

Deliverable 4.5

LeTSGEPs Guidelines to overcome local resistances

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List of Acronyms	
Acronym	
CY	Cergy Paris Université, France
EU	European Union
GB	Gender Budgeting
GE	Gender Equality
GEO	Gender Equality Officer
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICM	Institut de Ciències del Mar (ICM)/Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)
M	Month
MISANU	Mathematical Institute of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Serbia
MPI-BI	Max-Planck-Institute for Biological Intelligence (MPI-BI) Max-Planck-Society (MPG), Germany
PI	Principal Investigator
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
RWTH	Aachen University, Germany
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIME	University of Messina, Italy
UNIMORE	University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy
UT	University of Tirana, Albania
WG	Working Group

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the result of Task 4.2 - Guidance through local GEPs implementations, which is closely related to tasks T4.3 - Implementation of GEPs (Iteration 1) and T4.5 - Implementation of GEPs (Iteration 2).

The core of T4.2 was to help involved LeTSGEPs partners - CY, ICM/CSIC, MISANU, MPI-BI, UNIME and UT - to overcome the resistances (through solutions) they can meet while implementing their Gender Equality Plans (GEPs). Therefore, T4.2 was an activity that ran until almost the end of that process - in the period between M12 and M47. It included online and face-to-face meetings and discussions between partners to ensure that a continuous internal mutual learning process is managed at each RPO.

The final result of T4.2 is the Deliverable 4.5, "LeTSGEPs Guidelines to overcome local resistances," based on the experiences of all partners. The Guidelines aim to serve institutions that plan to prepare and implement GEPs in the future. It includes information and notes, which partners collected through the implementation phase of their GEPs. This information relates to the resistance that partners experienced in implementing GEPs and suggestions on how to overcome it.

These Guidelines include three sections. Besides the Introduction, Section 2 presents the resistances and highlights possible related solutions and Section 3 concludes this document.

Please bear in mind that the COVID-19 pandemic has had various impacts on LeTSGEPs partners' activities and increased challenges to gender equality efforts during this time. The role of mentors, who advised the partners, was essential in addressing these challenges and resistance both during and after the pandemic. Moreover, collaboration between partners was crucial in overcoming resistance and promoting gender equality in the evolving work landscape.

2. UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING COMMON RESISTANCES

Achieving gender balance in organizations can be met with various forms of resistance, both implicit and explicit. These resistances may arise from individual attitudes, organizational culture, societal norms, or a combination of factors. During the LeTSGEPs project, involved partners encountered numerous barriers during the implementation phase of their GEPs. The common challenges faced by partners were, among others, traditional gender stereotypes, lack of awareness, ineffective policies, lack of inclusive practices, and resistance to change.

In these Guidelines, we tried to look at our experience, identify the most common resistances that we encounter(ed), and offer possible solutions. To bring a sense of order and facilitate the reading of this document, we organized and categorized identified resistances and related solutions into six groups:

- 1) gender data collection and gender monitoring,
- 2) gender-balanced decision bodies and gender equality policies,
- 3) gender-inclusive workplace culture,
- 4) work-life balance and career progression
- 5) gender dimension in research content,
- 5) gender budgeting, and
- 6) raising gender awareness.

In that line, we followed the advice that "categorizing resistances is important, as it allows us to plan and act strategically according to the specific form and content of resistance" (Ferguson and Mergaert 2022: 3).

Even though we offer suggestions for overcoming local resistance to achieving gender equality, this document presents a process, not a final result. It must be remembered that change takes time, and building consensus requires patience and persistence.

2.1 Understanding the Organization - Gender Data Collection and Gender Monitoring

Understanding the issue of gender (in)equality in academic or research organizations involves examining the structure, policies, practices, and overall culture to assess how equitably they address the needs, opportunities, and challenges individuals of different genders face. By critically examining these aspects, an organization can gain insights into its strengths and areas for improvement in terms of gender equality. Achieving gender equality is essential for fostering diversity and inclusivity and maximizing the potential for innovative and impactful research. Monitoring and data collection play crucial roles in understanding an organization by providing valuable information and insights. Appropriate data are needed to assess, analyze, and understand various facets of an organization, enabling informed decision-making and continuous improvement. However, collecting gender data can be challenging due to multiple social, cultural, legal, ethical and other obstacles.

