

Women, government and policy making in OECD countries: Fostering diversity for inclusive growth ^[1]

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Source: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Format: Report

Publication Date: 3 Apr 2014

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About this report:

Achieving gender equality in the economy and in the political leadership remains an ongoing challenge across the world. This report aims to address this gap. It provides comparative data and policy benchmarks on women's access to public leadership and inclusive gender-responsive policy-making across OECD countries. The report is prepared in the context of the OECD Gender Initiative, launched by the OECD Ministers.

Chapter 1: Mapping women's access to public life in OECD countries

Closing persistent gender gaps in public life has emerged as a critical policy issue for OECD countries in their efforts to foster inclusive growth and restore trust and confidence in public institutions. This chapter maps women's access to public life and highlights the rationale and the scope for the study. It outlines study objectives and details the methodology adopted in preparing the report.

Chapter 2: Women's leadership in public life

This chapter highlights the current situation of women in public leadership positions in OECD countries and beyond. It describes women's representation in parliaments, executive cabinets, the judiciary and top civil servant positions. Overall, women remain underrepresented in the top echelons of public power, although there are considerable cross-country differences due to various historical and socio-economic factors. The chapter offers a detailed analysis of potential driving forces behind the lack of women in key decision-making posts. The analysis is based on existing literature, legal analysis and findings from the 2014 OECD Survey on Gender Equality in Public Life, which involved interviews with parliamentarians, judges and legal experts. To address barriers to women's advancement, the chapter identifies a set of good practices and policy avenues that can support governments in improving the gender balance in senior positions in public life. The chapter concludes with policy recommendations on breaking the glass ceiling in public life.

Chapter 3: Women as public employees

The public sector is an important source of employment in all OECD countries and women are generally well represented among public employees. This chapter discusses women's employment in the public sector in OECD and partner countries, based on empirical evidence from the 2011 OECD Survey on Gender in Public Employment and OECD research. Specifically, it highlights employment and occupational patterns of women in the public sector, their contractual arrangements and their average earnings as compared to men. The influence of the economic downturn on gender equality in the public sector is also explored. Despite notable progress, women remain overrepresented in lower pay and part-time jobs and tend to experience more frequent career breaks, which may lead to lower pay positions and fewer career development opportunities. To respond to the highlighted challenges, the chapter identifies a set of good practices and actionable policy recommendations, such as equality acts, gender diversity targets and quotas, family friendly policies and training programmes, in the public service. Finally the chapter emphasises the importance of collecting good quality gender disaggregated data for developing sound policy solutions and outlines key policy recommendations for governments to enable equal access to opportunities in the public sector, reduce the pay gap and improve working conditions.

Chapter 4: Institutional dimensions of gender equality

This chapter examines institutional dimensions for advancing the gender equality agenda. The analysis in this chapter is largely based on the OECD 2011 Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership. The chapter highlights the main challenges for advancing gender equality identified by OECD countries, such as limited accountability mechanisms and a lack of awareness within the public service. It then argues that strategic government capacities and mainstreaming gender into regular policy-making cycle are critical for the effective design and implementation of the gender equality agenda. The required government capacities include the ability to promote a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach to gender equality through national gender equality strategies and action plans, the effective allocation of roles and responsibilities across public institutions, robust accountability, oversight and coordination mechanisms, effective channels for making the voices of different groups of women and men heard, and tools for gender-

sensitive policy making, supported by sound evidence of policy impacts on women and men. The chapter also provides an overview of institutional practices across OECD countries, highlights good practices and outlines a number of policy recommendations that aim to support governments in strengthening national frameworks for gender equality.

Region: International ^[4]

Tags: gender ^[5]

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