

TARGET } Taking a Reflexive approach
to Gender Equality for
institutional Transformation



TARGET-GEECCO CONFERENCE

March 11th 2021



TARGET - This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 741672.

GEECCO - This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 741128.

Supporting sustainable gender change in research organizations in Mediterranean countries

Initial reflections

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TARGET PROJECT

- Initial reflections: what are some of the factors that seem to have supported or conversely restricted gender organizational change?
- What could the European Commission, national policy makers, and individual organizations do to render gender mainstreaming and gender change sustainable?
- To build the capacity of 7 organizations to develop GEPs in Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Italy, Serbia, Morocco, and in a network of universities in the field of engineering.
- Different organizational entities, some engage in research, others fund research, higher education institutions, small institutes, extended higher education structures. The challenges and the complexity of the task widely vary
- Factors that undermine or support gender mainstreaming and the development of a GEP in HE and ROs → contextual (national) and organizational levels

NATIONAL CONTEXT FACTORS

- Gender equality: not a central priority in research and innovation policy in the TARGET countries; **legal provisions or new policy measures** can boost the importance of gender equality in research, innovation and higher education; example of Greece and Gender Equality Committees in universities.
- Horizon requirement for participating institutions to have a GEP is a watershed; has already imparted strong motivation among ROs and universities to seek to develop GEPs across most of the TARGET countries.
- **Development of a gender equality discourse** that is compatible with the idea and policy of gender mainstreaming, is crucial for the willingness of research and HE institutions to adopt GEPs. A strongly embedded formal conception of equality, as opposed to a substantive notion of equality
- **Prevalence of a formal conception of equality** in TARGET institutions → Where a relative numerical balance among men and women exists, there tends to be denial or resistance to the idea that there is an issue of gender inequality to be dealt with. **Substantive conception of gender inequality**: indirect inequalities and implicit biases, harder to explain and prove, especially without sex disaggregated data
- **Absence or weakness of active civil society actors and stakeholders** to both help diffuse a substantive conception of gender equality and to advocate and support gender mainstreaming in the form of GEPs

INSTITUTION-ORGANIZATION LEVEL FACTORS

Limited organizational capacity and gender expertise in TARGET institutional partners

Lack of sex-disaggregated data and systematic data collection processes, lack of an understanding as to why such data is important to record; tied together with **limited development of a new public management culture and operational structure**

A well-developed **research program or a study program on gender studies** in a university can make a difference

Continuous support from top management is key to all the above, but how can national policy or the government promote this?

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EU level: The European Commission could develop further action, promote participation of civil society organizations, in order to facilitate the diffusion of a substantive conception of equality in research and innovation.

National and EU level: allocation of resources for training and other capacity-building activities

National level: any act of official will or incentive would be crucial to encourage support by top management and willingness among ROs and universities to develop effective action plans. For example, to include GEP as a precondition in university evaluation and accreditation systems, or more broadly, to highlight gender equality as a value that the Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation regards highly.

Organizational level: the ROs and HEIs that are participants in the TARGET project can be and some have acted as drivers and multipliers in the development of such a broader discourse

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THANK YOU!

TARGET- GEECCO Conference
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