



EQUAL4EUROPE

GENDER EQUALITY PLANS

Toolkit for setting-up mentoring programs

WP6

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Toolkit aims to provide guidelines and information about how to design and implement gender-sensitive mentoring programs, or to enhance already existing ones. It has been developed in the framework of the EQUAL4EUROPE Horizon 2020 project, which focuses on developing and implementing tailored gender equality plans in six AHMSSBL (Art, Humanities, Medicine, Social Science, Business and Law) European higher education institutions -located in Spain, France, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Netherlands- in order to realize sustainable cultural and institutional change, closing the gender pay gap, advancing gender balance in decision-making, and ending gender-based violence. In this context, mentoring acquires a strategic role, as an instrument to support young female academics at the beginning of their career, to increase wellbeing at work and to raise awareness about gender equality.

Building on the expertise in this context - know-how already developed by other EU-funded projects, and on a literature-review focused on models and approaches for gender sensitive mentoring - this Toolkit provides guidance to develop self-tailored mentoring programs, addressing them from three different perspectives: (i) the relationship mentor-mentee; (ii) mentoring as an agent for gender equality and organizational change, and (iii) the setting-up of a mentoring program intended as a progressive process.

In the relationship mentor-mentee, the mentor is expected to provide technical, strategic and sympathetic guidance (Sections 2.1-2.3). This entails the capability to realize general mentoring tasks, like playing a role-model function, stimulating self-reflection and helping the mentees to find motivation to deal with career-related challenges, as well as a more specific assistance linked with the academic context. This includes support to strengthen academic performance of mentees, helping them to structure career strategies, achieve related goals, and to join national/international professional networks.

The second dimension -mentoring as an agent for gender equality and organizational change- operates both at individual and at institutional level (Section 2.4). In the first context, providing ad hoc solutions to help people of the less represented gender -that currently, in academic context, are frequently women- to address the most relevant obstacles on their career path. And looking at the impact of mentoring on the whole organization, adopting an approach promoting mentors' and mentees' behaviours aimed at actively addressing and removing gender-biased norms and practices present in the institution, involving decision-making bodies and the whole community.

The third perspective refers to the process of setting-up a mentoring program, presented as a progressive and continuous effort achieving a series of realizable goals. Therefore, Section 3 of the Toolkit provides a step-by-step guide, structured around 5 stages: (i) Design a mentoring program; (ii) Promotion and attract mentors and mentees (iii) Matching and running the program; (iv) Training mentors and mentees; (v) Monitoring and evaluation.

Finally, further inspiration on how to design and structure mentoring programs is provided by benchmarks included in Section 4, consisting of examples of mentoring programs developed in the framework of EU-funded projects, and/or whose results have been published or discussed in scientific literature. They have been selected according to criteria of excellence, relevance for gender equality and variety of approaches.



1. INTRODUCTION

Mentoring has been employed, in the last decades, in diverse organizational contexts and for a variety of purposes, going from socializing new staff to enhancing diversity within management ranks (de Vries, 2011a).

Broadly, mentoring consists of an accompanying practice where a more experienced person -the mentor- provides advice to one with less experience -the mentee (Meschitti et al., 2016). A more specific definition is provided by the EIGE's Thesaurus, that identifies mentoring as a «*sheltered relationship that allows learning and experimentation to take place, and personal potential and new skills to flourish, through a process in which one person, the mentor, supports the career and development of another, the mentee, outside the normal superior-subordinate relationship*» (EIGE, 2022). As pointed out by the GARCIA Horizon 2020 project, this sheltered relationship should be inspired to a mentor's holistic approach in guiding the development of the less experienced mentee (Adam et al., 2016).

In academia, mentoring has been considered, for long time, as a process that occurs spontaneously, without institutional intermediation (Weimer, 1990). Among other causes (de Janasz and Sullivan, 2004), one is the assumption that dissertation/PhD supervisors are those who should prepare apprentice/doctoral students for next steps of academic career (Betz, 1997), also establishing longer mentoring relationships with most promising ones. In everyday business this not always happens, and not all dissertation/PhD supervisors also act as mentors (Lunsford, 2013). Anyway, this determined that mentoring, when present, was normally informal. That is, a form of unstructured mentoring where the matching between mentor and mentee occurs on a voluntary basis, and the relationship is carried out outside an institutionalised framework.

