



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

GUIDELINES, PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES TO
PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE
ORGANISATION PRACTICES



INTRODUCTION

According to the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development Goals, gender inequality is one of the greatest obstacles to sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction. Goal 5 (Gender Equality) therefore supports equal opportunities between men and women, the elimination of all forms of violence, and women's empowerment and leadership in all decision-making processes of political, economic and public life.

Gender equality is also a fundamental value of the European Union, which in recent decades has activated multiple initiatives aimed at promoting women's empowerment and fighting all forms of gender-based discrimination in all productive sectors. Despite this, the Gender Equality Index, calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2023, places Italy (with an index of 68.2%) below the European average (70.2%) in terms of rights and goals achieved: the disparity concerns mostly the probability of men and women entering the labour market, the possibility of employment in activities that allow for hourly flexibility, employment stability and career prospects.


As per the European Parliament's guidelines on gender language, this document is written with "gender-neutral language" means, in general terms, the use of non-sexist, inclusive and gender-respectful language. The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid formulations that could be interpreted as biased, discriminatory, or degrading because they are based on the implicit assumption that males and females are destined for different social roles. The use of gender-fair and inclusive language also helps combat gender stereotypes, promotes social change, and contributes to the achievement of equality between women and men.

As a social innovation and positive change driver, Liberitutti considers gender equality a fundamental and inalienable right, and over the last years has been paying increasing attention to combating all forms of violence and harassment linked to gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. Liberitutti adopted and handed specific pregnancy procedures for Women Workers to protect the safety and health of female workers, and thus the periods of interdiction and the preventive and protective measures to be put in place during the months of pregnancy and the months of breastfeeding.

The sensitiveness in regard to the topic of Equality and Inclusion came to fruition in 2023, when the company signed and adopted the Diversity Charter intending to contribute to the fight against all forms of discrimination in the workplace - gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religious faith, and sexual orientation - while committing ourselves to valuing diversity within the organization, with particular regard to equal opportunities between men and women.

Liberitutti participates in events and campaigns to raise awareness of gender equality from the perspective of active citizenship and service design with an eye toward the gender perspective: Liberitutti every year organises events and workshops on the occasion of the International Day against Gender-based Violence at Bagni Pubblici di via Agliè; we also took part in the festival Women and the City 2023 bringing the experience of women's engagement in marginalised neighbourhoods.

The Liberitutti Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was born with the need to enhance pluralism and inclusive practices in the world of work and to promote gender equality in the organisation through a process of structural change contributing to the innovation and competitiveness of the Liberitutti Group.



The Plan aims to create more inclusive and integrated workplaces through a series of coherent actions designed to combat gender discrimination and the promotion of a culture of respect and equal opportunity.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was drawn in compliance with the national UGCs guidelines (Unique Guarantee Committees for Equal Opportunities, Workers' Wellbeing and against Discrimination, law 183/2010), the National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (d.lgs 198/2006), and the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans prepared by the EU Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (EC) as per Council Decision 2021/764 of 10 May 2021. With this regard, LT GEP Complies with the constituent elements stipulated by the EU:

- is a formal public document, agreed unanimously by the Administration Committee, signed by the President, published on the institutional website and actively communicated internally and externally by the organisation. The final draft was approved by the Human Resources Head Office and by the Administrative Board and shared with the internal stakeholders through an official assembly;
- provides dedicated human and financial resources for the implementation of the measures taken, their monitoring over time and possible incentives to ensure a continuous and sustainable process of change;
- includes a gender-disaggregated data collection system, which is essential to define the operational actions of this plan and the indicators to monitor their progress over time. These data will be used annually to promote a continuous and improving process of practices and processes and evaluate the impact of GEP on the entire organization;
- programs training and other awareness-raising actions at all levels of the organization on gender equality issues in order to achieve continuous, long-term, evidence-based cultural change.

OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE

The Gender Equality Plan aims to lay the foundation for the development of gender equality practices and policies for the next three years. Our organisation, in compliance with the Charter for Equal Opportunities, overcomes gender stereotypes, through appropriate policies, training, awareness-raising campaigns, and women's leadership initiatives. Liberitutti is committed to developing the principle of equal treatment in all stages of professional life and career development, and to providing concrete tools to facilitate work-life balance.

