

Motto: Realize equality, diversity and inclusion while fostering innovation, prosperity and friendship!

MeOut Group Gender Equality Plan (2022-2027)

Adopted for the purposes of Horizon Europe

Adopted by the Board on 20 December

2021

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1. LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

The European Commission (EC) has stipulated that, starting in 2022, every organization must have a **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** in order to be eligible for Horizon Europe funding. The requirement is part of the plans drawn up by the European Commission to actively promote gender equality (Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; Gender Equality in the European Research Area).

Our approach, values and mission have already been in line with the objectives declared by the EU, but in this document we further emphasize all of this and we describe their key components in more detail.

Our culture is based on hard work, commitment and ownership. We have the mindset of finding solutions. The amazing part is that we're more than just colleagues, we're highly curious and creative individuals committed to build up new initiatives, which are beneficial for the communities and at the same time for personal development.

MeOut Group is one multinational Team and a network of organizations! Our goal is to contribute to the sustainable development of societies by managing (full cycle) education and innovation projects.

In this regard, MeOut Group is committed to implementing the gender equality strategy of the European Union in its own institutional system. MeOut Group commits itself to funding the GEP's actions fully until the end of Horizon Europe and to publish an annual progress report online to document the implementation of the GEP.

As a responsible organization MeOut Group is conscious of its responsibilities regarding equalities as a place of work and a place of cooperation, a place of mutual possibilities, simultaneously characterized by innovation, internationalization and progression. This GEP reaffirms MeOut Group's commitment to equalities in general and to gender equality in particular.

On behalf of the Board and the team members of the MeOut

Group President

Budapest, 20 December 2021

2. BASIC INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Since 2013, MeOut Group has been working on building bridges between communities and countries mainly focusing on solutions that pave the way for progress. We connect the dots locally and globally in the fields of education, innovation and entrepreneurship by facilitating mutually beneficial multisectoral global collaborations.

MeOut Group has been focusing on education and innovation in the past decade. From the operational headquarter (Budapest, Hungary) through the many activities, MeOut Group has a wide reach of regions including: The Visegrad 4 Countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic), Western-Balkan (North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), The Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), The Turkic Council States – in which Hungary is being present as an observer state, and Central Asia (Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan).

MeOut Group's main activities involve organizing hackathons (HackMeOut), ideathons (ChallengeMeOut) and other events focusing on youth, innovation and startup ecosystem. MeOut Group is also the founding body of the EuroAsian Startup Awards (EASA). The desirable goal of these activities is to foster regional and local ecosystem development.

2.1 Team members:

We are working with 53 countries and 40+ Team Members are from 8 countries.

2.1. Our main stakeholders:

1. Internal stakeholders: leadership, team members, colleagues
- 2a. Direct External stakeholders: our customers, students and adults participating in a wide range of projects, project members, startup ecosystem members, our friends and other contributors
- 2b. Indirect External stakeholders: EU, governmental and non-governmental organizations, media, natural environment

For more details see: <https://meout.org/> and <https://meout.org/legal/>

3. DEDICATED RESOURCES

MeOut Group has committed resources and expertise in gender equality to GEP implementation. Our dedicated resources encompass the subsequent categories:

3.1. Principles as strong pillars of our commitment

The Gender Equality Plan will be developed along the following principles to be followed in the implementation and monitoring of gender equality goals:

Participation: The process of developing and adopting the GEP is carried out with the involvement of employees, individual and group, collective participation. The process of establishing, implementing and monitoring the implementation of the GEP takes place in front of the entire organizational public, giving all employees the opportunity to actively participate in it. Participation is an important element of the democratic functioning of an organization, providing an opportunity for the emergence of different perspectives.

Fairness: The GEP follows the principles of fairness and equity in its objectives, actions and implementation. The relationships, procedures and programs established within the framework of the GEP operate on the principle of fair treatment, acting on a complex consideration of specific persons and specific situations.

In developing and implementing the GEP standards, they not only follow the "literal" rules, but also take a broader view of the whole situation and take into account all relevant factors that can contribute to a fairer decision and more accurate opinion.

Cooperation: The GEP is created, drafted, implemented and monitored in the form of consensual collaboration. The precondition for the implementation of the principle of cooperation is the organization of trainings and seminars that help the participants to gain access to information, to interpret data and experiences together, and to change attitudes. An essential element of cooperation is the participants' trust in each other and the presumption of goodwill. The principle of cooperation also includes rights and obligations, as well as the responsibilities of the parties to each other.