The predominance of informal mentoring has also gender implications. A relevant one is linked with the “cloning phenomenon” (Johnson, 2007). It consists of the tendency of senior academics, acting as mentors, to privilege in a mentoring relationship those identified as “similar”, for instance from a social, gender or ethnic point of view. A trend reducing mentoring opportunities for women (Meschitti et al., 2016), given that most of senior academics are white men.

This situation, nonetheless, is presently changing. In particular, an increasing intervention of institutional developers in steering the mentoring process, together with the adoption of a “gender lens” in structuring these activities, has made mentoring an important driver for gender equality. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide, thus, a brief guide to set-up gender-sensitive and effective mentoring programs.

In this view, the toolkit is divided in three sections: (i) an analysis of different models and approaches that a mentoring program can assume; (ii) a description of the phases to set-up and implement a gender sensitive mentoring program; and, finally, a (iii) list of selected benchmarks that could work as a further inspiration to follow.



2. MODELS AND APPROCHES FOR GENDER SENSITIVE MENTORING

Introducing a mentoring program is a task that requires accurate fine-tuning. Developers should shape the program according to the desired impact on the mentees, the characteristics of available mentors and the expectations of the institution. This section provides an overview about solutions to customize gender sensitive mentoring programs, especially dealing with:

- Scope and nature of mentoring.
- Functions and tasks characterizing mentors in academia.
- Models for formal mentoring programs.
- How mentoring can work as an agent for gender equality and organizational change.

2.1. SCOPE AND NATURE OF MENTORING

Following the analysis conducted by the GARCIA project (Adam et al., 2016), mentoring is an accompanying practice characterised by a holistic approach in guiding the development of a less experienced person. So, mentoring goes beyond the scope of other common forms of accompanying practices like:

- **Coaching:** a short-term and target based accompanying practice, aimed to provide learning and focused on performance. While mentoring is a learning-to-be process, coaching is focused on education, and may be part of the exchange between mentor and mentee.
- **Tutoring:** transmission of job-related knowledge and know-how, and basically utilised for the integration of new workers.
- **Counselling:** an advising practice dealing with orientation and information, involving the social and psychological sides, and usually carried out on a short-term.
- **Sponsoring:** introducing a person into specific circles, like a scientific or a professional network.

Mentoring should be intended, thus, as a process that may include elements of coaching, tutoring, counselling and/or sponsoring, integrated in the dynamic and trust-based relationship established by mentors and mentees.

Besides that, a mentoring program can take on different forms. As to that, the main distinction is between informal and formal mentoring. Following recent studies (Lecoq et al., 2020):

- **Informal mentoring** is the most traditional form of mentoring, consisting of a spontaneous and voluntary relationship, without a specific program, administrative intervention or a fixed duration.
- For **formal mentoring** is intended a structured practice, where mentors follow a program establishing the frequency and the duration of meetings, and that offers to mentors and mentees the opportunity to participate together to activities aimed to facilitate their interaction.



Formal mentoring	Informal mentoring
Structured mentoring, usually framed in an institutional program.	Unstructured form of mentoring.
Matches mentor/mentee based on aspirations of mentees, and of expertise and knowledge of mentors.	Matches mentor/mentee based on similarity (for instance similar research interests, but also same gender and/or similar social background) and attraction, and on the initiative of one of the parties.
The mentoring relationship develops in a defined timeframe, that may include intermediate reviews.	The mentoring relationship is in general free to develop without specific deadlines.
Formal mentoring may include organizational objectives, and criteria to measure if goals are attained.	Independent and autonomous accompanying practice established on voluntary basis, so it does not include organizational objectives and related indicators.
A program manager oversees the whole program.	Not overseen by a program manager.
A formal mentoring program may be integrated with additional activities aimed at improving its effectiveness, like data collection to ensure good matching, periodical trainings and evaluation sessions.	Not assisted by side activities, like training for mentors and mentees. Even though the parties of an informal mentoring relationship may autonomously integrate such activities in their program.

Source: Lecoq et al., 2020.

Mentoring essentially relies on a bi-lateral -or mutual, in case of group mentoring (see *infra*, Section 2.3)-relationship between mentors and mentees. Normally, this relationship has a medium-term duration. For instance, for formal mentoring it that may go from 6-12 months until 15-18 months. Nonetheless, some of these relationships may last for the time needed for the mentee to obtain the next academic qualification/accreditation; other evolve, after the end of the program, as informal mentoring (see Lacunza et al., 2020, and Nöbauer and Genetti, 2008).

