



# Handbook

## How to Sustainably Create a Gender-Aware Mindset in Social Entrepreneurship

HANDBOOK  
1/5



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**This handbook is part of a series that aims to equip social entrepreneurs, organizations, and stakeholders with practical strategies for integrating gender awareness into their work. By fostering a gender-inclusive mindset, we can drive positive change and sustainable growth**

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# Handbook overview

## Introduction

This is a set of 5 handbooks on gender mainstreaming and peer-learning methodologies to help Social Entrepreneurship (SE) stakeholders foster more gender-inclusive local and European ecosystems. These handbooks provide practical tools and methodologies for embedding a gender perspective in SE practices. They will remain freely accessible and available in German, Greek, Romanian, Portuguese and French.

These handbooks are part of the Cooperation for a Gender-Equal Social Economy (Coop4Equality) project, funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme Running until July 2026, this project aims to enhance the role of women and gender minorities in the European social economy, fostering gender inclusivity, sustainable growth, and equal opportunities.

## Project Partners:

- [Empow'Her Global](#), France
- [Nova SBE Leadership for Impact Knowledge Center](#), Portugal
- [Fundatia Ashoka](#), Romania
- [Pranado gGmbH](#), Germany
- [Digital Leadership Institute](#), Belgium
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**This is handbook number 1. Apart from this handbook you may find information about the remaining 4 handbooks:**

**1**

**Sustainably creating a gender-aware mindset in the social entrepreneurship field**

**This handbook aims to empower social entrepreneurs with practical strategies to develop a gender-aware mindset, fostering inclusivity and equity in their ventures. By addressing key mindset shifts and providing actionable tools, it equips readers to overcome barriers and create lasting social impact.**

**2**

**Reinforcing empathy-based methodologies in social entrepreneurship**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a resource for social entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, and all those interested in using empathy as a foundation for developing solutions to social problems.

**3**

**Self-assessing the gender approach when teaching and doing social entrepreneurship**

This handbook aims at supporting and guiding members of support structures and social entrepreneurs with a specific self-diagnostic tool, as case study, and further equip them a 3-stage methodological approach, useful tips, questions and key performance indicators (at external & internal level) that can facilitate them to analyze and self-assess their progress on gender lens integration within their project or initiative.

**4**

**Implementing peer to peer & co-development mechanisms among social entrepreneurs**

This handbook introduces two impactful methodologies designed to foster support and growth among women entrepreneurs: cross mentoring and co-design sessions.

**5**

**Bringing out a gender-inclusive model of high-growth and scalable social enterprises**

This handbook equips readers with the necessary tools to critically reflect on various aspects of scaling, including the decision to scale, the reasons for scaling, and the methods of scaling. It encourages readers to reflect upon and implement gender-inclusive practices in their own social enterprises.

# Summary

## Handbook 1: Sustainably creating a gender-aware mindset in the social entrepreneurship field

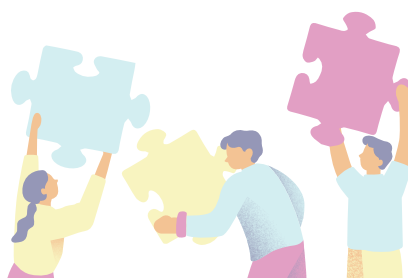


This handbook is designed to empower social entrepreneurs with the knowledge and tools needed to cultivate a gender-aware mindset, an essential foundation for fostering inclusivity and equity within the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Drawing from research, interviews, and practical insights, the handbook highlights the critical role of mindset in shaping entrepreneurial success and addresses the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.

The handbook is structured as follows:

1. **Why a Mindset Change Is Necessary:** Explains the critical role of mindset in addressing gender disparities and overcoming societal norms within social entrepreneurship.
2. **Understanding Mindsets and Their Transformation:** Delves into the psychology of mindsets, exploring how they are formed and can be intentionally shifted to promote growth and resilience.
3. **Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field:** Provides strategies for building inclusive narratives and transforming collective norms around gender.
4. **From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset:** Outlines actionable steps and interventions for organizations, including education, inclusive networking, and policy advocacy.

