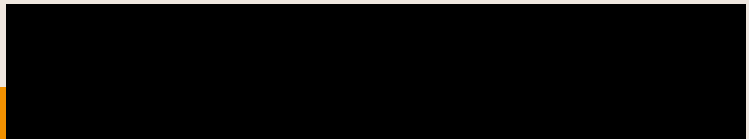




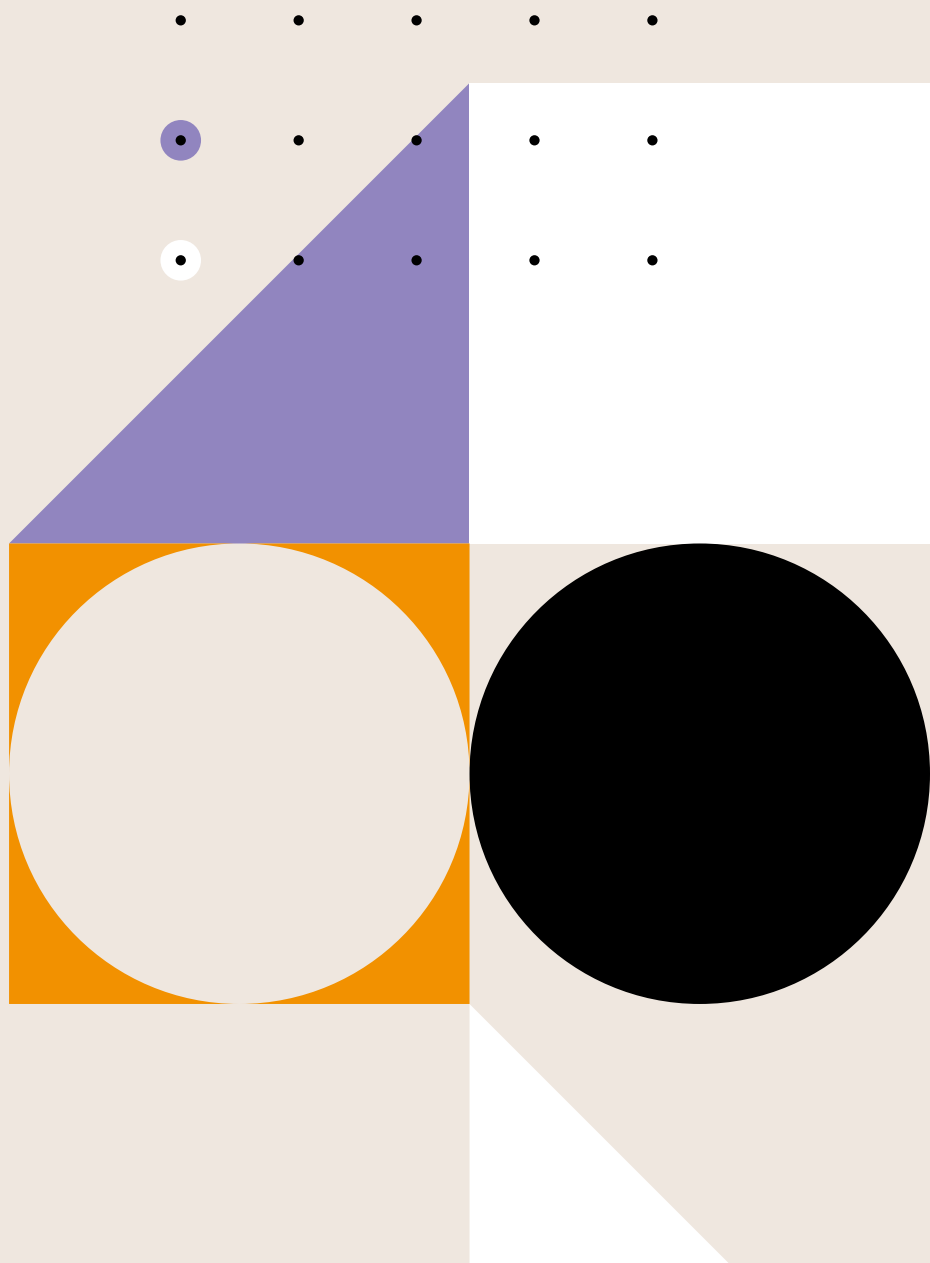
Gender Equality in Associations



The Gallery **OF INSPIRING PORTRAITS**



GENDER EQUALITY
IN ORGANIZATIONS



The Gallery of Inspiring Portraits was produced within the framework of *Gender Equality in Associations (Egal'Asso)*, which was implemented in France, Greece, and Belgium with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project aimed to equip small and medium-sized associations active in various sectors with a set of practical tools and evidence-based insights designed to support them in recognising, addressing and preventing gender-based discrimination while fostering the promotion of gender equality in everyday practices.

The content of the gallery was based on interviews, practical experience, and research on gender equality, focusing on associations employing between 0 and 25 individuals. While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the information provided, the gallery does not constitute legal, professional, or exhaustive advice. The authors and project partners accept no responsibility for any consequences arising from the use or application of the information contained herein.

All contributions and interviews included in this gallery were made on a voluntary basis. Personal data has been either anonymised or used with explicit consent, in compliance with applicable data protection, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in line with ethical research standards.

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Introduction to Inclusion, Gender Equality & Non-Discrimination

Inclusion, gender equality, and non-discrimination are fundamental rights within the European Union, as well as core principles guiding social, economic, and democratic development. Recent European developments, including the *2024 Report on Gender Equality in the EU*¹ and new legislative measures such as the Pay Transparency Directive, show a clear commitment to addressing inequalities not only at the policy level, but also in everyday practices within workplaces and organisations.



Despite this progress, many challenges remain. Women continue to face barriers to employment, career progression, and decision-making positions. Women are still more likely to experience job insecurity and carry a disproportionate share of unpaid care work. Beyond these visible inequalities, less tangible factors, such as stereotypes, unconscious bias, and social expectations, continue to shape opportunities and behaviours in ways that are often difficult to identify and address.

In addition, many individuals experience overlapping forms of discrimination. Factors such as gender identity, migration background, disability, age or socio-economic status can interact and reinforce exclusion. This highlights the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective, which recognises that inequalities are complex and cannot be addressed through a single lens.

¹ European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, *2024 report on gender equality in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024

For many organisations, particularly small and medium-sized ones, the challenge lies in translating values into concrete actions. Questions often arise, such as how to make the recruitment process more inclusive. How can working conditions support different needs? How can communication avoid reinforcing stereotypes? And how can teams create environments where everyone feels respected and able to participate? Addressing these questions requires moving beyond a purely formal or compliance-based approach. While policies and legal frameworks provide an essential foundation, they are not sufficient on their own. Meaningful change also depends on awareness, reflection and the willingness to examine how decisions are made, how roles are distributed, and how interactions take place in everyday organisational life.

In this context, inclusion, gender equality, and non-discrimination should be understood as an ongoing process. They involve continuous learning, adaptation, and dialogue. Small, consistent actions, such as reviewing communication practices, creating spaces for discussion, or adjusting working conditions, can contribute to long-term change when they are embedded in organisational culture. Ultimately, fostering inclusive and equitable environments benefits not only individuals but also organisations and communities as a whole. It supports participation, strengthens collaboration, and enhances the capacity to respond to diverse needs. By engaging with these principles in a practical and reflective way, organisations can contribute to building more inclusive societies across Europe.



Gender Equality in Associations

Across Europe, gender inequalities persist despite increasing awareness and policy efforts. Research conducted in the partner countries of the Gender Equality in Associations (Egal'Asso) project, in France, Greece, and Belgium, confirms that community-based and social economy organisations are not immune to these dynamics. While these organisations are often seen as spaces for inclusion, cooperation, and social justice, they can still reproduce broader societal patterns in their internal functioning and everyday practices.

Meanwhile, associations play a crucial role in promoting equality at the local level. As key actors in civil society, they serve as important intermediates for engaging communities, shaping social norms, and fostering participation. Their proximity to citizens and their capacity to act flexibly position them as powerful agents for advancing gender equality. However, many organisations, particularly small and medium-sized ones, report feeling insufficiently equipped to address these issues in a structured and sustainable way, both internally (with staff and volunteers) and externally (with beneficiaries and the wider public). Resources are limited, and the responsibilities are endless, which eventually leads to an overwhelming workload. From these observations and needs, the *Egal'Asso* began to take shape. Instead of offering abstract theories or generic solutions to the issue of gender equality, it seeks to bring it down to earth, into meeting rooms, volunteer teams, everyday conversations, and daily practices. *Egal'Asso* seeks to provide guidance on job offering, how to support young parents, how to confront and address sexism, how to discuss menstruation openly and without shame, and how to create a work environment where all decisions are transparent and fair.



To achieve this, the project developed three complementary tools which are available on <https://egalasso.eu/en/>:

- This **gallery** provides concrete examples, experiences, and practical approaches to support the transformation of organisational practices.
- Four **escape games** which support awareness-raising and encourage organisations to reflect on their own practices and motivations for change.
- A **white paper** which presents key arguments and insights aimed at mobilising stakeholders and strengthening commitment to gender equality within the sector.

This gallery builds on these tools by documenting practices from a diverse range of organisations across the three partner countries and Spain. Each organisation brings its own perspective, shaped by its mission, size, and context. By highlighting concrete and innovative practices, the gallery aims to inspire other associations and demonstrate that meaningful change is possible at all levels, even with limited resources. In this way, *Egal'Asso* helps strengthen associations' capacity to act as drivers of equality, supporting a broader shift toward more inclusive, fair, and participatory societies across Europe.



