



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 5: Women in leadership

Supporting women in leadership requires a comprehensive, multi-level approach involving institutions, organisations, leaders, and individuals. This overview outlines key actions that can drive lasting advancements in gender equity—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 towards supporting women in leadership

- Institutions can embed gender equity in strategy with clear targets and accountability.
- They can also streamline transparent recruitment and promotion processes.
- They can integrate mentorship, sponsorship and bias training into leadership development.
- Institutions can also cultivate an inclusive culture supported by flexible work–life policies.

Translating policies around women in leadership into everyday workplace practices

Policies around women in leadership can be translated into everyday workplace practice by:

- Training and empowering managers to apply leadership-equity policies;
- Normalising flexible work, parental leave, and equal development opportunities for all genders;
- Establishing safe feedback channels;
- Maintaining continuous review loops to refine practices;
- Reinforcing inclusive behaviours through visible leadership role-modelling.

Best ways to engage leadership and stakeholders in the implementation of better opportunities for women in leadership

- Leadership and stakeholders can showcase data on leadership gaps and linking equity to business innovation, patient outcomes, and key performance indicators.
- They can embed equity targets into shared KPIs.

- They can also foster collective ownership of progress among leaders and stakeholders and challenge bias by modelling and reinforcing inclusive behaviours daily.

Measuring success and tracking improvement

- Success and improvements can be measured over time through collecting and transparently reviewing data on gender representation, promotion, retention and policy uptake.
- Staff surveys and focus groups can also be conducted to gauge perceptions and barriers.
- Integrating insights into employee satisfaction metrics and using the findings to refine policies and drive continuous improvement can be useful.

Strategies, tools, frameworks, or resources that support better implementation of policies around women in leadership

These include:

- Structured tools (e.g., Gender Equality Framework, Athena SWAN)
- Leadership development programmes for all
- Access to mentoring, coaching and peer networks
- Integration of equal-opportunity principles into well-being and culture strategies.

The role of individuals in enabling change

- Individuals can challenge bias and model inclusive behaviours.
- They can amplify colleagues' voices in meetings and projects.
- They can mentor peers across seniority levels.
- They can advocate for equitable policies and set an example through their actions.