

FESTA PROJECT

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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I-Introduction

FESTA is an EU framework 7 funded project under “Implementing structural change in research organizations/universities”. Therefore structural changes are the expected outcomes of the project and actually FESTA managed to achieve a number of important changes in the runtime of the project, such as the institutionalization of Gender Equality Centers where they were not existing and important structural changes in standard operating routines, as for hiring procedures and their underlying concept of excellence.

In considering which structural changes have been introduced and how they impacted on the institution under consideration, we should bear in mind the differences among FESTA partners. For example it is highly relevant that in the Danish context of the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) an Equality Committee at the Faculty of Science and in other four faculties was formalized, at South West University a culture of gender equality was introduced for the first time, and also at the Istanbul Technical University gender became a political issue. In other contexts, like at the Fondazione Bruno Kessler and at University of Limerick, there were already some form of institutionalization and an attention to gender equality and here FESTA acted as the impetus factor for making things happen. In other contexts (like Uppsala University, or RWTH Aachen University), where there was already both an attention devoted to the gendered nature of the organization and administrative routines for dealing with inequality, the impact of FESTA was relevant but the margins for structural changes of amelioration were more reduced. In evaluating the impact of FESTA it should be considered that the partners were not equal on the start line, and therefore their trajectories have been different.

FESTA is expected to make an impact also in the long run and at a cultural level. To evaluate the cultural impact of outcomes like gender awareness or gender sensitive PhD supervision is more difficult since objective evidences are difficult to trace and to document. Rather we have to rely on the potentialities of the project in the future and to consider if and how FESTA left a fertile ground for other initiatives of gender equality after the completion of the project. The sustainability of the project is one of the major concerns of an evaluation that does not limit itself to the documentation of achievements in accordance with the initial plan.

The aim of this report is to summarize the results and findings of the participative evaluation of the FESTA project. An appendix illustrates the methodology that was tailored for the project since an evaluation project was not envisioned from the start-up of FESTA and

therefore it had a limited budget. The evaluation has a participative and process-oriented methodology, but it does not neglect the attention to outcomes, nor to reflections in action. The report, after a short introduction, takes into account a summary of achievements (section 2) and then an analysis per single Work Package in the experience of the partners involved in each (section 3). At the end of section 3, the report proposes a series of reflections on implementing gender equity in the European academy (3.1). In the conclusion (section 4) the common features of the implementation processes are summarized and the lessons thus learnt are proposed as a reflection that may be useful for the European Community in reflecting on how to transfer the experience of FESTA to the draft of new call for tenders on structural change projects.

Acknowledgements:

The evaluator would like to thank the FESTA team members who have supported this endeavour through different ways, but mainly by sharing their reflections, doubts and hopes. Heartfelt thanks for letting the evaluator felt welcome in their communities.

II. Summary of achievements

2.1 Description of FESTA deliverables at the general level

The official deliverable number and name are completed by the name of the deliverable as stated on its title page.

1.1. Detailed work plan

For the commission, work plan set up in the beginning for the duration of the project. Timelines for each work package;

2.1. Information and communication plan

For the commission, a plan for both dissemination externally, and internal communication. A definition of FESTA main messages, and the communication means it will use;

2.2. and 2.3. Project webpage and Project logotype;

2.4. Brochure 1

In the beginning of the project. What is FESTA, who is FESTA, what is FESTA about, how is FESTA organized;

2.5. Brochure 2

Halfway into the project. FESTA update. Preliminary results. Announcing the FESTA-GARCIA joint conference;

2.6. Dissemination and communication report.

At the end of the project. An overview of all the dissemination and communication activities: Webpage, publications, social media, conferences, printed matter;

3.1. Training course report including course materials and evaluation of delivery

Development, implementation and evaluation of a training program and the outcome for individual women and for organizations;

3.2. Evaluated decision support system

FESTA Strategic Career Manager (SCM), is a web based tool designed to support early- and mid-level academics and researchers to manage their careers in male dominated environments;

3.3. Reproducible toolkit

Collecting and preparing statistics using existing organizational statistics, data and equality measures and supplementing these with gender sensitive data;

3.4. Final Report including Evaluation

description of the process during which gender statistics were used to stimulate and support discussions, reflections and debates as they provide evidence and facts on gender biases;

4.1. Report on procedures developed

Reveals the ways that organizational practices in relation to decision making and communications conceal the operation of power and contribute to gender inequality;

4.2. Report on training completed

Impact of training programs for decision makers and researchers in creating gendered organizational change;

4.3. Methodologies and measures for analysing informal decision-making and communication processes

Formulating policy amendments aimed at changing the status quo in situations where participation and transparency where lacking;

4.4. Report on changed actions and final results

Illustrates the way FESTA designed and implemented changes in the target institutions detailing each step;

5.1. Report on perceptions of excellence in hiring processes its comparison between participating partners and a conception of a gender awareness workshop for members of selection committees at the partner institutions

Interviews with persons from selection committees who can be considered ‘gatekeepers’ as well as successful and unsuccessful candidates about the issue of who is an excellent candidate and how this is acknowledged;

5.2. Recommendation handout

The appointment systems of each institution are depicted in flow charts. Gender biases are marked. Guidelines are included which aim to reduce or eliminate these biases and lead to gender equality;

5.3. Report on hidden perceptions

In Sweden, Germany and Bulgaria, a selection of both men and women were interviewed about their conceptions of excellence.

5.4. Report on results of the survey

Summarizes our experiences of conducting workshops about excellence, and the work that is presently going on at each institution, related to managing the downsides of the excellence quest;

6.1. Course material and plans for facilitation training

FESTA offered training to scientists who are responsible for meetings in order to sensitize them towards the different elements, dynamics and communication of meetings and how to facilitate constructive meetings;

6.2. Results surveys and partner meetings

The proceedings from the partner meetings for the whole duration of the 6.1 task as well as the results from the E-surveys and the mini-interviews carried out at the three participating institutions;

6.3. Toolkit for gender equal supervision

Approaches and tools which create gender awareness enhance learning and support students to navigate the PhD journey in a supportive environment;

7.1. Handbook how to face resistance

Using 31 narratives of different incidents this handbook aims to summarize what barriers have been experienced along the process of change;

In addition to the expected deliverables, FESTA has published a “FESTA handbook of organizational change” and will publish a guide for meeting leaders.

2.2 Dissemination activities

Altogether, FESTA has reported 237 dissemination activities. Whether dissemination activities at each institution have been reported varies, since these activities could be regarded

as part of the implementation and are, thus, difficult to be clearly defined. The most common dissemination activity is "oral presentation in a scientific event", 55 presentations. In particular the Irish partner, and also the Italian partner have been engaged in several scientific conferences. The audiences in these have been national, European or international. The category "oral presentation to a wider public" has fewer entries, only 11. However, even here the borders are arbitrary. Altogether the FESTA partners have held presentations to 20 European and 25 international audiences. Moreover, FESTA partners have had posters in 15 conferences. In addition to the two brochures mentioned as deliverables, flyers have been produced and distributed by the partners.

FESTA has also been taken up by popular press. The FESTA partners themselves have made only a few press releases, and the articles in popular press most often feature some particular occasions initiated by the project, or where the project has been particularly visible. FESTA has also been in other media.

Each FESTA partner has either arranged a national conference, or had a session in it. In addition other, minor workshops have been arranged. Ireland has been the country where by far the most nationally targeted dissemination activities have taken place.

FESTA has not been particularly active in social media. FESTA has a twitter account, but it is not used very frequently. The homepage does not allow checking how many times it has been addressed. FESTA has been linked to a number of different websites.

Thus far the project has produced three scientific articles.

2.3 Contacts with sister projects

FESTA has not a built-up structure to keep in contact with other Gender in Research Institutions projects. Downprioritizing this has been a conscious strategy, as there have been several national collaborations and it was deemed better to use energy in cultivating them. However, there have been contacts on national level: In Italy project GARCIA is a collaborator, as GARCIA's Italian partner is located in the same city and has research contacts with one of the FESTA partner. This resulted in FESTA and GARCIA organizing a common final conference, highlighting the results of both projects. (A first effort of organizing a common conference were made with project GENOVATE, but that did not work out.)

In Ireland FESTA has collaborated closely with the INTEGER project. In Sweden, there is a network with people who belong to European gender equality projects, and the members of the network made up the program of FESTA's national conference. The Turkish partner

(during FESTA) has been part of another gender equality project, SHEMERA, for gender equality in research in the Mediterranean area.

The coordinator has visited in a number of occasions other European gender equality structures in research projects, invited by the Commission or by single projects. In addition, contacts between FESTA partners and partners in sister projects have been made in conferences and similar gatherings.

2.4 Description of achievements at local level

In this section a brief description of achievements at the institution and in relation to action plans is reported:

FESTA at Uppsala University. Here FESTA has succeeded in accomplishing lasting changes in the three selected departments. The project has raised awareness about gender issues in the working environment, also in other places than the selected departments, and inspired some concrete reforms.