How to use this Gallery

The gallery was designed to support organisations in exploring practical approaches to:

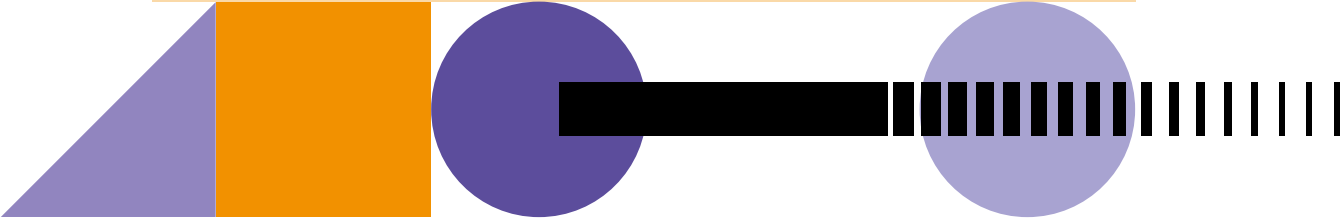
- inclusion
- gender equality
- non-discrimination

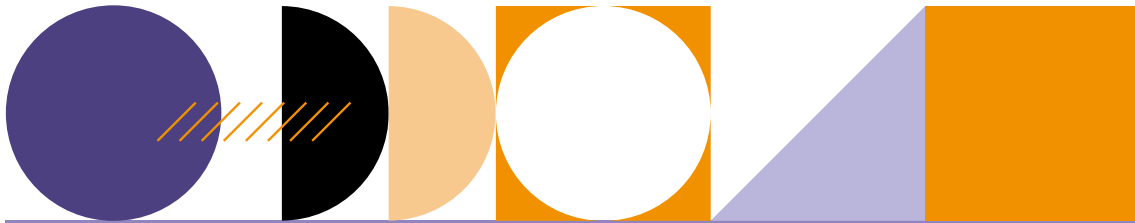
through real-life examples.

It offers inspiration, reflection, and concrete ideas that can be adapted to different organisational contexts.

The portraits are intentionally organised to provide a coherent journey. They move from organisations that influence the sector at a structural level, to those offering expertise and consultancy, and finally to grassroots initiatives embedded in local communities. In this way, the gallery progresses from broader frameworks to everyday practices, highlighting how gender equality can be addressed at different levels and in diverse ways. This approach allows readers to understand the broader context in which organisations operate and explore concrete methods and tools used in different settings.

At the same time, the gallery reflects the diversity of the sector. Each organisation operates within its own reality, shaped by its size, mission, resources, and target groups in France, Greece, Belgium and Spain. Rather than presenting a single model, the gallery showcases a range of approaches, demonstrating that there is no one way to work in gender equality, only practices that can be adapted, tested, and developed over time.





The gallery includes a wide variety of associations.

- /// **Le Mouvement Associatif des Hauts-de-France** acts as a regional umbrella organisation for the associative sector.
- /// **Egaleco** and **Equilatera** provide support and consultancy to associations working on gender equality.
- /// **Financité** promotes responsible and solidarity-based finance.
- /// **Amazoné** combines advocacy for women's rights with a work-integration social enterprise.
- /// **WHEN Hub** works on the professional and economic empowerment of women.
- /// **Melissa Network** supports women in vulnerable situation, with a particular focus on migrant and refugee women.
- /// **Little Big Women** supports female entrepreneurs while **Espoir Avenir** provides work-integration pathways for people facing barriers to employment.
- /// **Formeville** specialises in training, supervision, and team support.
- /// **Athenian Gestalt** offers psychotherapy and educational programmes focusing on inclusion and gender diversity.
- /// **L'association 3cm** creates inclusive and safe community spaces such as Café Nomade, and **Les Jantes du Nord** operates as a community-based bicycle repair initiative promoting inclusion in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Each portrait highlights specific practices rather than covering all possible topics. The intention is to showcase the most relevant and innovative elements of each organisation, allowing readers to draw inspiration and identify ideas that can be adapted to their own context.

This gallery is not meant to provide fixed solutions, but to encourage exploration, reflection, and action. Organisations are invited to engage with the examples, adapt them to their reality, and take small, meaningful steps toward building more inclusive and equitable environments.

Portrait of **Le Mouvement Associatif (LMA) des Hauts-de-France**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
Development and
representation of
the associative sector

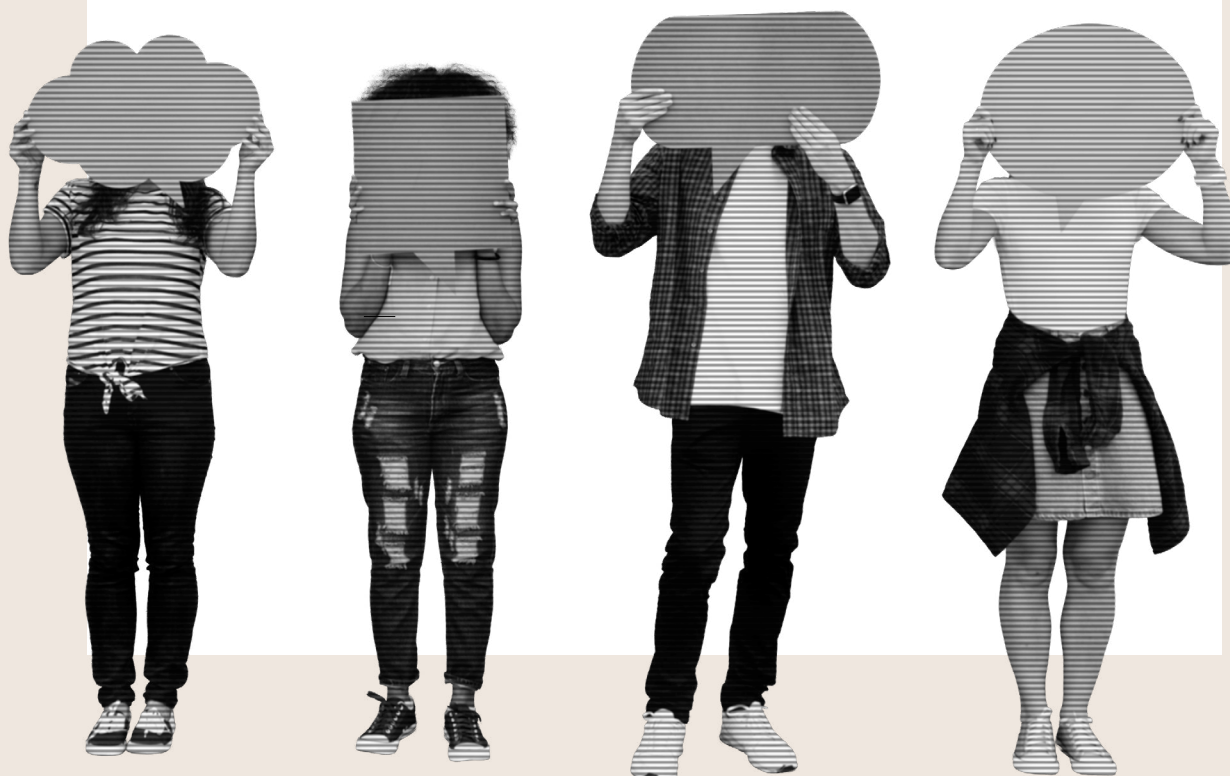
TEAM
10 employees,
9 of whom are women

CITY
Lille,
France

WEBSITE
lmahdf.org

Presentation of the organisation

As a member of the *Mouvement Associatif*, LMA Hauts-de-France represents and supports associations at the regional level and speaks on its behalf on financial issues. It helps organisations (federations, etc.) through programmes such as DLA* and Guid'Asso**, by providing tools, guides, network coordination and needs assessments. Finally, it advocates for better working conditions in the non-profit sector and stronger public support for associations.



Salary practices

LMA applies the ÉCLAT collective agreement*** to ensure fair, transparent, and universally recognised salaries. Each year, individual interviews provide an opportunity to discuss salaries and possible promotions in a transparent framework. Decisions take into account seniority, responsibilities, and technical skills. When salary increases are limited, the association takes action on working conditions to maintain the well-being and attractiveness of the positions.

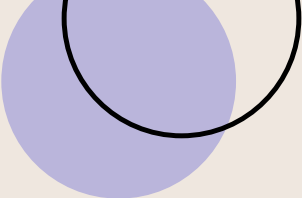


Menstruation

The organisation has implemented a written agreement for employees who experience menstrual pain. They can take up to two days of leave per month, which are not deducted from other types of leave and are granted in full by the employer. A medical certificate - renewed every year- confirming painful periods or endometriosis is required. When the employee experiences menstrual pain, they inform the employer by email in the morning and take menstrual leave without further justification. This request cannot be refused.

“Menstrual leave reduces guilt and helps employees feel supported and recognised when they experience menstrual pain, by legitimising that they cannot work when it is physically impossible.”

Attentive management and a shared awareness within a predominantly female team have enabled the development of this practice. The topic was introduced organically, driven by an administrative manager who was particularly affected by these issues, and then formalised through the Works Council (CSE). Sanitary products are available and free at the premises: sanitary pads, tampons, etc. Like toilet paper and soap, these products are funded through the associations' hygiene budget. A designated person is responsible for regularly checking stock and ensuring it is accessible to everyone.



Equality practices

The Works Council (CSE) provides a structured space to address topics that may otherwise remain sensitive (salaries, menstrual leave, etc.) in a calm and constructive environment, including decisions such as the introduction of a minimum salary. When the legal threshold for establishing a CSE is not met (a minimum number of employees is required), it is still essential to create alternative space for regular dialogue between employees and management on working conditions, equality, and well-being. The CSE plans to appoint a volunteer employee as a *gender equality representative*. This person would be trained by a specialised organisation in order to support employees and share good practices to the association's network. Additionally, LMA promotes flexibility and work-life balance through the implementation of flexible working hours. This framework allows for personal, volunteer, or family commitments, while maintaining organisational effectiveness.

* The DLA (Local Support Scheme) is a public support programme that provides free, tailored assistance to employing non-profit organisations, work integration social enterprises, and other social economy organisations. It aims to help them develop their activities, consolidate their operations, and create or sustain jobs.

** Guid'Asso offers easy access to advice, information, and guidance (for example: how to create an association, manage it, find funding, or develop projects).

*** The ECLAT collective agreement is a French sectoral labour agreement that sets working conditions and employment rules for organisations in the education, culture, leisure and community sectors covered by its scope.



Portrait of **Egaleco**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
**Gender equality
consulting**

TEAM
**6 workers (hiring
interns sometimes)**

CITY
Spain

WEBSITE
egaleco.coop

Presentation of the cooperative

Egaleco is a Spanish workers' cooperative specialising in gender equality, diversity and social inclusion. The cooperative supports public administrations, NGOs, universities, and private companies through audits, consultancy, training, and the implementation of equality and diversity policies. All members are both workers and associates, and decision-making is collective. This governance model reflects the cooperative's commitment to transparency, shared responsibility and shared leadership. *Egaleco* applies its equality principles internally and brings strong knowledge of Spanish and European frameworks through its work.

