



FIPWiSE

Advancing women in science
and education worldwide

The FIPWiSE toolkit in action: Short learning resources to support positive work environments for women in science and education

Factor 3: Creating supportive and safe working environments

Building supportive and safe working environments requires a comprehensive, multi-level approach involving institutions, organisations, leaders, and individuals. This overview outlines key actions that can drive inclusivity — from institutional frameworks and policy implementation to leadership engagement, outcome measurement, and the essential role individuals play in creating lasting change.

Key actions that institutions can take to ensure sustained progress creating supportive and safe working environments

- Organisations can establish clear policies on zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, invest in mental health support, create inclusive spaces such as baby care, breastfeeding areas and daycare centres, and ensure regular training on equity and inclusion.
- Feedback systems must be confidential, accessible, and acted upon.
- Organisations can regularly review the composition of their teams and management for balance and diversity.

Translating policies around supportive and safe working environments into everyday workplace practices

- Policies must be accompanied by ongoing training, accountability mechanisms, and role modelling by leadership.
- Safe reporting channels and team-wide inclusion dialogues should be normalised to make values part of daily operations

Best ways to engage leadership and stakeholders in the implementation of supportive and safe working environments

- Data can be presented on the benefits of supportive environments, including retention and performance.
- Involving leaders in co-creating solutions and providing them with tools to model inclusive behaviours and sponsor safe space initiatives will also be beneficial.

- Leaders can be reminded that organisations will benefit from a range of leadership styles and that “one size doesn’t fit all”.
- In addition, sharing positive outcomes and success stories from other institutions can act as a form of motivation to improve steps towards implementation.

Measuring success and tracking improvement

- Tracking employee satisfaction surveys, anonymous feedback mechanisms, incident reports, and retention of employees, especially those from underrepresented groups, can provide data to measure success.
- Additionally, organisations can set benchmarks, review trends regularly, and adjust interventions accordingly.

Strategies, tools, frameworks, or resources for better implementation of supportive and safe working environments

- Gender audits, psychological safety assessments, DEI toolkits, anonymous suggestion platforms, and mentorship programmes can be useful tools.
- In addition, partnering with organisations who are experienced in workplace safety and inclusion could provide tailored support.
- The use of anonymised CVs or application processes during recruitment or when considering individuals for promotion can also help.

The role of individuals in enabling change

- Individuals can model inclusive behaviour, call out bias respectfully, support colleagues, and use available reporting systems.
- Being an ally and promoting a culture of respect helps drive collective change.