The main objectives we want to achieve are:

- Promote structural and cultural changes in the organisation to create more inclusive and gender-responsive environments and services at all levels of the organization;
- Ensure equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees, promote their work well-being and counter any form of gender discrimination or gender-based violence, including sexual harassment;
- Define clear procedures and policies regarding equal opportunities addressing the existing gaps and facilitating work-life balance to reach a more equitable workplace;
- Identify adequate personnel with specific roles and responsibilities for equal opportunities, and provide staff with internal tools to ensure the effective protection of equal treatment;

- Promote specific training opportunities at all levels of the organization and awareness-raising campaigns on the value of diversity;
- Periodically monitor the progress of the actions and evaluate the impact of good practices;
- Promote internal and external visibility of the organisation's commitment, the policies adopted, the progress and results achieved in a truly supportive and responsible community perspective

The structure of LT's Gender Equality plan follows the five key areas defined by the European Commission for the research institutes (Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans, 2021) and adapted to fit the environment of a social cooperative:

- Key Area 1 - Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Key Area 2 - Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Key Area 3 - Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Key Area 4 - Integration of the gender dimension into research content, official documents, project proposals and dissemination content
- Key Area 5 - Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

For each Key Area Liberitutti defined general objectives, concrete actions, targets and performance indicators.

General objective: indicates the general effects pursued in terms of systemic change. Concrete action: understood as an operational measure to achieve the general objective of reference.

Target: represented by the main recipients/beneficiaries of the envisaged measure (direct target) and the secondary recipients of the measure (indirect target); we also included the senior figures and roles in the organizational chart who are responsible for decision-making of each measure and the individuals responsible for monitoring its actual implementation.

Performance indicators: given that continuous monitoring and evaluation are important parts of the process of change, the organization includes a definition of indicators, collection instruments and a time frame for the achievement of target results.

KEY-AREA 1: Work-life balance and organisational culture

General Objective

Inclusive work-life balance policies and practices play a crucial role in promoting gender equality within an organization: by recognizing and addressing the unique challenges that individuals, particularly women, may face in balancing work and personal life, these policies contribute to a more equitable workplace. Liberitutti GEP aims to promote gender equality through the sustainable transformation of the organisational culture: a social cooperative should implement necessary steps to ensure an open and inclusive working environment, the visibility of women in the organisation and externally, and that the contribution of women is properly valued. By implementing work-life balance policies and practices Liberitutti will reshape its organisational culture and create an inclusive and safe environment where employees, regardless of their gender, can thrive both personally and professionally. This not only contributes to gender equality but also enhances overall workplace satisfaction and productivity.

The actions foreseen in relation to organisational culture include measures to ensure that all staff feel valued and welcomed at work, to promote a climate of co-partnership and solidarity toward all employees who have family burdens or face health problems, and to support employees returning to work after long periods of absence.

Action 1.1: Parental Leave Policies

This concrete action has already been implemented by Liberitutti over the years, however, the current policy is targeting specifically women for maternity leave: the aim in following years is to provide gender-neutral parental leave policies to support both men and women in their caregiving responsibilities. This will help challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, promoting a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities. The specific measures that will be put in place are:

- Revision of the parental leave policy to include all the parenting figures and caregivers
- Mentorship and coaching sessions after returning from parental leave or from absence for other caregiver-related reasons.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: Liberitutti workers Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>HR Manager</i> : definition of the new policies <i>Administrative Board</i> : approval of the policies <i>Gender Equality Representative</i> : monitoring of the progress and results
<i>Performance indicators</i>	Number of staff by gender applying for / taking parental leave, for how long they took leave and how many returned after taking the leave; Numbers of absence days taken by women and by men differentiated, by absence motive (sick leave, care leave etc.)

Action 1.2: Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements play a significant role in improving gender equality in the workplace, specifically in creating a more inclusive and accommodating environment, addressing some of the challenges that disproportionately affect women, like balancing their professional and personal responsibilities.

Flexible work arrangements can contribute to the retention of female employees, who often juggle caregiving roles at home and who are therefore more likely to remain in the workforce when they have options that accommodate their diverse needs, and therefore contribute to the development of an inclusive company culture that values diversity and recognizes the unique circumstances of each employee.

