

On-site mentoring by UPC experts enhanced gender integration in teaching and Gender Equality Plans at partner universities

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AGRIGEP project's activities started this year with three impactful on-site visits by Dr. Marta Peña and Prof. Amaia Lusa Garcia from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC). The visits focused on sharing best practices in gender-inclusive teaching and guiding the effective monitoring of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) implementation, site visits, starting at the Czech University of Life Sciences, continuing at the Prague Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and concluding at the University of Primorska.

Project Background and Scope

The AGRIGEP project, funded by Horizon Europe, creates a collaborative environment for co-designing gender equality actions and activities at partner universities with the support of experienced mentors. This initiative is part of a broader effort to ensure that gender equality is not only envisioned but actively integrated into the teaching and administrative frameworks of European universities.



Visit Highlights:

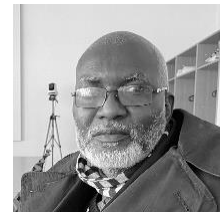
- **Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU) January 29-30, 2024:** A lecture titled "Gender & Teaching: Inclusion of the Gender Equality Sustainable Development Goal in Teaching" was delivered, fostering an environment of discussion about the relevance and integration of gender dimensions in STEM fields.
- **University of Primorska (UP) February 28-March 1, 2024:** The sessions included lectures on "Gender and Research – Incorporating Gender Perspectives in Projects and Funding Opportunities," aimed at researchers and faculty to emphasize the critical role of gender perspectives in securing and managing project funding, particularly under Horizon Europe guidelines.
- **Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE) March 8 and 9, 2024:** Discussions focused on the GEP's implementation progress and challenges, culminating in a vibrant exchange of ideas and strategies for advancing gender equality within institutional frameworks.

Expert insights and participant feedback



Dr Marta Peña (UPC) stresses that *'providing students with new tools to identify gender" stereotypes, norms and social roles contributes to developing their critical spirit and acquiring skills that allow them to avoid gender blindness in their future professional practice.'*

Visiting professor Yakoubou Bakasso from the University Abdou Moumouni in Niger, whose mobility is supported within Erasmus+ KA171, attended the lecture and provided positive feedback: *'It has been very inspiring. Similar lectures are needed at our universities not only to motivate our academicians to think about gender equality but also to motivate our female students to keep studying and even become university teachers.'*



Dr Rosó Baltà Salvador (UPC) summarized her experience from on-site visit: *'This week, accompanied by my colleagues Dr. Marta Peña and Dr. Amaia Lusa from the SOCSTEM research group, I had the privilege of visiting the Faculty of management, University of Primorska as part of our participation in the Horizon Europe project AGRIGEP. During our visit, we talked about how to integrate a gender perspective into teaching and*

research, as well as how to design and implement effective gender equality plans. I am thankful for this enriching experience and look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts toward fostering a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.'

A female assistant professor teaching mostly zoology-related courses shared that the lecture: *'opened my eyes on how to approach my teaching and teaching material to be more inclusive. Marta showed examples that are easy to use. I do not know why it did not come to my mind before...'*



The day concluded with a meeting with UP's Rector, Prof. Dr. Klavdija Kutnar, underscoring the significance of the visit for UP's internationalization efforts and its participation in Horizon and Transform4Europe alliance projects. The Vice-Dean for Research and Internationalization at UP FM, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ana Grdović Gnip, also participated in the afternoon session and the meeting with the Rector.

'During the on-site visits, I've learnt the importance of working every day for gender equality and of being perseverant despite the favourable context we may have. What may seem like a small step in the eyes of a university relatively advanced in gender equality issues such UPC is, it can constitute a significant advancement for institutions that are just beginning their journey towards gender equality and may encounter significant resistance and barriers. I encourage these partners to continue moving forward and to walk, step by step, towards real gender equality.' prof. Amaia Lusa shared her views on all three visits.



Sustained commitment and strategic outcomes

The mentoring visits assessed ongoing efforts and facilitated discussions on future directions, including the planning of a summer school in Barcelona and an annual conference at UP in November 2024. These initiatives are designed to continue building momentum for the project's goals.

Conclusion

In 2024, the AGRIGEP project facilitated transformative on-site visits led by experts from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), fostering collaborative environments for gender equality initiatives within partnering universities. Through lectures, workshops, and strategic discussions, the UPC team shared best practices, inspired dialogue, and empowered participants to integrate gender perspectives into teaching, research, and institutional frameworks. Feedback highlighted the profound impact of these interactions, signaling a collective commitment to advancing gender equality. As the project progresses, the lessons learned will continue to inform and inspire efforts across partner universities, underscoring the enduring significance of mentorship and collaborative exchange in fostering inclusive academic environments.



AGRIGEP Beneficiaries:

WIDENING PARTNERS

- Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE), **Coordinator**
- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (CZU)
- University of Primorska (UP)

MENTORING PARTNERS

- Yellow Window (YW)
- Association of Hungarian Women in Science (NATE)
- Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya - BarcelonaTech (UPC)



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