Through a combination of research insights, real-world examples, and practical exercises, the handbook offers a step-by-step approach to help readers understand and implement gender-aware practices in their daily lives and professional environments. It encourages lasting mindset transformation to drive equitable innovation and impactful social change.



# Why a Mindset Change is Necessary

## **Why Mindset matters in Social Entrepreneurship (SE)**

Mindset Matters - Nowhere is this clearer than in the social entrepreneurship landscape, where mindset isn't just a thinking habit: it can be an outcome determinant of success, resilience and innovation. Attitudes and beliefs entrepreneurs have about themselves, their capabilities as well as others and the world around them determine how they behave and perceive things. The legacy of years of entrenched societal norms and stereotypes, when it comes to gender especially continue till date – for good or bad, we come programmed in specific ways.

## **The role of Mindset in Tackling Gender-Peculiar Obstacles**

For female founders in the world of social entrepreneurship, mindset is just as important for success as action. Female business owners encounter both external challenges, including funding access as well as internal ones such self-doubt and fear of falling. According to a study by the Harvard Business Review (Eddleston et al., 2016), women are paralyzingly gripped by "the imposter syndrome" – an all-too-common pattern in which they doubt their competence and persistently fear that other people will determine their achievements have been overrated. This mentality encourages over planning, self-doubt and therefore missed opportunities.

What is more, societal pressures and traditional gender norms complicate the lives of woman entrepreneurs. Research in the Journal of Business Venturing (Jennings & Brush, 2013) has shown that women entrepreneurs tend to see their entrepreneurship activities as something they must fit around family and caregiving responsibilities which can reduce the time and energy they are able or willing to devote to it. This dual load makes women less risky, reducing the size of their goals and limiting them.

Mindset and gender equality is a powerful lever of action for more inclusive, effective social entrepreneurship ecosystem. By promoting an entrepreneurial mindset on all sides which not only recognizes the gendered barriers but also mobilizes both genders to work against them, the social entrepreneurship ecosystem can evolve to better support gender equity, ultimately leading to more innovative solutions and greater social impact.

Practically, this is supported by empirical evidence that mindset interventions can translate into noticeable increases in entrepreneurship results. A study published in the Journal of Business Venturing (Mueller & Dato-On, 2013), for instance, found that entrepreneurship training programs emphasizing changing it-grants like imparting resilience and a growth mind-set were more successful compared to those which focused solely on skills set development regarding enhancing entrepreneurial self-efficacy and performance especially amongst women.

# Understanding Mindsets and Their Transformation

## What Is a Mindset?

A mindset fundamentally is a collection of beliefs about the abilities we have, our potential and what can be done facing challenges. It permeates every area of our lives, from how adventurous we are to how resilient in the face of adversity. On the other hand, for many social entrepreneurs, being able to approach challenges with a silver lining can be what turns life difficulties into mere inconveniences.

Mindsets are not mere opinions; they create our actions. For instance, if an entrepreneur holds a fixed mindset – the belief that their abilities cannot change – they would rather shy away from taking risks or trying new things (which could ultimately result in failure). On the other hand, if they think that through effort and practice, they can grow and get better, then - when faced with challenges – they would rather be prone to believe that endurance during difficult times helps them to develop their abilities.





# Understanding Mindsets and Their Transformation

## How Are Mindsets Formed?

It is a combination of personal experience, social interaction and cultural conditioning which gives rise to mindsets. As young children, we get countless feedback from parents, teachers, and peers that shape how we see ourselves and others. Feedback that recognises effort over innate talent – such as being told one is good at drawing because of hard work - encourages the belief that skills are learnable and become key in encouraging an adaptive approach.

