Inclusion Matters in Research

Lessons from the INCLUDE project



Inclusivity Matters in Biomedical Research

Biomedical research aims to generate knowledge that can improve health outcomes for entire populations. However, when certain groups are systematically underrepresented, the evidence produced does not accurately reflect the diversity of real patients. This can limit the applicability, effectiveness and safety of medical interventions.

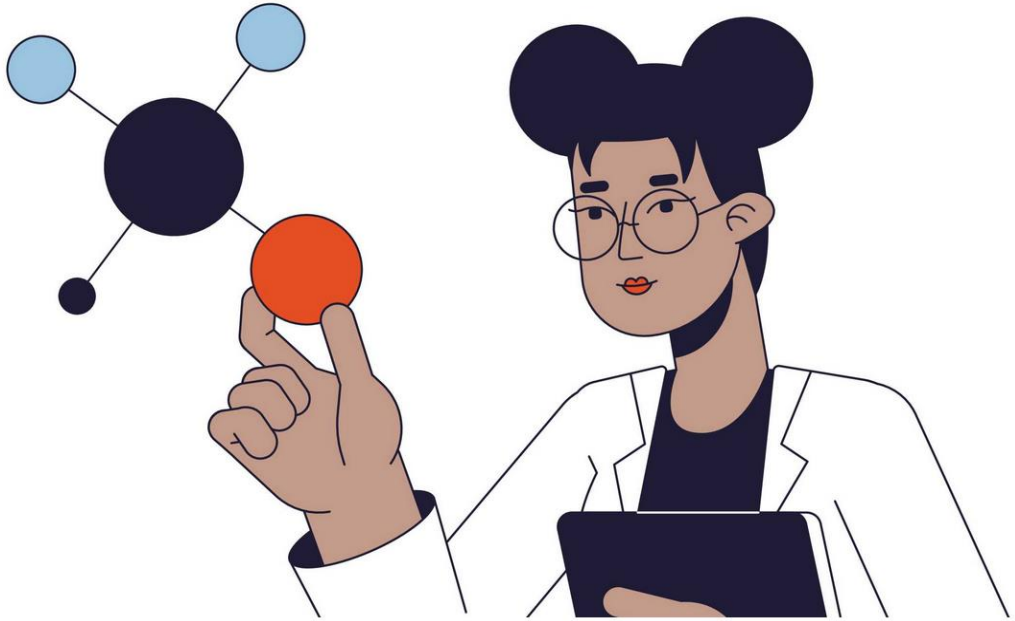


Inclusivity Matters in Research



Gender bias in biomedical research

For a long time, biomedical research has treated the male body as the default model. Women and gender-diverse people have often been excluded or insufficiently represented in clinical studies. In many cases, sex and gender specific differences are not considered during study design or data analysis.





The INCLUDE Project is a European initiative that advances **gender equality** and intersectionality in biomedical research.

It develops and tests **Actions** in research institutions while building capacity, training, and tools to make science more inclusive and fair.

