

Promoting Gender Equality is Promoting Occupational Health: Presenting Bridges Project

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Issue/Problem: Gender discrimination is associated with negative mental health effects.

Description of the problem: All over the world the labor market is strongly gender segregated. Several studies show that women who experienced **gender discrimination** at workplace had higher odds of **depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress** (Elwér et al., 2013). There is clear and mounting evidence that gender inequality at work comes with a **cost to employers and the organizations** (Cavazotte et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2018). Thus, it is important that **companies themselves invest in promoting gender equality**.

Results: In Portugal, in the **Alto Minho Region** (see figure), a project – **bridGEs** - is being implemented aiming to promote gender equality in local organizations. **bridGEs** is a practice/research project promoted by the **Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP)**, and an **EEA Grants funded project on Work-life Balance and Gender Equality Programme**. **bridGEs** intervention includes **three enriching experiences for organizations**, in order to promote their **ability to create excellent work environments** and to develop their **accuracy to detect inequalities**, to act and to react more efficiently, becoming more productive and competitive. These experiences consist of training courses mainly practical, and workplace focused, including:

- 1) **Construction of assessment tools;**
- 2) **Assessment and construction of equality plans;**
- 3) **Tailor-made consultancy in equality plans implementation.**

Lessons: It is possible to implement **projects that aim to combat gender inequality, health promotion and well-being in Portuguese organizations**, in more **peripheral locations and regions** of the country where it was believed to be difficult to achieve these objectives.



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