Our experiences with different environments refine our mindsets as we grow older. Our environment in both the education system and workplace culture as well as societal rules mould our beliefs. Starting and scaling a business is often an immensely developmental journey for social entrepreneurs. Their failures and successes, feedback from mentors and peers, as well their surrounding culture that tells what is possible affects their entrepreneurial mindset. The most important influences are:

- **Personal Experiences:** These are the direct experiences of success, failure, feedback, and reinforcement that we encounter in life. For social entrepreneurs, early experiences with leadership, problem-solving, and innovation are critical in forming the belief that they can create positive change.
- **Social Interactions:** The attitudes and expectations of those around us, including family, friends, colleagues, and mentors, significantly influence our mindsets. For example, a supportive mentor who encourages risk-taking and learning from failure can help an entrepreneur develop a resilient and adaptive mindset.
- **Cultural Influences:** Broader societal norms and values also shape our mindsets. For example, in cultures that value individualism and innovation, entrepreneurs may be more likely to adopt a mindset that embraces change and continuous improvement. Conversely, in cultures that emphasize stability and tradition, there may be a stronger tendency toward a fixed mindset.



# Understanding Mindsets and Their Transformation

## Mindset and Social Entrepreneurship

In the context of social entrepreneurship, mindset is particularly important because it influences how entrepreneurs approach the unique challenges of balancing social impact with for example financial sustainability. Social entrepreneurs tend to work in resource-constrained environments, with wicked social problems and a call for novel solutions. An adaptive mindset—one that embraces growth, learning, and resilience—is essential for navigating these challenges. Important factors of such a mindset are:

- **Seeing Challenges As Opportunities for Learning And Innovation:** Social entrepreneurs who adopt a growth mindset are more likely to view challenges as opportunities rather than the obstacles that will jeopardize their chance at success. Such a mentality remains nimble and receptive to new strategies, which is essential in confronting large social challenges.
- **Learning From Failure:** Failure is an unavoidable part of entrepreneurship and the way in which entrepreneurs respond to failure depends on their mindset. People with a growth mindset see failure as an opportunity to learn and are also more inclined to reflect on what happened, make changes and try again. This kind of resilience is essential to thrive in the long-term as a social entrepreneur.
- **Persistence And Resilience:** Life as a social entrepreneur is full of challenges and the journey seems endless. An adaptive mindset produces perseverance by rewarding one for thinking that hard work and effort bring about development, ultimately turning into success. This ability to bounce back from each failure is vital in being able to sustain momentum and dedication toward the social mission, even after experiencing defeats.
- **Innovation And Creativity:** Adaptive mindset encourages entrepreneurs to think outside the box, exploring new possibilities. This is particularly significant in the social sector where traditional business models do not easily apply, and new ways are required to solve old as well as new challenges.

# Understanding Mindsets and Their Transformation

## Impact of Mindsets on Gender Equity

The mindsets prevalent in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem have a significant impact on gender dynamics. Traditional gender roles and societal expectations have long shaped the mindsets of both men and women, often leading to entrenched stereotypes and biases that perpetuate gender inequalities.

For example, women entrepreneurs often face the internalized belief that they must conform to certain societal norms, such as being more cautious or avoiding risks. These attitudes can lead to conservative business strategies, lower financial projections, and a reluctance to pursue large-scale ventures. As highlighted in the Coop4Equality study and various interviews, many women entrepreneurs tend to pursue "safe" and "manageable" goals rather than the ambitious, high-risk ventures often pursued by their male counterparts.

Moreover, such attitudes are often reinforced by the existing structures within the SE ecosystem. As noted in a study by Brush et al. (2018), women-led ventures receive less venture capital funding than male-led ventures, largely due to investor bias and the perception that women are less capable of leading high-growth businesses. This disparity is not only a result of external bias but is also linked to the internalized beliefs of women themselves, who may doubt their ability to scale and succeed.

A growth mindset therefore can play a transformative role in promoting gender equality in the SE sector. When women entrepreneurs adopt a growth mindset, they are more likely to challenge the status quo, take bold actions, and pursue opportunities that may initially seem out of reach. This shift can lead to greater innovation, more ambitious ventures, and a greater likelihood of securing the resources and support necessary to succeed.