The articulated structure and the more far-reaching objectives of formal mentoring imply the support of different actors -like management, HR experts, trainers for mentors and mentees- and so, of an **organizational context**.

In this view, diverse organizational contexts may provide more or less favourable grounds for the development of a mentoring program. A **cooperative organizational context**, aimed at creating constructive relationships relying on cohesion and sharing, and orientated towards the mutual satisfaction of actors operating therein, is a favourable environment to set-up an effective formal mentoring program. Conversely, in a **competitive organizational context** -focused on promoting and rewarding just its most performative members- mutual trust and supportive dynamics at the basis of mentoring may be hampered. This does not exclude that effective mentoring programs can be developed in **hybrid contexts** where elements typical of the cooperative and of the competitive organizational context are present at the same time. Which is a situation quite common in academia (Adam et al., 2016).

Finally, studies conducted on the impact of formal and informal mentoring have not provided undisputable results on which is, in absolute terms, the most effective solution, also because the nature of informal mentoring makes its performances more difficult to measure. Both the forms of mentoring may originate productive relationships leading newcomers to brilliant outcomes (Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2007), while informal mentoring may result useful to provide support to specific individuals that find more difficult to get included in official and more formal processes. Nonetheless, for a wide-ranging effort to remove barriers to career progression of young women in



academia, the “casual” approach of informal mentoring seems less suitable. This is because informal mentoring usually concerns a limited part of eligible people and, also as a consequence of the already mentioned cloning phenomenon, risks to be more accessible for men than for women. **Conversely, formal mentoring offers more systematic opportunities for mentoring.** In general, it addresses all eligible people, or select them through a process that may be made gender sensitive.

Besides that, formal mentoring is generally carried out under the oversight of a **program manager**. Who can set objectives, that can be tailored in order to **address specific obstacles** to women's career progression. And that monitors intermediate and final results of the program, with the possibility to timely become aware if some gender-equality goals are going to be missed, making the needed adjustments. A formal mentoring program also allows to analyse mentees' needs and desiderata, to **match them with the more suited mentor**, to guide the development of the mentoring relationship and to support it with training and networking opportunities (Meschitti and Lawton Smith, 2017, p. 172-173).

In this view, although informal mentoring can, in any case, provide a positive impact, **formal mentoring appears as a more promising option** from a gender equality perspective. Following this assumption, this toolkit focuses on solutions, strategies and benchmarks to set-up and implement a **formal mentoring program**.

- **Five examples of gender-sensitive formal mentoring programs**, implemented in higher education institutions throughout Europe, and developed in the framework of EU-funded projects and/or presented in specialised literature, are described in Section 4 of this Toolkit.

2.2. FUNCTIONS AND TASKS CHARACTERIZING MENTORS IN ACADEMIA

Being a mentor is a complex and articulated activity, which includes diverse functions and tasks. Some of them characterize mentors in any field. Other are, instead, more specific for academia.

Regarding **general functions of a mentor**, they could be summarised (St-Jean, 2011) as:

- **Psychological function**, including tasks stimulating self-reflection of the mentee about her/his future, and helping her/him to find motivation to overcome obstacles encountered in the first stages of the career.
- **Career-related function**, which includes introducing the mentee in professional networks, providing information about achievements required for career progress, and conducting a critical analysis of mentee's work to improve her/his skills.
- **Role-model function**, that is how the mentor, with her/his examples in everyday academic business, can inspire the mentee, indicating how to behave in order to become a good professional.

Within these three functions, is possible to allocate general tasks of mentors:

Psychological function	Career-related function	Role-model function
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflecting, providing critical assistance to mentees in developing projects for future. ▪ Reassuring, helping mentees to go throughout difficult and stressful periods, for instance providing moral support in case of rejection of a mentee's application. ▪ Motivating mentees to address next challenges to progress in their career. ▪ Confiding, being a safe reference to mentees for openly sharing doubts, projects, and plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration, assisting mentees to integrate in the work context. ▪ Informational assistance, helping mentees to understand rules and criteria to progress in their profession, providing institutional know-how and indicating where to obtain information and even further assistance. ▪ Confrontation, positively criticizing mentee's work and outcomes, challenging the mentees and stimulating them to further develop key professional skills; as well as examining ideas together with mentees. ▪ Problem-solving, be a safe reference for mentees to explain career-related problems, and for finding support and advice to solve them. For instance, a mentor should be a reference to help mentees dealing with work-life balance issues, both with advice and, when possible, with a proactive intervention among academic institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be an example for mentees. Mentors should indicate to mentees, with everyday practice, 'how to behave' in reference to job-related issues, networking, attitude to work and to career. ▪ Inspire and guide mentees, carefully listening to them, resulting approachable and open to their ideas and opinions, and without being too prescriptive. ▪ Be a trustful ally for mentees. If a mentee shares doubts or opinions, confidentiality shall be kept. ▪ Be an agent for organizational change, according to mentees common instances. For instance, if most mentees cannot have experiences abroad for lack of funds, solicit the institution to cope with this issue.

Source : St-Jean, 2011 ; Adam et al., 2016 ; Meschitti at al., 2016.

Besides that, a mentor working with young academics, or with young and early-stage researchers, should provide **specific assistance** around three main areas (Adam et al., 2016):

- **Core academic tasks**, that is contributing to strengthen academic skills and performances of mentees.
- **Career perspectives**, helping the mentee clarifying her/his future perspectives, and structuring around her/him career strategies and choices.
- **Networking**, introducing the mentee in internal and external (national and/or international) network, guiding her/him also to play an autonomous and relevant role in that.

Specific tasks correspond to each of these areas that an academic mentor should address.

Core academic tasks	Career perspectives	Networking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guiding the mentee to manage daily activities and getting organized. ▪ Assisting a mentee in learning how to write and think academically. ▪ Offering to the mentee opportunities to collaborate in books, conferences and research projects. ▪ Stimulating the mentee to explore new fields and develop autonomous lines of research. ▪ Assisting the mentee in developing teaching methods and skills, providing suggestions and advice. ▪ Providing the mentees with opportunities to develop skills as an academic supervisor/reviewer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A mentor should play a role model, by showing to mentees choices and activities to become an expert scholar. ▪ Helping mentees in developing a vision about their future position in academia -according to mentees' ideas and expectation- as well as a related research and work plan. ▪ Providing advice to the mentee about career strategies, like discussing advantages and disadvantages to move to another specific institution. ▪ Advise mentees on how to build a strong academic CV, for instance suggesting them high rank journals where to publish, or offering opportunities to gain teaching experience. ▪ Showing to mentees trade-offs concerning career choices, like being or not involved in specific scientific projects (i.e. making the mentee reflect on possible positive outcomes as well as on workload issues). ▪ Guiding mentees to find positions to apply, circulating information about job-vacancies, and providing assistance in preparing applications. ▪ Assisting the mentee in applications for grants and fellowships, for instance giving feedback on drafts, and sharing experiences about how to address an interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guiding mentees in developing internal networks to her/his institution, allowing mentees becoming more involved in the organization and getting used to local practices. ▪ Providing help to mentees in building an external network, promoting mentee's introduction to new contacts, participation to conferences, and joint publications with other colleagues. ▪ Show to the mentee -acting as a role model- how to develop collaborations with other scholars/colleagues and how to gain or maintain visibility in external academic networks.

Source : Adam et al., 2016 ; Meschitti et al., 2016.

In this sense, being an academic mentor could be summarised as providing **technical, strategic and sympathetic guidance** to mentees, in order to facilitate their career progression. A mentor should provide advice, examples and



assistance on problem solving, and shape this activity on mentees' aspiration, without being prescriptive. This since the main goal of mentoring is making of mentees **independent and autonomous scholars**, strongly relying on their own skills, experiences and critical thinking.

Finally, from a **practical side**, a mentor should agree with mentees, from the beginning, how to manage time. That is, the frequency of meetings in presence, and how the mentees can reach out the mentors outside those occasions (for instance via e-mail, video chats, telephone, messages etc.). Finally, it should not be forgotten that **also a mentor may need help**. In this sense, sharing experience with other colleagues may help to better manage mentoring relationship. As well, if the mentor should become aware of significant difficulties that cannot solve autonomously, they should be reported timely to responsible of the mentoring program.

- Higher education institutions may also support mentors with specific training, that may deal either with the core functions described in this section, or with integrative knowledge and skills. An example of this second kind of training for mentors is included in the GENOVATE@UNINA mentoring program, presented in Section 4 of this Toolkit.