Recruitment

Recruitment is considered a key moment for preventing inequality. Internally and externally, *Egaleco* promotes gender-neutral, inclusive job descriptions and removes unnecessary requirements, such as availability or constant physical presence. Where possible, it recommends using blind CVs and relying on checklists that clarify which interview questions are acceptable and which are not. Recruitment remains open until candidates of different genders are sufficiently represented. *Egaleco* also supports organisations in rewriting job offers, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as logistics, to attract a wider and more diverse range of applicants.

Salary practices

Egaleco currently applies a strict equal-pay policy: all workers receive the same salary. This choice is based on recognising the diversity of work, including administrative, coordination, and care-related tasks that are often invisible or undervalued.

“So the key is not to compare the salaries of men and women just like that, but to understand how structural gender dynamics shape the pay outcomes.”

The cooperative sometimes collectively adjusts salaries to meet personal needs. As it grows, *Egaleco* plans to formalise its pay system by 2026 to prevent future inequalities.



“Pay equality is multidimensional. Availability and mobility requirements often disadvantage women because of care responsibilities.”

In its consultancy work, *Egaleco* assists organisations in complying with Spanish and EU regulations, which require organisations with more than 50 workers to develop a gender equality plan, including a pay audit. These audits combine data analysis with interviews and group discussions and may lead to changes in job classifications using gender-neutral evaluation methods.

Parental leave

Spanish law guarantees equal parental leave, including for adoption. Beyond legal compliance, *Egaleco* highlights the importance of reintegration after leave. Key practices include a gradual return to work, adjusted tasks and workload, and access to training after long absences. These measures help ensure that reduced working time does not affect career progression.



Menstruation

Menstruation-related absences are recognised in Spain as medical leave. *Egaleco* goes further by promoting flexible internal arrangements for people who experience menstruation or menopause-related difficulties. Menopause is explicitly included in these discussions.

Practices include:

- Possibility to work from home or alone
- Flexible scheduling
- Awareness-raising and training for managers



Equality practices

Work organisation is based on objectives rather than fixed schedules. Flexible working hours and remote work are common practices, allowing workers to adapt their workload to personal or care-related needs. *Egaleco* identifies availability and mobility requirements as major drivers of inequality, especially for women, and works to ensure that professional value is not linked to constant availability. The association integrates this analysis into its organisational and consultancy practices.

“Key to equality is work-life balance.”

Spanish law now requires organisations with more than 50 workers to implement LGBTQ+ diversity plans. *Egaleco* supports and promotes measures such as:

- Safe environments for coming out
- Training on LGBTQ+ inclusion
- Protocols supporting gender transition processes, including collaboration with psychologists
- Clear and systematised procedures to prevent discrimination and harassment

Training managers and establishing clear prevention measures are key to addressing sexism and sexual harassment. LGBTQ+ diversity policies are still developing and mainly focus on prevention, as there is currently limited data available.

In Spain, organisations with more than 250 employees are also required to ensure that 2%-3% of their team includes people with disabilities and some organisations have introduced protocols to support gender transition, offering safe environments and flexibility for medical or administrative needs.

Portrait of **Equilatera**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
**Gender equality
consulting, equality
plans, harassment
prevention**

TEAM
**2 cooperative
partners, 4 freelance
collaborators**

CITY
**Barcelona
Málaga
remote work, Spain**

WEBSITE
equilatera.coop/ca/inici/

Presentation of the organisation

Equilatera is a small cooperative based in Spain, created by women consultants who previously worked as freelancers. This cooperative model was chosen to provide greater economic stability, social protection, and collective governance, while remaining flexible and aligned with feminist and equality values. Spanish cooperatives benefit from a specific legal framework that allows them to combine freelance activity with collective social security. In *Equilatera's* case, the cooperative directly pays social security contributions for its partners, offering stronger protection than traditional self-employment. *Equilatera* works with public institutions, private companies, and non-profit organisations to design equality plans, deliver gender equality training and implement harassment prevention protocols, in line with Spanish law and European directives.

Recruitment

Although recruitment² is informal due to its small size, *Equilatera* promotes fair and inclusive recruitment practices, both internally and in its advisory work. These include clear job offers about working conditions, inclusive language, anonymised CVs, simple scoring tools to reduce bias, and transparent communication with all candidates (commitment to informing all candidates of recruitment outcomes). These practices are designed to be accessible and transferable, even for small organisations.

2 Under Spanish law, companies with more than 50 employees are required to adopt and register equality plans. All companies, regardless of size, must also implement measures and protocols to prevent sexual and gender-based harassment. (International Treaty and Spanish Law RD 901/2020)

Salary practices

Salary equality is a central focus of *Equilatera*'s internal organisation and consulting work. Under Spanish national law, organisations must provide salary tables and justify gender pay gaps exceeding 25%. Following the transposition of the EU Pay Transparency Directive (2023/970), a 5% threshold will trigger a joint pay assessment where unjustified disparities persist. Despite these rules, the average pay gap remains around 19% (data 2023).

Internally, *Equilatera* ensures equal base pay for cooperative partners, with differences only linked to working time or additional hours, and full financial transparency, prioritising payment to freelancers. In its advisory work, the cooperative highlights gender biases in job valuation. Risks in male-dominated roles (for example, accidents related to machine use) are recognised and financially compensated, while risks in women-dominated roles (such as regular exposure to chemical products in cleaning work) often remain invisible, contributing to unequal pay. The cooperative also underlines the importance of analysing job responsibilities and work-related risks when determining fair and balanced salaries.



Parental leave

Spanish law grants both mothers and fathers at least 16 weeks of paid parental leave, with the first six weeks taken immediately after birth and the remaining weeks used flexibly within the first year. Recent reforms are extending this period up to 19 weeks per parent.

Beyond legal requirements, *Equilatera* prioritises flexibility rather than additional paid benefits, recognising the limited financial resources of very small organisations. This includes planning workload adjustments around parental leave, offering flexible working hours before and after leave, and discussing reduced working time with parents when needed.

The cooperative favours case-by-case solutions, based on dialogue and adaptability. While national law provides rights such as one hour per day for breastfeeding, *Equilatera* is currently exploring how to reflect these provisions in its internal policies, noting that additional leave beyond the legal framework is not publicly funded.



Menstruation

Spanish law grants four paid days per year for urgent family leave. Menstrual pain, when incapacitating, is treated as a certified temporary disability. *Equilatera* encourages an open and supportive approach to menstruation and chronic conditions like endometriosis. Key elements include no requirement for medical proof for short absences and flexibility in scheduling meetings and deadlines.

Equality practices

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, *Equilatera* has operated remotely, without fixed premises. This approach supports geographical flexibility and work-life balance, particularly for individuals with care responsibilities (for example, parents of school-aged children).

Key practices include:

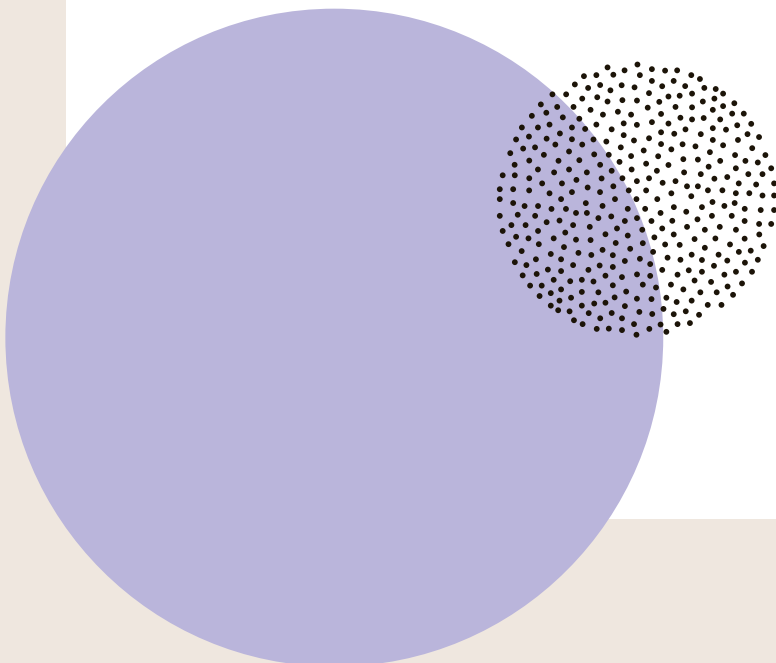
- ▶ Full remote work and shared calendars (e.g. Toggl Track) to ensure coordination and transparency
- ▶ Flexible working hours, organised collectively and based on trust
- ▶ Alignment of collective holidays with school holidays when possible
- ▶ Financial support for home office setups (e.g. equipment coverage)

Equilatera works mainly with women consultants, reflecting its feminist approach and the broader reality of the equality sector. Collaboration with men is possible when relevant to the audience or context.

The cooperative actively affirms women's leadership and sets clear boundaries when facing sexist behaviour, including interrupting or stopping a training session if necessary.

"People do not always expect us to be in leadership positions, which can create discomfort. During one training session, my partner faced a sexist situation and chose to stop the session."

Equilatera actively promotes inclusive communication internally and externally. Particular attention is paid to Spanish and Catalan, both gendered languages, through systematic review of written materials and ongoing team discussions.



Portrait of **Financité**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY

**Research, education & action
in the field of responsible
& solidarity-based finance,
contributing to a more equal
& more humane society**

TEAM

**17 staff members,
with a gender-balanced
co-directorship (one
woman and one man)**

CITY

Brussels, Belgium

WEBSITE

financite.be

Presentation of the organisation

Financité is a pluralistic movement working to promote responsible and solidarity-based finance as a lever for a more equal and humane society. Rooted in the principles of the social economy, the organisation combines education, research, citizen mobilisation, advisory services, and innovation in sustainable finance. Financité operates across several sites in Liège, Charleroi, and Brussels and employs 17 staff members. Gender equality is embedded in its governance and daily practices, notably through statutory requirements for gender balance within its board, a gender-balanced co-directorship, and strong internal awareness of feminist issues. Financité also actively promotes gender equality externally through its publications, campaigns, and its “Solidarity Label,” which includes a specific mention for actions supporting gender equality.