Mindsets are developmental structures that take shape within individuals for an array of reasons – from personal experiences and social interactions to cultural influences. As a set of beliefs and attitudes that influence how we perceive ourselves and our interconnected world, they are powerful narratives to put us on a brave-crusade in life – especially when it comes down to doing something as challenging as delving into the domain of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs who harness the power of a growth mindset that emphasizes growth, learning and resiliency can turn challenges into opportunities to achieve lasting social impact for a cause.

# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

Achieving gender equity in the field of social entrepreneurship presents several significant challenges, despite growing awareness and initiatives aimed at addressing disparities. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders, including investors, policymakers, and educational institutions.

## Strategic interventions for an inclusive ecosystem change

A recent review of the Self-Help Groups conducted by different departments in the World Bank, has shown that most development strategies and programs emphasize changing individual behaviours but achieving gender equality also necessitates a focus on transforming collective norms and mindsets. We need to consider the narratives surrounding gender that we live in—what it means to be a girl, boy, woman, or man.



For many, these gender narratives form a crucial part of our social identities, often without our conscious awareness, significantly influencing our lives. In the approach to achieve gender equality, we have ignored the grip these gender stories have on both men and women, and the society at large. Gender norms are the shared perception, emotions and behaviour about men and women by all societal groups that reproduce gender inequality at all levels. Transforming these shared narratives requires addressing both collective agency and the societal norms surrounding gender across various class, race, and ethnic groups.

# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

To change collective mindsets, especially regarding power dynamics, all actors, but especially those in power, must first recognize their own gender norms and engage with the collective agency of gender norms that are present within families, communities, workplaces, service providers, markets, schools, and colleges. For this to happen there are some horizontal elements that need to be considered:

## 1. **Change the gender story through the narrative:**

The way information is framed can significantly reinforce stereotypes and our own biases. Behavioural science has long shown that framing, impacts decision-making and outcomes. For example, the World Health Organization reports that one-third of women globally have experienced violence from an intimate partner. While this statistic highlights a serious issue, the passive presentation of the information can unintentionally shift the focus solely onto women, framing the problem as a "women's issue." Being mindful of how information is presented can help challenge and reshape existing mindsets.

## 2. **Understanding the power dynamics:**

Anything that tries to destabilize or change men's power brings resistance to change and a backlash against women. Without a change in men's story of what it means to be a man (and how to use their power for the collective good), transformative change that is authentic and non-violent can be difficult. Emotions play a critical role in our behaviors, decisions and keep in place the power dynamics in significant ways. Recognizing the importance of emotional drivers, such as anger, disapproval, or shame,

can uphold existing inequalities. Development initiatives benefit when they incorporate elements that address emotions and power dynamics. Programs that teach life skills, including emotional intelligence (like empathy, compassion etc) and non-violent communication, have shown to reduce violence against women, improve retention rates for girls in school, and foster healthier self-worth in men without resorting to violence.

## 3. **Encourage Collaborative Approaches**

In general, men have been largely excluded from large-scale women's empowerment initiatives. However, there is growing evidence that involving men in these conversations can lead to significant behavioral changes. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an intervention involved men and their partners discussing how conflict shaped their ideas of masculinity. This initiative resulted in a marked reduction in domestic violence and greater involvement of men in childcare and decision-making, with women reporting increased freedom to share their experiences. Women empowerment programs need to include men and work on deconstructing and shifting mindset about the current power imbalances.

# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

## Practical tools for creating a gender-aware mindset in the social entrepreneurship field

A gender-aware approach recognizes the different experiences, needs, and contributions of all genders, enabling social entrepreneurs to build more effective and equitable ventures. Here are some actionable strategies to develop this mindset:

**1 Education and Awareness:** Workshops, training sessions, and discussions can equip social entrepreneurs with the knowledge to recognize and challenge gender stereotypes, fostering an understanding of how these biases can impact decision-making and innovation. Strategic tools can include:

- **Tailored Training Workshops:** Offer training sessions focused on business skills, leadership development, and financial literacy specifically designed for women and marginalized genders.
- **Discussion and awareness sessions:** Focused sessions on biases and stereotypes can increase the understanding and change perspectives

**2 Access to Funding and Financial Resources:** Work to eliminate barriers to funding and resources for women and underrepresented genders. Create initiatives specifically designed to support these groups, such as grants and access to investment opportunities. This can include:

- **Gender-Lens Investing:** Encourage investors to adopt gender-lens investing strategies that prioritize funding for women-led ventures and those that address gender issues.
- **Microfinance and Grants:** Develop specific grant programs and microfinance options that cater to female entrepreneurs, reducing barriers to entry and enabling them to launch and scale their businesses.



# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

**3 Creating Inclusive Networks:** Women and marginalized genders often benefit from mentorship and peer support. Creating platforms for networking can empower these entrepreneurs, helping them share resources, experiences, and strategies for success. This can involve:

- **Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship networks connecting experienced entrepreneurs with emerging female leaders to provide guidance, support, and resources.
- **Networking Events:** Organize events that bring together diverse stakeholders in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem, encouraging cross-gender collaboration and idea exchange.
- **Online Platforms:** Digital spaces for entrepreneurs to connect, share resources, and collaborate on projects, ensuring accessibility for all genders.

**4 Policy Advocacy:** Organizations should implement policies that consider the unique challenges faced by different genders. This includes flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and support for caregiving responsibilities. Such policies not only benefit employees but also create a culture that values and supports all individuals. Key interventions can include:

- **Gender-Responsive Policies:** Work with governments and organizations to create policies that promote gender equity in funding, employment, and entrepreneurship support.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of gender equity in social entrepreneurship, mobilizing public support for systemic change.





# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

**5 Research and Data Collection:** Developing metrics to assess gender equity within social enterprises is important for accountability. Organizations should track the representation of different genders in leadership roles, funding distribution, and project impact. Strategic interventions should include:

- **Comprehensive Studies:** Conduct research to gather data on the representation, challenges, and successes of women and marginalized genders in social entrepreneurship.
- **Impact Metrics:** Develop metrics to assess the impact of gender-focused interventions, helping to inform future strategies and policies.

**6 Fostering an Inclusive Culture:** Creating a culture that values diversity and inclusivity within organizations is fundamental. This can be achieved through:

- **Training on Unconscious Bias:** Implement training programs that address unconscious biases in hiring, funding, and organizational practices, promoting a more equitable environment.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Recognize and celebrate the contributions of diverse leaders in social entrepreneurship through awards, showcases, and public recognition, reinforcing the value of inclusivity and diversity.
- **Promoting Role Models:** Highlight and celebrate the achievements of women and marginalized genders in social entrepreneurship. Showcasing role models can inspire others and demonstrate the positive impact of diverse leadership in driving social change.

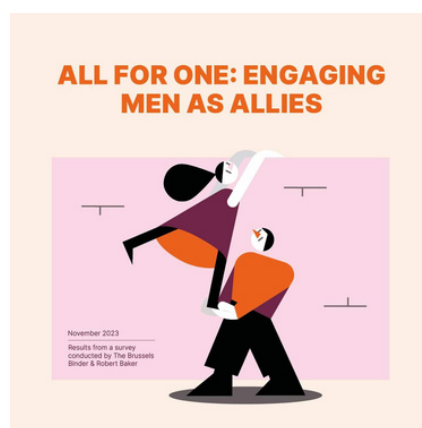




# Creating a Gender-Aware Mindset in the SE Field

**7 Engaging Men as Allies:** When men understand the importance of gender equity and recognize their role in promoting it, they can become advocates for change. This involves not only supporting women but also challenging harmful behaviors and practices within their networks, creating a more inclusive culture. This can involve:

- **Men's Advocacy Programs:** Create initiatives that encourage men to take active roles in promoting gender equity, helping to shift cultural norms and support female leadership.
- **Workshops on Allyship:** Provide training for men to understand their role as allies and equip them with the tools to advocate for gender equity effectively.



**8 Promote Diverse Leadership:** Actively recruit individuals from various genders and backgrounds to ensure a range of perspectives in decision-making. This diversity not only enhances creativity but also improves the organization's ability to address the needs of different communities.

