

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

We have been working on equality in the workplace since 2005, and that is the basis of our strategy on gender equality.

This document is our Gender Equality Plan (GEP), which explains how we plan to achieve our goal, what areas it covers, and what strategic objectives we have set for the next three years. This document is not fixed, but will be revised regularly to reflect new actions and developments.

2. STATEMENT

Gender equality and equal opportunities have always been a priority for SIM Skopje, ensuring a balanced representation of genders both in our organization and in our activities. We believe that gender aspects are essential for our vision and our mission of advancing the social economy.

We see equality as a core value and a key element of creating a fair and sustainable future.

At the moment, women make up about 65% of our members, and 73% of our management boards. To further advance gender equality, we also need to keep challenging the beliefs and attitudes that hinder progress.

We need to broaden our focus on workplace flexibility and be more creative in how we address the obstacles that gender diverse individuals encounter.

This equality plan recognizes that “gender equality is about non-discrimination and the protection of fundamental human rights”. We also acknowledge that gender is not binary and that there are various gender identities beyond men and women, including LGBTI+, and that people with many of these gender identities face systematic discrimination and violence.

SIM Skopje supports equal rights and fair treatment for all members of the LGBTI+ community.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

SIM Skopje values and celebrates the diversity of its members based on language, culture, gender, age, religion, region, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic situation.

This is reflected in the organization’s situation, with a wide range of ages from 18 to 60 years, diverse cultural backgrounds, and women making up 65% of its members. The organization also performs well in terms of gender equality, with women having a strong presence in management.

This could be attributed to the fact that the cooperative model provides a favorable environment for all members, especially women, allowing them to balance work and life, and also to the fact that social economy and social entrepreneurship are often seen as models for addressing inequality and promoting social inclusion and cohesion.

SIM Skopje has been active in the fight against gender-based violence for many years. It regularly launches project initiatives with its network members and other important European partners to protect and promote the physical, emotional health, safety and well-being.

SIM Skopje is committed to making an extra effort to achieve a gender-equal culture, by taking the necessary measures to create working conditions and a culture where both female and male workers feel welcome, satisfied and valued by the organization.

Despite the long-standing engagement on this topic, organizational data and consultation with members indicate that more actions are needed to empower women and define a more inclusive workplace culture.

Moreover, SIM Skopje has a clear position on quotas and targets, as explained further in this action plan. However, it also recognizes the importance of working on company culture. A numerical target is not enough without a simultaneous change in mindset. Therefore, this gender action plan will be followed by a detailed implementation plan in the future.

This gender equality plan proposes specific interventions for areas that require more practical and strategic approaches, in order to ensure the empowerment of gender diverse individuals as a step towards gender equality.

4. OBJECTIVE & SCOPE

4.1. Objective

The main purpose of this GEP is to be a tool and framework for improving gender equality and to facilitate the incorporation of gender into organizational practices.

SIM Skopje Network wants to proactively set an example to encourage organisational changes in other social economy enterprises, federations and support networks.

4.2. Scope

The Organization's work in all areas is covered by this Plan.

A person in charge of equality has been assigned to ensure that the gender equality plan is carried out.

All members need to be committed and the organization needs to support activities that improve the members' knowledge and skills for effective gender mainstreaming in their work areas. This is what the plan's implementation requires.

The person in charge of equality will keep track of the implementation process and report to the Board of Directors.

The person in charge of equality will also establish ways to increase the members' skills, knowledge, training, and technical support that are necessary for the plan's success.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY & RESPONSIBILITY

1. Approval

The GEP is approved by the executive level (Board of Directors and President) and the equality officer is in charge of making sure that it is shared with all members.

2. Information

The equality officer also has the duty to make sure that members know about the gender equality plan and to take corrective action when discrimination is seen or reported.

3. Evaluation

The equality officer has the obligation to evaluate the situation and keep the plan up to date with new actions and developments while they are on duty.

