



Gender Lab



collaboratio helvetica is an initiative dedicated to catalysing collaboration in Switzerland towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), amongst others through multi stakeholder innovation processes for systemic change – Social Labs. One of our key Social Labs is the Gender Lab.

Why Gender Equality?

While Switzerland has closed the gender gap in economic participation and opportunity, Swiss cultural norms still have an influence on the roles that men and women play in society – with breadwinner roles typically assigned to men and caretaking roles to women. We therefore observe a gender gap, driven by structural elements along with behavioral responses to expectations, as follows:

- Switzerland has one of the shortest lengths of paid maternal leave amongst OECD countries, no paternal leave, and high costs of childcare compared to income.
- There is a persistent gender pay gap (with women earning CHF 1'412 less per month than men, on average), and fewer women fulfilling managerial functions (35% at management levels and 17% on boards)
- Women still take on two-thirds of domestic work, and 60% of working women work part-time (compared with 17% of men), while men are expected to bear the brunt of earnings for their family.
- At the same time, men also suffer from the pressure around gender norm, with depression, burn-out and suicide rates that are alarming whilst, for example, 90% wish to work less in order to spend more time with their family.

This structural reality and cultural expectation no longer corresponds to the wishes and aspirations of many, especially the younger generations. There is a huge opportunity to break through the remaining barriers and establish a new cultural norm regarding gender roles that includes all realms of activity from caring for a family all the way to how leadership is conceived of and embodied in the public and private sectors.

This is why we decided to launch a Gender Lab, bringing together stakeholders and experts from all sectors to understand the root causes of this issue and to prototype solutions.

The Social Lab on Gender Equality was co-initiated by the community of collaboratio helvetica – 70 individuals from different sectors, regions of the country and ages – during two collaborative co-creation days in 2017.



During the co-creation days, Gender Equality (SDG5) came out as one of the most pressing issues to be addressed in Switzerland.

Key facts and figures

- The collaboratio helvetica Gender Lab was the first Social Lab in Switzerland, the first Lab run by collaboratio helvetica and the first Social Lab on Gender Equality worldwide.
- The Lab used a highly innovative process combining methodologies and social technologies such as Theory U, Integral Worlds Theory and others, to foster a deeper learning process, encourage collaboration and spark innovation and organisational change.
- 20 Explorers from different organisations took part in 4 immersive retreats that formed the backbone of the Lab, alongside other activities like [Dialogue Evenings](#). Participants were drawn from all over Switzerland, across different age groups, gender identities and sectors of work.
- The learnings from our first pilot prepare us and the ecosystem for the 2019 Gender Lab which will tackle Gender Equality in the workplace in Switzerland and aim for systemic change.



Impact of the Gender Lab

Though the concrete results follow the principle of emergence, the outcomes of the Social Lab can be grouped under four main headings:

1. Personal transformation:

The GL gave the participants the opportunity to explore and grow around the topic and beyond.

“ The Gender Lab has changed my life”

2. Impacting their environments:

Participants developed skills and learned methods in areas such as listening, dialogue, innovation and collaboration, which they are now applying to promote gender equality in their professional and personal environments.

“ I now have the tools to act and truly make a change in my environment, without confrontation”

3. Gender equality learnings:

Participants gained a deeper understanding of their own assumptions and the root causes of the issue as well as improving their knowledge of gender equality in the Swiss context.

“ This really brought me to a whole different another level of awareness of my own bias”

4. Creation and deployment of prototypes:

4 prototype solutions to encourage gender equality in Switzerland were devised during the Gender Lab, and are now being implemented.

“ I really want to work on that [prototype] because I want to do less activism and more creating. To me that is the best outcome of the Gender Lab.”

Prototypes



GENDER EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONS THROUGH TRANSFORMATIVE DIALOGUE



EQUAL PAY FOR CARE-GIVERS



SUPPORTING GENDER WORKERS TO PREVENT GENDER BURNOUT



CREATING HUMOROUS CONTENT TO DECONSTRUCT GENDER NORMS



What makes a Social Lab different from other projects in the Gender sphere? Social Labs are...

Social: bringing together stakeholders from all sectors to represent a diversity of perspectives is key

Experimental: working with prototyping and sustained efforts with the right to fail and try again distinguishes them from a project-based approach

Systemic: the solutions that come out of it are meant to tackle the root causes of the challenge and have systemic impact, rather than fight the symptoms.



Based on our learnings from the first cycle, we are currently exploring the possibility of launching a second cycle of the Gender Lab, potentially on transforming organizational culture.

Reach out to us if you would like to collaborate to create systemic change in gender equality in Switzerland!

Team

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How you can get involved in the Gender Lab 2:

Co-creator: Help us shape the next Gender Lab

Explorer: Join the Cohort and create prototypes to transform Switzerland

Expert: Provide guidance and knowledge

Supporter: Keep in touch with the Gender Lab as it progresses

Contact us

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[Sign up to our monthly newsletter](#) to stay up to date about the Gender Lab

Find us on



ENGAGEMENT
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