Key Challenges

During the LeTSGEPs project, the implementing partners experienced some

obstacles when monitoring and collecting data, the analysis of which would help them understand their organization. Here are some common obstacles that they encountered:

- **Data Gender Gaps and Accessibility.** If significant gender gaps are not adequately monitored in existing datasets, it may be challenging to understand the organization comprehensively. Lack of foundational data can impede the ability to draw meaningful conclusions or identify trends. Even if relevant gender data exists, it may not be easily accessible or available. Legal, privacy, lack of standardization or other constraints may restrict access to specific datasets, complicating comprehensive and up-to-date information collection.
- **Lack of Awareness or Understanding.** Possible data providers such as the administration office and human resource department may not fully understand the purpose and benefits of collecting gender data. An absence of awareness can lead to resistance or reluctance to provide this information.
- **Inadequate Training.** Possible data providers and/or data collectors may not be adequately trained to handle gender-related questions sensitively. This can lead to inaccurate or incomplete information being collected.
- **Staff Resistance.** Employees or team members may resist participating in data collection efforts if they perceive it as an extra task that adds to their workload. The fear of allocating additional time and effort to provide accurate data can lead to reluctance or non-compliance.
- **Resource Constraints.** Organizations may face challenges in allocating the necessary resources, including time and human resources, for effective data collection. Limited resources can lead to a fear of overburdening staff and hinder the willingness to engage in data-related activities.

Overcoming the Resistances

Overcoming resistance to monitoring and collecting gender disaggregated data requires a thoughtful and strategic approach that respects privacy, cultural diversity, and individual rights, addresses concerns, communicates the importance of data collection and ensures transparency and inclusivity. Organizations and researchers need to be mindful of the potential challenges and work towards creating an environment that encourages accurate and voluntary reporting of gender information.

In the following table, LeTSGEPs' partners shared their strategies, which helped them to promote the collection of gender data on a local level and address local resistance effectively.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Acquisition and provision of gender-related data: Resistance of the responsible organization/person to provide the data and the difficulty of accessing it	ICM	At ICM, despite the passive resistance of the central organization to provide the data and the difficulty of accessing it, several meetings have been held with the new manager to improve internal databases and add relevant categories for gender analysis. The involvement of the Director and his commitment to gender equality was crucial to achieving access to data.
Acquisition and provision of gender-related data: "Additional work" for the data provider (e.g., human resources department) which lacks time and motivation	UT	Minimizing "the additional work" by following the existing and relevant procedures and guidelines to collect gender-sensitive data. For example, by adopting the methodology from the "She Figures 2021 Handbook" based on the ISCED classification and Eurostat requirements.
Acquisition and provision of gender-related data: The data provider (e.g., human resources department) is overloaded with other administrative works	UT	Conducting continuous formal and informal meetings with the human resources department instead of just one formal meeting would require more management, time and resources.
Acquisition and provision of gender-related data: Possible overload with survey requests	MPI-BI	Integrating gender equality questions in the mandatory work culture and mental health survey.
	ICM	Although sometimes it is difficult to respond well to surveys, the ICM LeTSGEPs team conducted a survey on sexual harassment and gender-based violence prevention and action in October 2021, and the participation was 40 per cent. The Director encouraged it, and although it was not mandatory, the response was positive.
Acquisition and provision of gender-related data:	UT	Organize several awareness and capacity-building activities.
Lack of training and experience	UNIME	Attribute competencies on gender budgeting and monitoring to the social accountability reporting unit. Provide

		learning and training opportunities to build employee's confidence and competence with new duties and situations.
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Suggested Literature

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<https://wrđ.unwomen.org/practice/topics/data>
2. *Dscout discusses how to collect user data on gender identity - and when not to*. Built In. (n.d.).
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3. Thornton, S. & Roy, D. & Parry, S. & Lalonde, D. & Martinez, W. & Ellis, R. & Corliss, D. (2022). Towards Statistical Best Practices for Gender and Sex Data, *Significance*, 19: 40-45. 10.1111/1740-9713.01614.

