EQUAL-IST
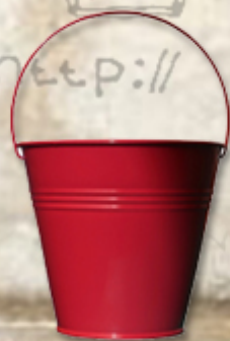
Gender Equality in Information Sciences and Technology

Gender Equality Progress Report

University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy)

EQUAL-IST UniMORE First progress report

The EQUAL-IST Project

Women remain a minority among academic leaders, especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The project "Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions" (EQUAL-IST) is improving this situation for seven partner Universities that are active in the fields of Information Sciences and Technology (IST) fields. EQUAL-IST joins the forces of those IST Research Institutions which are committed to introducing the internal structural changes necessary for boosting gender equality and removing barriers to the career progression of women in Research and Innovation (R&I).

The EQUAL-IST project does not only boost gender equality at the involved RPOs but also seeks to influence a bigger number of IST research organizations in order to address gender bias and contribute to the achievement of ERA objectives by increasing the number of female researchers in the IST fields.

Case of UniMORE
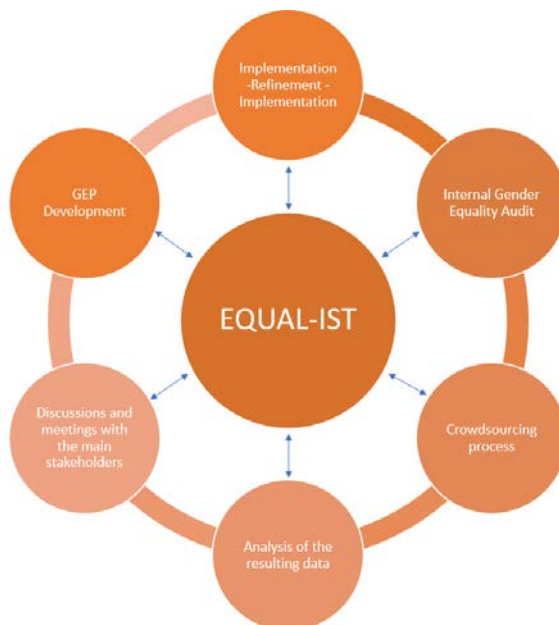
The UniMORE Gender Equality Plan is the result of a long process of discussion and analysis internally at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UniMORE). The formulated plan is based on the results of the internal Gender Equality Audit, the crowdsourcing process carried out on the online CrowdEquality[1] platform, the analysis of the resulting data and the discussions among the members of the UniMORE EQUAL-IST Research Unit and Working Group, and meetings with the main stakeholders that will be involved in the GEPs implementation.

The main challenges related to gender equality were identified during the internal gender audit at UniMORE, that took place between December 2016 and April 2017. The internal gender audit included different activities, such as a quantitative data collection of gender-disaggregated data, individual semi-structured interviews with

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1   https://www.crowdequality.eu

key people and decision makers, and participatory workshops. As a result of the audit, several challenges were identified, and some solution proposed to address them. These challenges and solutions were uploaded as an initial input into the CrowdEquality online platform to trigger a collaborative crowdsourcing process leading to the proposal of additional solutions aimed at addressing the identified challenges, according to the bottom-up ideation approach envisaged by the EQUAL-IST project.

After having analyzed and internally discussed the results of the gender audit and crowdsourcing exercise, the UniMORE working group organized online and face-to-face meetings with the main stakeholders involved in the GEPs implementation, namely the Rector of the University, the Head of the Department, the President of the CUG (Unified Committee for Guarantees, the Responsible of the Research Office, the members of the Interdepartmental Center CRID (Research Center on discriminations and vulnerability). The meetings had a twofold objective: on one hand, to discuss with the stakeholders how to translate the solution, emerged on the crowdsourcing process and formulated in general terms, into concrete actions that are feasible and effective at the same time to address the specific challenges within the UniMORE institution; on the other hand, the involvement of the stakeholders in the design phase of GEPs was aimed at engaging them to have their support in the following implementation phase.

It is important to underline that the National regulation and the current Triennial Positive Actions Plan 2016-18 of UniMORE[2] has been considered. The EQUAL-IST Gender Equality Plan does not replace the UniMORE Triennial Positive Action Plan but integrates it to reinforce or add new actions in order to achieve the goal of gender equality within our institution.

Challenges and Key Performance Indicators

The identified challenges along with the goals are presented in the table below.

Intervention Areas	Challenge Sub Area	Challenge Title	Goal
HR Management Practices	Gender Equality Policies	Challenge 0 – Lack of long-term sustainability of Gender Equality Plan's actions	Goal 0 - Ensure sustainability of GEP's actions by including gender equality actions in the University strategic documents
	Work-life Balance	Challenge 1 – Both academic and non-academic staff struggle to achieve	Goal 1 - Improve the work-life balance for staff (academic and

		work-life balance, especially with young children	non-academic) and students
	Gender Equality Machineries	Challenge 2 – Scarcity of resources and coordination for committees on gender equality	Goal 2 – Discover and Promote Collaboration Among Existing Resources for Gender Equality
	Gender Disaggregated Data and Monitoring	Challenge 3 – Absence of long-term monitoring for gender equality	Goal 3 – Create a permanent monitoring system for gender equality
Teaching and Students Services	Contrasting gender segregation in studies choices	Challenge 4 – Gender stereotypes about ICT/IST studies and lack of female role models	Goal 4 - Counteract gender stereotypes and gender segregation in ICT/IST studies
Research Content and Delivery	Lack of women leading research projects	Challenge 5 – Low Presence of Women as Leaders of Research Groups and Project Principal Investigators	Goal 5 – Support female researchers with dedicated networking and training activities
Institutional Communication	Gender stereotypes/bias in institutional communication	Challenge 6 - Lack of Gender Neutral Communication	Goal 6 - Improve the gender neutrality of the institutional communication
	Lack of awareness about gender equality issues	Challenge 7 - Awareness about gender equality issues to be raised at all levels within the university	Goal 7 – Raise awareness about gender equality among the members of the institution

