Community of practice – a key factor of a reflexive gender equality policy

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The TARGET project

- H2020 - Support to research organisations to implement Gender Equality Plans
- Duration: 48 months (05/2017-04/2021)
- TARGET will contribute to the advancement of gender equality in R&I by supporting a reflexive gender equality policy in seven Gender Equality Innovating Institutions (GEIIs) in the Mediterranean basin.
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<th>Partner No.</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>1 – IHS</td>
<td>Institute for Advanced Studies</td>
<td>Austria</td>
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<td>2 – ARACIS</td>
<td>Agentia Romana de Asigurare a Calitatii in Invatamantul Superior</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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<td>3 – RPF</td>
<td>Research Promotion Foundation</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
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<td>4 – FRRB</td>
<td>Fondazione Regionale per la Ricerca Biomedica</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>5 – ELIAMEP</td>
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<td>6 – UH2C</td>
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<td>7 – UB</td>
<td>University Belgrade</td>
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<td>8 – RMEI</td>
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<td>10 – FGB</td>
<td>Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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Reflective approach

TARGET approach goes beyond the formal adoption of a gender equality policy by emphasizing:

• an **iterative and reflexive** process towards equality at the institutional level

• the establishment of a **community of practice** for gender equality within the institution

⇒ Actual change is the result of increased institutional willingness and capacity to identify, reflect on and address gender bias in a sustained way.
TARGET approach

• CoP **integral part in all stages** of GEP/GES
  • Partners in development of GEP/GES
  • Feedback and dissemination
    ➔ Raise awareness, increase visibility, support of Gender Equality Agent

• **GEP/GES stages**
  • Audit (baseline analysis, identification of CoP)
  • GEP/GES development
  • Implementation of measures and policies
  • Monitoring and evaluation
Community of Practice

"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.” (Wenger-Trayner 2015:1)

→ Element of social learning

→ Assume that there is something like a common interest / topic (Bernard 2016; Murillo 2011)

→ We cannot assume that for gender equality when we want to mainstream gender !!!
Selection criteria for CoP members

- Who within the organisation may be affected by the TARGET project’s outcome?
- Who are the potential beneficiaries?
- Who might perceive the implementation of gender equality policies as a threat?
- Who has the authority to influence the implementation of the project or its outcome?
- Who exercises influence over other stakeholders?
- Who could offer significant support for mastering particular challenges?
- Who is in charge of resources, information, or facilities that are relevant to the implementation of the GEP?
Different composition of TARGET CoPs

- Different size, composition, roles, forms of involvement.
- Top-down/ bottom up
- Different levels of gender expertise, gender competence, and members who aim to improve current practices and procedures
- Members from within institution to inclusion of external members
- All new CoPs
Institutional Strategies to CoP (1)

• Division of CoP in different groups with different “projects”
  – Collecting statistical data
  – Implementing a survey about gender equality
  – Gathering data on the gender approach in research content and curricula
• Each group pursues a specific goal
• Infrequent common meetings
• Gender Equality Agent acts as the coordinator
Institutional Strategies to CoP (2)

• Main goal: being visible as a pioneer in the field of gender equality (gender equality central for GEII profile)
• Gender equality defined as integral part of excellence
• Inclusion of external stakeholders with interest in gender in the CoP
• Involvement of top management
Institutional strategies to CoP (3)

• Focus on synergies with other topics
  – E.g. professionalisation of internal processes
• Members of different parts of the organisation meet as experts on the same level
• Common projects allow mainstreaming gender
• Gender equality linked to quality assurance
Promising strategies and challenges

• Targeted **communication strategy** for members of the CoP

• Development of **common projects** which are associated with **individual benefits**. ➔ Mainstream gender in other current institutional change strategies.

• Aim to build up **gender competence** based on an general interest in gender issues.

• **Gender experts** as moderators of CoP.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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