4. Data collection

The equality officer is required to collect data separated by sex and other relevant variables, and to examine and think about the gender aspects of the respective areas of work. This will help ensure the inclusion of gender considerations in all of SIM Skopje's work in different fields.

6. KEY FOCUS AREAS

The equality plan outlines four areas that need focused attention to enable strategic and sustainable change at SIM Skopje. The plan will guide us to advance and speed up the gender equality journey that SIM Skopje must take in order to improve its performance.

1. Organizational culture and better work-life balance
2. More balanced gender representation in management and events
3. Incorporating gender in research and education content
4. Preventing sexual and gender-based harassment

To achieve its strategic objectives, SIM Skopje needs to work on several areas that are the foundation for the strategy. SIM Skopje should use [EIGE's GEAR Action toolbox](#) for each of the defined interventions on gender equality while considering its specific organizational context and features.

6.1. Organizational culture and easier combination of work-life balance

Creating and supporting an organizational culture and working environment that is fair and inclusive for all genders, enabling a flexible workplace that helps members to balance work and life responsibilities

Strategies

- The equality officer will supervise, monitor and encourage the implementation of the gender equality strategy and action plan.
- Enhance the organization's image and reputation as an inclusive organization that respects and values diversity.
- Incorporate gender inclusion into planning and strategy across the organization.
- Conduct a regular review of flexible work and other relevant policies.
- Make sure all members are aware of the gender equality and related equality policies.

Measures of Success

- Include gender equality objectives in SIM Skopje planning and strategy.

- External communication and statements of support for gender equality.
- Annual surveys of members on gender experiences when working for SIM Skopje: harassment, discrimination, workplace culture and management styles, the results of which are shared with the Board of Directors.
- Carry out consultations and surveys as part of the activities related to the next gender equality plan for SIM Skopje.
- Create family-friendly policies. Provide options and implement flexible working hours and methods.

6.2. More balanced gender representation in management, recruitment and events

Equal opportunity and participation of gender diverse individuals in decisionmaking structures (formal and informal) and ensuring equal chances to grow and advance their careers.

STRATEGIES

- Representation of gender diverse individuals in senior positions and in leadership domains.
- Engage SIM Skopje members' and decision-makers' with gender equality.
- Promote gender inclusive and biasfree recruitment.
- Balanced gender representation at events arranged at and by SIM Skopje.

Measures of success

- Representation of gender diverse individuals on projects and research activities implemented by SIM Skopje,
- Include gender awareness in all positions.
- Formulate recommendations with respect to increasing balanced gender representation at events.
- Use social media and a range of other media outlets to create a positive image of successful practices and/or key stakeholders in the social economy engaged in gender equality.

6.3. Integrating gender in research and education content

Including a gender dimension in ongoing research and education content, and applying it while designing new projects and training.

Strategies

- Encourage the inclusion of the sex and gender dimension in project content.
- Encourage diversity in project management.
- Encouraging the integration of a sex and gender perspective in training, education/ teaching curricula.

Measures of success

- Separating research data (articles, reports etc.) by sex and/or gender where relevant.
- Considering all genders for language and images in project material.

- Requiring all applicants for funding to consider sex and gender in their research and application design where relevant.
- Providing members with guides and workshops on the integration of equality and diversity in training programme design, and learning activities as a teaching and learning support.
- Providing members with specific training courses and materials on gender equality.
- Communications about training must not be gender-specific “unless the training is specifically designed for a specific gender”.

6.4. Combating sexual and gender-based harassment

Protecting and enhancing the physical and emotional health, safety and well-being of members.

Strategies

- Teaching members about different forms of bias and ways to prevent sexual and gender-based harassment.
- Working together to fight bias and stereotypes.

Measures of success

- Giving members and decision-makers specific training courses and materials on preventing sexual and gender-based violence, promoting gender equality and overcoming unconscious gender biases.
- Evaluating performance by how well members deal with these issues.
- Establish reporting mechanisms that enable members to express concerns, record, and act on gender balance issues they identify.