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ERASMUS + KA220-HED - Cooperation partnerships in higher education

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Inclusion and diversity plan for the project “Women STEM UP” (Issues to consider under the development of the prototype- training programme).

The “Women STEM UP” project aims at eliminating the factors and circumstances such as gender stereotypes and prejudices that impede women to successfully complete their STEM studies and develop academic or business careers. This goal is aligned with the Inclusion and Diversity horizontal priority because the project supports female STEM students who already face obstacles because of their gender but also goes beyond that.

The project incorporates intersectional inclusiveness by including diversity characteristics such as ethnicity and sexual orientation to ensure that diversity and inclusion are key elements of the programme and activities.

In particular, the training resources and material that will incorporate practical examples will equip STEM educators and staff with skills and tools to adopt gender neutral language and promote gender equality within the higher education ecosystems. In that way they will empower female higher education students to eliminate their own stereotypes that impede their success and continuous engagement in their field of studies and later career.

The project will offer female undergraduate student's tools, resources and an open community and quality ensured platform to empower them and to involve them in the decision-making process of both the project activities and the advancement from studies to a career in STEM. The tools and the platform will include gender sensitive education and training practices specifically customized for STEM education.



The project's participants agree that one of the most important issues to achieve the goals of the project is to develop material and examples on how to counteract and promote equal rights and opportunities, regardless of sex, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation or age.

To do that gender and intersectionality issues are embedded in all steps and modules through:

- a) Development of gender-conscious examples
- b) Discussing perception of gender and the importance of using an inclusive pedagogy approach
- c) Offer teaching and educators web-based resources and other material to support their daily teaching
- d) Increase level of knowledge of the potential benefits of including gender and intersectionality in daily teaching and activities. This will be done through examples, roles models from different sectors, including industry and academia, list of networks and a mentorship programme
- e) Adopting the E-STEAM approach, by including entrepreneurship and creativity skills (E-SteAm; E standing for Entrepreneurship and A standing for Arts)
- f) Developing examples in which minorities are affected by gender bias technological solutions
- g) Offer a training programme open for all individuals with interest in increasing knowledge
- h) Develop information and training material about the potential positive impacts and career development in the STEM areas
- i) Establishing and develop of network through the mentorship programme
- j) Offer lecturers the opportunity to review and develop courses and teaching material based on the training programme developed in the project.

Inclusiveness and intersectionality are also issues to consider in the interaction between project participants. We recognized that all participants have different backgrounds and that everybody has different aspects to their identity that make them unique. We see these differences as a resource, and we strive to develop an environment in which individuals are able to share their skills and knowledge to find solutions.

1. Vision

Women STEM UP is committed to creating a future where diversity, inclusion, and gender equity are not just goals but lived realities in STEM education and careers. We believe that empowering underrepresented groups — particularly women — in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics leads to richer innovation, stronger societies, and more sustainable development.

2. Goals

- Promote gender equity in STEM higher education and the labour market.
- Support intersectional inclusion, considering factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability, and LGBTQIA+ identity.
- Create safe, supportive environments where all individuals can thrive academically, professionally, and personally.
- Empower role models and mentors from diverse backgrounds to inspire and guide participants.

3. Core Actions

A. Recruitment and Representation

- Actively seek diverse participants, mentors, trainers, and speakers.
- Set specific targets for inclusion of underrepresented groups.
- Use inclusive language and visuals in all project materials and communication.

B. Inclusive Training and Mentoring

- Ensure that all training programs and mentoring activities are accessible (both physically and digitally).
- Offer specific workshops on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and cultural competence.

- Provide flexible participation options (e.g., remote access, childcare support where possible).

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Collect anonymous demographic data (on a voluntary basis) to monitor diversity among participants and mentors.
- Conduct regular surveys to assess participants' feelings of belonging, safety, and inclusion.
- Adjust strategies based on feedback and evaluation results.

D. Outreach and Awareness

- Share success stories from diverse women in STEM through newsletters, social media, and public events.
- Partner with organizations that promote minority groups in STEM.
- Celebrate international diversity days (e.g., International Women's Day, Pride Month, World Refugee Day) through campaigns and events.

4. Partnership and Collaboration

Women STEM UP will actively collaborate with:

- Universities and research centers committed to diversity.
- NGOs and advocacy groups supporting women, minorities, and people with disabilities in STEM.
- Companies promoting inclusive recruitment and workplace practices.

5. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

We recognize that inclusion is a continuous journey. Women STEM UP will:

- Review this Inclusion and Diversity Plan annually.
- Engage external experts for audits or workshops where needed.

- Remain transparent about successes, challenges, and areas for growth.