2.2 Institutional Governance - Gender-Balanced Decision Bodies and Gender Equality Policies

Research has shown that gender-diverse groups are more likely to consider broader perspectives, enhancing creativity, innovation, and problem-solving (Dempere and Abdalla 2023). Therefore, achieving gender-balanced decision bodies with an equal or proportionate representation of individuals of different genders can ensure that decision-making processes include diverse perspectives and experiences, contributing to more equitable and inclusive outcomes. Furthermore, implementing gender equality policies, measures, guidelines, and initiatives can create an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, has equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes. Thus, reaching gender balance in decision bodies and executing gender equality policies are part of a broader effort to promote equality and inclusivity in higher education and research-performing organizations. However, these efforts face various obstacles deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and systemic factors.

Key Challenges

In achieving gender-balanced decision bodies and implementing gender equality policies, LeTSGEPs partners faced several barriers that could be summarized as follows:

- **Resistance to Change.** Resistance to change within organizations or

societies can be a significant obstacle. Individuals accustomed to

traditional structures may resist efforts to promote gender equality, viewing them as threatening the status quo.

- **Lack of Role Models.** An absence of visible role models in leadership positions, particularly for women, can make it challenging for individuals to envision themselves in similar roles. This lack of representation can perpetuate the perception that certain positions are unsuitable for individuals of a particular gender.
- **Challenges Balancing Work and Family.** Traditional gender roles often place a disproportionate burden on women for caregiving responsibilities. Balancing work and family life can be challenging, leading some women to opt out of or avoid leadership positions.
- **Inadequate Policies and Enforcement.** Weak or inadequately enforced policies related to gender equality can limit progress. Even if policies exist, their effectiveness may be compromised by a lack of implementation, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms.

Overcoming the Resistances

Addressing the above-mentioned obstacles requires a comprehensive and intersectional approach. Efforts should involve education and awareness campaigns, policy changes, cultural shifts, and the creation of supportive environments that value and promote gender diversity. Leadership commitment and ongoing efforts at all levels of society are essential for sustained progress toward gender equality.

In the table below, LeTSGEPs’ partners shared some suggestions for overcoming the resistance to achieving gender-balanced decision bodies and implementing gender equality policies.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Engendering institutional governance: Resistance to improve gender balance in decision-making bodies	ICM	A strong management commitment was the best strategy to overcome passive resistance. This commitment crystallized in the creation of a Deputy Direction for Equality in the ICM Governing Board and a governance team that is gender balanced and committed to gender equality as a cross-cutting principle, which is integrated into the values of the ICM. Involving the management team in promoting gender balance in decision-making bodies is essential not only for its achievement but also for it to be sustainable.

Equal representation in decision-making bodies: Lack of female candidates interested in joining the decision-making bodies	UT	Conduct capacity-building events on the role of women in decision-making bodies with heads of departments and other key managers to promote equal representation in decision-making bodies.
	MISANU	Intentional efforts to challenge and change the underlying factors. Strategies include creating inclusive workplace cultures, implementing mentorship programs, addressing unconscious bias, promoting work-life balance, and advocating for policies that support gender equality. Furthermore, encouraging individual potential candidates for applying to such positions (and in particular with RPO leaders) also creates a favorable atmosphere for more gender equality at high level positions.
Develop/change and adopt a policy and procedures that safeguard academic, administrative personnel, and students from all forms of violence, harassment, and sexual harassment: lack of training and experience	UT	The need for more specific experience in the area can be solved by collaborating with external experts, such as the UNDP. Also, including internal members with knowledge of GE, such as GEO, can be very beneficial. However, even if the policy and procedures are developed and adopted with the help of external experts and GEO, the culture change needs more time and effort. Finally, raise awareness about adopted policies and procedures. For example, publish the prepared documents (policies, procedures, and regulations) on the official HEIs/RPOs website.

Suggested Literature

1. *Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision Making*. European Institute for Gender Equality. (2023, May 22).
https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/gender-balance-leadership-and-decision-making?language_content_entity=en
2. *Integrating Gender Into Workplace Policies: Document*. U.S. Agency for International Development. (2023, February 2).
<https://www.usaid.gov/engendering-industries/gender-equality-guides/policies>

3. Sandberg, S. & Scovell, N. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to*

lead. Alfred A. Knopf.

