



BASQUE COUNTRY

POLICY RATING



To what extent are Basque Country policies that focus on engaging men and boys gender transformative?



MenEngage Alliance
working with men and boys for gender equality

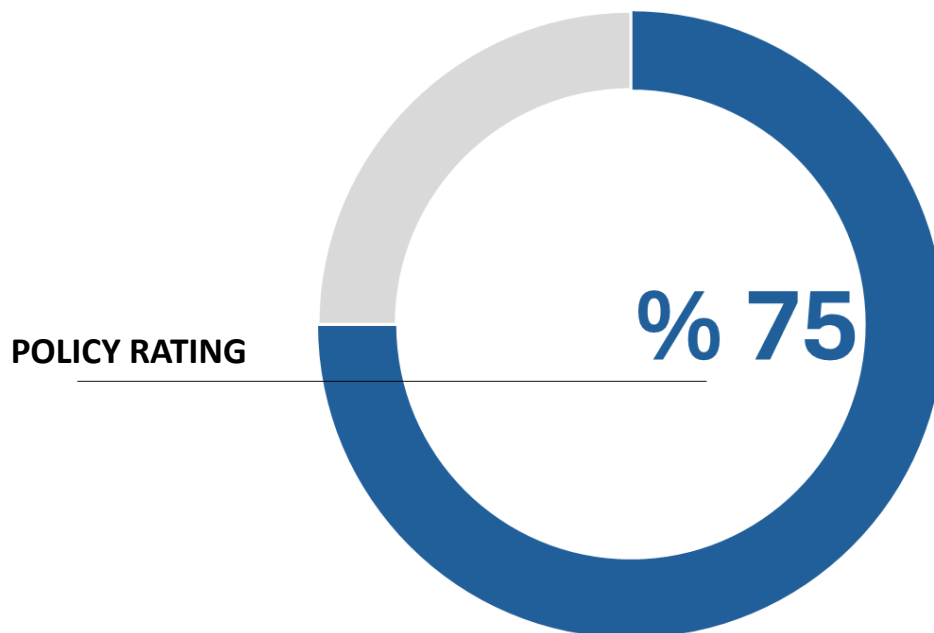
 **FemJust**
Feminist Solutions towards Global Justice

A review of the Basque Country's **regional policy**:

The Gizonduz initiative (2007-2023)

Launched in 2007 by the Basque government, and led by Emakunde, the Basque Institute for Women, the Gizonduz initiative has since evolved to become the Basque service for working with men and masculinities for equality. Its main aim is to help to build a fairer and more equal Basque society for all people, from a perspective that recognises the importance of actively engaging men in this process.

Gizonduz has made a significant contribution to increasing the number of men who are aware of, educated in and committed to equality between women and men and against gender-based violence. It has also helped to increase men's shared responsibility in household chores and caregiving, promoting ethical values and the practice of caregiving in a way that strikes a balance in the sharing of these tasks and reduces gender inequalities. Regarding the most important areas for improvement, this public policy has not had a great deal of civil society participation, including feminist and LGTBI organisations, nor a public feedback process in its design, implementation or evaluation. These strengths and areas that require improvement are reflected in the policy's overall score of 75%.



This report presents an analysis of **Gizonduz**, an initiative of [Emakunde, the Basque Institute for Women](#), which is an autonomous body of the Basque Government that designs, promotes, advises on, coordinates and evaluates gender equality policies.

Conducted by Emakunde, this self-analysis of the Gizonduz initiative is based on the [MenEngage Alliance Policy Analysis Toolkit](#).

The Policy Analysis Toolkit sets out a methodology developed by FemJust and MenEngage Alliance for rigorous, independent assessment of gender equality policies that include engaging men and boys.



The methodology allows for policies to be assessed against a number of criteria, scoring its feminist approach, analysis and implementation.

The methodology can also be used as a tool for self-analysis, monitoring, and evaluation by civil-society organisations, Government partners, and other stakeholders designing policies—as is the case for this report—.

Visit menengage.org/advocacy for more information about the methodology, how you can use it to foster high standards in policy-development and implementation, as well as to hold legislators and policy implementing institutions accountable (both nationally and internationally). You can also explore a range of policies that have been assessed using the Policy Analysis Toolkit methodology.

www.menengage.org

THIS IS A REVIEW OF THE POLICY:	Gizonduz Initiative
POLICY DATES::	2007-2023
SCOPE:	Policy of the Basque Country
POLICY DEVELOPED BY:	Emakunde – Basque Institute for Women

How was this policy analysed?