Recruitment

Recruitment at Financité is explicitly designed to minimise bias and promote equality. All job offers and public communications use inclusive language, guided by an internal charter and systematically reviewed by the communication team. Candidate selection relies on a standardised evaluation grid, and written tests, when used, are anonymised before correction to ensure fairness.

Menstruation

Financité fosters a culture of openness and non-judgement around health-related issues, including menstruation. Employees can take a day off per month when needed, counted as sick leave without requiring medical justification. Both co-directors, including the male leadership, are openly supportive of these practices. Period products are made available throughout the shared building at *Financité*'s initiative. While discussions about menstruation are generally possible in a respectful manner, the organisation recognises that comfort levels may vary between individuals and prioritises discretion and personal choice.

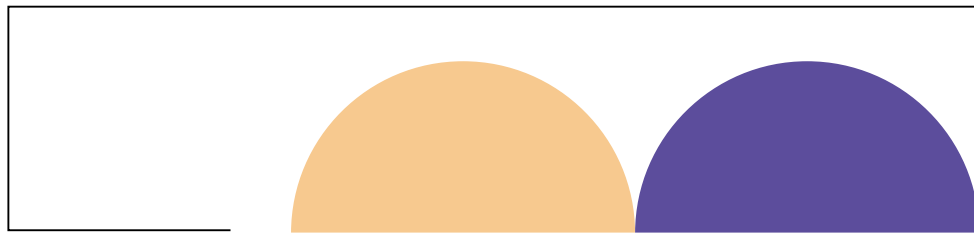
Salary practices

As is common in the Belgian non-profit sector, salaries at *Financité* are determined strictly according to legally defined wage scales based on years of experience. In addition to these legal requirements, salary progression follows automatic increases every two years, independent of individual negotiation or self-promotion, which helps ensure equality and staff retention. Promotions are also framed within this transparent system. Notably, recent promotions of women to coordination roles were granted without discrimination related to maternity or parental leave, although both individuals were either on parental leave or expecting, demonstrating that career progression remains accessible regardless of family situation.



Parental leave

Financité applies Belgian legal provisions regarding maternity and parental leave, while complementing them with a high degree of flexibility and trust. Employees benefit from flexible working hours, extensive remote working possibilities, and the option to work full or part-time, depending on their needs. Parental leave and unpaid leave can be taken without judgement, and workload redistribution is organised collectively, involving both colleagues and management. Upon return from parental leave, working arrangements are discussed on a case-by-case basis. Listening to employees' needs has led to concrete solutions, such as dedicating a private space for breastfeeding, illustrating how inclusive practices can emerge directly from staff dialogue.



Equality practices

Gender equality at *Financité* is approached as an ongoing, collective responsibility rather than a fixed achievement. Sexist language is discouraged, often addressed with humour, and inclusive language is actively used both in writing and orally. Internal tasks are shared through rotating systems, and particular attention is paid to gender balance when organising events, selecting speakers, or including experts analysis in their written publications. A dedicated reading committee has recently been established to ensure a balanced representation of expert voices, in their quarterly newspaper. At the same time, *Financité* remains attentive to persistent social patterns, such as unequal speaking time or note-taking roles, acknowledging that broader societal norms continue to influence behaviour even in sensitised environments. Continuous training, partnerships with feminist organisations, and thematic publications on gender and finance help maintain vigilance and reinforce an inclusive organisational culture.

Portrait of Amazone



FIELD OF ACTIVITY

promoting women's rights and gender equality, as well as a work integration social enterprise (WISE)³ restaurant and a conference centre

TEAM

22 staff members, including 12 permanent employees and 10 employees engaged in professional integration pathways

CITY

Brussels, Belgium

WEBSITE

www.amazone.be/

Presentation of the organisation

Amazone is an association fully dedicated to promoting gender equality through projects, workshops, and conferences, while running a restaurant that provides work integration and training for people in vulnerable situations. Over the years, the organisation has grown and strengthened its team, becoming increasingly active and visible in the field. Today, *Amazone* brings together 22 people working under equal conditions, combining permanent staff and employees in professional integration pathways. This diversity is reflected in age, gender, origin, religion, and professional background. From its organisational structure to daily working conditions, *Amazone* has made equality a concrete principle with equal contracts, shared meals, collective moments, and identical benefits for all. This strong commitment ensures that every person, regardless of status, is recognised, respected, and valued within the organisation.



³ The main objective of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISE) is to integrate those with intellectual or physical disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, including the long-term unemployed, back into the labour market and society through a productive activity.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices at *Amazonie* are fully aligned with its mission to fight gender-based discrimination. Job offers are carefully written using inclusive language and avoiding gender stereotypes, ensuring that everyone feels encouraged to apply. Rather than relying on rigid assessment tools, recruitment decisions focus on professional skills, motivation, and personal qualities. Gender, origin, or background are never considered selection criteria. Training and learning opportunities within the organisation are also intrinsically linked to gender equality, as all actions and programmes aim to promote inclusion and equal access, particularly for women and people in vulnerable situations.

Salary practices

Salary policies at *Amazonie* are based on Belgian legal wage scales, ensuring transparency and equality. Salaries are determined according to objective criteria such as qualifications, experience, and level of responsibility, leaving little room for subjective bias. Legal “automatic indexation”, a Belgian mechanism that forces businesses to raise salaries in order to match inflation, guarantees regular salary increases, independent of negotiation skills or self-promotion. In a small organisational structure, *Amazonie* favours collective discussions and regular functional meetings over formalised individual evaluations. This approach avoids creating unrealistic expectations while maintaining fairness and clarity in remuneration practices.

Parental leave

Amazonie applies Belgian legal provisions regarding maternity and parental leave, while fostering a culture of flexibility, dialogue, and trust. Parental leave is accessible to all parents, regardless of gender, and departures are handled in a pragmatic and supportive way, even when requests arise at short notice. The organisation prioritises open communication to ensure a smooth redistribution of tasks and continuity of work. Upon returning, employees are supported through flexible arrangements such as breastfeeding breaks and gradual return to work. Solutions are discussed collectively and adapted to individual needs, making it possible to reconcile professional responsibilities with family life in a respectful and human-centred way.

Menstruation

At *Amazonie*, menstruation is treated as a normal aspect of health, free from stigma or discomfort. The organisation promotes flexibility for all staff members who may need to adapt their working hours due to physical or personal needs, including menstruation-related discomfort. Period products are made available in the workplace, and gender-neutral toilets ensure inclusivity for everyone. Open dialogue is encouraged, and the discouragement of judgement or mockery creates a safe environment where sensitive topics can be discussed freely. Respect, attentiveness, and immediate intervention in case of inappropriate behaviour are key elements of this approach.

Equality practices

Gender equality at *Amazonie* is not limited to policies but is embedded in everyday practices. Sexist language is actively discouraged in all forms of communication, and inclusive language is systematically used for job titles and public communication. Gender stereotypes in task distribution, leadership roles, or event organisation are consciously challenged and avoided. All team members share responsibilities equally, based on roles rather than gender. Continuous awareness-raising is ensured through mandatory training on discrimination and inclusion for all staff, as well as through collaborations, workshops, conferences, and joint projects with other gender-equality organisations. Together, these practices create a coherent, lived culture of equality.



Portrait of **WHEN Hub**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
**professional and economic
empowerment of women &
equality in the workplace**

TEAM
**14 employees,
10 volunteers (varying)**

CITY
Athens, Greece

WEBSITE
when.org.gr/en/

Presentation of the organisation

WHEN (formerly known as ‘*Women on Top*’) is an organisation working in the field of professional and economic empowerment of women and equality in the workplace. The team strives to support women both individually, by strengthening their skills, networks, and self-confidence, and at the systemic level by supporting companies and organisations that wish to invest in becoming more equal as employers and providers of products and services. *WHEN* runs a variety of training, programmes and consulting services for women and organisations throughout Greece. They also conduct research and develop policy recommendations to address the needs of women, while testing practical solutions to identify gaps in gender equality. At *WHEN Hub*, a space that serves as the organisation’s home, individuals can access dedicated facilities for co-working or learning in Athens.

“We try to do our best for women of all ages, all geographical origins, and of course all sexual orientations, ethnic identities, potential disabilities, etc.”

Recruitment

The organisation ensures that its job advertisements avoid sexist language that may be sometimes used unconsciously, including the use of adjectives or qualities that are commonly associated with a particular gender. Job titles are written in English, primarily for

practical reasons linked to European programmes and international collaboration, while also supporting the use of neutral and inclusive language. Applications and interviews are reviewed and conducted by two people, creating an additional layer of accountability and balance. Through internal training on unintended gender bias, *WHEN* raises awareness among the whole team about how their judgment and decisions may be influenced during recruitment processes. Additionally, the association places strong emphasis on where job advertisements are shared. Rather than asking why certain people are not applying, the organisation critically assesses whether its outreach effectively reaches the intended audiences and adapts accordingly.

Salary practices & Parental leave

Salaries at *WHEN* are based on EU-aligned salary ranges that take into account factors such as skill level, working conditions, and the complexity of the role, ensuring that remuneration and all related benefits are determined on a gender-neutral basis. Supporting parents before and after parental leave (including maternity, paternity, parental leave, as well as leave for school attendance and general childcare) is a central organisational priority.

A key challenge identified by *WHEN*, is covering the gap between social security benefits and an employee's actual salary during leave. As men are still, on average, paid more than women, this gap often discourages fathers from taking leave and therefore reinforces unequal care responsibilities. *WHEN* acknowledges the difficulty of planning for overlapping parental leaves for small organisations, but frames this as a structural challenge requiring proactive solutions. Instead of aiming for immediate full financial coverage, support can be built incrementally (e.g. 30%, 50%, 70%) while testing the financial and structural sustainability of the organisation. Additional practices include gradual handovers, reduced working hours before leave, and buddy systems to ensure continuity. After returning, support may involve access to key organisational developments, reduced hours, hybrid working hours, or access to child-friendly workspaces. While not all measures are feasible internally, *WHEN* recognises that many forms of support are low-cost or free, and that partnerships with external providers can complement internal solutions.