Almost all the intended outcomes have been reached and a long time impact is expected. In details and in relation to each task:

3.2 Raising organizational awareness: The task has resulted in the implementation of a few solid gender equality indicators in action plans to monitor gender equality work in the three departments. The tool is useful as a starting point for gender equality work and as a basis for contacts with the leadership. The male-dominated department starts from the indicators when setting priorities for the gender equality work and the indicators have made the gender equality situation and goals more well-defined, and also resulted in a better monitoring of the measures of gender equality. For the departments with a more balanced gender mix, the indicators have given impetus to an actionable equal opportunities group. The indicators have given them something to work with, and also good grounds for establishing contact with the department management;

4.2 Informal decision-making and communication processes: Together with selected departments' heads/staff UU found a way of working with actions to solve the arisen problems in informal decision-making and communication. Here the intended outcomes have been only partially reached. Due to the short time span from policy setting to policy evaluation, it is not possible to properly measure the results of activities in terms of meeting the intended outcomes. The evaluation was limited to assessing the work done on trying to introduce actions. In this regard, there are only a few of the around 20 actions which have been evaluated

negatively and this is only because those actions were not implemented in full at the time of the measurement;

5.2 Excellence in the daily working environment: This task has initiated reflections on the impact of the excellence ideology on general working conditions as well as their impact on gender equality. It has, in combination with other tasks, been helpful in raising gender awareness about junior researchers' issues in the working environment and inspired some concrete reforms. However, it is not realistic to change departmental cultures during the running time of FESTA for two reasons: 1) The interest in the issue among the institutional staff has been low, and 2) the connection between overall research policies promoting "excellence" and daily working environment disadvantaging women is not easy to understand and even more difficult to work on. In the academy the discourse on meritocracy is based on 'excellence' and it is in competition with a discourse of gender equality. Therefore the intended outcomes can be evaluated as not reached, even if a moderate long term impact can be expected;

6.1 Improving Meeting Culture: The three departments function as best practice cases for how to create a common field for all individuals and groups in the meeting room. Through this task UU has developed a proven methodology of how to improve meeting culture. A Facilitators' guide (provided by the HR Division) to meeting practices sensitive to gender will be integrated in the leadership programme for managers. In fact, there is a high demand on facilitation training at UU. Therefore not only the intended outcomes have been reached, but also a long term impact may be expected;

6.2 PhD supervision: The Faculty's Equal Opportunities Committee has for the last two years collaborated with the FESTA project and the Unit for Academic Learning and Teaching, to create a tool to achieve a more equal opportunities-aware doctoral program, with particular focus on gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Department-specific toolboxes to achieve a more equal opportunities-aware doctoral program have been developed. The web-based tool for gender-sensitive PhD supervision will be used in the compulsory PhD supervision education and in provisional supervisor courses/study circles. In this task the intended outcomes have been reached and a long term impact is expected.

FESTA at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU): Here FESTA has served as a catalyst at the Faculty of Science, and the University in general for necessary and implementable actions and initiatives, resulting in a number of initiatives, policies and actions

being implemented in parallel with FESTA – and as a direct consequence of the focused activity of the project. In the case of SDU it is more relevant to evaluate the actions implemented in the two case studies than to provide an overview according to each task, given that all the expected outcomes have been achieved and that the potential of a long term impact is high, as we shall see from the initiatives.

At the Faculty of Science a number of policies have been implemented, including:

- Formalization of an Equality Committee at the Faculty of Science;
- A policy for equal opportunities, which includes five main themes: Management (administrative management and research management); Recruitment and staff retention; Career development; Working environment; Awareness;
- Annual status and action plan of the gender balance at all academic career levels and management, which includes an annual compilation of gender statistics;
- Changes in recruitment practices: broad announcements which allow for a large number of applicants and thus a fairer competition; gender balanced assessment boards and hiring committees; and hiring only if there are three or more qualified applicants for the position. The two years where this practice has been fully implemented have seen a marked increase in the ratio of women being hired for an academic position;
- Gender sensitive career counselling and supervision of junior researchers;

The fact that FESTA has taken place at the Faculty of Science has meant that the question of gender in relation to Academia in general and Science in particular has come to the attention of a number of people, who were otherwise not keyed into this set of issues. It was relevant that the task leader of FESTA was also a member of the university gender and equality board throughout the project-period. The raised awareness at the individual level has been facilitated by the FESTA project through the interviews concerning career paths, the dialogues in departments and units on the basis of gender data, the study circles for PhD-supervisors, the career training sessions, and the many times gender has been on the agenda of meetings in the faculty management, academic council, liaison committee, departments and units, strategic seminars, both as a point in its own right and as a perspective on for instance recruitment and employment procedures, funding, resource allocation, and career guidance. This has been evident in the spontaneously initiated reactions, often after a period of time, from people who have participated in these activities, to members of the FESTA team.

At the University of Southern Denmark the following initiatives are being implemented, partly based on experiences at the Faculty of Science, and partly as a direct consequence of the pioneering work done in FESTA:

- Formalization of equality committees at each of the five faculties at the university;
- Development of gender data: an equality index for the university (to be implemented);
- Gender and awareness of unconscious biases incorporated into activities hosted and run by the University's HR-development and training unit. These include the University's lecturer training program, PhD-supervisor training, career counselling and coaching, and meeting facilitation training;
- Wider use of FESTA-generated tools and formats such as PhD supervisor tool, study groups for PhD-supervisors, career decision making tool and training modules, and training for meeting facilitators.

The FESTA team has seen an increase in spontaneous requests for supervision and knowledge exchange in areas such as inclusive meeting processes; gender sensitive PhD-supervision and career development from research leaders, supervisors, administrators and heads of department. Moreover, at a more grassroots oriented level there has been an increase in for-women-only networking activities entirely initiated and facilitated locally by research environments and departments.

At both university and national level, the FESTA actions and outcomes have been highlighted as recommendations for good practice, and were included in the Taskforce recommendations for more women in research in 2015, established by the minister for research and education. It is highly relevant, in this case and in others as we shall see, that FESTA had run in a national context that had increased the focus on gender as a parameter in EU- and Danish national research funding. The national and the local stress on gender awareness reinforce each other and constitute a good predictor of a long term impact.

FESTA at RWTH Aachen University: Here the FESTA team is positioned at the rectorate staff unit Integration Team – Human Resources, Gender and Diversity Management. The FESTA work is, therefore, part of the university's general equality and diversity strategic work and thus mainly directed at the policy-making level of the rectorate and faculty managements. Both the formalization of gender equality measures and a culture of gender were factors that helped the project to reach the intended outcomes and are indicators of a longer term impact.

FESTA offered the opportunity to look into various fields of action. They included different target groups – starting from PhD student to professorial level – as well as different topics like controlling of gender data or resistance towards gendered change. In relation to the Work Packages where this university was involved:

3.2 Raising organizational awareness: the task was about establishing new indicators, and to integrate them into the already existing monitoring systems. Some indicators could be included, for example the analysis of contract duration and gender or the inclusion of the category gender in research funding forms;

5.1 Monitoring excellence in hiring processes: in this task there was an initial difficulty due to the ambiguity of the term “excellence”, and the first steps took a little longer. After this first phase, the work package went smoothly, interviewing members in the selection committees, and organizing workshops. All interventions could be carried out. The gender awareness workshops were held and informally have been evaluated positively. A handbook was produced for future participants in selection processes;

5.2 Excellence and gender in the daily working environment: for this task some synergies between 5.2 and 5.1 were used. Nevertheless the team found somewhat difficult to motivate people to take part in workshops, since the interest was low. The material was saved but has not been used as widely as the handbook from WP 5.1;

6.2 PhD supervision: a supervisor study circle was organized in cooperation with the training department. The participants’ feedback was divided into two opinions. One group liked the idea of having a workshop and started thinking about gender equality more intensely. The other group thought that the measures need to be more focused. In the future, with the PhD tool online, a more focused implementation with the Center of Doctoral Studies is envisaged.

FESTA at the University of Limerick (UL): Here there has been an active tradition of work in academic gender equality, followed by organization equality initiatives since 2000. FESTA has had a positive impact on gender equality in UL, evident in terms of women’s representation both in the university and in the faculty of Science and Engineering. Women’s under-representation in STEM and in the wider university was measured at the start of the FESTA project and again at the end in 2016. In these faculties there has been an improvement in women’s representation at all levels. The expected outcomes were reached and a long term impact may be expected.

Without going here into details for each Work Package, at the University of Limerick research was conducted on raising awareness, formal decision making, PhD supervision, perceptions of excellence, resistance to gender equality measures and generic tasks related to management and dissemination. Overall, 71 people (34 F; 37 M) participated in focus groups and interviews. From these materials it may be inferred how gender works in this organization. At the individual level, different gendered selves are evident in attitudes and behaviors; women have a lower sense of entitlement and lower expectations of support than men. At the interactional level, men and women face different cultural expectations even when they fill identical structural positions. It was found that men supported each other and frequently excluded women from professional networks. At the organizational level, maternity was presented as a legitimate reason for women's under-representation in STEM. In hiring and promotion processes, gender was evident in the subjective evaluations that were made about candidates. On hiring and promotion boards, the chair is particularly influential as is the gender composition of the board. Gender was evident in PhD supervision and in the gender dynamic within research teams. At the institutional level, research funders frequently do not accommodate maternity, and Principal Investigators are reluctant to hire young female researchers because of this. Not only does gender operate at multiple levels, it operates in every process and practice. Gendered power was evident in the structurally weak position of women in decision making fora; and in both formal and informal decision making there was evidence of micro-politics and homosociability.