2.3 Creating a Gender-Inclusive Workplace Culture, Work-Life Balance and Career Progression and Development

Achieving gender inclusivity involves creating an environment that recognizes and accommodates the diverse needs and experiences of individuals of all genders. In a gender-inclusive environment, everyone, regardless of gender identity, has equal opportunities, is free from discrimination, and can fully participate in all aspects of work. Work-life balance is crucial to this inclusivity, acknowledging that individuals, regardless of gender, have responsibilities and priorities outside the workplace. Reaching a work-life balance does not necessarily mean splitting time equally between work and personal life but rather finding a sustainable and fulfilling integration that meets individual needs and priorities. A healthy work-life balance is vital for women, in particular to thrive in their careers, overcome barriers, and advance to leadership positions. Nevertheless, addressing the unique challenges that women may face in their careers and achieving a gender-inclusive workplace culture, including work-life balance, face significant barriers. These obstacles are rooted in a combination of systemic, cultural, and organizational factors.

Key Challenges

Following are a few challenges of achieving a gender-inclusive environment, including work-life balance and career progression, identified by the LeTSGEPs partners:

- **Resistance to Change.** Organizational resistance to changing traditional structures and practices can impede progress. A lack of commitment from leadership to foster a gender-inclusive culture may hinder the implementation of supportive policies.
- **Lack of Training and Awareness.** Insufficient training and awareness programs on gender inclusivity can contribute to an absence of understanding and sensitivity. Training programs are essential to raise awareness about unconscious biases and promote a more inclusive culture.
- **Limited Work-Life Balance Policies.** Inadequate work-life balance policies, including inflexible work hours, lack of parental leave, and insufficient support for caregiving responsibilities, can hinder, especially women's, ability to balance work and personal life.
- **Limited Mentorship Opportunities.** Women may have limited access to mentorship opportunities crucial for career development. A lack of

mentorship can contribute to isolation and hinder career progression.

Overcoming the Resistances

Addressing these obstacles requires a comprehensive approach, including policy changes, cultural shifts, and ongoing education and awareness efforts. Organizations must actively work to create an inclusive environment that supports all employees' career progression and work-life balance, regardless of gender.

Some approaches on how to overcome these resistances based on the experience of the LeTSGEPs partners are given in the table below.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Resistance to organizational changes and management procedures	UNIME	Employees frequently become weary of organizational changes and change management procedures. In this situation, it's crucial to concentrate on the additional benefits of gender mainstreaming since a focus on outcomes and results will eventually result in more specialized and long-lasting services. For example, organizing a summer school for children and adolescents, in agreement with the HEIs sports association, is one of the activities that was well accepted.
Resistance to gender-inclusive and fair training and work environment	UNIME	People support what they help create. Involve resisters in the change process. Encourage them to share their specific concerns and give feedback regarding how the changes work. Actively listen and be prepared to incorporate their suggestions and ideas for improvement. Furthermore, foster a gender-equal culture through training, seminars, and events at every organizational level and for incoming students.
Resistance to extension / improvement of childcare services within the workplace	UNIME	Concentrate on additional benefits of gender mainstreaming for everyone, on outcomes and results that will eventually result in long-lasting results. Consider improvement of kindergarten services through the activation of agreements with external providers.
	ICM	Setting up a permanent lactation room in an RPO is not a simple effort. The achievement of a breastfeeding room in the ICM has been the result of the perseverance of the

		Equality Task Force and a long negotiation with the management team. To achieve this, it was essential to have solid arguments on the need for the room.
Lack of solutions for remote work in exceptional circumstances such as child or elderly care	MISANU	Discussing widely and then formalizing such a possibility could help. MISANU adopted a rulebook that defined work from home in exceptional circumstances such as child or elderly care.
Overcoming the glass ceiling: Advancing women's researcher careers	ICM	ICM devoted specific efforts to encourage female candidates for promotion and/or leadership positions, including leadership as PIs of research projects. In this effort, coaching/training in leadership skills for female researchers is a must.
Limited Mentorship Opportunities	MISANU	Support young associates and associates in career planning through a mentoring counseling program.

Suggested Literature

1. Manoj Kumar, A & Adithya, V. (2022). A study on career progression of women during covid- 19. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(8): 1583–1592. 10.55927/eajmr.v1i8.1107
2. Pavlou, C. (2023, September 26). Gender inclusion in the workplace: Going beyond diversity. Recruiting Resources: How to Recruit and Hire Better. <https://resources.workable.com/stories-and-insights/gender-inclusion-in-the-workplace>
3. Rapoport, R. (2002). *Beyond work-family balance: Advancing gender equity and workplace performance*. Jossey-Bass.

