However, despite progress, women continue to face unique challenges and barriers in the workplace. In this essay, we will explore the career prospects of women, highlighting both the progress made and the remaining obstacles. We will also discuss the importance of breaking these barriers and building opportunities for women to thrive in their careers.



# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Advancements and Progress

- ❖ In recent years, women have made remarkable advancements in various professional fields.
- ❖ More women are pursuing higher education and entering traditionally male-dominated sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- ❖ This increased representation and expertise have contributed to diverse perspectives and innovation in the workforce.



# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Advancements and Progress

- ❖ Moreover, women have assumed leadership positions in organizations and sectors worldwide. There has been a growing recognition of the value of gender diversity at senior levels, leading to greater opportunities for women to take on executive roles.
- ❖ Women leaders bring unique strengths, including empathy, collaboration, and inclusive decision-making, which can positively impact organizational performance.

# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

Women career preferences:

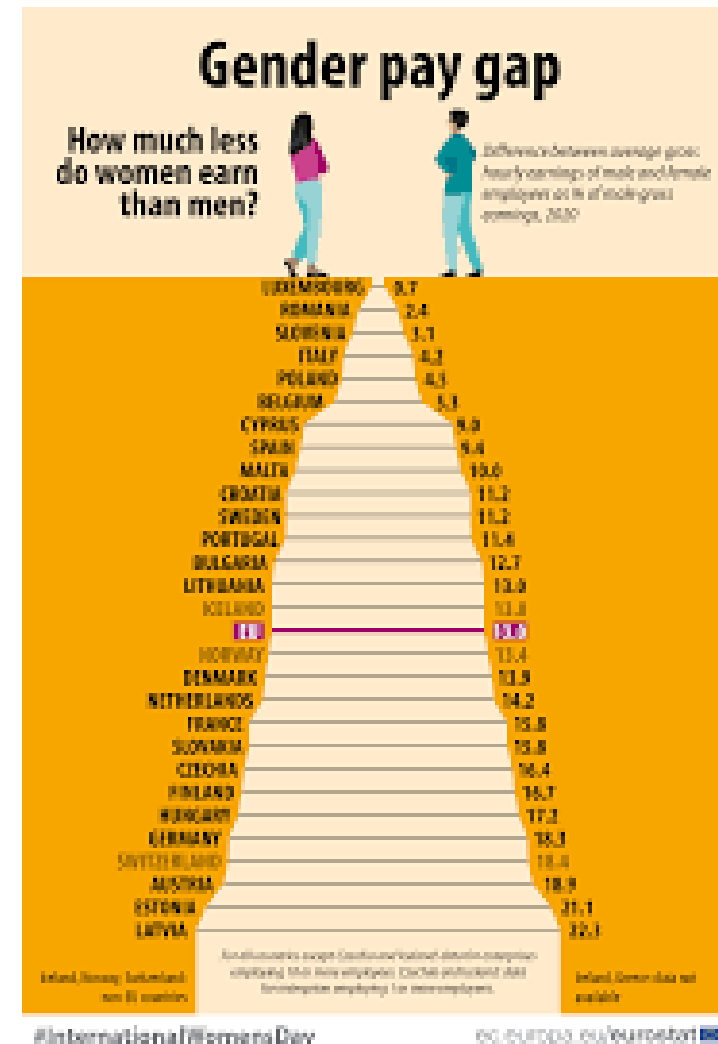




# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Persistent Challenges:

- ❖ Despite the advancements, women still face persistent challenges in their career progression.
- ❖ Gender bias and stereotypes continue to shape perceptions and limit opportunities for women in various ways.
- ❖ Women often face barriers in accessing equal pay, promotions, and leadership positions, leading to the existence of gender pay gaps and glass ceilings.



# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Persistent Challenges:

- ❖ . The challenge of work-life balance also affects women's career prospects.
- ❖ Traditional gender roles and societal expectations often place a disproportionate burden on women for caregiving and household responsibilities.
- ❖ This can impact their ability to advance in their careers, as they may face difficulties in balancing professional aspirations with personal and family obligations.



# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Persistent Challenges:

- ❖ Discrimination and harassment in the workplace remain significant concerns.
- ❖ Women continue to experience gender-based discrimination, including biases in hiring, promotion decisions, and unequal treatment.
- ❖ Sexual harassment is another pervasive issue that can undermine women's confidence, well-being, and career growth.

# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Importance of Breaking Barriers:

Breaking the barriers that impede women's career prospects is not only a matter of gender equality but also essential for economic growth and societal progress. Numerous studies have shown that gender diversity in leadership and decision-making positions leads to better organizational performance, innovation, and financial outcomes.



# TOPIC 1: Breaking Barriers

## Importance of Breaking Barriers:

- ❖ When women have equal access to career opportunities and are empowered to reach their full potential, they can contribute their unique skills, perspectives, and expertise to drive success in organizations and industries.
- ❖ Breaking barriers and promoting gender equality is not only the right thing to do but also a strategic imperative for organizations and economies as a whole.



# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## Building Opportunities

Building opportunities for women requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the systemic barriers and promotes inclusive practices. Here are some strategies to foster women's career prospects:

- a. Creating Inclusive Organizational Cultures
- b. Empowering Women through Mentorship and Sponsorship
- c. Developing Leadership and Skills.
- d. Addressing Bias and Discrimination

# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## a. Creating Inclusive Organizational Cultures:

Organizations must foster inclusive cultures that value diversity and gender equality. This involves implementing policies and practices that promote equal pay, transparency, and fairness in hiring and promotion processes. Encouraging work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, and parental leave policies can also support women in managing their professional and personal responsibilities.



# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## b. Empowering Women through Mentorship and Sponsorship

- ❖ Mentorship and sponsorship programs can provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities for women in their career journeys.
- ❖ Mentors and sponsors can provide valuable insights, advice, and advocacy, helping women navigate challenges and seize growth opportunities.





# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## c. Developing Leadership and Skills

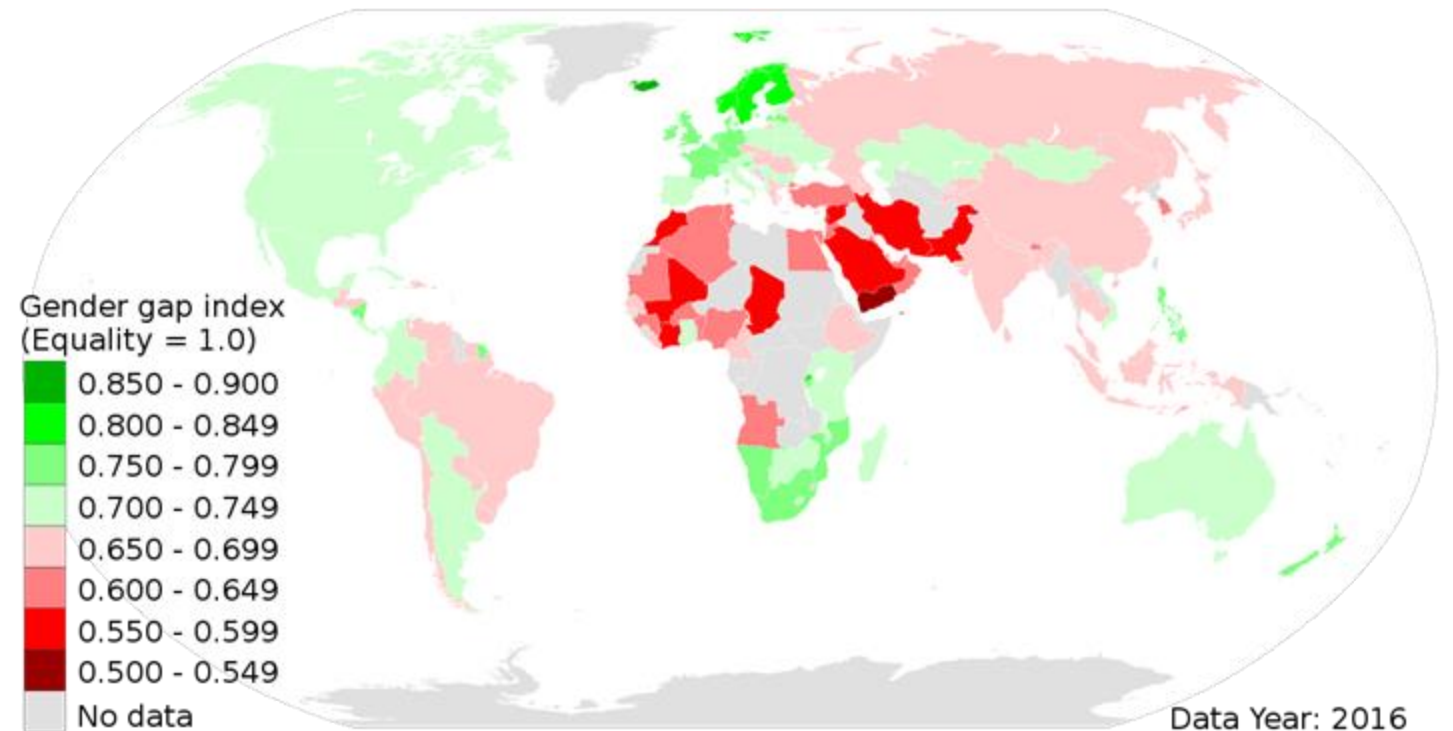
- ❖ Organizations and institutions should invest in leadership development programs and skill-building initiatives targeted towards women.
- ❖ These programs can provide training, mentorship, and networking opportunities to enhance women's leadership competencies, confidence, and visibility