- **Sponsorship and support:** Create sponsorship arrangements where senior leaders advocate for and actively promote the advancement of diverse talent within the organization. Pair emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds with senior leaders who can provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities.
- **Inclusive recruitment practices:** Ensure that hiring panels include members from various backgrounds to mitigate bias and promote inclusivity. Get help with diverse platforms and networks to reach underrepresented groups and partner with organizations that support minority entrepreneurs.

# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

Our mindset has a significant impact on how we perceive the world, how we respond to challenges, and what we consider to be possible — both on an individual level and within the systems we are part of. While shifts in mindset often begin with a moment of personal reflection, they require sustained attention, practice, and tools to become lasting change.

This chapter presents a series of practical, tested methods designed to assist individuals and teams in cultivating a gender-aware mindset. These tools were developed and applied through the Coop4Equality project workshops, with the aim of bridging the gap between inner awareness and outward transformation. They provide support to participants in the following areas:

- It is important to be aware of limiting beliefs and habitual patterns.
- We are working to create bold and inclusive visions for the future.
- The objective is to enhance self-efficacy and encourage shared responsibility.
- Translating reflection into concrete, day-to-day actions.

Each method is adaptable to different contexts and levels of experience. While some are suited for individual reflection, others foster team-based learning or collective action. The provision of a roadmap for integrating gender awareness into leadership, decision-making and organisational culture in the social economy is the purpose of this initiative.

Regardless of whether you are an entrepreneur, educator, facilitator or changemaker, these methods are designed to encourage you to think more deeply, act with greater courage and lead with greater purpose.



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

1

## Self-Diagnosis and Awareness

Cultivating a gender-aware mindset begins with understanding where we currently stand. Before attempting to alter patterns of thought or behavior, it is first necessary to become aware of them, without judgement, but with curiosity and clarity. This section introduces tools that help to identify habitual mindsets, emotional triggers and limiting beliefs.

The objective of these methods is to:

- Increase self-awareness with regard to internalised norms and reactive patterns.
- Indicate whether our mindset is fixed, growth-oriented or inclusive.
- Ensure that the groundwork is laid for intentional mindset shifts.

They can be used individually or in group settings and work particularly well as opening or foundation-building exercises in workshops, leadership trainings, or coaching contexts.

### Method 1: Mindset Typology Self-Check

#### Purpose:

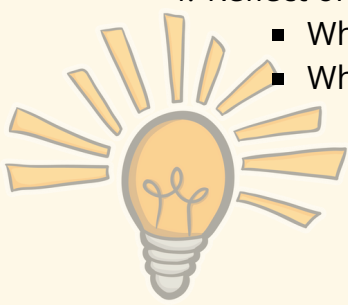
Gain insight into your current mindset tendencies — and identify areas where you want to grow.

#### Instructions:

1. Read a series of short statements (see attachment).
2. For each one, rate how true it feels for you on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).
3. Add up your points in each category: Fixed Mindset, Growth Mindset, Inclusive Mindset
4. Reflect on your results:
  - Which mindset is most prevalent within you right now?
  - Where would a different mindset serve you better?

#### Tip:

There are no right or wrong answers. This exercise is for you — be honest and kind with yourself.



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

## Method 2: Exploring Triggers and Patterns

### Purpose:

Understanding moments that trigger reactive thoughts, emotions, or behaviors — and uncovering the patterns behind them.

### Instructions:

1. Take 10–15 minutes to reflect on the following questions. Write freely in a notebook or journal.
  - When do you feel stuck, blocked, or hesitant in your work?
  - What situations bring up stress, self-doubt, or tension?
  - What kinds of thoughts come up in those moments?
  - Where do you think these patterns come from (e.g. past experiences, culture, role)?
  - What would you like to believe instead?
2. Pause and read through your reflections. Highlight one insight that feels especially important.

### Tip:

Treat this as an inner exploration — you're not trying to “fix” anything, just noticing with awareness and curiosity.

## Method 3: Reflecting Limiting Beliefs

### Purpose:

Identifying inner beliefs that might be holding you back — and beginning to reframe them.