Menstruation

Regarding menstruation, *WHEN* provides free period products on-site and offers gender-neutral toilets. The organisation also runs an advocacy programme to reduce VAT on period products and provides up to 8 hours of paid menstrual leave per month. For the organisation, two key elements in addressing menstruation are visibility and language. Through all these policies and programmes, *WHEN* actively works to reduce stigma while remaining adaptable and open to evolving practices.



Equality practices

All team members have the right to use the *Mini Hub* workspace, an on-site, supervised creative childcare space for children aged 0–12, up to three days a week, free of charge, for the hours they need to work for the organisation. *WHEN* also implements the “*I Win*” European programme, supporting very small organisations in accommodating employees with care responsibilities (parents or caregivers for dependent family members), and responding to gaps in public care infrastructure. The organisation also runs an *Annual Career Fair* bringing together employers committed to supporting women’s careers with women seeking professional advancement.

“Equality education does not mean that I have to do an eight-hour workshop to memorise which words I should and should not use. But it does mean that through small and large seminars, through daily reminders, through what we call micro-learning, which can be a poster or a sticker in my office or a three-minute webinar, it can take many different forms; I am beginning to learn how the way I use language can affect another person.”

Portrait of Melissa Network



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
**supporting women in
vulnerable situation,
focus on migrant &
refugee women**

WORK TEAM
**30 women, a few men
& volunteers**

CITY
**Athens,
Greece**

WEBSITE
melissanetwork.org

Presentation of the organisation

Founded in 2014, *Melissa Network* has grown into an international women's network providing support to women in vulnerable situations, especially migrant and refugee women. From a small local initiative, the organisation now supports women from more than 50 countries, acting as a bridge of communication between these communities and wider society. The organisation comprises approximately 30 women and several men, with both professional and volunteer collaborations offering diverse programmes for women arriving in Greece. These include language courses, creative and cultural activities, and therapy sessions for those with mental health needs, as well as self-care spaces and classes providing information on the social, medical, and educational systems in Greece.

Recruitment

Care and consideration are the primary focus when *Melissa* recruits staff. During recruitment processes, the organisation focuses primarily on the responsibilities of the position rather than on the gender identity of the applicant. Emphasis is placed on the applicant's skills, their level of motivation, and alignment with the values of the organisation, thereby supporting equity and inclusion from the outset.

All new employees receive emotional support during their integration as well as access to training and translation support, enabling them to develop skills, confidence, and the ability to express themselves professionally.

Parental leave

The organisation's commitment to gender equality is reflected in its approach to supporting mothers during their journey into parenthood. *Melissa* complies with Greek legislation on parental leave, so employees receive four months of paid parental leave from the employer and nine months from the national social security system, for a total of 13 months of maternity leave. Beyond legal compliance, the organisation fosters a strong culture of trust and support. During pregnancy, employees are encouraged to attend medical appointments without work-related stress. After childbirth, mothers have the right to work part-time for the first year without losing financial support. At *Melissa*, many employees are mothers, contributing to a supportive and open working environment. Children are welcome in the workplace, reinforcing the principle that parenthood and professional life can coexist.

Menstruation

Within the organisation, menstruation is understood and treated openly and respectfully. It is recognised as a health-related issue rather than a taboo. As a result, if a staff member needs to leave work to rest or to go home, it is considered to be an entirely normal and supported occurrence. Among team members, cultural perspectives toward menstruation vary widely. This is why the organisation actively encourages open dialogue among staff and participants. Additionally, workshops are organised to provide information and contribute to breaking the silence and stigma surrounding menstruation.

Equality practices

Rather than relying on a single policy or statement, *Melissa* builds gender equality through consistent, everyday practices including care, communication, flexibility, transparency, and trust. Together, these elements form a dynamic system that supports women not only to survive, but to participate and shape the society around them.



Portrait of Little Big Women



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
supporting female entrepreneurship

TEAM
**300 members,
60-100 volunteers (depending
on the season), 5 employees
(4 women, 1 man)**

CITY
**Lille,
France**

WEBSITE
littlebigwomen.com

Presentation of the organisation

Little Big Women is a non-profit organisation created in 2016, a successor to the *Initiatives Plurielles* association. It currently has 300 members, with 60 to 100 volunteers depending on the period, and 5 employees (4 women, 1 man, all part-time, including one female director). The association works to promote gender equality, focusing on supporting female entrepreneurship from initial idea to activity development. The employees are all professionals in business start-up support, having themselves already created or managed independent businesses. This provides strong legitimacy and proximity to the association's beneficiaries.

Little Big Women embodies an inclusive and participant-centred approach, particularly for women, based on reciprocity, empowerment and kindness. Its methodology draws on innovative practices in mentoring, co-development, and training on topics that are rarely addressed elsewhere, such as relationships with money or the entrepreneurial mindset. The collective dimension, respect for individuals, and strong field-based expertise are the association's key characteristics.



Recruitment

Diversity is a natural part of recruitment and operations, even though women are in the majority, reflecting the gender distribution within the field of female entrepreneurship. The search for skills takes precedence over gender, and the association actively encourages men's participation and involvement.

Salary practices

Remuneration is based on experience, seniority, and individual commitment, while remaining aligned with the association's financial capacity. Numerous workshops and group sessions are offered, including a dedicated module on 'the relationship with money and gender', which addresses topics such as return on investment, pricing legitimacy, and the role of money as a tool for emancipation.

Equality practices

Little Big Women combines a high degree of individual autonomy with structured collective coordination. While team members manage their roles independently, weekly meetings support alignment and collaboration, particularly in part-time work and remote arrangements. Working time is organised flexibly, allowing each employee to define their part-time schedule. This approach supports work-life balance and enables individuals to adapt their professional commitments to their personal needs.

A central element of the organisation's approach is its mentoring programme, which facilitates the exchange of experience between established women entrepreneurs and women at earlier stages of their professional journey. Mentors are carefully selected, trained, and supported throughout the process, and matching is adapted to the needs and preferences of participants.

The organisation places strong emphasis on empowerment beyond technical skills, supporting women in developing confidence, autonomy, and a sense of legitimacy in their entrepreneurial roles. This is achieved through coaching, co-development workshops, and reflection on topics such as financial positioning and professional identity.

Reciprocity is a core principle of the organisation. Participants are encouraged to take on both learning and contributing roles, for example through facilitating workshops or engaging in the organisation of activities. This approach strengthens ownership and collective learning. In addition, the organisation promotes peer support as a way to reduce isolation. Practices such as the “Binômat” pairing system allow participants to support each other before entering formal mentoring relationships, reinforcing community ties and mutual support.



Portrait of Espoir Avenir



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
social inclusion,
employment integration

TEAM
14 employees
(9 men, 5 women),
11 volunteers

CITY
Fresnes-sur-Escaut,
France

WEBSITE
association-espoiravenir.fr

Presentation of the organisation

Espoir Avenir is a Social Integration Workshop (ACI) operating within the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). The organisation adapts, innovates, and promotes diversity, while facing resistance and constraints in a sector marked by precariousness and occupational stereotypes. Its mission is to support women and men who have been away from the job market (due to health issues, mobility, childcare, exclusion, addiction, past imprisonment, etc.) in accessing employment through activities such as construction, landscaping, eco-grazing, cutting and selling firewood, waste management, highway work, etc.

Equality was not originally a priority, but it has become a key focus, supported by management and institutional projects (e.g. calls for projects from the Valenciennes metropolitan area, awareness-raising, and training).

“Thinking about gender equality means improving working conditions for everyone. Making progress on this issue also means making collective progress on other types of diversity and inclusion!”

Recruitment

Job offers are always written in masculine/feminine form with an explicit mention of the desire for the organisation's commitment to gender diversity within teams. *Espoir Avenir* has also tested alternative recruitment methods, such as skills-based recruitment without CVs, removing gendered information. This approach has contributed to increasing women's participation in certain sectors, such as eco-grazing.

The organisation holds state approval corresponding to 46.98 full-time equivalent positions, representing approximately 60 individuals engaged in integration programmes working 24-26 hours per week. Between January and June 2025, the workforce consisted of 24% women and 76% men. This represents a significant increase in the share of women compared to previous levels (11%), demonstrating the impact of targeted recruitment efforts.



Salary practices

The organisation strictly applies the collective agreement and provides identical bonuses for all permanent and temporary employees. There is no internal progression planned, as the organisation operates with a largely horizontal model. An equality officer has been established with The Works Council (CSE) whose mission is to improve employee integration and respond to equality-related needs.

Menstruation

The organisation is in the process of providing free sanitary products to address menstrual poverty. Health workshops are organised to raise awareness and support wellbeing.

Equality practices

In partnership with the *Galilée*⁴ (through four half-days, funded by Agglomération de Valenciennes⁵), *Espoir Avenir* has developed a structured approach to equality. This includes defining key concepts, concluding self-assessment on perceptions of equality, and developing a concrete action plan to adapt activities and working conditions. Particular attention was given to equipment and accessibility, ensuring that tools, machines, and working environments are suitable for all employees. Supervisors use observation sheets to identify barriers in tasks and propose adaptations, including improvements in reception conditions such as locker rooms, toilets, and waste disposal systems.

An equality action plan has been implemented, including team training, awareness-raising among partner organisations, gradual adaptation of activities, and inclusive communication in job offers. An equality officer has been appointed and is visible within the organisation, providing support, guidance, and intervention in cases of difficulty, including harassment or sexism.

Additional support is provided for childcare, including assistance with administrative procedures, connections to local childcare services, and flexible scheduling, particularly for single parents. Daily practices also reflect attention to equality, including the shared distribution of informal tasks and pairing team members for mutual support. The organisation adopts a flexible and responsive approach to work-life balance, adapting working conditions to individual needs through flexible hours, partial remote working where possible, and adjustments for parental responsibilities.



