

Equal Futures Project – Policy Recommendations (Denmark)

RECOMMENDATION 1: STRENGTHEN YOUTH-LED GENDER EQUALITY ENGAGEMENT

Objective: Empower young people to actively participate in shaping gender equality policies, fostering leadership, and driving societal change.

Context & Rationale: Youth engagement is a critical driver of sustainable equality. Nordic countries demonstrate that structured involvement of young activists and students in policymaking accelerates societal awareness, encourages innovative solutions, and builds a pipeline of future leaders. Equal Futures project findings in Denmark indicate that youth voices are underrepresented in local councils and national policy discussions.

Recommended Actions:

1. Fund youth feminist networks, mentorship programs, and advocacy initiatives, ensuring access across regions and socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. Integrate youth representatives into municipal and national equality councils, decision-making boards, and advisory committees.
3. Support capacity-building workshops for youth activists, including skills in advocacy, policy analysis, and public communication.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Gender Equality, municipalities, youth organizations, schools, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Establish clear selection criteria for youth participants, ensure gender and diversity representation, provide logistical and financial support, and monitor engagement outcomes.

Expected Impact: Increased youth-led initiatives influencing policies; broader societal awareness of gender equality issues; development of a pipeline of informed and capable future leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 2: ENHANCE INTERSECTIONAL DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

Objective: Enable evidence-based policy by systematically collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, disability, age, and sexual orientation, ensuring that all marginalized and under-represented groups are visible in policy-making.

Context & Rationale: Intersectional data is crucial to identify structural inequalities and monitor progress. Nordic countries have demonstrated that disaggregated data informs targeted interventions, reduces gaps in access to services, and strengthens accountability. Findings from the Equal Futures project show that many policies fail to fully address the needs of intersectionally marginalized youth.

Recommended Actions:

1. Expand national statistical systems to include comprehensive, disaggregated data on education, employment, health, and civic participation.
2. Require public agencies to use intersectional analysis when developing and evaluating policies.
3. Publish annual equality reports with clear indicators, actionable recommendations, and progress tracking.

Stakeholders: Statistics Denmark, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs, research institutions, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Ensure data privacy and protection, provide training for data collection and analysis, standardize methodologies across agencies, and engage civil society in reviewing findings.

Expected Impact: Evidence-based policies tailored to the needs of all groups; improved monitoring of equality outcomes; enhanced accountability and transparency in government action on equality.

RECOMMENDATION 3: PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

Objective: Reduce occupational segregation and ensure that women and marginalized groups have equitable opportunities in leadership roles and employment across sectors.

Context & Rationale: Despite high female workforce participation, Denmark still experiences gendered occupational segregation and underrepresentation of women and minorities in leadership. EU and Nordic best practices demonstrate that structured mentorship, transparent promotion processes, and pay audits significantly improve representation and reduce disparities. Equal Futures project findings indicate that young women and minority groups often face barriers to career advancement.

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement mandatory pay audits and transparency measures in public and private sectors to identify and reduce gender and diversity gaps.
2. Develop mentorship and leadership programs targeting women, youth, and marginalized groups to prepare them for senior roles.

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3. Encourage organizations to set measurable targets for representation in decision-making positions.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Employment, business associations, trade unions, public and private employers.

Implementation Considerations: Ensure programs are accessible to under-represented groups, monitor progress annually, and integrate findings into national equality strategies.

Expected Impact:

- Increased representation of women and marginalized groups in leadership.
- Reduced gender pay gap and occupational segregation.
- More inclusive and equitable workplaces across sectors.

RECOMMENDATION 4: MAINSTREAM GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN POLICY PLANNING

Objective: Ensure that all national and local policies proactively integrate gender equality and intersectional perspectives to address structural inequalities.

Context & Rationale: Nordic and EU best practices show that gender mainstreaming and intersectional policy analysis are key to achieving sustainable equality. Without systematic integration, policies may inadvertently reinforce existing disparities. Equal Futures findings in Denmark indicate that many local and national initiatives lack structured consideration of intersectional impacts, particularly for youth and minority groups.

Recommended Actions:

1. Apply mandatory gender and intersectional impact assessments for all new legislation and public programs.
2. Train policymakers and public officials in integrating equality considerations into planning and evaluation processes.
3. Establish accountability mechanisms to review compliance and report outcomes annually.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Gender Equality, all government departments, local authorities.

Implementation Considerations: Standardize assessment tools, provide dedicated resources and training, involve civil society in review processes.

Expected Impact:

- Policies that proactively reduce inequalities and foster inclusion.
- Improved integration of intersectional considerations in government decision-making.

- Enhanced transparency and accountability in policy outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 5: RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT UNPAID CARE WORK

Objective: Value and reduce the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, predominantly carried out by women, through social and policy measures.

Context & Rationale: Research and Nordic models show that unpaid care work limits labor market participation and career progression for women. Denmark has made strides in parental leave policies, but gender disparities in caregiving responsibilities persist. Equal Futures project findings highlight the need for targeted measures to balance care responsibilities and recognize this work in economic and social policy frameworks.

Recommended Actions:

1. Provide pension credits, social benefits, or tax incentives for caregivers performing unpaid work.
2. Promote shared parental leave policies encouraging equal participation by men and women.
3. Include recognition of unpaid care work in national statistics and policy evaluations.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Employment, municipalities, social services.

Implementation Considerations: Ensure equitable access, monitor uptake, integrate measures into broader labor and social policies.

Expected Impact:

- More equitable distribution of care responsibilities.
- Increased female labor market participation.
- Recognition of unpaid care work as a valued economic contribution.

