

Three Recommendations for Better Gender Balance

Our purposes and policies

Despite Denmark's history as a global front-runner of gender equality, with policies designed to achieve gender balance, and organizations that keep gender diversity high on their strategic agendas, the share of women in leadership in Danish society has only marginally increased over the past ten years. According to DI, 12% of CEOs in Danish companies with more than 50 employees are female.

Diversity and inclusion are proven to be good for society at large and are widely acknowledged to impart positive results in companies and organizations. Political and corporate leaders around the world understand the importance of diversity when it comes to attracting and retaining talent and many studies have shown that companies with diverse leadership teams outperform those with less diversity in leadership in terms of profit margins, return on equity, and revenues generated from innovations (on.bcg.com/2FqqdE2).

Denmark should profit from the full talent pool of a highly educated population, including a higher share of women graduating from Danish universities. Organizations that attract diversity, build diverse leadership teams and maintain an inclusive culture make better and more nuanced decisions. This leads the country forward.

But the myth of equality in Denmark hampers efforts: we are not as equal as we think. Current cultural norms, social expectations, stereotypes and unconscious bias are part of our everyday life and all contribute to a skewed gender balance in leadership in Danish society. We call on agents and policy makers to help address norms through interventions and regulations to build a future cadre of leadership that draws on the diverse talent pool and aspires to address current and future challenges.

The Gender Diversity Roundtable (genderdiversity.dk) represents a diversity of CEO/president-level Danish leaders from academia, the private sector and civil society. The GDR members see the necessity to work together on all levels of society and put forward three sets of cascading recommendations to policy makers to encourage more action to ensure gender equality and diversity in leadership teams.

These will impact both short-term goals and strengthen also long-term ones.

Recommendations

1. Promote a gender balanced educational system from early childhood learning throughout the tertiary levels that addresses gender stereotyping, enables unbiased education, encourages diversity, and helps students match their educational choices with their ambition and talent

- A. Include education on the value of diversity and equality, and unconscious bias in schools' and educators' curricula and learning environments
- B. Require educational institutions to be gender sensitive in how they educate children
- C. Require educational institutions to specify opt-in choice by parent/caretaker as the primary contact to avoid strengthening stereotypes
- D. Incentivize balanced gender participation in extracurricular activities
- E. Incentivize gender diversity for study lines and vocational trainings
- F. Make gender-sensitive counseling and career planning required services to help students match their talent and ambition with their career choices

2. Promote gender equality and address gender stereotyping in organizations and in the society at large.

- G. Encourage unconscious bias training to companies and organizations
- H. Incentivize actions against gender bias and stereotypes in the media
- I. Take action to ensure AI and digital solutions are not biased
- J. Recommend more than one gender represented on recruiting and promotion processes
- K. Encourage voluntary inclusion of reporting on gender balance and pay gap across all levels of the organization as part of the main annual report

3. Enable working families to drive a more balanced share of home, caregiver and work activities, allowing parents to pursue dual careers

- L. Incentivize a more balanced sharing of care
- M. Incentivize a more balanced parental leave split
- N. Incentivize private household support

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