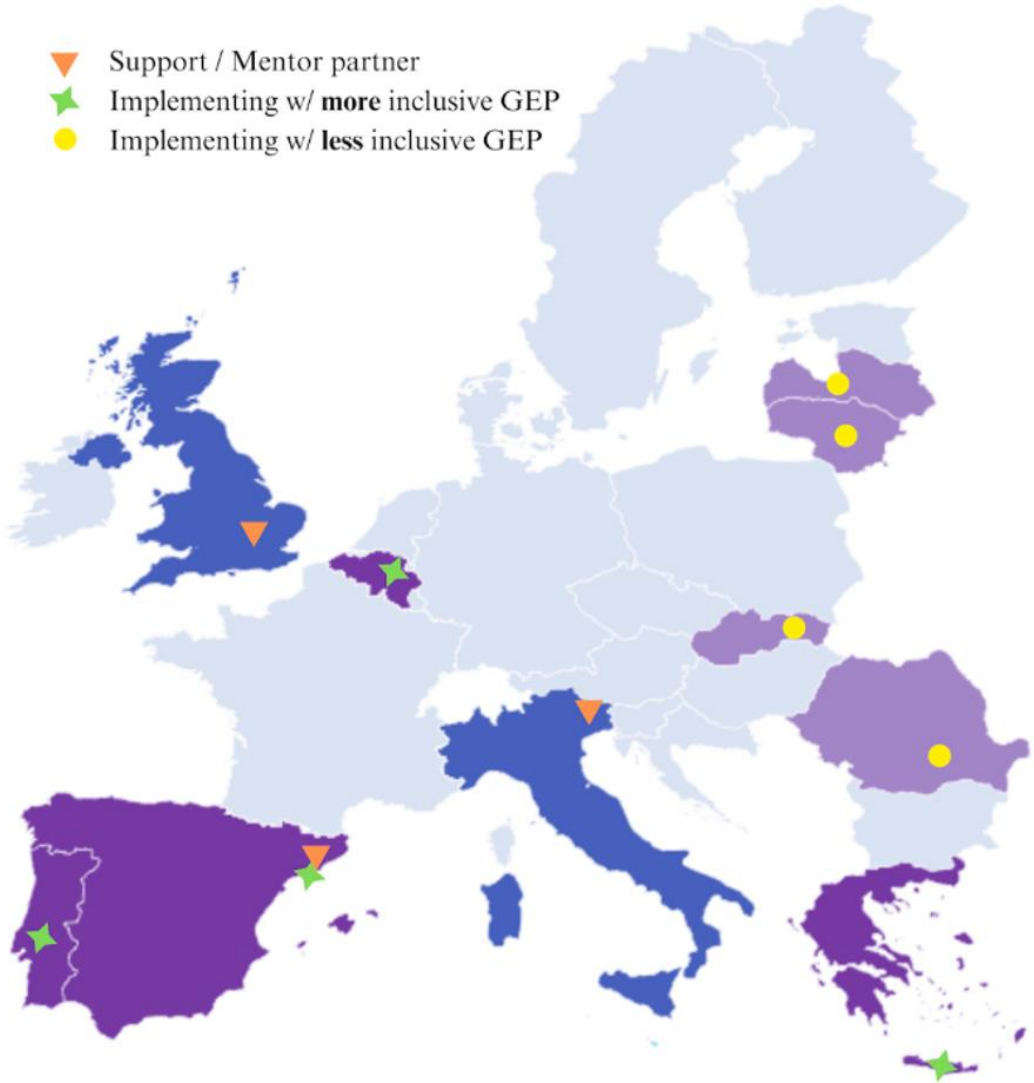
Why is this project important?

Women occupy only 26% of EU university leadership roles[1]. In biomedicine, only 33% of senior scientific positions are occupied by women[2]; in clinical trials, female representation is one woman for every four men[3]

1. European Commission. Gender equality in research and innovation, 2024.
2. UNESCO Report. The gender gap in science: status and trends, February 2024.
3. Catalunya Plural. Androcentric medicine: this is how gender bias affects women's health, March 2022

INCLUDE's Partners

1. Smart Venice (IT) (Coordinators)
2. UCL (UK)
3. University of Hasselt (BE)
4. National Institute of Chemical Pharmaceutical Research & Development (RO)
5. MEDIREX (SK)
6. IMBB (GR)
7. PRISMA (ES)
8. VMU (LT)
9. Riga Stradins University (LV)
10. ISGlobal (ES)
11. University of Coimbra (PT)



INCLUDE's Objectives

- **Assess** partners' current Gender Equality policies, identify key gender gaps, and highlight good practices.
- **Design** and run inclusive pilot actions to improve these policies.
- **Build** partners' skills through tailored trainings, shared learning, and mentoring.
- **Support** networking and broad sharing of project knowledge to increase impact.



Milestones

- Interviewed individuals from IMBB and analysed FORTH's GEP to assess needs and weaknesses.
- Thematic Hubs
- Received the Train the Trainers.
- Following IMBB's scientific council approval, we created a Gender Equality Working Group.



Gender Equality Working Group

The Gender Equality Working Group of IMBB is a diverse team committed to promoting equity, inclusivity, and fairness across all levels of our research community.

Our mission is to address gender-related challenges, foster equal opportunities, and create a supportive and inclusive environment for everyone!