Credibility: The principles of reliability and predictability apply to the establishment, implementation and monitoring of the GEP. The data included in the gender equality plan, as well as all further research data, are authentic and authoritative, following the methodological rules of social science research.

The relationships, patterns and procedures resulting from the GEP operate in a congruent manner in accordance with the principles and objectives of the GEP and authentically represent the principle of gender equality. During the implementation of the GEP, the security of the participants, the protection of personal data, the integrity of the participants and the availability of the relationship behavior pattern established by the GEP are enhanced.

Alignment with domestic and EU directives: During the establishment, implementation and monitoring of the GEP, both domestic and EU legislation and regulations are complied with, and these form the framework for the text and implementation of the GEP. The principle of gender equality applies as a horizontal principle in all regulations, decisions and measures of the organization.

3.2. Our dedicated gender equality function

Our dedicated gender equality function is strongly related to our main strategy and in parallel we work hard to make it clear for our stakeholders and to realize that promoting gender equality is the responsibility of every staff member.

In order to reach a high quality gender equality function we made relevant steps to harmonize our structure, our values, principles and our everyday activities to realize our commitments and objectives declared in GEP.

Our gender equality structure enables us:

- to set up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP;
- to provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation;
- to cooperate with and engage stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP's measures;
- to raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality in our stakeholder community;
- to assess the progress towards gender equality in our organization.

Gender Equality Commission (members: Dorottya Túros Board member, Silvia Caddeo team member and Sándor Nagy team member)

Diversity Policy Working Group (members: Bence Labossa Board member, Budavári-Nagy Zsolt team member, Kurcinák Melissza team member)

3.3. Wider staff time

In order to design, implement, monitor our Gender Equality Plan team members from across the organization should be engaged in various steps, from reviewing existing data and practices, to identifying areas for attention and establishing the GEP's objectives. Furthermore, staff may be needed to participate in working groups to review specific issues, for example organizational culture, and to develop new policies and or practices with the input of different parts of the organization. We provide the necessary extra time as a resource for the members involved.

3.4. Gender budgeting

Gender budgeting is a management strategy aiming to integrate a gender perspective into the financial processes and procedures of institutions, including R&I organizations. It is an instrument for advancing gender equality that can create new approaches to policy and decision-making related to raising and allocating resources and identifying gender inequalities in resourcing and workload. Gender budgeting goes beyond addressing the gender gap in distributions of earnings and other remunerations among staff. Keeping this in mind, our annual budget planning processes take into consideration the above listed needs and expectations and we allocate a dedicated amount to implement the GEP.

4. DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

With the help of our data collection system on gender equality we can analyze relevant, qualitative and quantitative data which can be used for various functions including:

- The establishment of a baseline situation in relation to gender equality in the organization, against which progress can be monitored on a regular (at least annual) basis;
- Carrying out a gender equality analysis to identify areas of relative strength and weakness, which will allow better targeting of actions and priorities within the GEP and ensure that it is fully evidence-based;
- Communicating to the organization's staff, students/project participants (where relevant), other key stakeholders and the wider public about the organization's commitment to gender equality and the progress made.

MeOut Group will publish annual female/male data on staff and employees in the Annual Gender Equality Monitoring Report. This report will focus on the specific areas as follows below:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by disciplines, function and by contractual relation to the organization;
- Student/adult numbers by sex/gender in different projects;
- Wage gaps by sex/gender and job;
- Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions;
- Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in past years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organization;
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave;
- Number of absence days taken by women and men and according to absence motive;
- Number of training hours attended by women and men.

5. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

We organize the following types of annual in-house trainings:

Active bystander training

The active bystander training is open to all staff members. This training is meant to empower individuals to react well, properly upon inappropriate behavior. During the training the participant learns to recognise signs of inappropriate behavior and receives tools to discuss inappropriate behavior.

Dealing with inappropriate behavior training

This training helps staff members and especially managers to understand which behavior is inappropriate behavior, as well as what to do when they encounter it. It points out (sexual) harassment, discrimination, aggression, violence or bullying.

Intercultural competences training

There are three different trainings that address differences amongst staff and students/project participants and how to better deal with these. While the main focus is on cultural differences, some gendered stereotypes are discussed as well.

1. Developing intercultural competences for team members;
2. Intercultural competences: raising intercultural awareness for team members;
3. Intercultural competences: advanced training for team members.