The specific measures that will be put in place are:

- Further implement remote work arrangements, in order to reach all the levels of the organisation;
- Provide the necessary technology and tools to support remote work;
- Schedule regular check-ins between managers and remote or flexible workers to ensure ongoing communication and support;
- Provide flexibility in scheduling, allowing employees to create customized work schedules that align with their personal and family needs, for example by implementing annualized hours, where employees work a certain number of hours over the year but have flexibility in when those hours are worked;
- Adopt an unlimited Paid Time Off (PTO) policy, allowing employees to take time off as needed without strict accrual limitations;
- Offer part-time work options for employees who prefer reduced hours;
- Ensure that part-time employees have access to the same benefits and opportunities for career advancement as full-time employees;
- Recognize and reward employees based on performance rather than the number of hours worked.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: Liberitutti workers and managers Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>HR Manager:</i> define the Flexible Work plan to be signed by workers who want to adhere <i>Service Manager/Area Coordinator:</i> implement flexibility within the workers who requested it in their service/area <i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> inform the managers, monitoring of the progress and results
<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new employees who sign a remote-working arrangement • Number of employees who obtained a part-time contract • Number of employees who declare to be satisfied on the time flexibility implemented • Level of satisfaction of managers and service coordinators in regard to the flexible work policies • Number of projects handed after the implementation of flexible time management procedures

Action 1.3: Support for caring responsibilities

According to the Gender Equality Index in 2023 persist the gender gap in the allocation of unpaid time for care and domestic work, like involvement in the care and/or education of their children, older people, or people with disabilities, or their involvement in cooking and housework: 34% of women, and only 25% of men engage in every day caring for others, 63% of women and only 36% of men report spending free time in housework activities. Implementing programs that provide support for employees with caregiving responsibilities, such as on-site childcare facilities, counselling services, or resource groups helps alleviate the challenges faced by working parents, predominantly women.

The concrete actions that will be put in place will be:

- Mapping the needs of female workers in our local services, to point out the changes needed and establish agreements with other (internal or external) welfare and territorial services to implement services to support family burdens (after-school services, elderly people or people with disability daycare etc.);
- Creation of “child-friendly spaces” and safe lactation spaces where requested;
- Reintegration of staff after career breaks, including active mentoring and support;
- Drafting a procedure for the assignment of solidarity leave permits, in addition to the provisions of current regulations and the National Collective Contracting System.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti workers and managers Indirect: workers’ families, local economic and welfare system</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>HR Manager:</i> reintegration mentorship, definition of the ad hoc plan for care-giving workers <i>Service Manager/Area Coordinator:</i> be responsive towards the internal policies <i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> map the needs of care-giving workers in local services, mediate between managers/service coordinators and workers, monitoring of the progress and results</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees who adopted flexible work arrangements, such as remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks • Number of utilization of various leave policies, including vacation days, parental leave, and personal days • Turnover Rate: high turnover rates, especially among employees with caregiving responsibilities, may signal challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, exit interviews can provide insights into the reasons for leaving • Qualitative internal research on satisfaction of employees in terms of workload

Action 1.4: Promoting Work-Life Boundaries

The aim of this concrete action is to encourage employees in no-profit and social sectors to set healthy boundaries between work and personal life, discouraging a culture of overworking and favouring an empathetic approach. A particular effort on so-called Third-Sector workers wellbeing has been put by AICCON during the definition of the Community Index: the well-being of people working in the social economy sector is in fact regarded as an indispensable element in preventing burnout and stressful situations, which tend to have a greater impact on female workers. The steps to achieve the objective will be:

- Distribution and analysis of employees about their well-being;
- Definition of work-life balance policies to address the impact and needs associated with home working and care responsibilities;
- Workload arrangements and responsible workload management to ensure that the assignments are distributed fairly and do not exacerbate existing gender inequalities;
- Offer advice and support on work-life balance;
- Encourage open communication between employees and their managers;
- Facilitate job-sharing arrangements where two or more employees share the responsibilities of one full-time position, ensure effective communication and collaboration between job-sharing partners.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti workers and managers Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> make a point of reference for employers, gather need and feedbacks, mediate between managers/service coordinators and workers, monitor of the progress and results <i>Service managers/service coordinators:</i> promote healthy work practices, make sure that the workload is distributed responsibly and fairly <i>Employees:</i> be responsible over their coworkers, respect each others boundaries and needs</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative surveys to gather feedback from employees about their work-life balance, workload, stress levels, and satisfaction with the organization's policies • Monitor the frequency and extent of overtime work • Employee burnout rate Feedback from managers and regular check-ins to collect valuable insights into the challenges employees face in balancing work and personal life • Performance metrics to assess the correlation between work-life balance on individual and team performance.