FESTA has raised significant awareness of gender within UL, and 70 per cent of the recommendations made by FESTA have been accepted. These recommendations are at structural, cultural and individual levels. FESTA, together with other EU funded gender projects lobbied to bring the Athena SWAN gender equality programme to Ireland. UL was successful in achieving an overall university award and two department awards in 2015. UL developed a Gender Equality Action plan, which contains 25 FESTA recommendations and will be implemented by March 2018. The remaining FESTA recommendations are included in the HEA Review.

FESTA has been successful in creating gendered organization change because the training provided for leaders created the motivation to improve gender equality and develop a gender equality action plan. EU funding for the project gave it status among the research community, while dedicated people and resources ensured all tasks were achieved and implemented. FESTA raised awareness at all levels and widespread dissemination of progress within the faculty and university maintained momentum.

UL has achieved the long term impacts anticipated in the action plan. There is evident career improvement (3.1), some of which is due to women's greater success in promotion competitions due to their increased awareness of gender (3.1) and perceptions of excellence (5.1), as well as management's greater awareness of gender (5.1 and 3.2) in decision making processes, both formal (4.1) and informal (4.2). There are increased numbers of women at senior levels (5.1 and 5.2) in the faculty of Science and Engineering and in the university overall.

FESTA at Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK): Here it should be specified that, differently from the other partners who are universities, FBK is a research institute and, in principle, its management may be more flexible and more stable in time. In this case we can see how FBK management was quite active and being willing to relate to FESTA as an opportunity. It is difficult to foresee the long term sustainability of the project in the future, but we can see how the institution was highly involved in implementing the activities and documented the structural changes thus achieved. The intended outcomes were reached and a long term impact may be expected.

In relation to the single task we find:

3.2 -Awareness raising at institution level: The task was to provide gender statistics and raise awareness of possible gender imbalances. When not available, relevant data were collected by means of an online form administered to all FBK staff and the HR department adopted recruitment software (a web based platform) that allowed the collection. Moreover, FBK adopted and integrated an HR management database software to store, organize and query HR-related data and, under the coordination of the General Secretariat, implemented an FBK data warehouse (DWH) containing most of the FBK relevant data. All the indicators prior identified by FESTA were included in it. Collection and use of appropriate statistics will be a permanent activity in FBK. Data in the DWH are now kept constantly updated and they are ready to be used. Some selected gender data on the FBK human resources are published on the institutional webpage under the heading 'transparency'. Gender related statistics on the FBK human resources were presented and discussed in several meetings with the staff (researchers and management). Such dialogues serve to (i) improve the data collection, analysis and interpretation; (ii) rise discussions on specific gender imbalances and gender patterns emerging from the statistics; (iii) propose and define specific actions of a gender plan within the organization aimed at supporting gender equality. Related gender actions were

classified into four themes (cultural change; leadership; recruitment and career development) and implemented, with the support and endorsement of the management. Finally the gender actions plans were evaluated by the progress made with reference to each proposed actions/policies in the given time frame.

4 Gendering Decision-making and Communication Processes: Following the main issues emerged in interviews with decision-makers, a set of recommendations was identified in order to increase the transparency and the inclusivity of the formal decision-making and communication processes. FBK included eight of the thirteen recommendations in their gender action plan. In order to support the processes and increase the gender awareness, training for decisions-makers on ‘gender and leadership’ was organized and evaluated by the participants themselves. Also, training for researchers (women and men) was organized in order to empower them (especially women) to participate more fully in decision-making; specifically, courses on negotiation and public speaking were held in FBK. As for the informal decision-making processes, four research units were analyzed and all the staff was interviewed. In a second stage, FBK implemented the policies, previously identified within each unit, aimed to increase the inclusivity and the transparency of the informal decision-making and communication processes. The implementation of the overall 23 actions/policies was finally evaluated according to two different approaches, namely “process-based” and “result-based”. The implementation of the identified actions/policies created the basis for an enduring transformation of the organizational culture that should favor a more active participation of women (as well as other people at risk of exclusion) in all the decision-making and communication processes.

5.1 Conceptions of excellence in hiring processes: A map of the criteria underlying the perceptions of excellence in hiring processes was derived through the analysis of situated cases in FBK, and a toolkit for training members of the hiring committees was produced. The FBK recruitment guidelines have been revised and they are now given to the commissioners to read before the recruitment process with the aim of increasing the awareness of the recruiters about gender-sensitive aspects in recruitment processes. A new policy has been implemented that guaranties the presence of both males and females in the recruitment committees.

6.2 Daily interactions in PhD supervision: a new PhD program in FBK was recently introduced and this was an opportunity to create a gender-sensitive culture from the very beginning. In 2016, the FBK International PhD Program has been launched. It consolidates and extends the previous one, and has the support of a dedicated management staff including

a director and a Steering Committee. The Director invited the FESTA team to present the FESTA toolkit as well as the FBK- advisor self-evaluation tool. This material has been considered very valuable and it is currently used for defining guidelines for the PhD selection. Moreover, FBK-advisor self-evaluation tool has been adopted as part of specific “continuous-education” actions designed by the FBK HR service for the FBK PhD advisors.

FESTA at Istanbul Technical University (ITU): Here it is not the numeric representation of women that is at stake, but rather their under-representation at decision-making levels. This operational context is more difficult to change, since the possibilities for action are embedded in gendered power mechanisms. This partner was responsible for WP 7 (resistance stories) which will be illustrated in the next section.

Almost all the expected outcomes have been achieved and an intended long term impact is expected. In particular ITU was involved in the following tasks:

3.1 Awareness Raising: ITU examined academics’ career paths by carrying out interviews with both male and female academics and investigated the positive and negative factors affecting their career progression. On this basis ITU developed training courses. Supporting women academics’ participation in management positions emerged as a critical discussion point after observing the statistics. Although ITU already has a fairly balanced female representation at all academic levels these proportions have not been reflected at decision making levels. FESTA helped to discuss and focus specifically on the unequal representation of women at decision making levels in ITU.

4 Improvement of Decision Making and Communication: Using the interview findings informal decision-making and communication processes were mapped in several departments. Several feedback sessions carried out after the interviews enabled us to pinpoint the problem areas in those processes and make suggestions to realize the necessary changes. Applicability of these FESTA suggestions was later investigated by an online survey and more than half of the respondents find the departmental meetings very important for better communication.

5.1 Monitoring excellence in hiring processes: The intended outcomes for this task were only partially reached. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, however, it was not possible to select three hiring processes at the institution as indicated in the action plan. Therefore, the interviews were carried out without specifying a particular hiring process. Academics preferred to share their thoughts on academic excellence in general without pinpointing specific hiring or promotion process. The evaluation of this activity was carried out using an

online questionnaire and all participants acknowledged that the workshop sessions helped to examine gender in academia more carefully.

7 Dealing with resistance: ITU was the leader of the activities related to work package 7 that will be illustrated in the next section, since all the partners participated in it and contributed with reflections that help to evaluate the project in its entirety.

FESTA at South West University (SWU): Here FESTA has a very strong cultural and social impact, not only on the University but also in a larger network of organizations and institutions. Gender equality work has been institutionalized by establishing a Gender Equality Centre, building a wide network of supporters and enrolling the first ever PhD student in the field of Gender Studies. FESTA was strongly supported by colleagues, heads of departments, deans and vice-deans, PhD students from two faculties – Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Technical Faculty; heads of various university committees; members of the Academic Council. The interest was extremely high because "gender equality" as a topic of discussion was an innovation at the university, as well as in the country. The main reason for such an impact was probably the fact that gender equality had never been a point of concern or discussion within the academic community – institutionally or nationally.

At SWU all the intended outcomes were reached and the potential for a long term impact is high. In detail the activities in which SWU was involved are:

3.1 Awareness raising: A thorough analysis and relevant indicators of gender equality in the selected institutions; broader awareness and higher concern about gender issues of individual female scientists; examples of successful pathways and career strategies; set of supporting measures.

4. Decision making processes: Improved decision making processes and practices; extended and stronger participation of female researchers in management of units and institutions, etc.

5.1 Conception of excellence: Definitions of clear and fair standards for the assessment of excellence at departmental and institutional levels; suggestions for changes in the selection and promotion rules and procedures for research staff, particularly regarding the female scientists.

5.2 Excellence in the daily working environment: More favorable departmental and institutional culture, particularly in terms of supporting and evaluating the scientific work of female researchers, etc.

6.1 Daily interactions in meetings: More active and productive contribution in elaborating collective decisions and resolutions.

6.2 Daily interactions in PhD supervision: Instructional materials and discussion meetings for supervisors about gender sensitive issues and constructive approaches to them (web based toolkit).

These activities have made gender equality part of the institutional discourse binding it together with other essential issues of the academic discussions like research excellence, international visibility, promotion and decision making, etc. All these raised considerable awareness about gender among the academic staff at STEM faculties.