First year's main results

The main results of the Activities completed during the 1st iteration of the GEP implementation at the UniMORE are the following:

(i) Two sub-commissions within the CUG, namely the Unified Committee for Guarantees on well-being and the Commission on Positive Actions for Gender Equality, were established.

(ii) The UniMORE was included in a National Working Group on Gender Budgeting within the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI).

(iii) Several events for the university staff were organized and conducted, which were aimed at raising awareness of the importance of gender equality. One of these events was focused on networking and training of female researchers.

(iv)   A new agreement about teleworking and smart working was defined and adopted at the UniMORE; the new opportunities and procedures were presented to the university staff during a dedicated event.

(v)   Several implemented Activities were aimed at counteracting gender stereotypes and gender segregation in the ICT field. In particular, the 4-week summer camp "Ragazze Digitali" was organized to attract girls to enroll in ICT academic studies. The camp included training courses to teach 16-18-year-old girls to code videogames, and this time it was extended to two other cities beyond Modena. Furthermore, other activities were realized in collaboration with local elementary and middle schools and aimed at teaching 7-12 children to code.

It is also worth mentioning that an atomized process of collection of the gender-disaggregated statistics at the UniMORE is currently being established. It is intended to enable the automatic generation of the reports containing relevant graphs and statistics and to then publish such reports regularly (annually) on the UniMORE CUG website.

UniMORE intends to continue the implementation of all the initiated but not yet completed Activities, complete the Activities that are behind schedule, and initiate further Activities that will be included in the refined GEP based on the evaluation of the 1st iteration of the GEP implementation. Specific Activities have been implemented and were intended to be implemented in the post first implementation period are as follows: i) receive an approval of the structure and other aspects of the periodic report containing the gender-disaggregated statistics at the UniMORE; (ii)

pursue further opportunities emerged due to the involvement of the UniMORE in the CRUI National Working Group on Gender Budgeting; (iii) continue the extension of the "Ragazze Digitali" summer camp to further cities and involving further universities in it; (iv) organize and conduct further events to raise awareness about gender equality issues in the ICT field; and (v) ensure the adoption of guidelines for the correct use of gender-sensitive language and communication. The main 'lesson learned' during the 1st iteration of the GEP implementation is the importance of being flexible and able to adapt the planned dynamically Activities (both time-wise and content-wise) in order to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. These opportunities supported the achievement of more effective and significant outcomes towards gender equality at the UniMORE and emerged due to the close collaboration of the EQUAL-IST team members at the UniMORE with local entities and associations. As a result, several planned Activities could be extended, and new Activities could be initiated. Importance of sustainability of the GEP implementation beyond the runtime of the EQUAL-IST project was another 'lesson learned'. Therefore, during the 2nd iteration of the GEP implementation particular attention and effort will be devoted to the institutionalization of structural change. It is intended to do it by increasing the level of engagement of the university management and the enforcement of collaboration with internal and external institutions.

External Stakeholders involved:

President of CUG of University Milano-Bicocca: Tiziana Vettor
President of the Unified Committee of Guarantees (CUG) of the University of Bologna and Member of PLOTINA Project: Benedetta Siboni
Fuzzy experts of University of Salento, Italy: Tommaso Pirotti, Gisella Facchinetti
President and 3 members of European Women Management and Development association, Modena and Reggio Emilia chapter: Nadia Caraffi (President), Silvia Bedodi, Paola Ligabue, Roberta Castagnetti,
President of Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Modena: Paolo Cavicchioli
Council Members of Modena Municipality: Ludovica Ferrari, Irene Guadagnini

Council Member of Reggio Emilia Municipality: Valeria Montanari
Council Member of Modena Province: Barbara Maiani
Council Member for Budget, Human Resources and Equal Opportunities of the Emilia Romagna Region: Emma Petitti
Members of National Contact Point Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions for Agency for the Promotion of European Research – APRE: Angelo D'Agostino
President of Digital Club of Unindustria Reggio Emilia: Isabella Bovero
CEO at IREN S.p.A.: Massimiliano Bianco
Co-founder and co-owners of Melazeta srl: Lara Oliveti and Marcella Albiero
President of Ceramic Confindustria: Vittorio Borelli

Order of the Engineers members: Carla Miselli and Valeria dal Borgo

Members of Italian National Research Council (CNR) and Women and Science association: Sveva Avveduto

GENOVATE FP7 Project Member and Professor at University of Naples "Federico II": Ilenia Picardi

Professor of University of Bologna: Antonella Carbonaro

Principal of High School 'Liceo Scientifico Statale A. Oriani' : Gianluca Dradi

President of IC7 Scholastic Consortium (Istituto Comprensivo 7): Ivana Nobler