2.3. MODELS FOR FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring in academia is usually carried out in a one-to-one relationship where a more expert scholar takes a guiding role for a younger researcher. This and other existing models for mentoring, with diverse design, purposes, functions and risks (Adam et al., 2016; Meschitti et al., 2016) are addressed in this section, with the aim of providing an essential overview.

Face-to-face mentoring	
Design	Classic one-to-one mentor-mentee relationship.
Target groups	PhD students, early-stage researchers, young academics.
Purposes and functions	It favours the establishing of a long-term and strong relationship between mentor and mentee. It allows a mentor to better know, and so address, the mentee's issues.
Risks	If mentor and mentee are not well matched, an exclusively face-to-face relationship may hinder the results of the whole mentoring program. Addressing all the needs (administrative, scientific, strategic) of a mentee is a significant task, and may discourage expert scholars to act as mentors.
Tips and examples	The strategic relevance of the matching between mentees and mentors, marks it as a stage to handle with care. Two different examples on how to manage the matching stage are described in Section 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Steering matching from the exterior (<i>Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes</i>). ▪ Allowing mentees to choose their mentor (The Baltic Gender Mentoring Scheme).

Group mentoring	
Design	A small number of mentors (one or two) hold mentoring meetings with a group of mentees.
Target groups	PhD students, early-stage researchers.
Purposes and functions	<p>It makes available a (valid) mentor for a larger sample of mentees, integrating a top-down dimension with a networking one.</p> <p>Mentees can establish relationships with their peers, learning from others, sharing information and avoiding isolation.</p> <p>The contact with more mentees makes mentors more sensible to recurrent issues, like those relating to gender equality.</p> <p>Recent studies indicated group mentoring suited to an increasingly changing, competitive and diverse world as academia is becoming, since it allows mentees to benefit of the experience of diverse mentors.</p>
Risks	<p>This model does not encourage the establishing of solid and long-term mentor-mentee relationships.</p> <p>Group activities may discourage less extroverted people to join as mentees.</p>

Cross mentoring	
Design	Model aimed to cross mentors and mentees within different units of the same institution, or even between different institutions.
Target groups	Early-stage researchers, young academics.
Purposes and functions	<p>It helps mentees to enlarge their network, to become accustomed to work in an inter-disciplinary context and to have a confrontation with mentors that is free from hierarchical conditioning.</p> <p>External cross-mentoring may help smaller institutions to enlarge the mentoring community, and to compensate shortage of mentors.</p> <p>Institutions with a network of alumni (former students, PhD students or young researchers) now working on other academic or research organizations, may consider involving them to structure a cross-mentoring program.</p>
Risks	<p>The matching process should be conducted carefully, avoiding matching mentors and mentees operating in too different fields, that may hinder the effectiveness of mentoring.</p> <p>Mentors of other units or institutions may be not specialised in the field of studies of the mentee, so this model may be not appropriate for very early-stage researchers.</p>
Tips and examples	<p>Cross mentoring may also include different kinds of mentors, dealing with different aspects of mentees' professional development.</p> <p>An example of structured cross-mentoring, aimed at matching mentees both with senior researchers of partner institutions and with international sponsors, is the FELISE mentoring program (see <i>infra</i>, Section 4).</p>



All these models of mentoring can be carried out (preferably) in person, or online (**e-mentoring**). Furthermore, other existing models can work as side activities in a structured mentoring program. One of them is **peer mentoring**, a model where mentors and mentees have the same level of experience, that allows young academics to support each other and to enlarge their professional network. In this group there is also **upward/reverse mentoring**, that is a model of mentoring where mentors are young academics, and mentees are more experienced scholars. It may be especially helpful to promote **organizational change**, since its aims to sensitize more expert scholars on issues experienced by early-stage academics, which may include the leaky pipeline and the glass ceiling issues (de Vries, J. 2011a).

- Further details on other models for mentoring programs are available in the toolkit [Gender-sensitive Mentoring Programme in Academia: A Design Process](#), developed by the GARCIA project.
- The University of Trento recently developed a platform for e-mentoring that could inspire higher education institutions interested in adopting this model. A more detailed description of this e-mentoring program is available in Section 4 of this Toolkit.

Finally, note that these models can be combined in **hybrid models**, for instance integrating face-to-face mentoring with **group activities (workshops)** involving external mentors, and/or with **networking opportunities**, allowing mentees to brake isolation and enlarge their professional network, as well as mentors to exchange experiences and learn from peers.