KEY-AREA 2: Increasing the number and share of women in leadership and decision-making positions

General Objective

According to ISTAT data, on average, the social work sector employs a high rate of female workers (about twice as many as male workers), yet while they make up the majority of employees, their numbers are not reflected in top or leadership positions, which remain in the hands of male workers (only 30.9% of leadership positions in Italian NGOs are held by women). As many researches have shown, companies that apply gender equality are more productive, more innovative, efficient and better positioned in the market than their competitors. The International Monetary Fund has calculated that if women's employment in Italy were to catch up with men's, GDP growth would be 11%. Today in Italy women's employment is 18% lower than men's, making it among the lowest in Europe, and women earn about 16% less than men.

Liberitutti is committed to achieving gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions, an aspect that touches upon all aspects of the GEP. The number of female workers has always been preponderant in the organization's workforce (in 2022 77% of human resources were women), and in recent years women have reached the apex and managerial positions within the services: in 2022 three out of seven members of the Administrative Board were women, and 62% of the Strategic Service Areas managers are women, in 2023 the first woman was elected president of the associated organisation within the Liberitutti Group.

The objective of this key area is to further increase the share of women in decision-making positions and valorize the role of female employers within the organisation, by levelling up the gender pay gaps, ensuring gender balance through gender quotas, providing decision-makers with targeted gender training, adapting processes for selection and appointment of staff on managerial boards, and by making committee membership more transparent.

Action 2.1: Inclusive HR processes and blind hiring

Increasing the number of women in leadership positions requires a comprehensive and intentional approach. Blind hiring is an approach designed to reduce biases in the recruitment process by removing certain identifiable information about candidates that may lead to unconscious biases. The concrete steps that we will put in place are:

- Remove personal details such as name, gender, age, and address from resumes before they are reviewed by hiring managers;
- Map gender imbalances in leadership positions and decision-making bodies and promote underrepresented gender participation in decision-making bodies;
- Use neutral language in job descriptions;
- Conduct structured interviews with standardized questions for all candidates, to evaluate candidates based on their responses to the same set of criteria, reducing the impact of interviewer bias;
- Make services and facilities more adapted to the needs of women;
- Provide training for hiring managers and team members to raise awareness about unconscious biases and how they can affect the hiring process.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: HR managers, female candidates Indirect: female employees, workers' families, beneficiaries in local services
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> regularly reviews and assesses the effectiveness of blind hiring practices, collects feedback from candidates, employees, and other stakeholders to continually improve the process <i>Service managers/service coordinators:</i> collaborates with the employees to continually improve diversity and inclusion efforts <i>HR staff:</i> are responsible to define blind hiring processes and attend specific training
<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative surveys to gather feedback from candidates about biases that may have occurred in the recruitment process; • Staff numbers by gender at all levels, by role, by function (including administrative/support staff) and by contractual relation to the organisation; • Numbers of women and men candidates applying for distinct job positions; • Numbers of training hours/credits attended/received by HR staff and managers; • Shares of women and men in recruitment or promotion boards and as heads of recruitment or promotion boards.

Action 2.2: Make leadership positions more appealing for women

Achieving gender balance in decision-making requires more than just increased representation. Ensuring that an appropriate number of women are on committees should be accompanied by measures to examine decision-making processes to ensure decisions consider gender issues and women are empowered to take equal roles.