From this brief illustration of how the different partners coped with FESTA demands in different cultural and operational contexts we can have an idea of how complex the task of managing the consortium was. The challenges posed by diversity, coordination of activities, resources and people were numerous. Only an expert coordinator, supported by an experienced staff, was able to meet the objectives and to maintain the partners' esteem from the beginning to the end. Nevertheless, management is a collective task where leaders and followers are interdependent and coordination is a joint accomplishment. During the process evaluation of the project all the partners reported a high degree of satisfaction in relation to the way that the project was held, information was circulated, problems were addressed and resolved. These opinions were mirrored by the coordinator's similar experience about her relations with the partners. Moreover, the atmosphere at the meetings was always relaxed but constructive and the several difficulties posed by fluency in English and by cross-cultural communication were a challenge that was collectively handled. This evaluative comment is only anticipation on the following section where the Work Package related to management will be analytically considered.

III. External evaluation

An overview of the main Work packages' achievements paves the way for a more general reflection on the implementation of gender equality. In each support activity oriented work package, except the one on resistance, there were two different tasks. Out of these eight options, each partner put together a package of actions which were deemed relevant at their own institution. The number of actions between partners is varied. The action plan for each institution consisted of the composition of chosen tasks. Each task has been chosen by at least

three partners. In this way there was a guarantee that all our actions would be tried out in at least three European countries and that there would be cooperation and mutual learning between partners in every aspect of the work. In addition, each partner took part in the work of analyzing the resistance which they meet at their own institution, and so contributed to the analysis of resistance work package.

The project actions consisted of seven work packages:

WP 1: Management

WP 2: Communication and dissemination

WP 3: Awareness raising: 1) among female researchers and 2) at the institution

WP 4: Decision making processes: 1) formal and 2) informal

WP 5: Conceptions of excellence: 1) in hiring processes and 2) in the departmental culture

WP 6: Daily interactions: 1) in meetings and 2) in PhD supervision

WP 7: Resistance

All the partners took part in WP 1: Management and in WP 2: Communication and dissemination. While WP 1 should be considered as a topic for external evaluation, WP 2 has been excluded from the present section since the documentation about these activities has been presented in section 2.2. The only thing that may be object of evaluation would be the consistency of this WP in relation to the others WP, and it is quite easy to see not only the quantity but also the quality of the dissemination activities. The less satisfying means is the web site that is not as friendly as it could have been, especially for an outside audience.

Work Package 1: Management

Management is considered here as a collective accomplishment, without neglecting the important role that UU had in ongoing planning and coordinating activities along the whole life of the FESTA project. It should be stressed that all the partners expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the managerial style and especially for the constant support that they received in critical moments. Perceptions of an open and democratic style of coordination and feelings of satisfaction and working smoothly are important, but there is a structural reason behind such a subjective judgement. The time spent for coordination was almost the double of what was initially planned and the additional time was done without financial resources. The role of the people involved in the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), with their careful, constant presence and syntonetic advice, was pivotal for leading FESTA to success. The Scientific Advisory Group was acknowledged by all partners as an important source of

inspiration in that it provided valuable insights. A better budgeting for sustaining their commitment to the project is one of the lessons learnt during the project.

What can be learnt from this experience is that a better budgeting for the task of managing similar project is needed, since management is a key resource for an EU implementation project. The exchange of experiences, the sharing of knowledge on specific points, and the mutual support in joint work packages have been the resources to which each partner could draw during the project. The collaboration between partners has been defined as motivating, facilitating and inspiring.

There was an awareness of the learning process taking place across local differences in the advancement of gender equality and in the construction of collaboration. At the same time there was also an awareness of the difficulties in collaborating. The possibility of voicing difficult moments and tensions during the General Meetings was the first step in finding and negotiating collective solutions. All the partners acknowledged the good climate and the efficiency in leading the General Meetings.

A lesson that was learnt while managing the project was a way of reframing the initial idea of 'implementing an activity in equal way' towards a common aim of 'handling differences' in relation to different organizational and national contexts. This lesson is the outcome of the difficulties in negotiating societal and cultural differences in relation to finding a common meaning for some key concept (from 'gender' to formal/informal to other working concepts). More specific difficulties have been experienced, such as a lack of coordination in some work package, or unmet expectations regarding how to manage them.

A proposal - as a positive suggestion for enhancing collaboration – is to devote more resources (of time and money for running more project meetings) for experiencing the sedimentation of collaboration. More face to face communication between partners is wished for a better collective management of such a complex project.

It is important to underline the general satisfaction with the style of management of the project and the feeling of trust that has been constructed during the WP meetings every six months.

In the course of the Proactive Review it was proposed a proactive exercise of imagination in the case of being involved in another gender equality project. The aim of such an exercise was the possibility of envisioning possibilities of actions or their avoidance in a context free from practical constraints. When we confront the actions that would be reiterated with those that would be avoided we can gain a deeper understanding of how the partners evaluate the overall management of the project.

The actions worth of being reiterated in an imagined new project share strong similarities across all groups: from a simple technique as timely skype meetings to styles of management as shared leadership, collective responsibilities, and respect for differences. From these considerations we can infer the existence of a shared and positive evaluation of the methods of management and planning of the activities. What has been reported as lessons learnt from this experience is that i) a single partner should not lead too many tasks and ii) that a partner should not have the main responsibility of a work package for which s/he is not the formal leader and iii) that an activity should not be delegated to an external person but implemented in cooperation.

We find also a point of reflection on what to avoid and it concerns the deliverables. Even if the number of deliverables has been maintained at the minimum required, they are evaluated as too voluminous and the deliverables appear as a topic in need to be reconsidered. A tension is here at play, between the time devoted to write deliverables, their consonance with the type of project, and the time that is considered as necessary for introducing and implementing a structural change. This may be an unresolvable tension but maybe a topic to bring forward for a collective reconsideration. In other words, the latent question that appears here concerns the trade-off between the time (and energies) absorbed by the activities in each organizational context and the time devoted to the accomplishment of FESTA as a collective effort.

In this landscape of things that should not repeated twice there is also something specific that is judged as something to avoid. Under criticism is the decision of excluding from work package meetings those partners that are not involved in it. This choice represents a missing learning opportunity for an enlarged participation and it generates resistances. While this choice has produced unintended consequences and represents something that can be avoided, another concern less manageable is linked to power differences as an unintended consequence of language differential. This point is connected to the previous discussion on the structure of participation within the FESTA project as a whole. The partners have awareness of differentials of power and participation within a project the leadership of which is described as participative and democratic. Nevertheless, the problem is open and somehow ineludible. In reflecting on what could be done differently the partners have different opinions that presumably reflect their different experiences both within FESTA and in their own organization.

In the local context a common reflection is constructed around the issue of getting to know more and better the organizational context before initiating the gender equality activities and even before writing the project. In particular the reference is done to the departments with

which to collaborate and to strategic people within them, the involvement of the HR office, the creation of a network of actors for implementing change, and on the other hand doing differently some tasks that do not need an extensive participation. In the FESTA consortium what should be done differently varies from decision making not delegated to skype meetings, to a clear commitment to publications, to the allocation of responsibility for work package or to shorter deliverables and a common understanding of 'gender equality'. Moreover an interesting reflection concerns the opportunity to involve more stakeholders in the FESTA network, addressing the actors at policy level and other bodies working in the field of gender equality.

Work Package 2: Communication and dissemination

See section 2.2

Work Package 3: Awareness raising

The task assigned to **Work package 3.1** consisted in creating change at the level of the individual, in order to: 'enable women researchers to make effective decisions in regard to their career paths and by providing tools for evaluating alternatives in career related decisions' (FESTA, 2012, p.9). The University of Limerick was the leading partner and the University of Southern Denmark, South West University Bulgaria and Istanbul Technical University were the other partners.

This WP was concerned with the way gender affects the career trajectories of women and men. The numbers of men and women at early, mid, and senior levels in the four universities was established, and the sample was selected at the points where the numbers of women increased/reduced dramatically. The majority of participants were selected by random sampling. However, purposive sampling was necessary where there were few available respondents. Overall the sample includes 106 (57 male, 49 female) academics and researchers across the four universities. In order to understand the impact of gender on careers in STEM, core interview guides were developed which contained questions such as *Has gender affected your career progression in a positive or negative way? Have personal or domestic issues influenced your career decisions?* Interviews were recorded and transcribed and analyzed manually as qualitative data analysis software was not available in all four languages. Themes which emerged during the cross-national analysis of the interview transcripts included:

- The operation of gender at individual, interactional, organisational and institutional levels;
- Academic capitalist career practices;
- Influence of family on careers in STEM;
- Constructions of masculinities and femininities in STEM;
- Social supports differentially available by gender in STEM.

On the basis of this analysis a training programme consisting of nine modules was developed: Academic Networking & Visibility; Career Paths and Patterns; Career Planning Strategy; Publication Strategy; Women and Negotiation; Power and Politics – playing the game; Gender in Academia; Institutional & Individual Support; Work-life Balance.