### Instructions:

1. Take 10–15 minutes for quiet reflection. Use a notebook or blank page to respond to the following prompts:
2. What thoughts or beliefs often come up when you feel small, hesitant, or not good enough?
3. In which situations do these beliefs usually appear? (e.g. speaking up in meetings, submitting an application, leading others)
4. Where do you think these beliefs come from? (childhood, previous roles, societal expectations?)
5. What would you like to believe instead — something that feels supportive, courageous, or ambitious?



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender- Aware Mindset

6. If you had an inner voice that encouraged you, what would it say?

**Tip:**

Write as if you're speaking to yourself, and do so with compassion. You can even turn the new belief into an affirmation or reminder.

**Example:**

Limiting belief: "I'm not ready to lead a team."

New belief: "I can learn to lead, and I don't have to be perfect to be effective."

## 2

### Vision and Action

Once we become aware of our inner patterns and limiting beliefs, the next step is to imagine new possibilities — and turn them into action. This section offers tools that help you shift your focus from what holds you back to what drives you forward.

The following methods are designed to:

- Expand your sense of what's possible.
- Connect your personal growth to real-world change.
- Help you define clear, bold steps toward a more inclusive and purpose-driven practice.

Whether you're an entrepreneur, educator, or changemaker, these tools can support you in translating reflection into movement — with courage, clarity, and intention.



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

## Method 4: Reverse Mapping

### Purpose:

Visualize a bold future – and work backwards to identify the key steps that will get you there.

### Instructions:

1. Take a moment to imagine your work or initiative five years from now:
  - What has changed?
  - Who is benefiting?
  - What are you most proud of?
2. Now map your way back to today using the following timeline. You can draw this on a sheet of paper or use the template:
  - 5 Years from Now → 3 Years → 1 Year → Today → Next Step
  - For each stage, ask:
    - What happened at this point?
    - What decisions, actions, or partnerships were needed?
    - What bold choices made the difference?
3. Finish by writing down one concrete step you can take this week to move in that direction.

### Tip:

Start with your ideal outcome — not the most “realistic” one. Let your imagination lead, and refine later.

## Method 5: Action Commitment

### Purpose:

Turn intention into action by committing to one bold, meaningful step — and preparing for what might get in the way.

### Instructions:

1. Take a quiet moment to reflect:
  - What is one action you’ve been hesitating to take, but know would move you forward?
  - What would you do if you were just a little braver?
2. Write down your commitment using these prompts:
  - My bold action:
  - Why it matters to me:
  - What might get in the way:



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender- Aware Mindset

- How I will support myself:
- When I will do it: (be specific)
- 3. Optional: Share your action with someone you trust — speaking it aloud can strengthen your commitment.

**Tip:**

Small is fine. The power lies in choosing something that stretches you — not overwhelms you.

**Example:**

"I will email the potential partner I've been avoiding by Thursday. I want to open the door to collaboration, even if I'm unsure how they'll respond."

## 3

### Connection and Co-Learning

Mindset work doesn't happen in isolation. We grow most when we share our stories, listen to others, and realize that we are not alone in our doubts, aspirations, or turning points. This section introduces a method that encourages mutual inspiration and collective insight — not through advice, but through presence and resonance.

Use this space to:

- Build emotional connection across differences
- Strengthen courage by sharing real experiences
- Learn through storytelling rather than theory

These practices are especially powerful in teams, communities, or learning groups — but can also be done in pairs or small gatherings.



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

## Method 6: Story Exchange

### Purpose:

Share real experiences to foster connection, reflection, and inspiration — and to remind yourself (and others) that growth is personal, possible, and shared.

### Instructions (solo or in a group):

1. Choose one of the following prompts. Write or speak freely for 5–10 minutes:
  - Tell a story about a moment you stepped outside your comfort zone.
  - Describe a time when you failed — and what you learned.
  - Share an experience that made you feel powerful or proud.
  - Talk about a limiting belief you've overcome.
  - Recall a turning point in your personal or professional journey.
2. If you're alone:
  - Write the story in your journal, or record yourself speaking it out loud.
  - Reflect: What helped you move forward in that situation? What are you learning about yourself?
3. If you're with others (2–4 people):
  - Take turns sharing your story (about 3 minutes per person).
  - Listen deeply — no advice, no comments, just presence.
  - After the round, each person may share one thing that resonated for them.