Specific steps to be implemented are:

- Offer mentorship programs and executive coaching to female employees to gather their needs and train them on leadership positions;
- Offer more flexibility to female leaders and managers to support work-life balance;
- Identify and develop high-potential women within the organization for leadership roles and create pathways for their advancement;



- Regularly review and address gender pay gaps within the organization to demonstrate a commitment to fair compensation;
- Provide training for existing leaders on inclusive leadership practices, to learn how to recognize and address unconscious biases, foster an inclusive culture, and promote diversity in decision-making;
- Create and support employee resource groups focused on women's leadership that can serve as forums for networking, mentorship, and discussions on gender diversity issues;
- Encourage women to self-nominate for leadership opportunities.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti workers and managers Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> regularly reports on metrics to hold the organization accountable and demonstrate a commitment to diversity <i>Service managers/service coordinators:</i> highlight and celebrate the achievements of women within the organization, facilitate networking opportunities for women within and outside the organization, encourage mentorship relationships to provide guidance and support for career advancement, get specific training on unconscious biases <i>HR staff:</i> develop and communicate strong diversity and inclusion policies that emphasize the organization's commitment to gender equality <i>Employees:</i> are responsible for their coworkers, and respect each other's boundaries and needs</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in the preceding years, specifying the number of years spent in the organisation; • Average numbers of years needed for women and men to make career advancements; • Wage gaps by gender and job; • Numbers of women and men in management and administrative decision-making positions.

KEY-AREA 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

General Objective

Women face systemic discrimination and structural barriers along their career path: recruitment, selection and career progression measures aim to ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their careers and reduce horizontal segregation. This key area is strictly linked to Key Area 2, focusing on the promotion of gender equality at all organizational levels, from recruitment to career progression, not only in the highest leadership positions. Critically reviewing selection procedures and remedying any biases can ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their careers: the aim of this key is to define and tackle unconscious biases that prevent women from entering the job market. Important measures to be considered in the GEP include establishing recruitment codes of conduct, involving gender equality officers in recruitment and promotion committees, proactively identifying women in underrepresented fields and considering organisation-wide workload planning models.

Action 3.1: Inclusive recruiting

This concrete action aims at making the recruitment process more inclusive and more aware of the unconscious biases that occur during a selection process that prevent women from accessing the job market or accessing it in an equal way. Concrete steps that will be put in place are:

- Encourage the adoption of tools to ensure inclusion in selective procedures for candidates and applicants with special conditions through a reading of intersectional discrimination;
- Provide gender-neutral job descriptions to attract a diverse pool of candidates;
- Focus on listing the skills and qualifications necessary for success in the role rather than using gendered terms;
- Provide evaluation arrangements for career progression to ensure unequal burdens and impacts are accounted for;
- Provide incentives for direct hiring (pursuant ex art. 1 c. 9 of Law 230/2005) to reduce gender imbalances within the organisation;
- Establish diverse hiring panels to minimize unconscious biases in the selection process, a diverse group of interviewers can provide a broader perspective on candidates.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: Female candidates, Liberitutti workers and managers Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	Gender Equality Representative: regularly reports on metrics to hold the organization accountable and demonstrate a commitment to diversity Service managers/service coordinators: highlight and celebrate the achievements of women within the organization, get specific training on unconscious biases HR staff: develop inclusive recruitment processes

<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by disciplines, function (including administrative / support staff) and contractual relation to the organisation; • Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions and success rate; • Share of women and men in recruitment or promotion boards, heads of recruitment or promotion boards; • The integration of the gender dimension in job applications.
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Action 3.2: Career advancement support and mentorship

This concrete action aims at ensuring appropriate employment growth paths for female workers, guaranteeing constant support for training and protection of the rights enshrined in the GEP and the Equal Opportunity Charter. Specifically:

- Management and supervision arrangement to ensure that appropriate support for new patterns of working is in place and ensuring inclusive practices;
- Provide a dedicated Gender Equality function represented by the Gender Equality Representative that will set up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP progression, provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation, cooperate with and engage stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP's measures, assess the progress towards gender equality in the organisation;
- Provide transformative mentoring and reverse mentoring programmes for the development of soft skills of female employees and make sure they update their skills for career progression.

<i>Target</i>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti workers and managers</p> <p>Indirect: workers' families, local economic and welfare system</p>
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<p><i>Administrative Board:</i> nominate the Gender Equality Representative;</p> <p><i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> regularly reports on metrics to hold the organization accountable and demonstrate a commitment to diversity;</p> <p><i>Service managers/service coordinators:</i> provide mentorship and educational programmes for female workers; HR staff: develop and implement inclusive policies.</p>
<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training hours/credits attended by women and men; • Number of policies and documents on gender equality; • Qualitative research on employees' perceived inclusivity.

