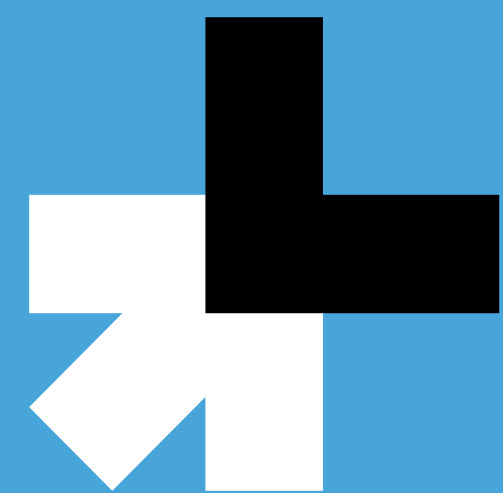


**Proven  
Solution**

Ending Gender-Based Violence



**HeForShe**

# **Finland**

**Integrating and mainstreaming  
gender equality to strengthen  
women's economic leadership**

## Global Context

**While progress has been made in several areas of gender equality, women's participation in political and economic life continues to be limited and the gender digital divide remains.**

Women still spend approximately two to ten times more time on unpaid domestic and care work than their male counterparts do. Globally, only 36% of senior managers in private companies and senior public officials are women. A female leader runs only 18% of global private companies.

One of the main causes limiting gender equality and women's economic empowerment and leadership is the lack of gender mainstreaming in legislation, policies, programs and actions – a whole-of-society approach.

The key factor in Finland's rise from poverty to prosperity is our commitment to and gradual progress towards gender equality and equality in general over the past decades. In the past one hundred years, Finland has transformed from a poor agricultural country to a world leader in innovation, education and individual freedom.

“One should not think about equality of women and equality of men, but equality as a whole, without distinctions on whose equality is in question. Equality requires a comprehensive whole-of-society approach, not a sectoral one. A starting point for positive development is adopting this type of thinking and translating actions of advancing equality into practice with this in mind”.

**H.E.Sauli Niinistö**  
**President of Finland**



**One should not think about equality of women and equality of men, but equality as a whole, without distinctions on whose equality is in question.**

H.E.Sauli Niinistö, President of Finland

## Key Stages of Implementation

**We need to continue to advocate bringing everybody on board for gender equality. Commitment of all actors and at all levels, especially those in senior leadership, is crucial.**

### Step 1 Committing to gender equality throughout society

The key factor for Finland's success in our rise from poverty to prosperity is our commitment to and gradual progress towards gender equality and equality in general over the past decades. In the past one hundred years, Finland has transformed from a poor agricultural country to a world leader in innovation, education and individual freedom.

The importance of commitment to gender equality cannot be emphasized too much. We need to continue to advocate bringing everybody on board for gender equality. Commitment of all actors and at all levels, especially those in senior leadership, is crucial.

### Step 2 Legislating for workplace equality

Finnish workplaces which regularly employ more than 30 employees are required by law to draw up a biannual equality plan which pays particular attention to wages and other conditions of employment, and which implements practical equality-promoting measures.

A nation's laws shift norms, reinforce positive messages about gender equality, and provide a framework for achieving progress. Each piece of legislation forms a new stage in the movement towards sustainable gender equality.

### Step 3 Mainstreaming gender equality

The Finnish government has adopted a Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2020–2023, in which gender mainstreaming is one of the key action areas. All ministries have set up equality working groups and concrete gender mainstreaming plans.

Several tools have been developed to support gender mainstreaming throughout the work of the government. The guidelines for drafting legislation stipulate that gender impacts must be assessed in law drafting. The guidelines of the Ministry of Finance for drawing up budget proposals include a request to present a summary of activities with significant gender impact. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has developed a handbook Gender Glasses in Use to support gender mainstreaming in the ministries and their work.

Ensuring that gender equality is an integral aspect of all government work enables the country to move forward on a wide front. Mainstreaming also encourages departments to work together and learn from each other. Transparency of policy and its implementation is also improved, which makes the government and its mechanisms more understandable and accountable to citizens.

### Step 4 Gathering relevant data

Sex-disaggregated data is necessary to carry out gender analysis and gender impact assessment. It is also important that different tools for gender mainstreaming are developed and properly used.

Gender mainstreaming requires knowledge so that informed action can be taken and impact measured. Regular standardised data collection drives progress and helps to inspire new actions.

## Resources

Gender Glasses in Use: a handbook to support gender equality work at Finnish ministries

 <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/74721>

## Contact

Hanna Onwen-Huma  
Senior Specialist  
Gender Equality Unit  
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
P.O. Box 33, 00023 Government  
Finland

**Email:** [hanna.onwen-huma@stm.fi](mailto:hanna.onwen-huma@stm.fi)