- Many formal mentoring programs adopt a hybrid model, in particular aimed to provide mentees with further networking opportunities. Some examples, like those of the Baltic Gender Mentoring Scheme and of the FELISE mentoring program, are described with more details below, in Section 4.

2.4. MENTORING AS AN AGENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The setting-up of a mentoring program can contribute, by itself, to increase gender equality in a higher education institution. Nonetheless, specific approaches and solutions that can be adopted when mentoring early-stage researchers or young women academics, may further improve the impact of a mentoring program in contrasting unbalances between women and men, at individual and at institutional level.

In this view, studies developed from 2010s (de Vries 2011a; de Vries and van der Brink, 2016) point out that a gender-sensitive mentoring should adopt a **bifocal approach**. That is, focusing both on the (i) **individual and short-term objective of successful professional development of women** (and, in a broader sense, of all underrepresented people in academia), and on the (ii) **organizational and long-term effort** aimed to create the conditions for a deeper structural change, **tackling gender-biased dynamics and practices historically rooted in higher education institutions**.



2.4.1. Individual side

As to the **individual side** of mentoring, the main areas to address through a gender-sensitive program should be assessed by looking to each specific organization and relationship. Nonetheless, international literature (McKeen and Bujuki, 2007, p. 190-191; and Tharenou, 2005) suggests some main areas to deal with, that are:

- **Career progression**, aimed to provide support and guidance to develop/enlarge a professional network, acquire better knowledge of institutional mechanisms and to develop a career plan.
- **Psychosocial issues**, contrasting isolation and lack of assistance, with a mentor that should act as a point of reference.
- **Preventing critical issues** that may hinder the gender-sensitive impact of mentoring, like the cloning phenomenon.
- Ensuring **confidentiality**, as the basis of a solid mentoring relationship.

These key aspects for gender-sensitive mentoring are addressed more in detail in the following paragraphs.

a) Career progression

In the domain of **career progression**, a gender sensitive mentoring should deal with advice and support for promotion, retention and research performance of women.

In this sense, a mentor is expected to customize mentoring for women, in particular relating to:

Enlarging professional networks of women	<p>Advising and supporting the mentee in the enlargement of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internal professional network of the higher education institution to which the mentee belongs, providing possible allies at institutional level; and ▪ External professional network, to counterbalance a possible lack of local institutional support (Adam et al., 2016, p. 19-20).
Career-related social and institutional mechanisms	<p>Through guidance clarifying what are the requirements, the preparatory stages and the proceeding to successfully apply for the next academic accreditation, for a specific permanent position, or for a grant.</p> <p>This task can be supported also by institutional activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training seminars on appointments procedures used by research institutions. ▪ Career talks involving successful women from outside the institution. ▪ More general professional development workshops on how the institution works and how to achieve success (Cacace, 2009, p. 81-82).
Developing medium/long-term career plans	<p>Assisting women mentees in setting stages and achievements to reach, step by step, in order to ascend the academic hierarchy.</p> <p>In this domain, one-to-one mentoring may be supported by a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handbook providing guidelines for mentors and mentees. ▪ Workshops providing mentees with practical knowledge, for instance on writing and publishing papers in refereed academic journals (Cacace, 2009, p. 82-83).



b) Psychosocial context

Relating to the **psychosocial context**, a gender-sensitive mentoring should look, mostly, to counterbalance isolation and lack of help and assistance that often characterizes the academic work environment. This condition is more likely to appear after the PhD, and for people that are underrepresented in academia, like women who are not (yet) stabilized researchers. Studies conducted in a former Horizon 2020 project suggested that this form of isolation is more frequent in social sciences and humanities departments, rather than in STEM ones (Adam et al., 2016, p. 19-20).

In this view, a mentor should not limit itself to provide knowledge, but it should act as a point of reference, allowing mentees to share doubts, concerns and uncertainties, and guiding them through these issues.

A further form of assistance is providing mentees with additional opportunities of networking, mostly with other early-stage researcher or young academics, in order to promote **relations and cooperation with peers**. This form of **relational mentoring** is positively assessed -with some experts that marked it as the highest-quality mentoring state (Ragins and Verbos, 2007)- since it goes beyond the psychosocial and career development functions to include relational processes such as empathetic teaching and mutual learning (McKeen C. and Bujuki M., 2007, p. 191). In this sense, it can foster mentees' personal growth, help them to set clear objectives, and allow them to profit of the widespread knowledge that, when shared in a group of peers, may provide important keys to solve issues related to professional development (Meschitti and Lawton Smith, 2017, p. 181).

