

## POLICY BRIEF #4

# Institutionalize Awareness on Gender Mainstreaming

Institutionalizing awareness of gender mainstreaming involves launching awareness campaigns focused on gender issues, implementing gender-smart training to create inclusive work environments, conducting promotional efforts, and showcasing women-led initiatives. This effort is not only valuable in the renewable heating and cooling (RHC) sector, but for the energy sector as a whole, as well as the whole STEM community.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Awareness Campaigns in Industry:** Launch awareness campaigns within companies to educate employees about the barriers women face in workplace environments.
- **Gender-Smart Training:** Provide training on gender-sensitive behavior and communication in workplaces to foster a more inclusive environment.
- **Promotional Campaigns:** Promote a stronger involvement of women in the energy sector through targeted promotional campaigns.
- **Visibility of Women-Led Initiatives:** Increase the visibility of initiatives led by women within the RHC sector to serve as role models and inspire others.

### Targeted stakeholders:

Energy Service Companies, Women Entrepreneurs, Educational Institutions (kindergarten -> universities), Families (parents and girls)

Meeting the Energy Roadmap 2050 goals requires substantial reductions in energy consumption and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Expanding renewable heating and cooling (RHC) sources is critical to achieving these targets. To build a more sustainable energy sector, we must prioritize diversity and inclusivity, ensuring that women have equal opportunities to contribute to the green transition. This involves raising awareness of women's positive impact on the RHC sector, creating gender-inclusive work environments to include more women in the sector, and raising awareness on the opportunities for women wanting to enter the sector.

**Gender mainstreaming should be institutionalized as a lasting, permanent change that encompasses all levels of organizations and industries.** Women face barriers at every level, and to initiate this process, we must acknowledge these barriers and raise awareness within companies, governmental organizations, as well as industry and policy organizations. This will make women entering the RHC sector aware of potential obstacles, allowing them to prepare and seek out companies that actively address these issues. This will not only enhance an organization's reputation but also broaden its customer base and attract new employees.

However, awareness alone is insufficient, as concrete training for personnel at all levels is essential, e.g., by providing teacher training at educational institutions and offering "train the trainer" support for larger organizations. This will enable gender-sensitive training and the development of tools to support a culture of gender equality, making organizations better equipped to assist women in overcoming barriers.

An awareness campaign should not only focus on barriers but also **promote women's participation in the energy sector.** Launching promotional campaigns can encourage greater female involvement in the energy sector, with a focus on targeting female students across all educational levels.

Achieving the Energy Roadmap 2050 goals demands a concerted effort to expand renewable heating and cooling sources, and this endeavour must include a commitment to diversity and inclusivity. By implementing awareness campaigns, gender-sensitive training, and targeted promotional initiatives, we can create a more inclusive energy sector where women have equal opportunities. This multifaceted approach, will not only help break down barriers but also inspire and empower women to play a pivotal role in the transition to a more sustainable energy future.

To inspire girls to pursue STEM university programs, **awareness efforts should also extend to primary and secondary schools.** Additionally, business schools can be effective in raising awareness among future entrepreneurs about opportunities in the energy sector and women's participation. Parents are also a critical audience to engage, as they can support their children in choosing energy-related career paths.

Gender awareness raising is a crucial method for integrating a gender perspective into policies, programs, projects, and services that cater to the diverse needs of people of all genders. It plays a pivotal role in informing individuals about the economic benefits of advancing gender equality in the RHC sector, as well as the adverse effects of gender inequalities, including the increased risk of energy poverty for women.<sup>2</sup>

**A successful campaign can be facilitated through increased collaboration between educational institutions and industry.** The industry can provide role models in the form of female figures working in the field, while educational institutions can provide potential targets. Collaboration can lead to cooperative education, such as internships for university students.

<sup>1</sup> Allen, E., Lyons H., Stephens, Jennie, 2019. Women's leadership in renewable transformation, energy justice and energy democracy: Redistributing power. Energy Research & Social Science. 57. 101233.

<sup>2</sup> EIGE, 2017. Gender Equality Index 2017: measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005 – 2015, Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

W4RES is a Horizon 2020 project that aims to scale-up the involvement of women in the market deployment and uptake of RHC solutions via replicable support measures tested and validated across the 8 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Slovakia). W4RES will run until October 2023 by an international consortium of 12 partners. A balanced union joining forces and expertise on renewable energy sources research & advocacy, innovative business lines development and women advocacy.