

EMPOWER Research

Mapping the Baseline: What's Really Happening with Gender Equality in ICT?

Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders,

As we conclude the first year of **EMPOWER**, we are pleased to share our progress in bridging the ICT gender gap through teacher training and role-model engagement.

Research & Evidence

To build a foundation for effective intervention, we completed several key research milestones:

- **Large-Scale Data:** Gathered **633 educator responses** across partner countries to identify barriers in ICT education.
- **Specialized Studies:** Conducted ecosystem mapping in France and researched the intersection of AI tools and educational equity.
- **Publications:** Published the **Mythoria Framework** (AI-augmented learning) and prepared a forthcoming paper on **LLM-based synthetic data and AI bias**.
- **Key Finding:** Success depends on practical teacher support, addressing confidence gaps, and authentic role-modeling.

Partners applied a **common mapping matrix** using six dimensions:

(**A**) policy frameworks, (**B**) institutional commitments, (**C**) curricular integration, (**D**) teacher and ICT educator training, (**E**) challenges/gaps, (**F**) good practices & recommendations. Evidence was gathered through **desk research**, **policy review**, **curriculum analysis**, and documentation of **institutional initiatives** and **good practices**. To compare teacher education systems, gender content in ICT/STEM teacher education programmes was coded as **Compulsory**, **Elective**, or **Absent**.

Across all partner countries, the consortium documented:

- **54 curricula** (teacher education / ICT-relevant)
 - **57 institutional initiatives** (including Gender Equality Plans and related actions)
 - **30 good practices**
- Overall, this represents **~93%** achievement of the quantitative mapping targets.

Key findings across countries

1) Strong policy foundations, uneven classroom impact. All countries show substantial alignment with EU equality principles in laws and strategies, yet implementation varies and often weakens at the level of everyday teaching practice.

2) Teacher training is the main bottleneck. Gender-sensitive pedagogy is frequently optional, fragmented, or project-based, and ICT-specific didactics rarely embed equality perspectives in a systematic way.

3) Gender content is largely missing from ICT teacher education. Across the 54 initial teacher education (ITE) programmes analysed: ~2% include a **compulsory** gender component, **31%** include **elective** content, and **67%** show **no identifiable gender content**.

4) Initiatives are numerous, but monitoring is often “compliance-first.” Many institutions have plans and actions in place, yet monitoring frequently tracks activities rather than measurable changes (e.g., participation patterns, attitudes, classroom interaction, and learning outcomes).

5) CPD is often optional and project-dependent. ICT-related equality training is commonly voluntary and reliant on external funding, limiting reach and sustainability.

What this means for EMPOWER

EMPOWER confirms a shared European pattern: **strong commitments but persistent gaps in practice**, especially in **teacher preparation** and **ICT pedagogy**. The mapping now supports a shift from evidence to implementation by **strengthening educator capacity with practical support** and **building outcome-focused monitoring** so inclusive ICT learning becomes standard practice rather than isolated projects.

In the coming year, we move from research to implementation:

- **Piloting teacher training** for inclusive ICT environments.
- **Expanding role-model engagement** to showcase diverse career pathways.
- **Deepening policy collaboration** for long-term sustainability.

Thank you for your continued commitment to inclusive ICT education.

Warm regards,

The EMPOWER Consortium Team