The module ‘Academic Networking and Visibility’ was implemented and evaluated in all four partner universities, as these competences are career enhancing and are highly gendered. An evaluation of the training program revealed that awareness of the way gender operates in STEM, and acquiring knowledge and skills to further their careers, motivated researchers and academics to change their behavior to achieve career success. Overall 74 per cent of all participants committed to achieving short term goals and demonstrated increased visibility and expanded networks and many women reported an increase in their self-esteem and self-confidence.

In tandem with the training programme, it was developed the FESTA Strategic Career Manager (SCM), which is a software tool designed to facilitate women’s strategic career decision making.

All the objectives of WP 3.1 have been achieved.

The task assigned to **Work package 3.2** was to find the best ways of using organizational statistics to promote women’s careers. The aim was to create a cost effective model that compiles relevant organizational statistics and shows how statistics can serve as a starting point for actions in gender equality work on different institutional levels. The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) was the leader and the partners involved were the Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK), Uppsala University, and RWTH Aachen.

The main task of WP3.2 was divided into two main types of activities and phases. The first phase, 2012-2014, was mainly concerned with the identification of indicators that described the dimensions along which data are defined, the collection of related gender data (when they are not already available) and the preparation of gender statistics. The first phase produced the 3.2 Deliverable “Toward raising organizational awareness” that serves as practical inspiration on an everyday level for those who are grappling with how to collect and present

organizational statistics as an opening to changing the ways of doing and understanding gender in organizations. In the Deliverable, it is accounted for the theoretical and methodological choices and approaches used as well as providing a manual with the description of the tools developed and used for collecting and understanding data and for turning figures into awareness.

During the second phase, 2014-2016, gender statistics were used to stimulate and support discussions, reflections and debates throughout the participating institutions by providing evidence and facts on gender biases, transmitting knowledge and providing baselines. The statistics thus served as material for debates/dialogues that constituted the arena for data dissemination, exchange of perspectives, evaluation of on-going processes and for the planning of actions and/or policies concerning gender equality conditions in working environments. Debates and dialogues were the occasions for the creative involvement of stakeholders (both the management, from the top, and the researchers, from the bottom) in the process moving towards gender equality, thus promoting engagement with and awareness of the topic under discussion. Over and above the presentation of the statistical findings, the dialogues were in fact designed and conducted according to participatory and inclusive meeting practices, as defined by creativity, innovation and change management literature and practices – yet adapted to the specific context and situation of each meeting and its participants.

Since the gender equality context and plan is quite different in the different local institutions, also the implementation of this task was different at UU and RWTH in regard to SDU and FBK.

At RWTH and UU, the awareness raising task had a low impact on gender equality, even if it has resulted in the implementation of indicators in action plans to monitor gender equality. The raising of awareness task was only one of the activities involving gender equality that had been going on at the institutions in general. The WP3.2.-task, thus, has been one contribution to ongoing gender equality work at both institutions, but not an influential factor in and of itself. The idea of conducting dialogues on the basis of indicators and statistics was relevant as it could reveal gender patterns and initiate change efforts, but it also brought in a top-down approach to the gender equality work and thus could limit measures to comprise only such measures which allow for counting or for suiting predefined indicators. Indeed, enforcing integration of indicators in action plans to control and monitor gender equality work can be directly counterproductive and may raise more resistance than goodwill, especially if the control units for the personnel data systems fail to maintain and annually update the indicators.

At SDU the collection of data and the discussions concerning gender, also when it comes to other FESTA activities, have gradually led to a more widespread acceptance of gender issues. The FESTA statistical report is the first of its kind in a Danish University context and has served as an inspiration for the first annual gender equality status reports and action plans for all the departments at the Faculty of Science. The faculty has also finalized its first ever strategy on gender equality. This has been implemented in a context where it is not even mandatory to have gender equality strategies and action plans. This has later been adapted to the entire university, both in terms of the collation and monitoring of gender statistics and the drawing up of gender equality plans. At FBK the task has had an even greater impact in the sense that they, in addition to the proposals and the implementation of many gender actions/policies, also have managed to include the selected indicators into a database – which comprises a repository of integrated data from disparate sources, designed for data query processing.

Therefore, even if it was a difficult task and the partners had to cope with different gender equality cultures, we may say that the specific aims were achieved and the potentiality for continuing a gender plan has been grounded in the local context.

Work package 4: Decision making processes

The task assigned to **Work package 4.1** consisted in creating transparency and inclusivity in formal decision-making bodies and processes so as to advance gender equality. The University of Limerick was the leading partner and Fondazione Bruno Kessler and Istanbul Technical University were the other partners.

This action was conducted in the context of theories of gender and power, and the way power operates to exclude women from decision making. In academia, power holders are men: between 69-100 per cent of all mid-to high level positional power structures and positions in all three organizations were held by men.

A purposive sample of people who participate in committees or have decision making power outside the committee structure was used, focusing on decisions which allocate positions, resources and make appointments. Overall the sample included 25 positional power holders in the institutions (9 F; 16 M). Interviews were recorded and transcribed and analyzed manually as qualitative data analysis software was not available in all three languages. The data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Key findings which emerged during analysis of the interview transcripts included:

- How institutional control is maintained directly through the centralisation of power and indirectly through committee decision making, policies and procedures;
- The significant role and power of the Chair on committees;
- The structurally weak position of women and how gender bias silence women, who have limited opportunities to communicate upwards.

Training programmes for decision makers were developed and implemented to create awareness of the need for and the motivation to embrace change, and training programmes designed to empower women to participate more fully were developed and implemented. Recommendations to create structural change, cultural change and recommendations to empower women were presented to the three universities and a good number of them was accepted.

All the objectives of WP 4.1 have been achieved.

The task of **Work Package 4.2** consisted in creating transparency and inclusivity in informal decision-making bodies and processes so as to advance gender equality. The task leader was the Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK) and the other partners were South West University, Istanbul Technical University, and Uppsala University.

In relation to this sub-task a conceptual difficulty arose in planning the implementation actions, since the distinction between formal and informal decision-making is very difficult to operationalize. Rather than a clear cut distinction it would be easier to consider the relationship between the formal and the informal, as it was done in FBK, where both the formal and the informal processes of decision-making and communication were jointly analyzed. A set of recommendations was identified in order to increase the transparency and the inclusivity of decision-making and communication processes. FBK included eight of the thirteen recommendations in their action gender plan. Also, training for researchers (women and men) were organized in order to empower (women especially) to participate more fully in the decision-making process.

Similarly both at SWU, ITU and UU the implementation of WP 4.2 improved decision making processes and practices. As a result the participation of female researchers in management of units and institutions was extended, and the meeting culture of academic staff has been considerably influenced by the different seminars and trainings so that the climate during meetings and behavior of participants has become more gender sensitive.

At UU, a specific attention was devoted to informal decision-making and communication and it formed a basis for a more streamlined methodology to do similar work in other contexts.

Due to the short time span from policy setting to policy evaluation, it was not possible to properly measure the results of activities in terms of meeting the intended outcomes. The evaluation was limited to assessing the work done on trying to introduce actions and only a few of the around 20 actions were evaluated negatively and this is only because those actions were not implemented in full at the time of the measurement. The two departments function as best practice examples.

Overall, the objectives of WP 4.2 have been achieved and their intended long term impact is expected.

Work Package 5: Conceptions of excellence

The task of **Work Package 5.1** “Monitoring excellence in hiring processes“ was led by RWTH Aachen University with four partners participating: ITU, FBK, UL and SWU. WP 5.1 produced one report “Perceptions of Excellence in Hiring Processes Results of mapping of the present situation in Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Turkey”, delivered in May 2014, and a handbook “Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes – Recommendations for a Gender Sensitive Application of Excellence Criteria”, delivered in January 2015.

The task consisted of three main parts. In a first phase, workshops were held in each institution to train and sensitize people who are involved in appointment processes and/or who can influence regulations. In a second phase, the workshops were evaluated in each partners’ institution. During a third phase the results of the workshops and the findings of the first deliverable/report were integrated into a handbook.

In the first phase it turned out that the workshop formats for the members of hiring committee members were not feasible in all institutions. It was not possible to identify three future hiring committees and train the whole group, due to the absence of future hiring committees, the non-transparency of hiring processes or difficulties on reaching the target groups. As a consequence the workshop format had to be adapted and opened so that also future committee members and practitioners who plan to become a member in the future could participate.

During the evaluation, also the original idea of having focus group interviews with the committee members was adjusted and substituted by a questionnaire asking for a feedback on the workshop. The evaluation was positive across all partners. The participants were interested in the topic and stated that it had raised their gender awareness. Concrete actions were suggested at some partners’ organizations. In ITU the majority of respondents recognized that

the criteria for appointment and promotion are not always equally achievable for women and men. One participant stressed that since the criteria differed among departments the accessibility of them might also differ from one department to another. Some participants who were members of appointment committees were able to use the content of the workshop in practice. Others said that the workshop will be useful in future committees.

The partners decided to produce a more elaborated handbook containing more information on the different processes and different approaches on how to counteract the biases. Beneath a country comparison, it includes flow charts of the different appointment systems. Possible gender biases were marked with different colors, depicting criterial and procedural biases.

All the objectives of WP 5.1 have been achieved.