2.4 Gender Dimension in Research Content

The gender dimension in research content considers including gender-related aspects in research studies' design, conduct, and analysis. It addresses the impact of gender on various aspects of the research, such as research questions and interpretation of findings. By incorporating a gender dimension in research content, researchers can produce more comprehensive and accurate results and contribute to a more inclusive understanding of certain phenomena. Including a gender dimension in research content can face several barriers, reflecting awareness, methodology, funding, and institutional support

challenges.

Key Challenges

Thinking about including the gender dimension in research studies was one of the most challenging tasks for the LeTSGEPs partners. For example, the gender perspective in research in Pure Mathematics may not be immediately apparent like in some social or health-related research. Here are some common challenges that the LeTSGEPs partners had to face in their efforts to integrate gender dimension into research studies:

- **Limited Expertise and Training.** Researchers may lack the necessary training and expertise in gender-sensitive research methodologies, resulting in a lack of understanding of how to appropriately integrate gender considerations into the design and analysis of studies.
- **Institutional Inertia.** Institutional inertia or resistance to change within academic and research institutions can be a significant barrier. Traditional structures and academic norms may not prioritize gender-sensitive research, hindering efforts to introduce new perspectives.
- **Resource Constraints.** Limited resources, including time and funding, may pose a barrier to incorporating a gender dimension in research. Researchers may face pressure to prioritize other aspects of their work or need more resources to collect and analyze gender-specific data.

Overcoming the Resistances

Overcoming the above-mentioned challenges requires a concerted effort from researchers, institutions, and funding bodies to prioritize gender-sensitive research. Training programs, institutional policies, interdisciplinary collaboration, and increased awareness of the importance of gender-inclusive research practices can contribute to breaking down these barriers.

In the table hereafter, the LeTSGEPs partners presented possible solutions to some challenges.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Difficulties on how to integrate the gender dimension into the research	UT	Disseminate and enhance the visibility of research projects incorporating a gender perspective, e.g., by creating a pool of good practices and challenges. For example, organize a national event where participants from different fields can share

		their latest research and good practices on gender issues and challenges.
	ICM	Although in some RPOs, such as ICM, it is challenging to integrate the gender dimension into the research content (because of the research field), we agreed with two research groups to pilot test the application of our internal tool in their research projects (case study). Seeking internal partnerships is key, and researchers who are willing to address this issue are always found.
Gender bias related to representation of authors in publication	MPI-BI	Creating a criteria list that must be fulfilled so that a researcher is named as an author on a publication in the individual department or research group. The list has to be known to all staff of the respective department/group. To achieve this, establish a committee of PIs to draft the criteria list and to propose further action. Invite the committee, for example, to a gender equality lunch, where a study on gender bias in publications can be discussed.

Suggested Literature

1. *Integration of the Sex/Gender Dimension Into Research and Teaching Content*. European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (n.d.). <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/integration-gender-dimension-research-and-teaching-content>
2. Murphy, Y. (2009). *Incorporating Intersectionality in Social Work Practice, Research, Policy, and Education*. Nasw Press.
3. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (2023). SAGE Publications, Inc.

2.5 Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting integrates a gender perspective into budget development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. This process aims to analyze how budgetary decisions impact different genders and ensure that public resources are allocated in a way that promotes gender equality and addresses the diverse needs and experiences of women and men. It presents a crucial strategy for promoting gender equality and creating more inclusive and equitable societies.

However, although gender budgeting aligns with the broader goals of promoting

gender equality, it can face various forms of institutional and societal resistance.

Key Challenges

At the beginning of the LeTSGEPs project, most of the LeTSGEPs partners were not familiar with the concept of gender budgeting nor how to implement this process. Thus, the first barrier partners had to overcome was a lack of knowledge and experience. Besides that, some other typical challenges and resistances associated with gender budgeting were:

- **Lack of Awareness and Understanding.** Resistance often arises due to a lack of awareness and understanding of gender budgeting. Some stakeholders, including policymakers and budget decision-makers, may not fully grasp the concept and its potential benefits.
- **Limited Gender Expertise.** The absence of gender expertise within budgetary institutions can be a challenge. Without experts who understand gender dynamics, it may be difficult to integrate gender considerations into budgetary processes effectively.
- **Lack/Unavailability of Data.** Insufficient and disaggregated gender-specific data can be a barrier. The absence of reliable data on the differential impact of policies on women and men can impede the effective implementation of gender budgeting.
- **Short-Term Orientation.** Resistance can arise when there is a predominant focus on short-term goals and immediate economic concerns. Policymakers may prioritize short-term fiscal considerations over long-term investments in gender equality.