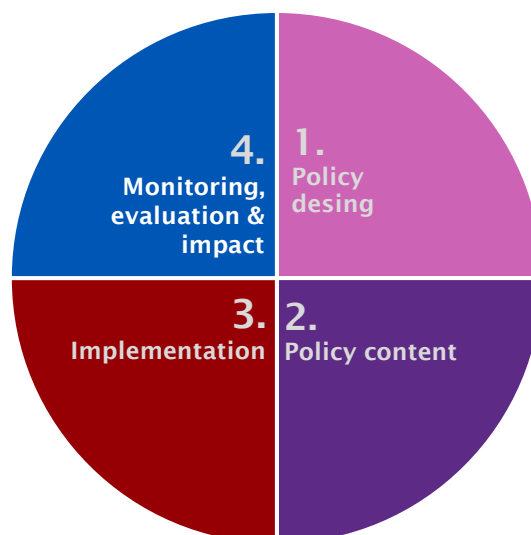
The policy was analysed at all stages of its process based on its alignment with the following frameworks:

1.
Intersectional
feminist
analysis

2.
Human-
rights based
approach

3.
The socio-
ecological
model

The policy's approach to engaging men and boys through a feminist policy process has been assessed across four areas:



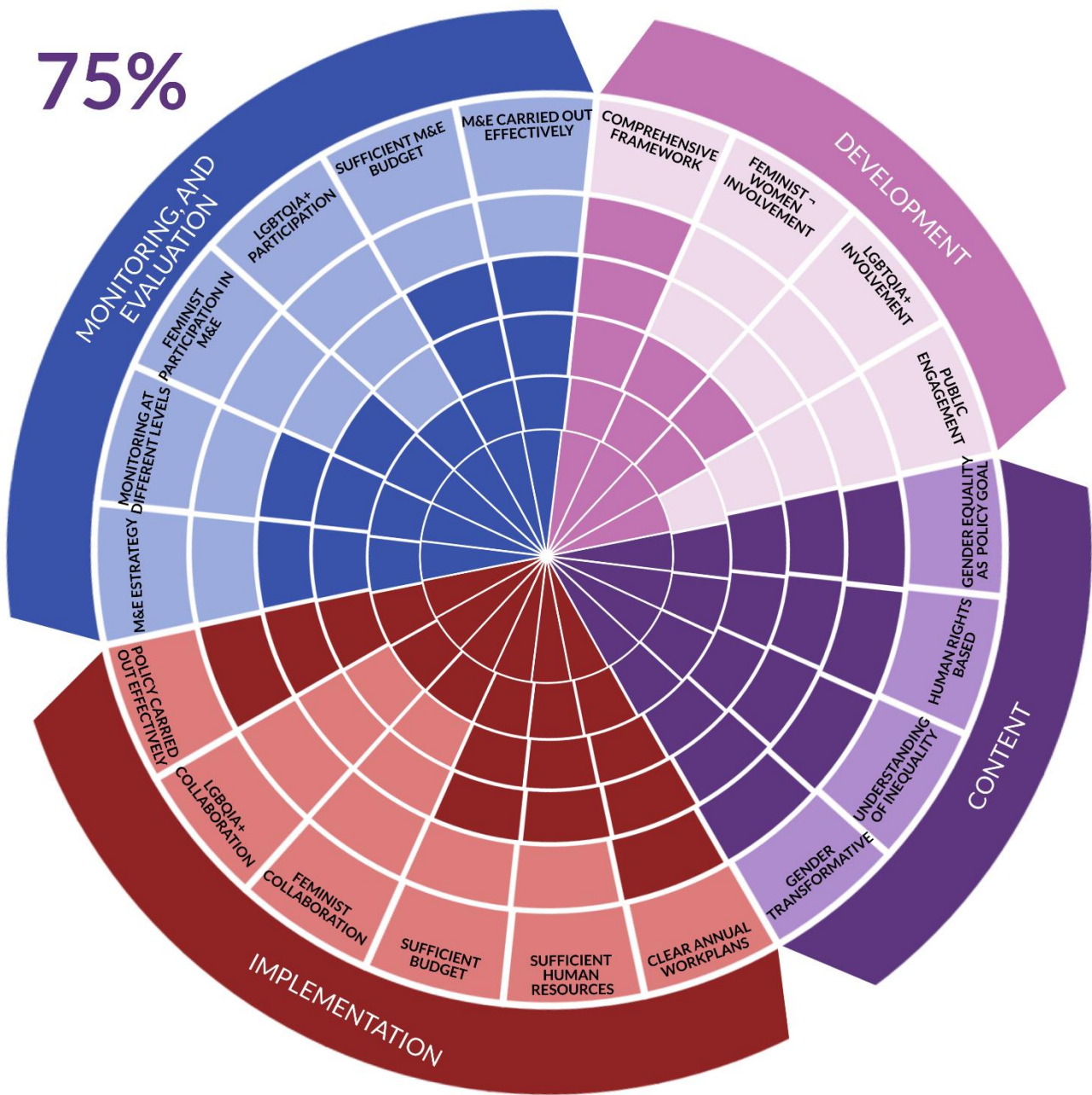
What makes a policy gender-transformative?

