

Gender Equality: A Pathway to Monitoring and Implementation

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Abstract. As part of the Assessment and Implementation of Agriculture and Life Science Universities' First Gender Equality Plans in Widening Countries (AGRIGEP) project, activities for gender equality and equal opportunities are taking place at the University of Primorska (UP). The emphasis is on improving the capabilities of educational and research institutions, developing and implementing sector-specific measures and strategies for gender equality. Objectives include capacity assessment of partner consortia, capacity building through education, sectoral assessment for strategy adaptation and long-term implementation of gender equality plans.

The AGRIGEP project focuses on raising awareness and monitoring of implementation of gender equality and equity. To this end, a number of activities aimed at achieving gender equality and equal opportunities and empowering women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are carried out. These activities are primarily aimed at improving understanding and commitment to gender equality within academic and research institutions.

Within the framework of the AGRIGEP project, some important steps and achievements have been made so far. Among them are the self-monitoring of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and mapping stakeholders, where the consortium partners assessed their capacity to strengthen and monitor the GEP. A self-monitoring tools have been developed that supports the continuous assessment of GEPs and at the same time introduces greater effectiveness of partners in promoting and implementing change. Raising awareness workshops and capacity building webinars were organized focused on strategies for effective implementation of GEPs and implementation of self-monitoring instruments.

The second group of activities is related to mentoring and training of key stakeholders, within the framework of which visits or personal meetings of mentoring partners and partners from widening countries take place. Among the activities of mentoring and coaching, it is important to highlight the various opportunities for communication, the organization of interesting lectures and the exchange of key information with internal and external stakeholders. These visits are thus aimed at in-depth involvement of stakeholders, review of GEP progress and identification of institutional challenges.

The third group of activities is related to the awareness of the stakeholders and general public about the importance of gender equality in education and research and the promotion of women in STEM fields, where women traditionally work in a significantly lower percentage than men. By improving the gender balance, not only educational institutions, but also society as a whole would more easily acquire key personnel for its further development, competitiveness and innovation. More diverse and inclusive work groups are characterized by more effective decision-making, greater creativity and innovation, better responsiveness to the needs of stakeholders, and higher employee satisfaction and the institution's reputation.

Important steps in the implementation of the project itself are the regular and annual meetings of the consortia of project partners, where intensive discussions take place about the status, progress, completed tasks and planned future activities. Events offer an opportunity to reflect on achieved

milestones, share insights and guide the future development of the project. These steps are an important part of AGRIGEP's wider efforts to improve gender equality and empower women and girls in science, particularly in the agriculture and life sciences sectors, demonstrating their commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment.

The AGRIGEP project seeks to strengthen cooperation between academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the economy and other stakeholders in order to ensure wider support and engagement in achieving gender equality goals. This includes sharing knowledge, exchanging experiences and working together to develop innovative solutions to improve gender equality in educational and research institutions.

Keywords: education, science, gender equality, equal opportunities, inclusive university

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