The task of **Work Package 5.2** was “Excellence and gender in the daily working environment” and Uppsala University was the task leader. Three partners participated: UU, RWTH and SWU.

The first deliverable (*Excellence and gender in the working environment. Results of mapping of the present situation in Germany, Bulgaria and Sweden*) was based on interviews in the different institutions. Researchers at all career stages (PhD student – professor) and both genders were interviewed. The main aim of the interviews was to find out what the interviewees meant with excellence, and how the requirements of excellence influenced their research and career. It was important to discuss the social construction of excellence and how the fact that some people or some units are defined as excellent, and others not excellent, influences the working environment. The aim of the task was to affect change by starting reflections on whether the adverse effects of the excellence ideals can be mitigated in the organizational context. Thus, the findings needed to be fed back to the organizational units where they emerged, and a problem had to be surmounted in relation to this task. In fact, questions of the implicit functions of excellence perceptions, their rationality, their potential for marginalizing different researchers etc, as well as possible measures to counteract these were difficult to discuss at UU and RWTH at a departmental and faculty level. There was therefore a change in the Description of Work where workshops were partly substituted by discussions with key decision makers. Only SWU was able to follow the original plan. SWU disseminated the findings also on a very high level: Minister of Education and Science, member of European Parliament, expert in women and science at the EU Commission etc. At SWU the evaluation interviews measured change in perceptions of the interviewees, and the interviews themselves also functioned as awareness raising.

The experience of WP 5.2 suggests a reflection on the impact of the excellence ideology on general working conditions as well as their impact on gender equality along two lines: 1) the interest in the issue among the institutional staff has been low at RWTH and UU, and at SWU the issue was very new and thus needs in itself some anchoring in the organizational context; 2) funders' perception of excellence is taken as a given, to which gender equality and workplace issues are secondary. Single institutions' or departments' reformulations of this ideology are not seen as feasible. The connection between overall research policies promoting "excellence" and daily working environment disadvantaging women is not easy to understand and even more difficult to work on.

On the basis of this consideration it can be said that the objectives of WP 5.2 have been achieved differently in different organizational contexts and this measure in plans for implementing gender equality should be thought differently in the future.

Work Package 6: Daily interactions

The task of **Work Package 6.1** was to improve daily interactions in meetings. The leader was The University of Southern Denmark (SDU) and the partners involved were SWU and UU.

The objectives of the task included exploring and developing ways of structuring and managing meetings based on collaboration, negotiation, room and respect for diversity and equal voice, as well as inclusive, transparent and participative processes that may challenge and compete with existing academic meeting cultures and norms. The ultimate objective has been to anchor more gender and diversity sensitive academic cultures and working environment in productive, efficient and creative meeting practices that afford equal voice and allow all participants a more equally distributed share of consideration and appreciation for their contribution to the benefit of everyone. However, because of the existing inequality in Academia women would by default initially benefit most.

A way to achieve these ambitious objectives was to target those who chair and facilitate meetings, with training, awareness raising and follow-up/feedback as well as to monitor the development of the meetings culture in general as a result of the training and follow-up. The activities of the project thus included three main types: a) facilitation training; b) Feedback/supervision/follow-up from facilitation training; c) Evaluation of the meeting cultures and the effect of the project activities within the partner organizations

The outcome of this task was a facilitated working climate and a higher participation and productive contribution in elaborating collective decisions and solutions. It was important to crystallize a method for achieving such an improvement in the working environment and the

development of a training program for facilitators in meeting practices sensitive to gender is available and it can be integrated in the leadership programme for managers.

However, as the project ran only for a period of approximately two years, its goals were very ambitious. The three partner institutions participating in the project had very different contextual situations and distinct starting points. This meant that even if all three partners participated in all three types of activity, these played out in very different ways, defined by the particulars of the wider context of the organization, the status of gender awareness and implemented gender policies, as well as the specific organizational position of the FESTA-team. The largest difference was evident in the evaluation activity, where the original plan was to conduct the same baseline e-survey in all three partner organizations, followed by two subsequent e-surveys to follow the development of the meeting cultures as a result of the facilitation training as well as to be able to make cross-cultural comparisons.

However, during the development of the e-survey immediately following the launch of the project, and with the responses to the first baseline survey, it soon became apparent that the e-survey was a useful and appropriate way of measuring the existing meetings culture only in the case of SWU. Furthermore, as a result of an unintended and unproductive ambiguity of the survey itself as well as a very low response-rate, UU and SDU decided to do a more qualitative evaluation of the project activities by conducting mini-interviews as a more adequate follow-up of the impact of the facilitation training instead of sticking to the original plan.

The expected outcomes for the WP 6.1 were achieved and there is potentiality for the sustainability of this action and the cultural change that it may produce. Nevertheless, it should be born in mind that such changes are rather fragile and need constant support.

The task of **Work Package 6.2** was to improve daily interaction in PhD programmes. The leader of the task was SDU and, except ITU, all the other partners took part in its implementation.

The objective of the task was to create awareness of the way gender affects supervisory relationships and to minimize the negative effect of gendered interactional patterns. There is a growing body of international evidence which demonstrates that women within STEM have more negative experiences of PhD education and, consequently, are more likely to leave academia. This loss of talent represents a cost in terms of lost research and innovation and maintains the male dominated culture in STEM. The task aimed to enhance high quality in supervision by offering a Toolkit for gender sensitive PhD supervision which will create

gender awareness, enhance learning and support students to navigate the PhD journey in a supportive environment.

There are many aspects and stages in the PhD supervision process: the research task; enculturation to academia; development of critical thinking; independence and the supervisor/student relationship. In the Toolkit several of the aspects which arise during the PhD programme are addressed and recommendations for good practice are offered. Gender issues can arise at any or all of the stages of a PhD. Addressing any one kind of bias contributes to a culture which challenges all kinds of bias and creates an inclusive learning culture. Many of the recommendations in the Toolkit will benefit both women and men because they describe effective and high quality supervision practices.

The methodology for carrying out the task was very similar among the partners, independently from the facility/difficulty of getting access to the faculty and the students. The development of the toolkit for gender sensitive PhD supervision resulted in a busy and intense time for the WP6.2 partners. During the task partners conducted study circles for PhD-supervisors and focus group interviews with PhD students. Conducting study circles had to conform to local and organizational challenges and possibilities. This meant that across the six participating partners a number of very different versions of the study circles were adopted – ranging from continuous sessions to single events. The material for the toolkit is based on a documentary review as well as empirical data which emerged in study circles, focus groups, interviews and workshops with 63 PhD supervisors (29 M, 34 F) and 54 PhD students (18 M, 36 F) in the six participating partners.

As the scope and complexity of the task and the desired outcome developed, the project underwent a couple of reorganizations. Firstly, in order to drive the task forward and to be efficient the task was divided into four different subgroups and subtasks before the summer of 2015 – each with their own sub-task: structure, tools, layout and evaluation. Secondly, after the PMG meeting in Istanbul, September 2015, the tasks for each subgroup were redefined due to the decision of moving forward with the toolkit as a web-based resource.

WP6.2 delivered a web based tool for gender sensitive PhD supervision for the EU at the end of May 2016. EIGE has asked for permission to link to our web tool on their homepage; EIGE received the link at the end June of 2016 and the toolkit was presented at the EIGE conference, Paris, in August 2016.

The satisfaction with these achievements is quite high among all the partners and the feeling of having an impact over the future generation of academics is in itself rewarding. Therefore the task has achieved its goal and the long term impact is expected.

Work Package 7: Resistance

The task of **Work Package 7** was dealing with resistance. The activities related to work package 7 of which ITU was the leader started with designing logbooks. All the partners took part in the work of recording the resistance incidents experienced during the WP actions and activities of the project, and later, in analyzing the resistance which they met at their own institution, all the partners contributed to a general reflection of resistance in gender equality projects. ITU led the analysis of the logbooks and the sessions organized during the PMG meetings to discuss logbook feedback.

A handbook addressing resistance in gender projects in academia was prepared on the basis of the resistance stories recorded and analysed by the FESTA partners. The handbook defined the indicators and causes as well as forms and symptoms of resistance. It also analyzed 31 of the 51 recorded resistance stories and developed a list of recommendations to deal with resistance.

Although not included among the work package tasks and deliverables for the purposes of dissemination ITU volunteered to prepare an online toolkit version of the handbook. This suggestion was accepted with much enthusiasm by the other partners and the interactive toolkit was decided to be made available on the website alongside the handbook.

IV. Implementing gender equality in European Academy

The following section proposes a reflection on what the FESTA project can tell us about the possibilities for gender equality projects to influence organizational practices in the diverse European academic landscapes.