The aim of a gender-transformative policy is to: dismantle oppressive and harmful social and gender norms, create new norms that support people of all gender expressions and identities, and to redistribute power and privilege associated with gender and other intersecting issues. It also puts into practice the human rights principles of participation, empowerment, accountability, transparency and focusing on the hardest hit and most marginalised groups, among others.

It properly conceptualises and analyses the problem at hand, e.g. gender inequality, gender-based violence or adverse reproductive and sexual health outcomes. This includes identifying the power imbalances generated by gender stereotypes and norms, and how these intersect with other forms of oppression. It does not perpetuate existing gender norms and stereotypes, in its framing, approaches or strategies.

It recognises the leadership of feminist and LGBTI movements and engages with them meaningfully at all stages of the policy process, from design to implementation to evaluation. At its heart, a transformative gender policy seeks to address the needs of all people who have been historically oppressed by patriarchal norms, discrimination and violence, including girls, women, trans, non-binary and queer people.

When a gender-transformative policy engages men and boys, it does so with the goal of achieving gender justice in society, political and social institutions, and the policy framework. Specific strategies urge and enable them to recognise and dismantle patriarchal power and privilege by following an intersectional feminist approach. Strategies for engaging men and boys do not operate in isolation but are part of a comprehensive strategic framework to achieve gender equality and transformation.



This chart shows how strong the policy is, in terms of intersectional feminist practice and thinking, across 20 scoring criteria. The criteria are grouped into four areas, providing a quick visual guide as to how well the policy was developed, implemented and monitored, as well as the strength of its content. The scores are based on a thorough evaluation of evidence and interviews, using a standardised scoring framework.

Further information at www.menengage.org/advocacy

Highlights

- **Alignment with the regulatory and policy framework:** The Gizonduz initiative was developed in line with the international, national and regional regulatory and policy framework regarding gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence. This alignment includes key references such as the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the CEDAW, the EU Gender Equality Strategy, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy. At a national level, Gizonduz is in line with Organic Law 3/2007 for effective equality between women and men, with Organic Law 10/2022, for the full guarantee of sexual freedom, and with Act 4/2023, on real and effective equality for trans people and the safeguarding of rights of LGBTI people. At a regional level, it is aligned with the consolidated text of the Act for Gender Equality and Lives Free of Male Violence against Women, approved by Legislative Decree 1/2023, of 16 March (hereinafter the Equality Act).
- **Gender-transformative-strategies:** Gizonduz includes strategies to shift knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, challenge norms and stereotypes, adopt gender-transformative programmes and policies by social entities, and promote changes in the legal and policy framework. Most evaluations reflect a positive perception of these aspects, with average scores above 8.0 out of 10.
- **Specialised and trained human resources:** The Gizonduz team is composed of qualified professionals, with training in equality and experience in various key areas such as coordination, training and social media management. Clear roles are assigned to the human resources, and they have access to ongoing training, which enables them to keep up-to-date with equality debates and practices.
- **Regular evaluations to identify areas for improvement:** Evaluations are carried out using questionnaires that cover numerous areas, including evaluations of the course, the quality of the content and speakers, and areas for improvement. Evaluations are conducted at both individual and organisational levels.

Lowlights

- **Civil society participation in the initiative requires improvement.** The participation of feminist women's organisations and LGBTI people in the Gizonduz initiative has been limited at several key stages, making this an area for improvement. In the initiative's initial design, the lack of formal mechanisms for the direct inclusion of these organisations was a weakness identified in the evaluations. Collaboration with these organisations was also inadequate in the implementation and monitoring of the initiative, and it has been suggested that closer and more formal cooperation is needed. Overall, we would stress the need to promote greater inclusion and discussion about their role in the initiative in order to improve the effectiveness and impact of Gizonduz.

Gizonduz is a ground-breaking public policy at a global level, It has fostered progress and commitment to equality among men in the Basque Country, but it requires the collaboration of civil society to continue gaining momentum.

