

## Mentoring for promoting gender equality and institutional change- AGRIGEP on-site visits in November 2023

*The AGRIGEP project reached a milestone as on-site visits to all participating universities (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Science, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, and University of Primorska) were completed in November 2023.*

**As part of the AGRIGEP project plan, Yellow Window as one of the mentoring partners of the project conducted on-site visits to the widening university partners in November 2023.**

During on-site monitoring and coaching visits at each university, partner institutions were engaged to review the progress of GEP, and identify any challenges and ways to overcome them.

On **November 1-2**, Dr. Maxime Forest and Panagiota Polykarpou from Yellow Window visited the **Faculty of Tropical Agriculture ČZU in Prague**. They gave an insightful lecture on the topic of Gender and Climate and also attended a group meeting of the Czech University of Agriculture in Prague AGRIGEP project.



Through the time of their visit, the main objective was to provide consultancy and support to the members of the AGRIGEP core team. The team discussed the implementation of the CZU Gender Equality Plan and identified windows of opportunities and challenges. Another aim was to meet the CZU GEP working group, which was established to create the first GEP and later switched to the body to implement GEP activities. The meeting took the form of a workshop and covered areas Related to the GEP itself, including the findings from the self-assessment conducted, and an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of CZU GEP, especially in light of the EC's mandatory requirements.

The second visit by Yellow Window occurred from **November 8-10, 2023** at the **Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Coordinator)**, also known as MATE. During the visit, Yellow Window interacted with staff at two campuses in Gödöllő and Kaposvár, and met with stakeholders and change agents responsible for MATE's GEP implementation and progress.



Discussions with PhD students and young researchers at different campuses provided a great opportunity to have open discussions and "immerse" into the local campus life. The visit to the Institute of Genetics and



Biotechnology at the Szent Istvan Campus, Gödöllő provided a possibility to see researchers in the field of biotechnology work in the lab and get a close picture of the most relevant research which they are focusing in the field of agriculture. Some research topics were directly related to sex and gender, such as the research topics of the Reproductive Biology and Toxicology Group, investigating the effect of different toxins on gender (both in the developmental phase and adulthood) in agricultural species.

Later, between **November 15-17, 2023**, the **University of Primorska (UP)** with AGRIGEP project hosted a visit by Yellow Window's partners. On November 15th, 2023, the AGRIGEP project participated in the Symposium on Gender Equality for an Inclusive University and Society, organized by the UP in Koper. It presented and discussed the development and implementation of the Protocol on Gender Equality at the University.



During the on-site visits, the mentor Maxime Forest, gave a lecture for students on the topic of "Gender & Climate - The case of gender-sensitive research and development programs". They also provided an awareness-raising session on integrating the gender dimension in research design for Horizon Europe Programs, specifically for PhD students and researchers. In addition, they conducted a capacity-building session on integrating the gender dimension in research at the University of Primorska. Lastly, they also provided a capacity-building session on integrating the gender dimension in sustainable construction research with InnoRenew CoE's researchers.

### “What people are saying about the on-site visits”:

“The visualisation of the results helped the participants to understand the gaps in our GEP and triggered further discussions on how to address this shortcoming...what can be done and that it does not require many resources...”, said *Jana Mazancová*, a PI of AGRIGEP CZU core team and a member of CZU WG GEP.

“Sometimes it seems that gender is everywhere...it is too much...we have other important issues to be discussed....But this [workshop] was useful. It was good that it was in Czech and many examples were shown.” (*female Professor*).

“The workshop was coincidentally aligned with the discussions held at the Czech Rectors Conference about the amendment to the Higher Education Act containing proposals concerning the obligation to create a safe and inclusive environment at universities and improve the financial conditions for PhD students. “Such legal framework for inclusion will also bring resources for personnel, activities, and training...In addition, it makes discussions among Czech universities more topical in this regard, finding solutions, sharing best practices...” (*male Professor*).