### Tip:

You don't need a dramatic story. What matters is honesty and meaning — even small shifts can inspire. And remember: stories grow stronger when they are told.





# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

## 4

### Micro-Tools and Team Practices

Not every mindset shift requires a deep workshop or structured reflection. Sometimes, small nudges in our daily routines or team habits can spark awareness, invite conversation, and normalize inclusive thinking. This final section offers three simple tools that can be used individually or embedded into organizational life.

These methods are:

- Quick to apply
- Easy to adapt
- Designed for ongoing use

### Method 7: Gender Mindset Definition Lab

#### Purpose:

Clarify what a gender-aware mindset means to you — and align your understanding with others in your team or group.

#### Instructions:

1. Take 5–10 minutes to reflect:
  - What does “a gender-aware mindset” mean to me?
  - What does it look like in daily actions or decisions?
  - What does it not mean?
2. If used in a group:
  - Invite each person to share their definition.
  - Collect keywords and build a shared version (on a flipchart or Miro board).

#### Tip:

Repeat this exercise once a year — to see how your understanding evolves over time.



# From Reflection to Action – Tools to Cultivate a Gender-Aware Mindset

## Method 8: Bias Tracker

### Purpose:

Increase your daily awareness of subtle gender biases — in yourself and your environment.

### Instructions:

1. For one week, observe moments when:
  - A decision or reaction seems influenced by gender roles or stereotypes
  - Someone is interrupted, overlooked, or typecast
  - You catch yourself making a biased assumption
2. Note them down (no judgment, just observation). At the end of the week, reflect:
  - What patterns do I notice?
  - What would I like to change?

### Optional:

Do this with a colleague and debrief together at the end of the week.

## Method 9: Monthly Inclusion Check-In

### Purpose:

Create a regular team habit to reflect on equity and inclusion in daily work.

### Instructions:

At the end of each month, take 10–15 minutes alone or with your team to reflect:

- Did we make at least one consciously inclusive decision this month?
- Where did gender equity show up in our language, processes, or relationships?
- What do we want to improve next month?

### Tip:

Add one of these questions to your existing team retrospectives or planning sessions — small rituals shape big cultures.



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# Mindset Typology Self-Check

Read each statement below and rate how true it feels for you today on a scale from 1 (not true at all) to 5 (very true). Then add up your points for each mindset category to find your dominant pattern.

Statement	Type	1	2	3	4	5
<b>I believe intelligence and ability are fixed traits.</b>	Fixed Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I avoid challenges to protect myself from failure.</b>	Fixed Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I find it hard to accept feedback without feeling criticised.</b>	Fixed Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I often compare myself to others and feel behind.</b>	Fixed Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I think success is only for a few who are naturally talented.</b>	Fixed Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I believe I can grow and improve through practice.</b>	Growth Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I actively seek out feedback to improve.</b>	Growth Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I see mistakes as opportunities to learn.</b>	Growth Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I enjoy pushing my limits, even if I might fail.</b>	Growth Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I believe effort matters more than talent.</b>	Growth Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I'm curious about different perspectives.</b>	Inclusive Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I believe collaboration across differences creates better solutions.</b>	Inclusive Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I value empathy and equity in leadership and teamwork.</b>	Inclusive Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I listen deeply, even to views I disagree with.</b>	Inclusive Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I see inclusion as a strength, not a challenge.</b>	Inclusive Mindset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Scoring:

Fixed Mindset: \_\_\_\_ / 25 | Growth Mindset: \_\_\_\_ / 25 | Inclusive Mindset: \_\_\_\_ / 25

## Reflection:

- Which mindset scored highest?
- Does this surprise you?
- Where would a different mindset support your growth or leadership?
- How could you practice that mindset more often?



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