The Gizonduz initiative is currently geared towards continuing to increase the number of men who are aware of, educated in and committed to equality between women and men and against gender-based violence, with special emphasis on young people, socially vulnerable groups and leaders with the power to influence. It also seeks to further increase men's shared responsibility in household chores and caregiving, promoting ethical values and the practice of caregiving in order to strike a balance in the sharing of these tasks, promote the development and well-being of all people, and reduce gender inequalities, gender-based violence and harmful risky behaviours.

Gizonduz is also currently focusing on increasing the number of men, especially young men, who receive counselling and psychoeducational support, or who are referred to specialised services to promote equality, positive attitudes and the prevention of challenging sexist behaviours. Finally, the initiative aims to increase the number of public and private organisations carrying out work related to men, masculinities and equality.

“Gizonduz has played an important role by focusing on education. Through its educational and awareness-raising programmes, it has provided some of the tools and resources needed to address and change their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to gender equality. There is a long way to go, but by empowering people to recognise and challenge gender inequalities in their environment, Gizonduz has actively helped to foster a cultural change that needs to take root among men and throughout Basque society”.

Expert in Equality

In what context did the policy emerge?

Gizonduz arose in response to the inequalities between women and men in the Basque Country, a phenomenon that can be observed in numerous areas, from the job market to the household, and also in social and political participation and male violence against women. Despite the progress made in recent decades, women continue to face widespread discrimination and numerous obstacles to their personal and professional development, while men as a social group continue to occupy a position of greater privilege and power. Against this backdrop, Gizonduz recognises that achieving real and effective equality is not only a matter for women, but also requires the active participation and involvement of men.

In order to achieve a truly fair and equal society, it is essential that men question traditional gender roles and stereotypes, accept shared responsibility for household chores and caring for dependants, and become involved in the fight against gender-based violence. Furthermore, gender equality not only benefits women, but also has a positive impact on the well-being of society as a whole, promoting the human, social and economic development of communities. A fairer and more equal society enables all people, women and men, to realise their full potential and contribute to collective progress.

The design and implementation of Gizonduz is built on solid foundations, covering several areas. Firstly, a legitimising legal framework: the initial version of the Basque Country's Equality Act of 2005 introduced the obligation to promote the shared responsibility of men in household chores and legitimised actions aimed specifically at men, stipulating that measures to promote their participation in these tasks would not constitute discrimination. Gizonduz was set up in 2007 in accordance with this legal mandate.

Political commitment has proved to be crucial. At its inception, Gizonduz had strong political support, both from the Board of Emakunde and from the then Basque Regional President (*Lehendakari*) Juan José Ibarretxe, who promoted its creation from the outset. This political backing and the support of other *Lehendakaris* have been essential for the development and consolidation of the initiative.

Gizonduz also has specific financial and human resources to carry out its activities, ensuring its continuity and enabling it to develop larger projects. It has a team of qualified professionals who are experienced in working with men and masculinities. Favourable public opinion has been another important factor. The positive response to this type of initiative in Basque public opinion has aided the implementation of the initiative and helped it to gain social acceptance.

The support of the grassroots movements has also been key. Gizonduz has gained the backing of various groups in the pro-equality grassroots movement, which initially expressed some reservations. This alignment has strengthened the initiative and allowed it to broaden its reach and impact.

Finally, the strategic design of Gizonduz has ensured that it is implemented in a well-organised and planned manner. Gizonduz has also formed strategic partnerships with key institutions such as the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), the Basque Police and Emergency Service Academy (AVPE) and the Basque Public Administration Institute (IVAP), among others. These partnerships have allowed the initiative to broaden its impact and reach new audiences.



How was the policy design process carried out?

Gizonduz was developed in line with the international, national and regional regulatory and policy framework regarding gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence. This alignment includes key references such as the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the CEDAW, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025, and the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023.

At a national level, Gizonduz is in line with Organic Law 3/2007 for effective equality between women and men, with Organic Law 10/2022, for the full guarantee of sexual freedom, and with Act 4/2023, on real and effective equality for trans people and the safeguarding of rights of LGBTI people.

At a regional level, it is aligned with Legislative Decree 1/2023, of 16 March, approving the consolidated text of the Act for Gender Equality and Lives Free of Male Violence against Women in the Basque Country. The initiative focuses on raising awareness and educating men, seeking their active involvement in promoting equality and preventing gender-based violence, which is in line with the current 2030 Strategy for Equality between Women and Men in the Basque Country.

The participation of feminist and LGBTI activists and organisations in the design of Gizonduz has been limited and, at times, indirect. The lack of formal mechanisms for their direct inclusion in the initial design of the initiative is an area that requires improvement. In the evaluations, the participation of and responsiveness to the needs of these civil society organisations was rated poorly. Furthermore, the initiative did not widely engage with citizens to seek public feedback during its design, thus limiting the possibility of including suggestions and proposals from civil society in the design process.