## d. Addressing Bias and Discrimination

Organizations must actively address gender bias and discrimination through awareness campaigns, training programs, and clear policies. Encouraging reporting mechanisms and establishing zero-tolerance policies for harassment can create safe and inclusive work environments.

# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

- ❖ Governments and policymakers play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for women's career prospects.
- ❖ Implementing and enforcing legislation that promotes gender equality in the workplace, such as pay equity laws, parental leave policies, and anti-discrimination measures, is essential for creating a level playing field.



# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## The career prospects of women in Europe.

The career prospects of women in Europe have improved over the years, but there are still challenges and disparities that exist.

One significant issue is the gender pay gap, which refers to the difference in earnings between men and women. In the European Union, the gender pay gap stood at around 14.1% in 2020. This means that women, on average, earn 14.1% less than their male counterparts. The gender pay gap is influenced by factors such as occupational segregation, discrimination, and differences in work experience and education levels.



# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## The career prospects of women in Europe.

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions in Europe. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, women held only 33% of managerial positions in the EU in 2019. This underrepresentation in leadership roles limits the career advancement opportunities for women and affects their overall prospects in the labor market.

Women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields is lower compared to men. This gender imbalance contributes to the underrepresentation of women in high-demand sectors and professions, limiting their career prospects in industries that drive innovation and economic growth.

# TOPIC 2: Building Opportunities

## The career prospects of women in Europe.

The European Union has implemented various policy initiatives to address gender equality in the labor market. For instance, the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 aims to promote equal economic independence, closing the gender pay gap, and increasing the representation of women in decision-making positions. Additionally, countries like Iceland and Sweden have implemented policies such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements to support work-life balance for both men and women..



# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 1 – Video “Crushing Stereotypes in the Workplace”

This activity aims to raise awareness of employers and employees fighting gender workplace stereotypes



Source: [Image by Freepik](#)

Employers should watch and reflect on the video “Crushing Stereotypes in the Workplace” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyFHyULSOvo>) and reflect on it in smaller groups.

# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 1 Guidelines

### Video “Crushing Stereotypes in the Workplace”

**Topics Covered:** Positive change, team unity promoting acceptance of differences, leadership more open to the needs of the team and potential to achieve gender equality with initiative and flexibility

**Skills Gained:** Communication, Problem-solving, Empathy, Critical thinking

**Duration:** 15 min

**Venue:** training room scenario (face-to-face)

**Requirements:** Computer, Internet, chairs, flipcharts



# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 1 Content

### Video “Crushing Stereotypes in the Workplace”

#### Video (15 mins)

To tackle the topic of promoting a more inclusive and equitable workplace, gather the group of participants and have them watch the video “Crushing Stereotypes in the Workplace”, on [YouTube](#).

#### Group discussion (15 mins)

Split the participants into small groups and appoint a facilitator. They should engage in discussions on how to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Allocate time for group discussions and for participants to present their findings to the team. Summarise the discussion and highlight key points.

#### Reflection Time (10 mins)

Participants should present their findings to the entire group, summarising the discussion and highlighting key points.

#### \*\*Requirements

Computer, internet, chairs, flipchart



# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 2 – “Educational choices and stereotypes “ Workshop

### This activity aims to:

- Introduce the concept of the educational choices and stereotypes and its effects
- Equip employers with knowledge and skills to shatter the educational choices and stereotypes effect



The “Educational choices and stereotypes” workshop is a 1.5 - 2 hours interactive session aiming to empower employers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence and advance their decisions on the company.

# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 2 Guidelines

### “Educational choices and stereotypes” Workshop

**Topics Covered:** Definition of, causes of, implications of the “educational choices and stereotypes” effect and real-world examples and strategies to break it via discussion panel with successful leaders

**Skills Gained:** Deep knowledge regarding the phenomenon of the educational choices and stereotypes in the workplace, practical knowledge on how to break this effect

**Duration:** 1.5- 2 Hour approximately

**Venue:** Organizations/Company Premises or partner organization premises

**Requirements:**

- Computers or smartphones
- Video presentation equipment
- Conduct with successful leaders
- Paper and pen

# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 2 Content

### “Educational choices and stereotypes” Workshop

**Energizer (10 min):** Employers should participate in rounds saying a word that comes to their mind related to productive work as fast as possible. If a participant says the same word or a word with the same meaning as someone else then it gets eliminated. Participants only have 3 minutes to say as many words as possible and the person/s who will not be eliminated is the winner/s of the activity.

**Presentation (30 mins):** Participants identify activities carried out by men and women, analyzing the differentiated value of educational choices and stereotypes.

# ACTIVITIES

## Activity 2 Content

### “Educational choices and stereotypes” Workshop

**Career Strategies Activity (30 minutes):** Participants will be divided into break-out rooms. The moderator will tell them a strategy name for breaking the TOPIC 4-ACTIVITY 2 effect and they should come up with a concrete idea of why this strategy is useful, how it can be implemented, setting a timeline, etc. The strategies can be derived from this presentation. Then each employee or team should present their idea and at the end, the other participants should exchange points of improvement, opinions, and suggestions.

**Panel Discussion (30 minutes depending on guest speakers):** Invite successful leaders, especially those who have broken through the educational choices and stereotypes, to share their experiences and insights. Allow participants to ask questions and engage in a dialogue

**Reflection (10 mins):** Participants should reflect on their learning experience in an open discussion, expressing their interest, questions, and needs for any additional training.

# CONCLUSION

Breaking the barriers that impede women's career prospects is not only a matter of gender equality but also essential for economic growth and societal progress.

Addressing the gender equality requires adopting an approach that encompasses policy changes, workplace reforms, and cultural transitions. It is vital to promote encourage women's leadership, and aid in their representation in decision-making positions, while simultaneously offering equal opportunities for career growth.



Source: [Image by Freepik](#)

# SUMMARY

## You have learned that:

- ❖ The gender inequality include occupational segregation, discrimination, and caregiving responsibilities.
- ❖ Breaking the barriers that impede women's career prospects is not only a matter of gender equality but also essential for economic growth and societal progress.
- ❖ The career prospects of women in Europe have improved over the years, but there are still challenges and disparities that exist.
- ❖ Employers play a key role on bridging the gender equality by fostering equitable work policies, addressing bias in hiring and promotions, and offering opportunities for women to advance in their careers.

# REFERENCES

- European Commission. (2023b). *Gender equality strategy*. European Commission. [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en)
- The European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination. (2023). *Key EU directives in gender equality and non-discrimination*. Key EU directives in gender equality and non-discrimination - European Equality Law Network. <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/legal-developments/16-law/76-key-eu-directives-in-gender-equality-and-non-discrimination>
- Madziwanyika. Glass Ceiling. The Facts and How to Break it. The Human Capital Hub. <https://www.thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/Glass-Ceiling-The-Facts-And-How-To-Break-It>
- Understanding the gender pay gap: What role do sector and occupation. (n.d.). Eurofound. [www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/policy-brief/2021/understanding-the-gender-pay-gap-what-role-do-sector-and-occupation-play](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/policy-brief/2021/understanding-the-gender-pay-gap-what-role-do-sector-and-occupation-play)
- Reddy, K. (2019, February 22). Women in the Workplace - Top 10 Issues and Challenges - WiseStep. WiseStep. [www.content.wisestep.com/women-in-the-workplace/](http://www.content.wisestep.com/women-in-the-workplace/)
- Dutta, S. (2019, March 18). The Challenges Faced By Women In The Workplace. Vantage Circle HR Blog. [www.blog.vantagecircle.com/women-in-the-workplace/](http://www.blog.vantagecircle.com/women-in-the-workplace/)
- McCarthy, J. (2021, March 11). What Is the Gender Pay Gap and How Do We Close It? Global Citizen. [www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-the-gender-pay-gap/](http://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-the-gender-pay-gap/)

## PARTNERSHIP



Follow us on:



[Closing the gender gap in the modern workplace](#)

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.  
PROJECT NUMBER 2022-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000086221



Co-funded by  
the European Union