Co-Design of Pilot Actions



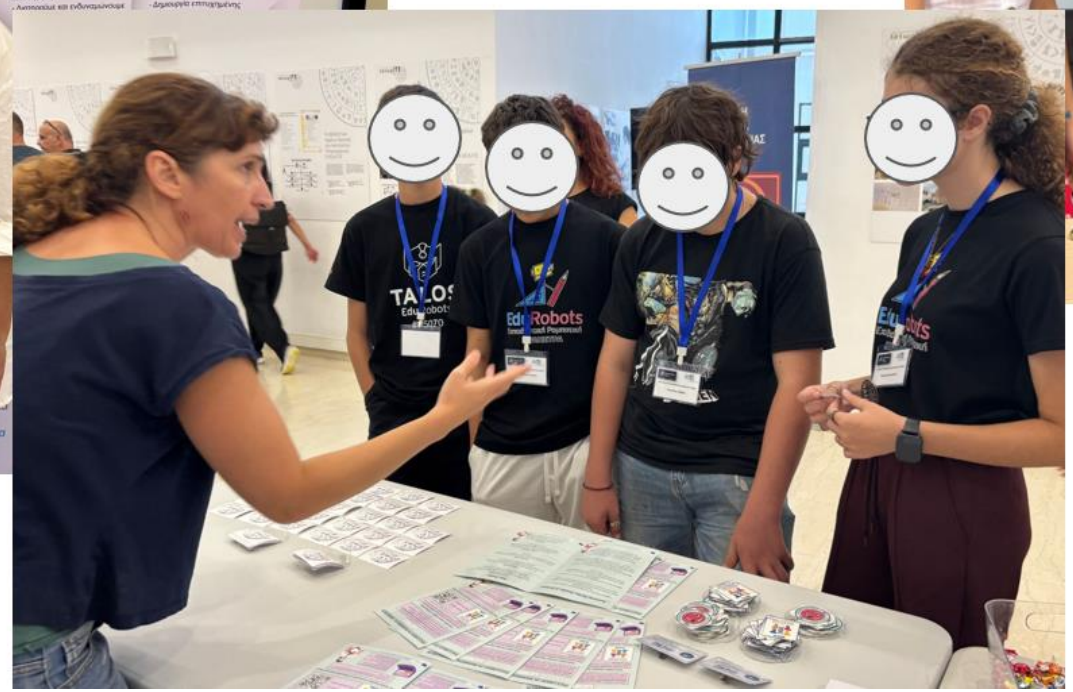




- Posters
- Invited Speakers
- Researcher's Night
- Visibility of Diverse Needs (eg. pads at the restrooms)

Researcher’s Night







Multiplying Sessions



- Sex and Gender
-Gender Based Violence
-Feminist issues
-Gender+ in the contents and methods of biomedical research







A collaborative space to shape inclusive biomedical research
Below is the proposed structure and content for each graphic:

INCLUDE Communities of Practice (CoP)

Advancing gender equality & intersectionality in biomedical research

Launch Event

22 April

10:00 - 12:00h (CET)

Register form

INCLUDE

Funded by the European Union

Lessons from the INCLUDE project

Gender-neutral research is not gender-equal research!

Treating all participants as if they are the same does not eliminate bias.

Ignoring sex and gender differences often reinforces existing inequalities rather than preventing them.

Explicitly analysing gender differences is essential for scientific accuracy and fairness.

Lessons from the INCLUDE project

Intersectionality reveals hidden inequalities!

Focusing on gender alone is not enough to understand health disparities.

Overlapping factors such as ethnicity, age, disability and socioeconomic status shape health outcomes in complex ways.

An intersectional approach helps identify groups that are otherwise invisible in traditional research designs.

Lessons from the INCLUDE project

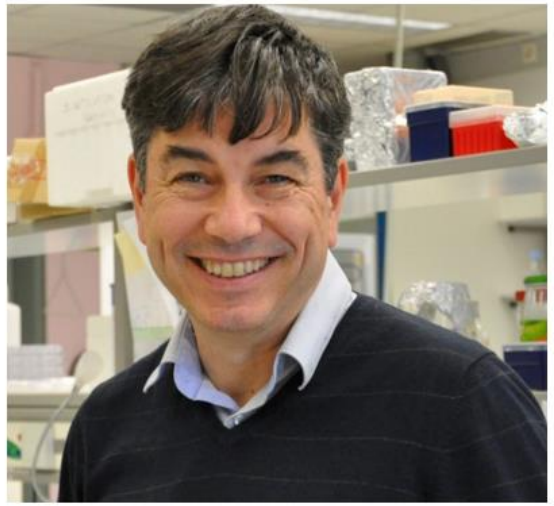
Researchers need practical tools and guidance!

Good intentions alone are not enough to achieve inclusive research.

INCLUDE highlighted the importance of providing researchers with concrete tools, frameworks, and training to support inclusive practices.

Practical guidance makes inclusion achievable, not abstract.

INCLUDE Team Members





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