⁴ Galilée is an organisation committed to enabling everyone to contribute to the life and development of our towns and villages by fostering economic, social, and citizens' initiatives

⁵ <https://www.valenciennes-metropole.fr> and <https://www.valenciennes-metropole.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RAPPORT-2020-SITUATION-EGALITE-F-H-VF.pdf>

Portrait of Formeville



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
Provides training, supervision, and team support, mainly in the areas of communication, conflict management, and leadership

TEAM
5 staff members
(3 women, 2 men)

CITY
Brussels,
Belgium

WEBSITE
formeville.be

Presentation of the organisation

Formeville is a small non-profit organisation specialised in training, supervision, and team support, particularly in the fields of social work, communication, conflict management, and leadership. Rather than approaching its work through the lens of gender categories, *Formeville* focuses on individuals and group dynamics. Equality is treated as a transversal principle, with the aim of enabling each person, regardless of gender, to express themselves, reflect on their practices, and develop professionally.



Recruitment

Recruitment at *Formeville* is strictly based on skills, experience, and professional outlook. Job offers are written in a gender-neutral way, and gender is never considered a recruitment criterion. While diversity and team balance are considered valuable, they are not prioritised over competencies. No standardised evaluation grids are used, as the organisation considers that gender-related bias is best addressed by focusing on professional qualifications. Through its training activities, the association also contributes to raising awareness of gender and diversity issues when these topics are relevant to the organisations it supports.

Parental leave

Formeville applies Belgian legal provisions regarding maternity and parental leave, relying on the legal framework as a clear and shared reference. As a small team, the organisation prioritises dialogue and collective discussion to respond to individual situations, including family-related emergencies. This may also involve open dialogue with clients to adapt the training schedule if such an emergency happens. Trust and flexibility guide internal arrangements, with formal rules being activated only when required. This approach reflects a reliance on mutual respect combined with legal clarity.

Menstruation

Formeville promotes flexibility when a staff member is unwell, regardless of the cause. This applies equally to menstruation-related discomfort and other health conditions, recognising that effective professional engagement depends on both physical and mental well-being. Menstruation is not a topic commonly discussed within the organisation, but emphasis is placed on the importance of having a trusted person to speak to if needed. Rather than formalising all possible situations, *Formeville* favours case-by-case dialogue within a relationship of trust.

Equality practices

In its daily functioning, *Formeville* approaches equality through attentiveness and responsiveness rather than highly formalised procedures. Sexist language or behaviour is rare but addressed when it occurs. Tasks, roles in meetings, and responsibilities during activities are distributed based on skills and professional competencies, rather than gender. Inclusive language is systematically used in recruitment and communication. Beyond its internal functioning, the organisation promotes equality through its training programmes, which address gender, racialisation, disability, and other forms of discrimination in diverse group contexts. The association emphasises the importance of listening to individuals who experience discrimination and responding promptly to problematic situations. The Belgian legal system is used as a point of reference to ensure fairness and accountability.

Portrait of **Aθenian Gestalt**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY

**raising awareness on the
equality of all genders,
international psychotherapy
& educational programmes**

TEAM

**2 co-owners
& co-creators**

CITY

**Athens,
Greece**

WEBSITE

atheniangestalt.com

Presentation of the organisation

Aθenian Gestalt is a partnership organisation offering psychotherapy and educational programmes at an international level, raising awareness about the equality of all genders, sexual orientations, gender expressions, and gender characteristics. Through practices such as affirmative therapy, affirmative training and educational seminars, the organisation aims to create safer and more inclusive spaces, particularly for intersex individuals, who are often discriminated against. This work takes place in a broader social context where gender and inclusion continue to be shaped by stereotypes and social norms.

“Any expression or gender identity that is outside the binary creates a stereotype, and stereotypes directly create exclusion.”

Recruitment

Since the team of *Aθenian Gestalt* is very small, there has been no need to publish job advertisements so far. However, they emphasise that recruitment processes should be non-binary and non-gendered as gender should not define a person's ability to perform a role. The organisation also highlights the importance of using inclusive language to avoid reinforcing stereotypes about who is expected to apply. To support this approach, *Aθenian Gestalt* provides training and workshops for organisations on using gender-neutral and inclusive language.

Salary practices

Athenian Gestalt highlights that barriers related to gender identity often emerge before issues of promotion or salary are even considered. Access to employment itself can be limited, particularly for trans individuals, who may face exclusion during recruitment processes, including at early stages such as initial contact. For many individuals, “to get to the point of getting a promotion or asking for a raise, we first need to be hired, and usually trans people in particular are essentially excluded from the hiring process itself and often directly from the phone, especially if their documents do not match their gender identity.” And even if they do get work, the organisation emphasises that intersex people may be seen as unsuitable for promotion, because they may stand out too much, because they may move around too much, because their voice may be higher or deeper, or because their appearance may be perceived as more feminine. An example of a measure addressing these inequalities is the initiative by the Municipality of Athens with DYPA⁶. Under this programme, when a company hires a trans person registered as unemployed, up to 75% of salary and social security contributions are covered for two years. This aims to reduce structural barriers in the labour market and encourage more inclusive hiring practices. “People who are not cis men usually have to try twice or three times as hard to achieve the same social results, in any role or position.”



Menstruation

To address stigma around menstruation, *Athenian Gestalt* promotes inclusive infrastructure and language. The organisation highlights the importance of providing gender-neutral sanitary facilities, including different types of restrooms, allowing individuals to choose according to their needs and identities. For example, having restrooms with urinals and restrooms without urinals are gender-neutral, and each person, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, can choose to use either a toilet with a urinal or a toilet without a urinal. This approach recognises that menstruation should not be understood exclusively as a binary or gender-specific experience. Not all people who menstruate identify as women, and inclusive practices must take this into account. The organisation emphasises the importance of ensuring that policies related to menstruation, including leave provisions, are accessible to all individuals who may need them, regardless of gender identity.

Equality practices

Within its training programmes, *Athenian Gestalt* places strong emphasis on gender-neutral and inclusive language as a key tool for promoting equality. The organisation considers that transforming communication - both written and interpersonal - is a fundamental step toward creating inclusive environments. Continuous training and reflection are central to this process. The organisation also promotes participatory approaches, emphasising that individuals directly concerned by specific issues should be included in discussions and decision-making processes. "When conducting training on LGBTQ+ issues, include LGBTQ+ people; when conducting training on disabilities, include people with disabilities!"

In its internal functioning, *Athenian Gestalt* promotes the equal distribution of tasks among all team members. Responsibilities are shared based on capacity rather than gender, and tasks are organised on a rotation basis, with adjustments made only in cases of specific physical limitations.

Portrait of **L'Association 3cm**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
**Local development,
sustainable
development, culture**

TEAM
**1 employee,
5 co-presidents**

CITY
**Lille (Fives
neighbourhood),
France**

WEBSITE
**[asso3cm.fr/
page/1204368-asso-3cm](https://asso3cm.fr/page/1204368-asso-3cm)**

Presentation of the organisation

L'Association 3cm aims to create social ties through the Café Nomade activity and cultural workshops, while also supporting the network of social economy organisations at the local level. It promotes sustainable development through donations, reuse, and upcycling activities and provides support in communication and graphic design, as well as training modules and workshops on the social and solidarity economy, gender equality, and environmental issues.

Equality practices

Through its local initiatives and training activities, *L'Association 3cm* demonstrates that the creation of safe and inclusive spaces is a key tool for addressing gender-based power relations. Le Café Nomade⁷ (Nomadic Café) brings together residents of the neighbourhood in informal settings. Activities often begin with a collective walk through this post-industrial neighbourhood, followed by visits to participants' homes, fostering trust, connection and open exchange. An inclusive and safe atmosphere is supported by clearly defined community guidelines signed by both participants and hosts. These emphasise respect and explicitly prohibit sexist, racist, or homophobic behaviour.

The organisation also develops structured activities to support individuals in vulnerable situations, particularly women. For example, pitching exercises are designed to help project leaders present their funding requests within a supportive framework. These activities

⁷ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_bW6XOuroDPqYrbeOf1VBnqhtu0mDaWP/view?usp=sharing

recognise the challenges women face when engaging with decision-making environments that are often male-dominated.

“Having to present your project to funders is often a difficult step, especially at the beginning. The attitude of the interlocutors - often male and in decision-making positions - can seriously undermine self-confidence.”

During one pitch exercise for project leaders, a participant became emotionally affected. Due to the clear and supportive framework⁸ established in advance, the group was able to respond with care and support, and the participant's emotional response was acknowledged as valid.

The organisation also recognises the importance of women-only spaces in certain contexts, creating environments that support self-expression, confidence-building, and open discussion of sensitive topics. Inclusive communication is consistently applied across both internal and external activities. The organisation uses systematic inclusive language in its communications and training, despite occasional criticism, as a deliberate strategy to promote visibility and inclusion.



8 https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CpD78c0TpyB-WH6qCknWCqk6FpdGqSGD/view?usp=drive_link

Portrait of **Les Jantes du Nord**



FIELD OF ACTIVITY
Bicycle repair

TEAM
**30-50 volunteers,
500 members,
2 employees**

CITY
**Lille,
France**

WEBSITE
lesjantesdunord.org/

Presentation of the organisation

Les Jantes du Nord (The Rims of the North) is a non-profit organisation based in Lille whose purpose is to support bicycle repair, as well as the sharing of tools and knowledge related to bike mechanics. The association has between 30 and 50 active volunteers, 2 employees, 500 members (users who access the repair workshops), and is governed by a board of directors operating on a collegial basis. In addition to the board, several thematic committees operate as needed, including Human Resources, Volunteering Coordination, Communication, Finance, Activities, and a Feminist Committee. *Les Jantes du Nord* runs four weekly sessions, led by volunteers and/or employees, in a space provided by the City of Lille. An additional weekly session takes place in Villeneuve d'Ascq, in premises located in the former *Maison des Droits de l'Homme* (House of Human Rights). The organisation also develops paid mobile workshops in partnership with municipalities, companies, non-profit organisations, and schools. These activities expand access to repair services and promote knowledge-sharing in different contexts, making it easier to reach people.



Recruitment

In a still male-dominated environment, the recruitment of a female mechanic represented an important step in affirming the association's commitment to feminist values. The Human Resources Committee formalises recruitment processes, while another employee is responsible for formatting and writing them using inclusive language. After this process, these are published on a non-discriminatory platform such as "[Heureux Cyclage](#)" (Happy cycling in English), a national network of participatory and community-based bicycle repair workshops. Recruitment decisions are guided primarily by the association's values, alongside skills and motivation.