When we take into consideration how the seven partners of FESTA describe the meaning of the project in their organization, we can understand better how FESTA acquired different, situated meanings. The differences are nuanced, since gender equality may be considered the key word of the whole sense-making process, at the same time we can also consider how the meaning of ‘gender equality’ is different in an organizational environment where previous activities have been implemented and in another where the main focus is on rising awareness of gender in/equality. In fact in one organizational context the very issue of the quantitative

presence of women in STEM is considered as an issue for the project, while in another organizational context it is not the presence of women that is under question, but their weight in decision making processes. A similar consideration regards the relationship between gender equality and working environment. Is gender equality related to equal presence of men and women, equal opportunities of career development and advancement and equal power relation? And a good working environment is it characterized by a gender culture that values diversity? The aim of implementing changes in the working environment may be dependent on the local meaning of 'gender equality' and we know that gender culture may vary from one organization to another within the same country and from one country to another. Therefore what is possible to implement and what is not, what is prone to be retained by an organizational unit or within a single working practice and what is more fragile, has to be evaluated in relation to the initial local culture and structure. In other words each institution where FESTA was implemented is unique but at the same time the common experience in the project and the mutual learning prompt reflections that may be transferred to other situations across Europe. The lessons that may be shared with similar projects concern the importance of stakeholders' involvement from the beginning of the project, the factors enabling the implementation process, the obstacles to overcome, and the process of learning to collaborate. They are briefly illustrated.

When we consider the actual target of the local projects, we see a greater homogeneity among the partners in the way of depicting the stakeholders of the project in the formal structure of the academic institution and the direct audience of the project either in young female researchers or in both sexes researchers at an early stage of an academic career. The way of addressing the stakeholders and planning the procedures for establishing a collaborative relationship with them is context sensitive. Nevertheless stakeholders' involvement along the whole life of FESTA and their assumption of responsibility for sustaining the initiatives after the conclusion of the project is one of the main predictor of success for structural changes.

In the self-evaluation of FESTA partners we find a description of both the strategies used to approach the local stakeholders and the techniques used (such as workshops, meetings, interviews, etc.). It is interesting to reflect on the consideration of how the way of proceeding towards the aims of the project follows an iterative cycle: from initial activities focused on communication to the internal parties in the university, to coordination with the other partners, to testing the strategies and institutionalizing them into the organizational structure, to new ideas again. The temporal dimension in the life of the project is reflected in the following consideration: the progression from an initial phase in which each work package was

perceived as a separate field of activity, to the moment in which they become connected and integrated into a whole, and to the moment in which the contribution of each to the whole project can be evaluated. When the stakeholders gain a common vision of what FESTA means, they become the owner of it. In this process there are obstacles to overcome but also enablers. The obstacles to overcome in implementing a gender equality project aiming at a structural change are numerous and they absorb time and energies in ways not envisioned by the planning of the project. Therefore it is important to understand the nature and the sources of difficulties and how they may appear (or disappear) in the course of a project for coping with them without losing motivation and commitment. The process of adaptation of initial expectations in the project group to the reality test of the situation is an inevitable social dynamics that should be managed since it produces disappointment. This is only the beginning of a process of progressive involvement and enrolment of organizational actors in the implementation of a plan.

The first obstacle to consider – and that has been strongly experienced by all the partners – is the changing participation of the actors in the field. In management terms the problem is how to keep together the people with the activities, how the two can ‘stick’ together in the face of changing circumstances, other events requiring their attention, or disaggregating forces coming in. Participation in fact is a process, participants may go away, new participants may come in, the commitment in participating varies in time and among actors and the unstable structure of participation affects what can or cannot be done and its outcomes. In other terms participation needs to be maintained and repaired, not only established at the beginning of the project.

In considering the obstacles experienced by the partners we can reflect on how maintaining participation was a practical problem and how participation is fragile since possible changes due to a renewal of academic positions may impact on the environment in a favorable or unfavorable way. Similar events - related to changes in the organization and not connected directly to the project - may affect the general situation in which the project is carried out. Moreover, at different times enabling and hindering factors may become interchangeable.

Another obstacle in the life of the project and in relation to its structure of participation may be connected to the hierarchical levels of the participants. For example a HR manager may be or become an obstacle because not committed to introducing changes or not involved in the proposed changes. In similar situations a key organizational actor becomes a resistance not easy to overcome. At the same time it is not surprising that other actors at a high level of responsibility may show a greater support for the project than people who are supposed to be

the target group of it. The project in fact may be more demanding for the latter than for the former group of actors. The possible explanations for the difficulty of involving the lay participants have been seen in cultural factors like a male dominated environment, or a 'research environment' meaning a culture of gender neutrality, or a passive attitude in which the participants do not feel themselves as involved in a changing project. A low motivation and involvement is reported both from male and female researchers. In general gender equality is hindered not only by different conceptions of how gender 'works' but also by a diffuse feeling that it is a threat to male privileges or that it concerns only women.

Another important source of obstacles or difficulties of implementation is not internal to the organizational situation but is located in the cooperation and coordination of all the partners in the FESTA project. The internal differences are sometimes seen as obstacles and the allocation of responsibilities creates tensions and difficulties in the overall management of the project. Moreover, a simple difference like language proficiency, when English is the official language, creates barriers in full participation and difficulties in communication especially during the general meetings.

In concluding this reflection on the difficulties and obstacles that may rise during the implementation, we can say that in the developmental phase of any project the most critical point is to keep alive the motivation and the alignment between all the people and the material things that come together.

Regarding the enabling conditions we can see two opposite situations. On one hand we have organizations that have a history of gender policies and have developed a structure for dealing with gender issues (equal opportunity committee, gender equality office, and similar positions or units). To rely on the institutionalization of an organizational commitment to gender equality may enable the implementation of one more project that follows the steps of previous activities. The new project may, in principle, have privileged interlocutors and enjoy their experience, but at the same time further steps in the direction of gender equity may prove hard to envision or may find the belief that equality has been already realized. Similar situations have been described in terms of 'gender fatigue' or in terms of a de-politicization of gender equality, meaning that it has become an administrative issue and a topic for bureaucracy.

The opposite situation can be found in those institutions where the novelty of gender policies makes the topic of gender awareness 'interesting'. The context where for activating the first steps towards gender equality may be favorable when it is open to novelty and when tensions and latent conflicts have not (yet) been experienced.

In general we can see how in the experience of the seven partners, the support of the higher University's (or research institute) representatives was important. From the partners' experience we can learn how crucial it is for implementing a gender equality project to start with the commitment of the higher leaders in the University, and also how their commitment should be maintained and possibly improved all along the development of the project. The main enablers of the project have been: the Vice-Chancellor (or similar position named differently in different countries and organizations), the Human Resources Managers, and the heads of the departments concerned by the project. The local groups acknowledged also the support of the chief coordinator of FESTA and therefore we can see how the texture of supportive relationships is formed by a connection of external and internal actors, among which also the participants in the promoted activities have a very important role.

If people in key positions may exert influence and contribute to create an enabling environment, also other symbolic resources play an important role. In fact, the acquisition of an EU project brings a resource of legitimation to the University. If such a project is linked to similar initiatives at the national and international levels, it increases the visibility and the legitimation of the organization and therefore contributes to increasing the favor around the initiative and to the creation of a gender equality culture. In this framework a powerful enabler is represented by the National Government and its Ministries.

In conclusion we can acknowledge the enabling role of a network of potential allies, both people and symbolic resources, and therefore we can say that at the beginning of a project like FESTA, or another similar initiative, it is worth to invest in communication and in initiatives devoted to create, enlarge and maintain an enabling network of stakeholders who may contrast the risk of isolation. In fact, the topic of gender equality should stay high in the structure of interests of the organization and its open and hidden communication should be visible and tangible. In other words, a change project aims to institutionalize permanent changes in the internal structures and routines of an organization and to create external conditions forming the context for making the changes culturally viable.

V. Conclusions

This section provides conclusions in terms of learning for designing future implementation processes, for policy development/improvements but also for conducting evaluations of similar projects.

FESTA project had a positive impact for what could be evaluated on a short term basis:

- Increasing awareness of gender bias in research appraisal;

- Increasing awareness of the problems caused by resistance, in implementing gender equality measures;
- Improvement of communication channels;
- Progressive decrease of informal meetings in favor of more institutional formal decision-making processes;
- Reduced impact of gender bias in the daily interaction of researchers at the local institutions.

The long term expected impacts concern the stabilization of structural changes in the number of female PhD students and the procedures for handling gender sensitive career-advancement. There is evidence that structural change projects like FESTA can make and are making a difference. They can trigger changes through engaging in awareness raising and agenda setting activities but also through implementing changes at the level of policies. The experiences of implementation processes are a learning opportunity for those involved in promoting gender equality in academia and one requirement to become a learning opportunity is that these projects are object of a process-oriented evaluation that foster collective reflexivity as in the case of FESTA.

The significance of FESTA's impact should be evaluated in relation to the local history of gender equality, since in some cases the process of its institutionalization goes back in time (as in UU, FBK, RWTH or UL), while in other context (as at SWU or SDU) gender equality work has been institutionalized by establishing a Gender Equality Centre, building a wide network of supporters and enrolling the first ever PhD student in the field of Gender Studies. At SDU the FESTA-project has served as a catalyst at the Faculty of Science, leading to the formalization of an Equality Committee in it and at each of the five faculties of the university. Two specific worries are common to several partners and are worth of a general reflection. They are: i) a specific concern towards what can be called 'passive resistance' and how to overcome it in order to gain support for the implementation of gender equality activities, and ii) the sustainability of the local changes after the end of FESTA. The two concerns are connected since the first expresses the goal of assuring a distributed commitment around the project as a condition for implementing structural changes and the second expresses the anxiety about the durability of that commitment once the external resources (of persons and money) will not be there any longer.