Overcoming the Resistances

Handling resistance requires a multi-faceted approach that includes raising awareness, building capacity, fostering political will, and demonstrating the tangible benefits of gender-responsive budgeting. Advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with civil society organizations are essential to overcoming resistance and advancing gender-responsive budgeting initiatives. Additionally, providing evidence of the positive impact of gender budgeting on research, social and economic outcomes can help garner support and mitigate resistance.

In the accompanying table, the LeTSGEPs partners proposed solutions to some local resistance that they encountered.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Resistance / delay of the Gender Budgeting Analysis / Gender Wage Gap Analysis	MPI-BI	To facilitate the process of gender budgeting analysis, we suggest hiring a renowned and well-known national expert on Gender Budgeting for input and guidance.
	CY	At CY, we have encountered a lot of resistance to getting data. The gender equality officer exchanged many emails, but after the first positive response, the department in charge of collecting the data has not replied for a long time. After discussing the situation with the Mentor, we received access to the wage and salary data. The role of the Mentor as a "champion" played a crucial role in advocating for and facilitating the access to research data.
	ICM	To overcome the lack of data the leading organization provides, improving internal databases that include new categories relevant to gender analysis is considered a transversal strategy to address data collection issues for several measures, such as gender budgeting and gender pay gap analysis.
Capacity-building on Gender Budgeting: Lack of transparency and involvement	UT	Organizing several prior informal meetings and discussions on increasing the transparency of the gender budgeting process. Furthermore, advocate for the training with working groups directly involved in budget preparation.
	MISANU	Including gender-sensitive budgeting in the financial documents of RPO to ensure gender considerations are transparently mainstreamed across all budget documents, including the budget statement, expenditure plans, and financial reports.
Gender Pay Gap: Lack of long-term goals	MPI-BI	In the whole MPI-BI, there are signals to outsource cleaning and security tasks to external service companies. In this case, the Institute would no longer be able to influence the working conditions. Solution: We have created a Gender Procurement manual for the whole MPG, which is now in the process of being agreed on with the Headquarter Administration. It contains a prominent part on considering gender equality aspects in the decision to outsource vs. insource service tasks.

Suggested Literature

1. Addabbo, T. & Badalassi, G. & Canali, C. (2021). Gender Budgeting in Academia: a powerful tool for Gender equality. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Gender Research*: 1-7.
2. *Gender Budgeting*. European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (n.d.). <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gender-budgeting>
3. Steinthorsdottir, F. S. & Heijstra, T. M. & Einarsdottir, T. (2015). *Gender budgeting in academia*. GARCIA.

2.6 Raising Gender Awareness

Raising gender awareness in research and academic institutions is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable scholarly environment. It involves promoting a deeper understanding of gender dynamics, challenging gender biases, and creating spaces where diverse voices and perspectives are valued. Faculty, researchers, students, and administrators can actively contribute to raising gender awareness and creating a more inclusive and equitable space for research, learning, and collaboration. Despite the importance of raising gender awareness in academia and research, various systemic, cultural, and organizational resistances and challenges can hinder progress.

Key Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unique challenges, including those related to raising gender awareness. Since the global focus was on public health and economic recovery, the attention to social issues, including gender-related concerns, was reduced. The LeTSGEPs partners struggled in their efforts to raise awareness about gender disparities in periods of social isolation, limiting opportunities for community engagement and collective action. Furthermore, a lot of their colleagues - academicians and researchers - resisted gender awareness initiatives due to a belief that addressing gender disparities is a secondary concern during a crisis. Besides this obvious challenge of raising gender awareness in periods of crisis, other common resistances that the LeTSGEPs partners encounter were:

- **Limited Resources.** Resistance may arise when there are limited resources allocated to gender awareness initiatives. There needs to be more funding, time, and personnel to ensure the implementation of effective programs.
- **Competing Priorities.** Academics often face numerous competing

priorities, including teaching, research, and administrative duties. The pressure to meet academic demands may leave little time or energy for engaging with gender awareness initiatives.