Salary practices

Salaries follow the [ECLAT](#) collective agreement with increases based on skills and responsibilities. However, internal observations indicate that differences in self-confidence and gender-related social norms may still influence access to promotion opportunities.

Parental leave

Due to its small size, the association does not have formalised parental leave policies. However, practices remain flexible, as illustrated by a male employee taking paternity leave.

Menstruation

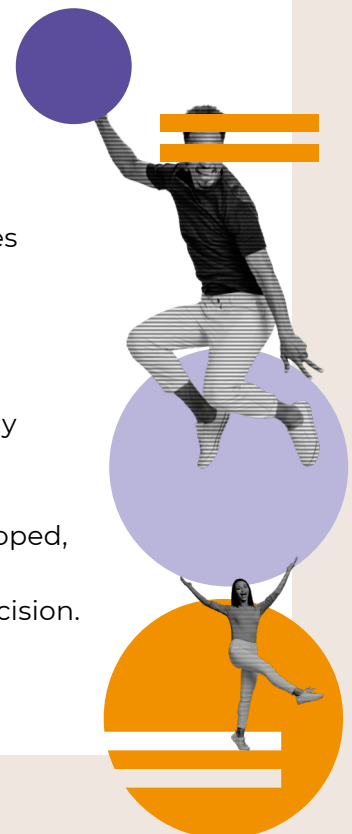
The organisation adopts a flexible approach to ensure everyone feels comfortable, regardless of their status as a volunteer, intern, or employee. Working hours have been adapted in specific cases, such as for an apprentice experiencing endometriosis. This flexibility is supported by a strong volunteer base, which enables adjustments in participation. Sanitary products are available in the gender-neutral toilets, and menstruation is not taboo. If inappropriate comments occur, members step in to remind everyone of the rules.

Inclusion, feminisation, and prevention

Equality and inclusion are integral to the organisation's culture and way of working and are formalised through statutes, internal regulations, and a charter displayed at the organisation's entrance. The Feminist Committee promotes equality and prevents discrimination. It organises monthly bicycle repair sessions in chosen-gender spaces, reserved for women, trans, non-binary and intersex individuals, called "la perm des genTes", "so that everyone feels free to learn and practise." The team also holds discussions on feminist issues and raises awareness among volunteers through a dedicated fifteen minutes conversation about inclusiveness at the beginning of mechanical training sessions. "As a result, it is not only the people who are already interested who take part." This initiative promotes an inclusive atmosphere and aims to improve practices collectively.

Attention is given to avoiding gender stereotypes in the organisation of tasks and the distribution of roles. Responsibilities are not assigned based on gender, and key roles such as note-taking, meeting facilitation and timekeeping are shared on a rotating basis within the collective governance. "In the collective board, there are currently more men than women. This is not because the organisation is not open, but because fewer women come forward. The organisation highlights the importance of gender balance and reflects on the fact that men may be more likely to speak or make decisions."

The charter reminds everyone of the importance of respectful behaviour, free of racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks. This charter is displayed at the workshop entrance, and members are required to read it. "We observe that, as in society more broadly, some volunteers may reproduce sexist behaviours. This requires constant vigilance." This is why the organisation aims to strengthen awareness-raising activities on inclusivity before mechanical training sessions for volunteers. "Our goal remains self-management: everyone is expected to take responsibility during workshop sessions, without any hierarchy between volunteers. The workshop is a shared tool for all users." Finally, a reporting procedure for sexist behaviour or sexual harassment is currently being developed, which will allow the Feminist Committee to provide an advisory opinion before the board collectively takes a decision.



ABOUT THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Maison des Associations de Tourcoing

The Maison des Associations – the House of Associations – of Tourcoing (Mda), based in northern France, is a local resource centre supporting the voluntary, community and social economy sector. It works with more than 1500 non-profit organisations by providing advice, training, networking opportunities and project support.

The Mda's work is based on cooperation and learning by doing, inspired by popular education approaches that value collective learning. Equality, inclusion and the fight against discrimination are central to its approach. The Mda supports non-profit organisations through exchange, dialogue and shared experiences, helping them become more confident and able to respond to local needs.

We place a strong focus on developing inclusive projects. The Mda leads the Erasmus+ project *Egal'Asso* (2024-2026), which supports associations in integrating gender equality into their practices through practical tools and training. It also coordinates the European Interreg project *BELIEVE*, which promotes volunteering to strengthen employability, particularly for people furthest from the labour market. In addition, the Mda develops initiatives to make volunteering more accessible to people with disabilities through co-designed tools and inclusive approaches.

Building on previous European experiences such as *REQUAPASS* (skills recognition through volunteering) and *TEDDA* (ecological transition and citizen engagement), the Mda develops practical, accessible tools adaptable to different contexts. At the local level, it organises training sessions for volunteers and young people on topics such as civic engagement, ecological transition and digital skills, while contributing to the Guid'Asso network to improve access to support for associations. It also supports young people in developing their own projects, particularly through junior associations, by providing guidance and training.

Through its partnerships with associations, public institutions and local actors, the Mda strengthens cooperation and widens the reach of its actions. It supports individuals in developing skills and confidence, while helping organisations adopt more inclusive practices, notably through European initiatives such as *Egal'Asso*.

Through its work, the Mda contributes to building a more inclusive, participatory and solidarity-based society. It promotes volunteering as a driver of social change and supports more equitable access to civic engagement.

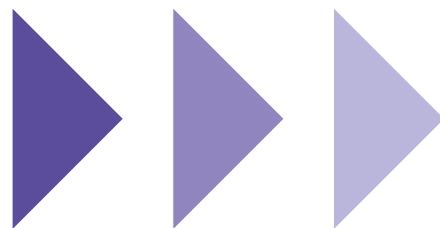


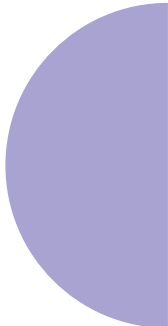
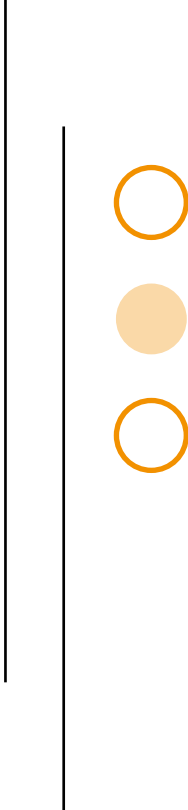
Hellenic Youth Participation (HYP)

Hellenic Youth Participation (HYP), based in Athens, Greece, stands as a pioneering organisation at the intersection of gender equality, non-formal education, and civic engagement. Operating in a context where training, empowerment, and gender-aware professional development are still emerging fields in Greece, HYP has positioned itself as a leader in designing and implementing innovative, experience-based methodologies that address real societal needs. Through its work, the organisation bridges the gap between individual transformation and structural change, creating pathways for participants to both grow personally and act collectively.

Its flagship initiatives, such as *ReStart Your Career* (a structured programme supporting women in overcoming labour market barriers through mentoring, coaching, and employability skills development), *Gynaikonitis* (a women's group exploring cultural and structural inequalities affecting women's professional and personal lives), and *Eudaimonisses* (a peer network of professional women focused on collective care, connection, and mutual support), demonstrate how HYP has created sustainable models that go beyond traditional training by integrating identity work, peer support, and collective empowerment. These initiatives function as a living ecosystem where participants evolve from beneficiaries to contributors, strengthening both individual agency and community cohesion.

HYP works primarily with adults, with a particular focus on women, youth workers, adult educators, trainers, coaches, and facilitators who multiply this impact within their communities. This ecosystem is further enriched by *Literary Witches* (a community-based initiative promoting female authors and critical reflection on gender through reading groups and creative engagement), which expands empowerment through cultural and intellectual participation.





European projects such as *GRL Power Reloaded* (a capacity-building and campaign initiative addressing gender stereotypes in media and everyday narratives through training and large-scale digital outreach) and *Level Up Your Finances* (an educational project enhancing financial literacy for women through interactive and non-formal learning tools) demonstrate HYP's capacity to address complex societal issues, from gender stereotypes to financial independence, through scalable and impactful interventions that combine awareness, skills development, and behavioural change. Through its European collaborations and Erasmus+ projects, HYP contributes to shared European priorities such as gender equality, inclusion, and quality non-formal education, while adapting these frameworks to the Greek context.



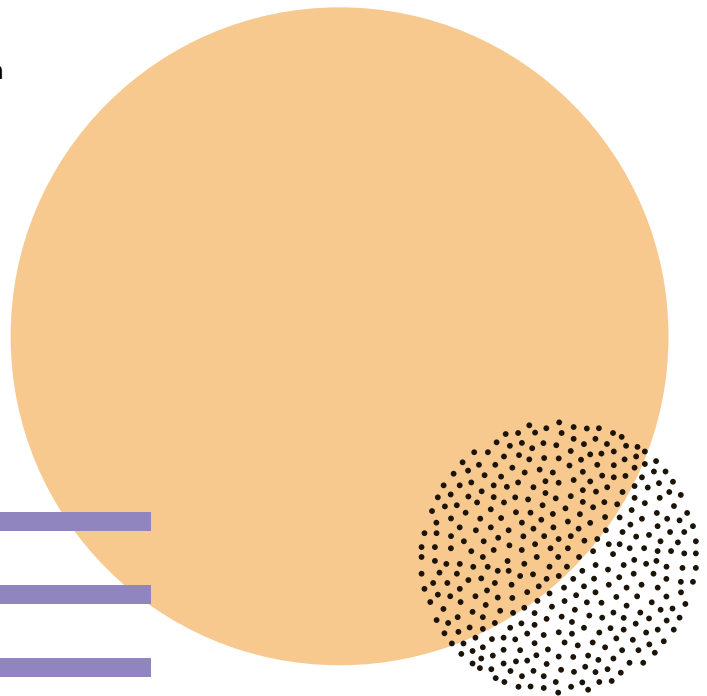
HYP's contribution to systemic change is further reflected in its involvement in Gender Equality in Associations (Egal'Asso). Through this initiative, HYP extends its impact beyond direct beneficiaries to the organisational level, strengthening the capacity of civil society actors to integrate gender equality into their structures, policies and everyday practices. What distinguishes HYP's approach is its ability to connect personal development, community-building, and structural awareness into cohesive and transferable learning models. HYP's work has been recognised as good practice at both the national and European levels, reinforcing its role as a reliable and innovative actor shaping new approaches to inclusion, participation, and social change.