KEY-AREA 4: Integration of the gender dimension into research content, official documents, project proposals and dissemination content

General Objective

The integration of the gender dimension addresses the incorporation of sex and/or gender analysis through the entire R&D and HR cycles. It is a crucial step toward promoting gender equality: It means considering how gender roles, identities, and relationships influence and shift the impact of a project, the methods used, and outcomes, as well as contributing to shaping an organisational culture devoted to inclusivity and openness.

The aim of this key area is to develop actions and tools to consider how sex and gender analysis will be included in the research priorities, internal process documents, or educational outputs of the organisation. Considering the gender dimension in project design and management also means considering the **intersectional dimension** of discrimination: we should also consider other individual or group features that constitute barriers, such as age, ethnicity, intellectual or physical disabilities, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Action 4.1: Gender mainstreaming in the R&D cycle

Gender mainstreaming is defined by the United Nations as "the process by which the full implications for women and men of any planned action, in all fields and at all levels, including legislative, policy and programming activity, are assessed". It is a strategy to make women's specific needs, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs to achieve a more equal society.

This concrete action, therefore, sets out the organisation's commitment to incorporating sex, gender and other key identity dimensions in the Project Life Cycle, from the context analysis to project design, from project writing to project implementation and monitoring. For ensuring that the gender dimension is considered in research and teaching, and the support and capacity provided for researchers to develop methodologies that incorporate sex and gender analysis. The steps that will be implemented are:

- Collect data disaggregated by gender, and where possible by other socio-cultural dimensions, fundamental for addressing and rectifying systemic gender imbalances;
- Use of inclusive language in project proposal, project reports and dissemination content;
- Conduct analysis of specific need and challenges faced by women during the project design phase, with particular focus on intersectional elements of discrimination meaning to understand how factors such as age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and geographical location intersect with gender to shape individuals' experiences and opportunities.;
- Promote education access and gender-specific solutions during project implementation, also by making sure that spaces (digital or physical) are inclusive and safe.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: project designers and project managers, beneficiaries of our services Indirect: local economic and welfare system, policymakers, donors
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<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<p><i>R&D Manager:</i> provide guidelines to introduce gender mainstreaming in the Project Life Cycle, give a gender mainstreaming check to project proposal;</p> <p><i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> helps the project designers and project manager to assess the gender point of view of their projects;</p> <p><i>R&D staff:</i> develop and implement gender-sensitive projects.</p>
<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects that directly address women and their socioeconomic issues; • Number of projects that put gender-disaggregated data in their analysis

Action 4.2: Gender mainstreaming in the HR and management cycle

This concrete action aims at introducing gender mainstreaming measures in the internal communication documents, in the official documents and in the management procedures document, to further promote gender equality inside the internal management cycle. In particular, the organisation commits to:

- Create a Gender Information Management System based on gender-sensitive and/or gender-disaggregated data collection;
- Drafting and adopting a vademecum for the correct use of gender-neutral language in selective procedures and in all company communications. Review of forms used by the company with attention to gender declination or use of gender-neutral terms;
- Use gender-sensitive communication for internal and external communication, using the Toolkit adopted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

<i>Target</i>	<p>Direct: HR staff and managers, employers</p> <p>Indirect: donors, policymakers</p>
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<p>HR Manager: provides guidelines to introduce gender mainstreaming in the official documents and internal working documents, collects gender-disaggregated data on employees;</p> <p>Gender Equality Representative: helps to define the guidelines and monitors the development of the steps;</p> <p>HR staff: develop and implement gender-sensitive documents and report.</p>

Performance indicators

- Number of documents that contain gender-neutral language
- Number of documents having gender-sensitive language and targeting external stakeholder

KEY-AREA 5: Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

General Objective

Addressing gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, is a critical responsibility for organizations to create safe and inclusive workplaces. The aim of this key area is therefore to set a zero-tolerance culture towards all acts of discrimination, to demonstrate leadership commitment to preventing and addressing gender-based violence and to create a safe and supportive work environment. This means establishing all the necessary steps to ensure clear institutional policies on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, codifying the expected behaviour of employees, outlining how members of the organisation can report instances of gender-based violence and how any such instances will be investigated and sanctions applied. The following actions aim to build inclusive practices and attitudes to support and prevent discrimination, to foster a broad organizational culture on gender equality.