"We heard a not-every-day and eye-opening interactive presentation within the framework of the AGRIGEP project. The conversation put gender differences and prejudices in a different context. We learned the difference between sex and gender, and what gender blindness is. I think that not only me, but others also misinterpreted equality and do not necessarily know what gender blindness is. We were presented with various examples where sexual equality does not pay off, as women and men should be differentiated based on their biological and physical characteristics. One was the symptoms of a heart attack, which are different for men and women, and in the public mind, we only know the male side. Second was the safety design of the cars, which is designed for the size and body shape of the average European man, so women have a greater chance of getting more serious injuries or, in the worst case, dying during accidents. It was good that he addressed the students and everyone was able to give their example from their studies or their home country for dealing with gender differences. We discussed these situations and outlined a possible solution." (*female researcher*).

"I am responsible for PhD candidates at our faculty, which focuses on STEM. We do not have a lot of female candidates...and those we have, I recognise that often they don't complete their studies due to family reasons...or they are somehow influenced by all these men around, and they might feel not good enough...so they give up. It is sad...This workshop motivated me to think about how to encourage our female students to continue and complete their studies...though I have only limited knowledge about gender issues." (*female, administration*).

"I enjoyed the session...the topic is actual. We have touched on it in several of our courses, too. The lecturer made it attractive, and I liked his jokes. I am from Nigeria, and gender and climate is something we need to solve...being part of such discussion enhances my knowledge and arguments for further discussions." (*male, student*).

"We are from Zambia and just started our first year in Master studies. Our country has a Ministry of Gender, and increasing resilience toward climate-change impacts, in particular on women, is a hot topic. We liked the workshop and discussion. This is what we come to study here." (*female student*)

"I have heard about the project AGRIGEP something, but not thought about it much...this lecture was fascinating. Facts and examples made me think about gendered migration much more...it is cool that you do this stuff...something more than regular courses." (*female, student*).

"The training within the framework of the AGRIGEP project conducted by Dr. Maxime Forest on UP FM on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023 was extremely interesting. With his insightful approach, Dr. Forest touched on the investigation of various areas of gender equality and treatment, which are not always unambiguous. He provided us with different concerns about gender and offered us new dimensions in dealing with gender equality in today's society. Certainly, efforts in the field of gender equality in the pedagogical and research fields are still very strongly committed to the fundamental directions of humanity, freedom, and solidarity in the field of gender equality. During the training, he attracted the students to reflect on the question of how well we understand the mandatory responsibility towards the topic of gender equality of each individual and those who are professionally and occupationally

responsible for the implementation of normative rules in this area. And much more. It was really interesting and instructive." (*Martina Kosič Barone, UP FM, female, administration*).

"The information provided by Maxime is invaluable for developing successful research projects and for becoming a more understanding and respectful human." (*Dr. Matthew Schwarzkopf, InnoRenew, male, Associate Professor*).

"The gender equality training in research and academia, hosted by UP in collaboration with partner Yellow Window in November 2023, was exceptionally informative. It provided attendees with insights into addressing the crucial issue of gender equality in both research and academic environments. The event, which also included a workshop on the subject, was an outstanding contribution to the advancement of gender equality in academic and research settings. It offered valuable insights, practical knowledge, and collaboration opportunities, making it a commendable contribution to a more inclusive and equitable future." (*Dr. Patricia Blatnik, UP FM, female, Associate Professor*).

*We are grateful for the valuable support, coaching, and training we receive during the project from our mentors. They help us unlock our potential, offer growth opportunities, provide constructive feedback, and transfer knowledge and values while also providing performance support. The AGRIGEP Team would like to express our appreciation to the Yellow Window mentor team for their enthusiastic participation and valuable contributions during the engaging discussions. Thanks to their efforts, all of the site visits were a great success!*

#### **AGRIGEP Beneficiaries:**

- Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE), Coordinator,
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU),
- University of Primorska (UP),
- Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - BarcelonaTech (UPC),
- Yellow Window (YW),
- Association of Hungarian Women in Science (NATE).

**For further information on our project visit our website and follow our social media channels!**

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