How are masculinities addressed within the content of the policy?

The equality of women and men is clearly stated as a key objective of the Gizonduz initiative, focusing its efforts on actively involving men in the fight for equality and recognising the power relations that perpetuate gender-based violence. This is borne out by the high score (8.6 out of 10) the initiative received from respondents for promoting gender equality and practices that do not perpetuate inequalities.

The initiative covers a range of issues related to gender equality, including power relations, gender norms and stereotypes, harmful masculinities and discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation, which is reflected in the content of the courses and awareness-raising programmes. Gizonduz incorporates a human rights-based approach, following the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability, with an average rating of 8.5 points out of 10, which confirms a favourable view of the application of these principles.

The initiative also shows a strong commitment to human rights through its participation in projects and partnerships with organisations such as UN Women, in line with the Equality Act and other existing equality policies. Gizonduz includes strategies to shift knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, challenge norms and stereotypes, adopt gender-transformative programmes and policies by social entities, and promote legal and policy change, with the evaluations reflecting a positive perception on these areas, with average scores above 8.0 out of 10.

One aspect that could be improved is the fact that the initiative places greater emphasis on the masculinities of heterosexual men, with less focus on the masculinities of gay and trans men, which suggests that there is scope for improvement regarding the inclusion of gender identities and sexual orientations in all their diversity. In the evaluations by feminist and LGBTBI organisations, this aspect scored 6.7 out of 10.



To what extent has this policy been implemented?

The Gizonduz initiative has a clear work plan that includes defining phases, identifying roles and responsibilities, the budget and the timeline. This plan ensures that tasks and roles are clearly assigned to the various actors involved, ensuring efficient and well-organised management. Furthermore, the Gizonduz team is composed of qualified professionals, with training in equality and experience in various key areas such as coordination, training and social media management. Clear roles are assigned to the human resources, and they have access to ongoing training, which enables them to keep up-to-date with equality debates and practices.

Gizonduz's budget has been increased by 59% for 2024, which will enable more ambitious and diversified implementation of the planned actions and improve the initiative's ability to meet demand and broaden its reach.

Likewise, most of the planned actions have been carried out effectively, with participants awarding high scores for the fulfilment of objectives related to awareness-raising, education and shared responsibility for men in the household and in caregiving.

Despite having a skilled team, the number of staff resources has not always been sufficient to meet the growing demand, and it scored 5.5 out of 10 in the evaluation for the number of professionals allocated. Although the budget has recently been increased, at times there have been substantial budgetary constraints that have hampered the initiative's ability to roll out its actions more broadly and effectively. The score of 6.3 out of 10 for the adequacy of the allocated budget reflects the view that financial resources have been insufficient to meet growing demand.

There was limited involvement of feminist and LGBTI organisations in the initiative's implementation and decision-making, with scores of 6.3 and 6.5 out of 10 respectively, indicating scope for improvement. The lack of close and formal collaboration with these organisations may limit the effectiveness and impact of the actions implemented.



Has the policy been monitored and evaluated?

Gizonduz's monitoring and evaluation system has clearly defined outcome and impact indicators, which measure both the increase in the number of men who have been made aware of and educated in equality and the changes it has led to in their attitudes and behaviour. It also has a detailed annual report that includes data on participants, evaluation results and suggestions for improvement, thereby enabling accountability and allowing actions to be adapted to better achieve objectives.

Regular evaluations are carried out using questionnaires that cover numerous areas, including evaluations of the course, the quality of the content and speakers, and areas for improvement, at both individual and organisational levels. The monitoring and evaluation system was rated positively by the respondents, highlighting its effectiveness in gathering information and monitoring indicators.

Gizonduz carried out two external evaluations in 2015 and 2017, which helped it to identify strengths and areas for improvement and provided a more objective picture of the initiative's impact and effectiveness. The evaluations include both quantitative data (satisfaction rates and perceived usefulness) and qualitative data (comments and suggestions), providing a broad picture of its impact.

One area for improvement is the fact that not all participants complete the evaluation questionnaires on time (e.g. teachers in schools), and the limited availability of time for participants in the “men in

politics” project makes it difficult for them to participate in the programme evaluation, which may limit the completeness of the collected data.

Furthermore, feminist women and LGBTI organisations have limited involvement in monitoring and evaluating the initiative, with their participation scoring (6.5 points for feminist organisations and 6.0 points for LGBTI organisations) lower than other aspects, which highlights the need for greater inclusion of civil society in identifying proposals and areas for improvement in Gizonduz.