Action 5.1: Promote a culture of respect and inclusion

This concrete action aims to foster a workplace culture that values respect, inclusion, and diversity, by encouraging open communication and emphasising all employees' contribution to a safe and respectful environment. The steps that Liberitutti will follow are:

- Create Safe Zones in each service;
- Make sure that all services have clean and accessible toilet facilities and baby changing tables;
- Promote inclusion and respect for all cultures in physical and virtual places and in events organized by the different realities;
- Design and regularly conduct surveys on gender discrimination and inclusiveness, as well as surveys on the implementation of the GEP;
- Promote, print and disseminate the Equal Opportunity Charter in all services;
- Foster opportunities for employees, managers, and the Gender Equality Representative to meet and discuss safe spaces and inclusivity;
- Relieve the workload on employees, especially women with children, during religious fasting;
- Ensure that workplace facilities, including restrooms, are inclusive and accommodate individuals of all genders;
- Establish mechanisms for employees to provide feedback on the organizational culture;
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives, and adjust them based on the evolving needs and dynamics of the organization.

<i>Target</i>	Direct: Liberitutti employees at all levels, service coordinators, internal policies Indirect: beneficiaries, donors, policymakers, and local stakeholders
<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>HR Manager:</i> activates the promotion of internal tools, ensures policy receptivity; <i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> coordinates and monitors gender equality policies and interventions to the inclusive work environment; <i>Service coordinators:</i> develop and implement inclusive services; <i>Employees:</i> actively engage in the creation of a more inclusive environment.
<i>Performance indicators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the gender equality objectives by observing the commitment and acceptance of the implemented measures and the (human and financial) resources allocated to support them; • Internal surveys to measure the effects on both formal and informal practices due to the implemented measures (e.g. by increased attention given to women's ideas and perspectives in decision-making mechanisms, by changes in working conditions and in verbal and non-verbal interactions, management of work-life balance, and so on); • Number of communication material exposed in each service; • Number of accessible and inclusive events, and inclusive adjustments to the physical spaces.

Action 5.2: Harassment prevention and report policies

Liberitutti is committed to taking concrete measures to combat gender-based violence and sexual harassment, considering specifically four dimensions:

1. Behaviours: establishing and codifying the expected behaviours of employees including the actions that are considered sexual harassment;
2. Reporting: outlining how all members of the organisation can report instances of sexual harassment, including where they are the victim of harassment or witness harassment, this would include clear, visible, and robust reporting channels;
3. Support for victims or witnesses: providing advice and information to victims or witnesses when a report has been made;
4. Disciplinary measures: providing disciplinary/grievance procedures for perpetrators at the organisation level.

The steps that will be implemented are:

- Identify a Confidential Advisor (Consigliera di fiducia) to hear employees who were bullied or sexually harassed, give support and find a suitable solution, according to law 183/2010;
- Develop a comprehensive Anti-Harassment Policy and Code of Conduct for preventing and combating discrimination and gender-based violence in the work environment that explicitly defines unacceptable behaviours, outlines reporting procedures, and emphasizes the organization's commitment to a harassment-free workplace;
- Prepare and send a notice on how to report cases of gender-based harassment and violence and attach it for new hires;
- Ensure that all reports are taken seriously and investigated promptly and impartially, and assure employees that they will not face adverse consequences for reporting incidents of harassment;
- Ensure that the anti-harassment policies and reporting mechanisms are communicated clearly to all employees;
- Encourage male employees to act as allies in the prevention of gender-based violence, by promoting allyship programs and initiatives that involve men in creating a safer workplace;
- Stay informed about local and national laws related to gender-based violence and harassment.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti employees at all levels, service coordinators, and internal procedures Indirect: beneficiaries, donors, policymakers, and local communities</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>HR Manager:</i> activates the promotion of internal tools, ensures policy receptivity; <i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> may assume the role of Confidential Advisor, provide support and counselling to victims of harassment and abuse, monitors the training and reporting system; <i>Service coordinators:</i> make sure that policies are clear and visible in all services, ensure compliance with the rules; <i>Employees:</i> actively engage in the creation of a safer working environment, reporting (even anonymously) any case of abuse.</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the development of a reporting system; • Monitor the level of reception and dissemination of the Code of Conduct; • Internal survey on perceived safety in the services.