CORIF

CO.R.I.F. (Research, Engineering, and Training Council for Gender Equality), based in Lille, France, is a pioneering organization at the intersection of professional equality, lifelong learning, and social transformation. In a context where gender diversity in the workplace, women's economic empowerment, and gender-sensitive professional development remain major challenges, CO.R.I.F. has established itself over the past 40 years as a leader in the design and implementation of innovative methodologies, based on research, engineering, tool creation, and field intervention. Through its work, the organization bridges the gap between individual empowerment and structural change, offering participants the opportunity to secure their career paths and influence their environments.

Through its European collaborations and Erasmus+ projects, CO.R.I.F. actively contributes to shared European priorities such as gender equality, inclusion, and quality non-formal education, while adapting these transnational frameworks and tools to the local and regional French context.



Its flagship initiatives demonstrate how CO.R.I.F. has created sustainable models that go beyond traditional support by integrating work on self-esteem, peer support, and the deconstruction of gender roles:

+ Gender-Adapted Mobilization Pathways and Skills Assessments:

structured support (combining interviews, tests, and sophrology) that helps women seeking employment or employed to overcome obstacles in the job market, enhance their skills, and open up new career opportunities, particularly in non-stereotypical professions;

+ Empowerment Workshops and Support Groups:

collective spaces for co-creation and mutual support that foster the development of shared strategies for accessing sustainable and quality employment;

+ HR Diagnostics and Equality Audits:

cutting-edge expertise that analyzes recruitment, compensation, and career advancement practices in order to implement concrete action plans within local authorities, government ministries, businesses, and organizations in the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). This ecosystem engages a wide range of key stakeholders who amplify the association's impact within society: from women in career transition to career guidance and integration professionals, as well as teachers and business leaders. It is enriched by the design and dissemination of innovative educational tools (guides, facilitation kits, e-learning modules) and by the production of territorial studies and publications, which foster critical thinking and inform policy recommendations.

CO.R.I.F.'s contribution

This systemic change is also reflected in its ability to network with public and private stakeholders (Regional Council, Rectorate, employment agencies) to prevent sexist behavior and establish inclusive and sustainable practices. What distinguishes CO.R.I.F.'s approach is its skill in combining individual support, strengthening partnerships, and structural awareness within coherent and transferable learning models. Recognized as a leading organization in the Hauts-de-France region and nationally, CO.R.I.F. reinforces its role as a reliable and innovative player every day, shaping new approaches to equality, diversity, and social change.

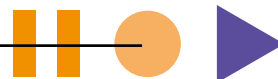
Pour La Solidarité

Over the years, PLS has developed extensive expertise in the social and labour market inclusion of vulnerable groups, notably through its MentorYouth project, a mentoring programme for young people aged 15 to 21 who are at risk of leaving school early, and MentorYou, an employment mentoring programme implemented in the Brussels-Capital Region and recently expanded to the Province of Namur. Beyond these mentoring initiatives, PLS has also built strong expertise in supporting young adults through projects such as 100%Jeunes and Marolles&Ssens, the latter focusing on the social and professional reintegration of young people with a judicial background from the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Marolles and Anneessens.

Since its establishment, PLS has been actively engaged in promoting gender equality. At the European level, it has recently contributed to the CAPSE project, which promotes gender equality within the governing bodies of social economy organisations, as well as to the Join the Game project, aimed at encouraging young women to pursue careers in traditionally male-dominated professions, and the MEET project, which seeks to prevent gendered Islamophobia. Between 2020 and 2022, PLS coordinated the ACTIV project, supporting

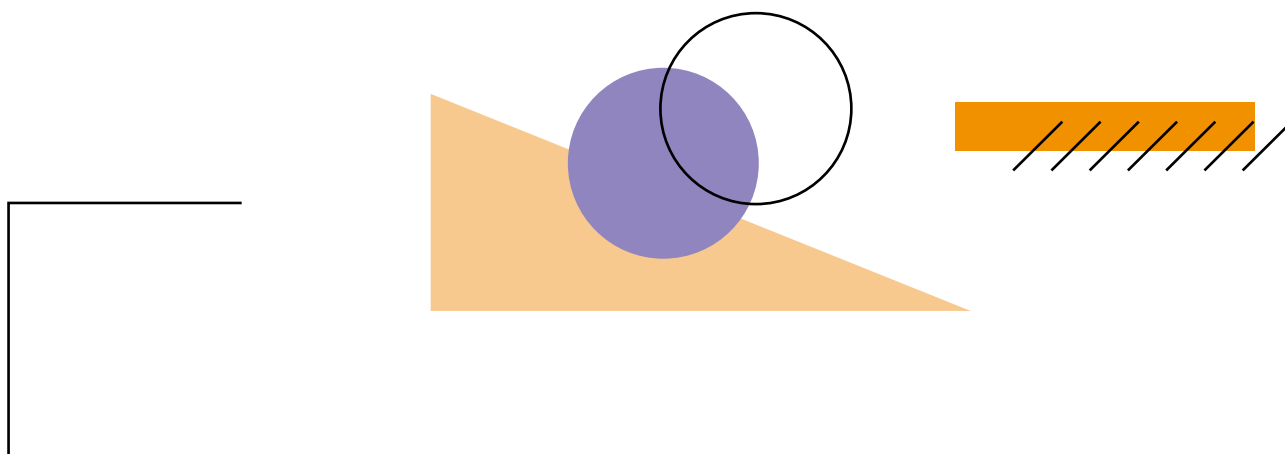
the labour market reintegration of women affected by domestic violence. Building on this experience, it subsequently launched the CEASE network in Belgium, which provides training and support to human resources professionals on addressing domestic violence consequences in the workplace.

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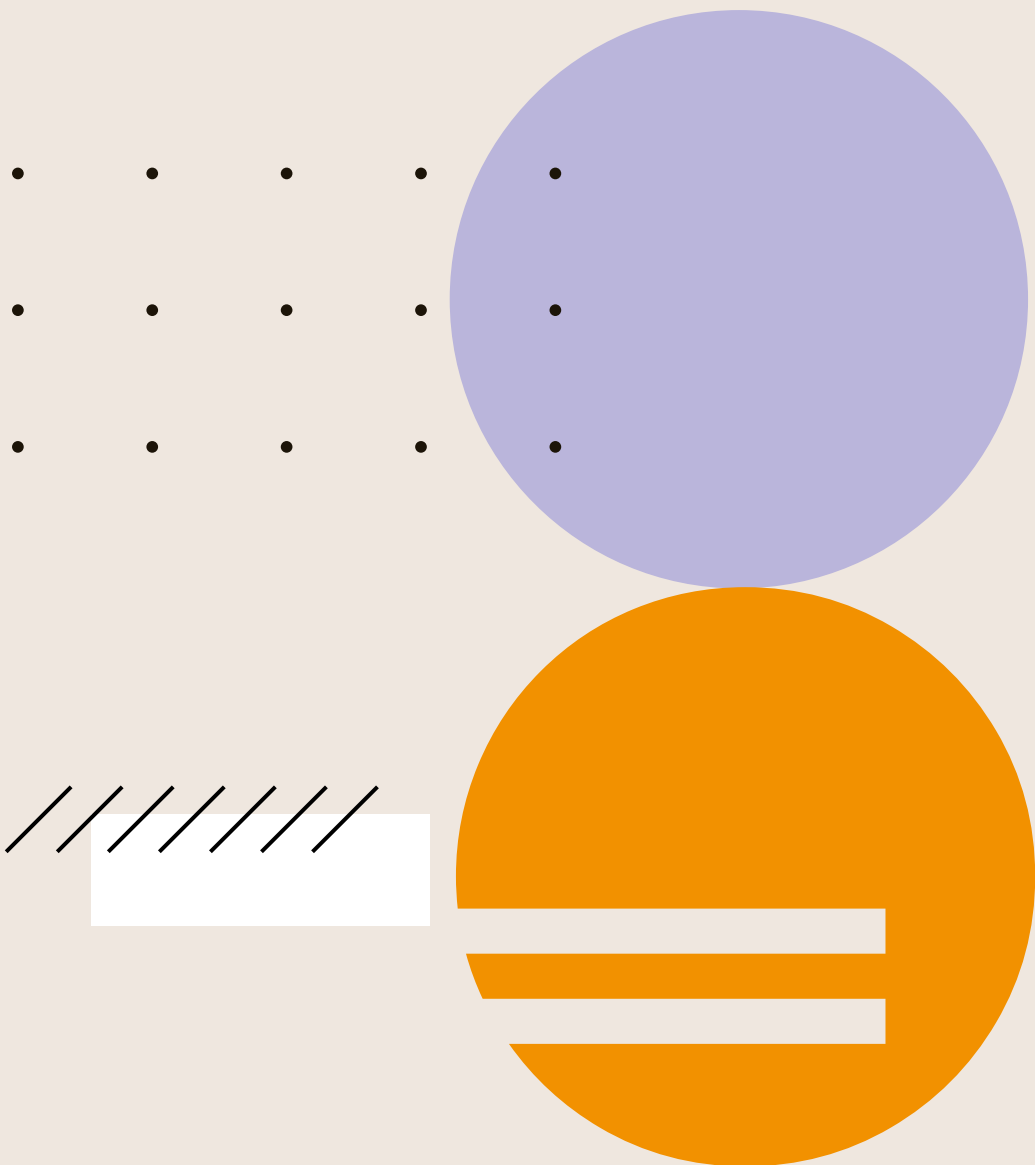
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The think & do tank is also actively involved in supporting single-parent families through initiatives such as Kid's Friendly, a label promoting child-friendly public spaces; Un premier pas ("A First Step"), which organises dance and body expression workshops for single mothers; Monopedia, a project encouraging single mothers to claim their social rights; and Voix des Mères ("Voices of Mothers"), an initiative aimed at creating a collaborative media platform led by single mothers themselves.





GENDER EQUALITY
IN ORGANIZATIONS



Gender Equality in Associations
THE GALLERY OF INSPIRING PORTRAITS