RECOMMENDATION 6: FOSTER INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Objective: Reduce educational inequalities and support lifelong skill development for youth, women, and marginalized groups.

Context & Rationale: Inclusive education is essential for sustainable social and economic participation. EU and Nordic best practices show that access to early childhood education, vocational training, higher education, and adult learning programs improves equality and labor market outcomes. Equal Futures project findings indicate that marginalized youth face

systemic barriers to education and training opportunities.

Recommended Actions:

1. Ensure equal access to early childhood education, vocational programs, and higher education for all groups.
2. Expand adult learning, re-skilling, and part-time education programs tailored to marginalized populations.
3. Monitor outcomes and provide additional support to ensure retention and completion.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Education, adult learning centers, universities, municipalities, NGOs.

Implementation Considerations: Remove financial, geographic, and cultural barriers; provide mentorship and support programs; assess impact regularly.

Expected Impact:

- Higher participation of marginalized groups in education.
- Increased employability and skills development.
- Reduction of long-term social and economic inequalities.

RECOMMENDATION 7: REDUCE STEREOTYPES AND PROMOTE CULTURAL CHANGE

Objective: Address unconscious bias, stereotypes, and social norms that limit equality and inclusion, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

Context & Rationale: Persistent gender stereotypes and biased social norms influence education choices, career pathways, and leadership opportunities. EU and Nordic evidence shows that awareness campaigns, diversity training, and role model initiatives can shift attitudes and behaviors, leading to more equitable outcomes. Equal Futures project findings in Denmark indicate that cultural norms continue to reinforce gendered expectations, limiting opportunities for youth and minority groups.

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement mandatory diversity and inclusion training for educators, managers, and public officials.
2. Launch national awareness campaigns highlighting diverse role models across gender, ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation.
3. Integrate gender and diversity education into school curricula to shape inclusive mindsets from an early age.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Gender Equality, municipalities, schools, NGOs, media partners.

Implementation Considerations: Develop standardized training materials, involve

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civil society in campaign design, monitor attitudinal change via surveys, and adjust programs based on impact assessment.

Expected Impact:

- Reduction in unconscious bias and stereotypes in schools, workplaces, and society.
- Broader career choices for youth across genders and backgrounds.
- Positive shifts in social norms, supporting equality and inclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 8: SUPPORT MARGINALIZED AND UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Objective: Ensure that all policies and programs actively include marginalized and under-represented groups, such as migrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, and persons with disabilities.

Context & Rationale: Systemic barriers often prevent marginalized groups from fully benefiting from education, employment, and leadership opportunities. Nordic and EU experiences show that targeted policies and inclusive program design significantly improve access, representation, and social cohesion. Equal Futures project findings in Denmark highlight gaps in participation and visibility for these groups in local and national initiatives.

Recommended Actions:

1. Design tailored employment, education, and leadership programs addressing the specific needs of marginalized groups.
2. Establish dedicated monitoring and feedback mechanisms to track access, participation, and outcomes.
3. Ensure representation of marginalized groups in advisory committees and decision-making bodies.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Employment, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, municipalities, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Engage communities in program design, provide financial and logistical support, ensure intersectional inclusivity, and conduct regular impact assessments.

Expected Impact:

- Increased participation of marginalized groups in education, employment, and leadership.
- Greater social inclusion and reduced structural inequalities.
- More representative policymaking and equitable access to services.

RECOMMENDATION 9: PROMOTE INNOVATION AND PILOT EQUALITY INTERVENTIONS

Objective: Develop, test, and scale innovative policies and programs to advance gender equality, youth participation, and inclusion of marginalized groups.

Context & Rationale: Pilot initiatives allow governments to test innovative approaches, measure impact, and scale successful interventions efficiently. Nordic countries have demonstrated that evidence-based pilot projects lead to long-term improvements in equality outcomes. Equal Futures findings in Denmark show opportunities for creative solutions in youth engagement, pay transparency, and inclusive workplaces.

Recommended Actions:

1. Fund pilot projects addressing pay transparency, inclusive workplace practices, youth leadership, and gender equality in local governance.
2. Conduct rigorous evaluations of pilot programs to identify best practices and scalability.
3. Facilitate knowledge-sharing between municipalities, civil society, and national government to implement successful models.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Gender Equality, Ministry of Employment, innovation agencies, research institutions, municipalities, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Ensure pilots are inclusive, monitor outcomes with clear metrics, provide sufficient resources, and document lessons learned.

Expected Impact:

- Evidence-based policies and interventions that are proven effective.
- Greater innovation in equality promotion at local and national levels.
- Increased engagement of youth and marginalized groups in policy initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 10: STRENGTHEN ACCOUNTABILITY, GOVERNANCE, AND TRANSPARENCY

Objective: Ensure that equality policies are effectively implemented, monitored, and reported to achieve measurable impact.

Context & Rationale: Transparent governance and accountability mechanisms are essential for sustained equality outcomes. Nordic and EU examples show that embedding equality targets in performance frameworks, combined with independent oversight, strengthens policy implementation. Equal Futures project findings indicate gaps in reporting and monitoring of

equality initiatives at local and national levels.

Recommended Actions:

1. Integrate clear equality goals and performance indicators into all government departments and public institutions.
2. Mandate annual reporting on equality outcomes with independent oversight and public dissemination.
3. Establish feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement of equality programs.

Stakeholders: All government ministries, National Equality Body, municipalities, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Provide training for public officials, ensure standardized data collection, involve independent auditors, and engage stakeholders in monitoring progress.

Expected Impact:

- Improved implementation of equality policies.
- Greater transparency and accountability in government action.
- Measurable progress toward gender equality and inclusion goals.