In relation to these concerns the experience of FESTA has already elaborated some practical knowledge that can be summarized as a need that a local project becomes knitted with other

resources of varying durability. For example it is helpful to create strategic alliances with the presence of a Center for Gender Initiatives (or similar names denoting an institutional reality) or the alliance with other similar projects (for example Athena) attracting legitimation resources. An enlarged network of stakeholders has the potential of securing visibility and legitimation. This latter point is worth of a closer scrutiny in light of the partners' experiences. In fact, structural change projects may benefit from the use of participatory approaches to develop concrete measures through a close stakeholder involvement. This participatory approach could be envisioned already in the proposal writing phase and continued throughout the project runtime and beyond. Moreover it would be wise to formalize the participation of stakeholders through a steering or advisory group with clearly defined responsibilities, competencies, and a dedicated budget.

The local project may be placed in an organizational unit in staff position or at a high hierarchical level or within a functional unit, usually within the Human Resources Department. All positioning have pros and cons that should be considered at the beginning of the project. For example a positioning within the HR department could enhance the durability of the organizational commitment since the project may be integrated within other personnel policies; nevertheless it risks also to become subordinated to a system of priorities inherent in the department strategy. And also the positioning as a special project under the responsibility of the highest organizational unit may convey an enhanced visibility, legitimacy, and freedom but risks of becoming lost in an organizational change that changes the strategy and the governance of the institution. As we can see there is not a best way but situated choices in need of a local awareness of local power structures.

A similar consideration about the need to take into account the logic of action of the local strategy of the organization in which a structural change project has to be introduced and implemented, regards also the general philosophy behind a European project. Often a strategy for stressing the commonalities of initiatives across a European project is justified by an underlining assumption that building a European space is achieved by growing similarities among countries, their cultures, structures, and policies. Another reason is that commonalities of activities within a project make the project keener for comparative purposes and easier to manage in a centralized way. Nevertheless, the consequences (intended and unintended) may be to sustain a process of standardization instead of a strategy that value differences between countries, cultural differences, and contextual sensitive initiatives. A critical appraisal of the consequences of managing a European project can be taken forwards, since efficacy and efficiency cannot be the only criteria for evaluation.

Many questions are open and an evaluation of the trajectory of the local and the general project has been here outlined. Nevertheless, there is a single concern that envelops the whole experience and it is the awareness of the fragility of this kind of organizational initiatives. At the end of the project what is floating in the air - over the difficulties and over the satisfactions - is a sense of fragility. It should be mentioned that the general context of contemporary academia is shaped by neo-liberal philosophies in which the discourse of meritocracy is competing with the discourse of gender equality. The two discourses are kept decoupled and the usual way of making them co-existing is to downplay gender equity to the rank of an administrative (or personal) issue, de-politicizing its impact.

Appendix I: The methodology used for the evaluation of the project

The logic of a participative external evaluation

FESTA should be considered a structural change project and to evaluate a project oriented to the implementation of gender equality faces the challenge of not knowing in a short time frame its long lasting effects. Therefore the external evaluator and the Project Management Group opted for an evaluation methodology that was process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented and was supportive of organizational learning. The description of the methodology follows.

Methodological approach

The original aim of the evaluation was to assess the institutional progress and structural changes initiated by the FESTA project and to follow them engaging the partners in an active role during the evaluation process. Therefore all the partners have been involved in a Participative Evaluation Project, after a discussion (and a negotiation) about the methodology and its phases.

Evaluation may be done in different ways and for different purposes, nevertheless it is important to monitor the ex-ante and the ex-post moments. Besides evaluation in order to monitor the attainment of objectives and the correctness of actions, evaluation may become a significant moment for self-reflection and for organizational learning. Participative Evaluation is the answer to a demand of collective reflexivity, since: i) it is centered on the needs of the users; ii) it is characterized by methodological flexibility and creativeness; iii) it follows the logic of process consultancy.

The aims of the Participative Evaluation Project are:

- to offer a formative context for all the partners throughout the project's duration,
- to explore continuing forms of improvement based on partners needs and their sharing of experiences,
- to accompanying the partners and supporting them in their own self-evaluation;
- to formulate the knowledge thus acquired in a way that is transferable.

The FESTA partners had the opportunity to discuss the logic of participative evaluation and the process of its implementation until the end of the project.

The first step consisted of a moment of reflection on the characteristics of the operating environment of each partner and the positioning of the FESTA project in it in structural and cultural terms. Moreover an ex-ante evaluation of the organizational differences among

partners has been complemented by an elicitation of the participants' expectations concerning the project.

The second step was called Proactive Review and consisted of an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation of the FESTA project in the second part of its duration.

The two steps of the Participative Evaluation are briefly illustrated but it is necessary to anticipate a more general comment of the overall evaluation process. In fact, FESTA is an implementation project, but structural and cultural changes are difficult to assess in the short term life of a project, even if the question of the sustainability of the project should be present in the mind of the partners and the evaluator. Nevertheless, the description of the implementation process, its circumstances but also its short term achievements in a thorough and detailed form, allows generating learning effects and knowledge spill overs for all the stakeholders of FESTA and similar projects. The concluding part of the present report is devoted to the aim of proposing a reflection on the lessons learnt during the implementation project.

Data collection for the first step of the Participative Evaluation

The aim of the first step was to analyze the expectations of the participants to FESTA at the time when they were first involved in it and two years after its beginning. The first step was conducted using an individual questionnaire that was proposed in October 2014, and the results were presented in a written report that was discussed in March 2015. The questionnaire was anonymous and participation was voluntary. There were 24 respondents, and practically all those involved in FESTA at the time answered within a week. The answers were elaborated by coding them according to a qualitative methodology for the qualitative analysis of data (grounded theory).

The outcome of this phase is represented by the possibility to become aware of how initial expectations changed and became more realistic as the implementation proceeded. The challenges posed by the process, the way that FESTA project was managed, the way that the collaboration between partners evolved the difficulties in coping with differences in the operating environment of the partners and other connected topics became objects for open discussion. The report was an opportunity to give voice to the challenges of establishing coordination and collaboration and to reinforce the initial commitment to devote time and resources to the collective management of the project. It should be noted that FESTA allocated a conspicuous amount of resources for the coordination of the project and, in so doing, was supported by the continuous presence and dialogue with the SAG members who devoted their

time and energies in a generous way. The first step of the Participative Evaluation represented the occasion for reflecting collectively on the experience of the FESTA project after two years from its beginning and draws some insights on how the partners were learning to manage the project. The elaboration of the different expectations in each partner group and the effort collectively done for the building of a project group has the effect of being aware of the much diversity between countries. A main challenge in this context was that good functioning equality structures existed which were working strategically on different gender issues, have established networks, have gathered expertise and were well known experts in the field of implementing gender equality measures, while for other partners actions for gender equality were to be introduced almost for the first time. This step was the basis for the next step in the evaluation process since the impacts of each action in each country has to be considered in relation to the initial expectations and operating conditions.

Data collection for the second step: The Proactive Review

The second step in the evaluation took place over a year (from April 2015 to March 2016) and it was devoted to the support of the partners' ongoing self-evaluation. The aim of second step was the move from individual learning to collective learning, having in mind a reflection on what each partner has achieved in terms of organizational learning in their country and what they could do to ameliorate their actions before the end of the project.

Proactive Review is a methodology developed in order to support the process of organizational learning and knowledge sharing both within a single organization and within an inter-organizational network as well. The aim of a Proactive Review is to support the group's reflections on the project that they have carried out (or are carrying out) and to transfer the knowledge they generated to the appropriate organizational level. Thus individual and group learning may become institutionalized as organizational learning, and therefore the focus of a Proactive Review is on the organization in which the project is under way and on those activities that have been implemented.

The Proactive Review has been structured in two moments, whose timing has been chosen by each group according to the development of their tasks in the overall project:

Each group has conducted an internal reflection review guided by five evaluative questions, whose answers have been sent to the evaluator together with a proposed calendar for a follow up in skype meetings;

During the skype meeting (one or more depending on the group needs) further questions lead the reflection on the local group experience of the FESTA project and its management. Therefore the second step in the participative evaluation was partly a guided process of group discussion on the implementation of FESTA in each institution and partly was an interactive process with the evaluator on their achievements and the organizational learning prompted by FESTA and institutionalized in changed operating routines. To schedule a process-oriented evaluation of the whole project in 2015 (more or less one year before the end of the project) had the object of inviting a non-bureaucratic moment of reflection on what has been done in the past and what can or should be done or changed in the near future. It was a moment for evaluating the time tables and the well-established plan of activities in the light of the gap between plans ex-ante and situated actions taking place in the course of the activities. The attention was therefore directed to each organization and FESTA was put in its context. In fact one of the first challenges that each partner has to face is how to translate an EU project in the language and the needs of a local context. It is a process of collective sense-making in which communication is the most important means. Moreover it cannot be considered as a task completed once forever, since the local meaning of the project is an ongoing achievement in which several actors contribute and whose participation in the life of the project may be more or less stable.