6. THEMATIC AREAS OF ACTION

6.1. Measures affecting MeOut Group's organizational and institutional system

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Gender Equality Commission (GEC) Extension, updating and review of the committee's tasks.	Expand and redraft the text of the Gender Equality Plan	continuous implementation	President, GEC	checking changes to documents
Creating a special Working Group: Diversity Policy Working Group (DPWG)	Defining the task of a working group, inviting its members	the foundation was completed. Defining tasks in progress.	President, GEC	checking the declared tasks
Development and implementation of a gender data collection system	Development of new data collection aspects; set up a gender data collection system	end of the year (2022)	GEC, DPWG	monitoring the implementation of the gender data collection system

6.2. Development of organizational culture

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Implementing the principle of participation: developing the final text of the GEP with the involvement of team members	organizing and holding meetings during the GEP discussion phase	end of the year (2022)	President, GEC	preparation of reports summarizing the content of the discussions
Introduction and acceptance the principles and logic of gender equality to stakeholders	preparation of explanatory and informative background material	end of the year (2022)	GEC	completion of background material.
Development of the curriculum of the trainings and elaboration of the training process	Development of the training curriculum and process	continuous implementation	GEC, DPWG	checking the materials and process plan of the trainings
Continuous development and dissemination of the principles of gender equality, monitoring of scientific data, experiences and own analyzes based on gender equality database	Continuous monitoring of domestic and international professional and scientific results, performing own analyzes	continuous implementation, but at least once a year	GEC	continuous monitoring, evaluation of the implementation in every 2 years
An overview of the organization's communication practices in terms of gender equality	Align the results of the review with current practices	end of the year (2022) and after continuous	President, GEC, DPWG	monitoring the coordination of communication practices

6.3. Work-life balance measures

MeOut Group calls for the implementation of the European Union principle of work-life balance, primarily in the so-called through family-friendly measures, supplemented by the following components:

Work-life balance and organizational culture

- Part-time work;
- Flexible working times and core hours;
- Staff satisfaction surveys;

- Advise and support networks;
- Parental leave policies beyond legal minimum requirements.

We especially help our team members to fulfill their expectations regarding work-life balance. The following components are managed by our existing or planned trainings:

Self-management

Sufficiently managing yourself can be challenging, particularly in getting proper sleep, exercise and nutrition. Self-management is recognition that effectively using the spaces in our lives is vital, and that available resources, time and life are finite. It means becoming captains of our own ships. No one is coming to steer for you.

Stress

management

Managing change

In our fast-paced world, change is the only constant. Continually adopting new methods and re-adapting others is vital to a successful career and happy home life. Effective change management involves making periodic and concerted efforts to ensure that the volume and rate of change at work and at home does not overwhelm or defeat you.

Managing technology

Managing leisure

time

This is the most overlooked element of the work-life balance. Rest and relaxation are important and shouldn't be short-changed. Time off is a vital component of the human experience. Curiously, too much of the same leisure activity, however enjoyable, can lead to monotony. Thus, effective leisure management requires varying your activities.

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Creating flexible working hours for parents with small children, creating conditions for home office agreements	an overview of options for flexible working hours and home office use	end of the year (2022)	GEC	measuring the effectiveness of new methods
Conducting staff satisfaction surveys	preparation and conduct of research	end of the year (2022)	GEC	evaluation of the results of the questionnaires

6.4. Combating sexism and gender-based violence and harassment

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Making visible the phenomenon of sexism, violence and gender-based harassment	Make the topic a priority and keep it on the agenda. Develop a special complaint procedure for victims of sexual and gender issues, taking into account the situation of victims	3 years (medium term)	President, GEC	monitoring the development of the complaint procedure, measuring the operation and effectiveness of new procedures
Development of victim support systems	Establish victim support programs and practices	3 years (medium term)	GEC	measuring the effectiveness of initiatives

6.5. Gender equality in work

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Defining and presenting gender perspective in each area of activity	reviewing and analyzing processes, developing recommendations	2 years	President, GEC	monitor the development and implementation of recommendations
Development of common practices on gender equality in international cooperation	Participation in projects that take into account gender equality (as well), and support for such programs	2 years	President, GEC	monitoring the implementation of projects

6.6. Gender-focused development of infrastructure and services

Objectives	Measures / Indicators	Implementation time	Responsible person(s)	Monitoring / Evaluation
Inspection of the organization's buildings and offices in order to check the necessary infrastructural conditions, e.g. baby-parent room, etc.	providing at least one such room/office	completed	GEC	checking of infrastructure development

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