- **Perceived Irrelevance.** Some individuals may perceive gender-related issues as irrelevant to their field of study or research, leading to a lack of motivation to engage with gender awareness initiatives.
- **Lack of Training and Education.** Insufficient training and education on gender-related issues may contribute to resistance. Some individuals may not be aware of the importance of gender awareness or may lack the knowledge to integrate it into their academic practices.

Overcoming the Resistances

Managing resistance to raising gender awareness requires an approach that includes, among others, awareness campaigns, training programs, policy changes, and fostering a culture that values diversity and inclusivity. Building alliances and networks to advocate for gender awareness can help overcome resistance and promote lasting change in academia and research.

The following table shows possible strategies, used by the LeTSGEPs partners to overcome some resistances.

Common Resistances	Partner	Suggested Solutions
Lack of awareness or understanding of GE/GEP/GB	ICM	ICM organizes dissemination sessions dedicated to gender equality once a week. Precisely, every Friday, they discuss various gender topics, which helps in raising gender awareness. Initially, there was an initiative to limit the number of sessions to 2 per year. However, they negotiated with relevant stakeholders that these sessions should be organized once a week as they are crucial for the organization.
	CY	To raise awareness and understanding of GE/GEP, CY created a dedicated section on the CY intranet site and published the procedure and good practices in place at CY.
	UT	For a better understanding of GE, UT decided to incorporate gender equality topics in several other training programs organized by the institution. One example is the inclusion of the "Women in higher education management" topic.

Lack of resources for promoting GE/GEP/GB	CY	Each year CY organizes a week of integration to increase efforts in staff integration. Since the faculty staff is already engaged in this event, they decided to introduce sessions dedicated to gender equality and sexual violence prevention. In this way, they avoid putting additional workload on their staff.
Topic of GE is not important in the periods of widespread global crisis and instability	MISANU	In 2020 - 2021, MISANU wanted to involve its associates in the Association of Women of Europe in Mathematics (EWM) activities. However, this measure was perceived as meaningless and superficial due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address resistance and promote gender awareness during the pandemic, the team figured out that adapting strategies to the current context is essential. This may involve integrating gender considerations into pandemic response efforts or leveraging digital platforms for awareness campaigns.

Suggested Literature

1. Anttila, M. (2023, March 2). *An overview of raising gender awareness in Erasmus+ projects*. LabOpen.
<https://www.labopen.fi/en/lab-pro/an-overview-of-raising-gender-awareness-in-erasmus-projects/>
2. *Gender Awareness-Raising*. European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (n.d.).
https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gender-awareness-raising?language_content_entity=en
3. *Gender awareness raising and advocacy police*. United Nations. (n.d.).
<https://police.un.org/en/gender-awareness-raising-and-advocacy>

3. CONCLUSION

Overcoming local resistance to implementing and achieving gender equality measures in higher education and research-performing organizations requires a strategic and sustained effort. The LeTSGEPs Guidelines hope to contribute to this effort and foster a more inclusive and equitable environment within academic and research institutions. By implementing and continuously refining Guidelines, institutions can contribute to a more inclusive, innovative, and impactful scholarly and research landscape, ultimately benefiting individuals and society. In summary, utilizing these Guidelines can lead to several positive

outcomes, such as:

- **Increased Representation.** Addressing resistance to gender equality can result in increased representation of all genders at various levels, including leadership positions, research teams, and decision-making bodies. Diverse representation enhances the quality and impact of research.
- **Long-Term Institutional Transformation.** The guidelines encourage a long-term commitment to institutional transformation. By embedding gender equality principles into policies, practices, and organizational culture, institutions can create lasting change.
- **Adaptability to Evolving Challenges.** Organizations that prioritize gender equality are better positioned to adapt to evolving challenges. A diverse and inclusive environment fosters resilience and creativity, enabling institutions to navigate complex issues more effectively.
- **Cultural Shift.** By challenging existing norms and promoting gender equality, institutions can contribute to a cultural shift within local research and academic communities.

In conclusion, the LeTSGEPs Guidelines are one of the tools that help address resistance at multiple levels and require collaboration, persistence, and a commitment to cultural change.

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