Action 5.3: Training and prevention measures

This concrete action aims at consolidating a culture of inclusion and respect by providing specific training to the employees and service managers, including through interactive ‘forum’ theatre and non-formal education. Specifically, compulsory training will be provided on the following aspects:

- How to recognise unconscious biases and discriminatory practices that affect female workers and female beneficiaries;
- How to recognise systemic discrimination and microaggressions and provide resources for addressing and preventing them;
- How to intervene when they witness potentially harmful behaviours: bystander intervention programs empower individuals to prevent and address harassment in real time;
- Preventing sexual harassment: these sessions will cover the organization's policies, the impact of harassment, and the importance of bystander intervention;

In addition to these steps, Liberitutti will:

- Create a culture where individuals feel comfortable speaking up against microaggressive behaviours;
- Encourage female employees to attend courses provided by external organizations to improve their professional skills, and where possible cover the expenses
- Promote awareness of intersectionality, meaning the interconnected nature of social categories such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status thanks to which individuals may experience multiple forms of discrimination and privilege.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: Liberitutti employees at all levels, service coordinators and managers, and internal procedures Indirect: beneficiaries, donors, policymakers, and local communities</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>HR Manager:</i> activates and schedules the training; <i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> assist the content definition for the training, monitor their implementation; <i>Service coordinators:</i> make employees take part in the training.</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training provided on gender-related topics and sexual harassment; • Number of attendants (by gender) to the training; • Number of external courses attended by female workers with the support of Liberitutti; • Positive feedback on the training sessions.

Action 5.4: Awareness-raising campaigns

Liberitutti is committed to implementing awareness-raising events and specific actions to further disseminate and encourage inclusive and safe working environments for all. This means, specifically, to:

- Establish connections and partnerships with external organizations that specialize in preventing gender-based violence to enhance organizational efforts and inform local communities about best practices;
- Celebrate diversity and inclusion through events, campaigns, and ongoing initiatives, to emphasize the value of a diverse workforce and the contributions of individuals from different backgrounds;
- Organise and take part in events and initiatives, including an annual conference, against harassment and gender-based violence;
- Promote awareness of physical, verbal or sexual violence through promotion on the institutional website and social channels of initiatives carried out by others
- Post the 1522 hotline on the institutional website, using the format edited by the Department of Equal Opportunities, and also in services managed by the cooperative
- Promote and establish partnership with "Centri Antiviolenza" (centres and shelters open to victims of stalking, gender-based, domestic, sexual and economic violence);
- Organise awareness raising moments for internal and external stakeholders, in occasion to national and international celebrations.

<p><i>Target</i></p>	<p>Direct: internal and external stakeholders, local communities, beneficiaries, local organisations, policymakers, and general audience Indirect: victims of violence, and other organisations in the no-profit sector</p>
<p><i>Roles and responsibilities</i></p>	<p><i>Gender Equality Representative:</i> schedule events, contact moderators and stakeholders; <i>Communication staff:</i> promote and disseminate events and other interventions.</p>
<p><i>Performance indicators</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events organised or taken part of, and number of people who attended; Number of press releases; • Number of posts on social media and number of people reached; • Number of 1522 Hotline posters in LT's services.



CONCLUSIONS

The Gender Equality Plan has been drafted and approved by the Membership Assembly, by the Board and adopted by the Human Resources office to create a culture of respect and inclusion that values the contributions of all genders and fosters a workplace where individuals feel heard, supported, and empowered to succeed. The Plan calls for targeted interventions to be adopted over the next three years, in compliance with the five Key Areas identified in the Horizon Program Guidelines:

- Work-life balance and organisational culture;
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- Integration of the gender dimension into research content, official documents, project proposals and dissemination content;
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

The GEP is a public document that commits all Liberitutti organs and employees to a commitment to a more inclusive work environment and to social design that takes into account the demands and needs of women even from an intersectional perspective. Liberitutti commits to investing resources (human and financial) for the implementation of the planned actions, identifying a designated figure for monitoring and implementation. The organization also undertakes to promote and disseminate this document through all its official channels and make it known to all employees, beneficiaries and external stakeholders. Any changes and additions will be agreed upon by the Members' Meeting and the Administrative Board, in compliance with the principle of transparency and democratization of processes.

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