Promoting relational gender-sensitive mentoring	
Mentor perspective	<p>A mentor might support women mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Putting them in contact with other peers; or ▪ Introducing mentees in already constituted group of peers, for instance, a group of ex-mentees that are in a career stage similar to the one of the actual mentees.
Institutional perspective	<p>One-to-one mentoring could be integrated by solutions to allow mentees to establish additional supportive relationships, like creating a list of young and/or experienced researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Available for sharing knowledge sessions. ▪ Or who could participate with mentees in network meetings, workshops and discussions on career-relevant topics (Cacace, 2009, pp. 83-84).
Risks	<p>Mentoring programs carried out mostly or exclusively through group of peers should be carefully monitored.</p> <p>This, in particular, to prevent unpredictable and negative group dynamics that may develop in such kind of initiatives (Meschitti and Lawton Smith, 2017, p. 180).</p>
Tips and examples	<p>The program 'Mutual Mentoring for Early-Career and Underrepresented Faculty' (Yun et al., 2016), adopted by the University of Massachusetts Amherst, allowed to establish different forms of relational mentoring.</p> <p>It consists of grants awarded to groups of mentees -or of mentors and mentees- interested to establish mentoring programs customized on their professional preferences, that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departmental projects aimed to establish peer and near peer mentoring networks; and ▪ Projects of mutual mentoring between two young faculty at the same stage of the career.



c) Preventing critical issues

A gender-sensitive mentoring program should be structure to contrast or prevent some **critical issues** associated with the most common forms of mentoring, that can penalize women.

In this context, one of the main problem consists of the already mentioned **cloning phenomenon**.

Cloning phenomenon: what is and how to prevent it?	
Description	The cloning phenomenon is the tendency of people in a position of power to favour the professional development of whom they can identify with -from a social, gender or ethnic point- marginalizing the others. In an academic context, the outcome is that those who are predominant in the higher faculty ranks -in general, white men- often privilege in mentoring those similar to them.
Negative impact	In academia, the cloning phenomenon normally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reduces mentoring opportunities for women; and ▪ makes it more difficult for women to access structured academic networks that are paramount in career progression and where, in general, white men senior academic are predominant.
How to prevent this issue	To tackle this issue, a possible solution is to use a formal mentoring program to match (at least part of) mentors and mentees of different gender. This could provide women with more opportunities to access relevant connections and strategic relationships which men senior faculty acting as mentors can provide. Such a strategy may lead to positive results: a study emphasizes that mentees involved in cross-gender mentoring relationships resulted more productive than the others (Ugrin et al., 2008).

Although **cross-gender mentoring** can be an effective solution to prevent or contrast the cloning phenomenon, it is as well an option to handle with care. For a profitable mentoring, mentor and mentees indeed should also develop a **personal relationship**, in which the mentee feels comfortable to share doubts, concerns and expectations relating to professional life in academia. And such a relationship usually is easier to establish with people of the same gender, or of the same ethnicity (Meschitti and Lawton Smith, 2017, p. 172). For instance, women mentee reported to find more difficult to address possible impacts on their career progression of work-life balance and of family support-related issues when they have as a mentor a man, (Adam et al., 2016, p. 19; see also Gibson, 2006).

In this sense, thus, if cross-gender mentoring could be integrated in a formal mentoring program, it is advisable to implement **specific follow-up measures**, monitoring the development of the relationship, providing mentees and mentors with suggestions to keep the relationship back on track, and making it easier for the mentee to change mentor in case the first relationship should not work adequately (RSM, 2020, p. 7).

Another issue that must be addressed is that mentors are often more inclined, when dealing with women, to try to make them adapt to the dominant masculine environment, rather than making an effort to produce an organizational change towards a less gender-biased context (Adam et al., p. 18). In this view, encouraging mentors to adopt a transformative approach (see below) could be helpful.



d) Ensuring confidentiality

In the context of critical issues that must be addressed in a mentoring program, and with the aim of providing best practices, another aspect is **confidentiality**. As already mentioned, a mentoring relationship implies mentees to express concerns and need for support. In this sense, it is important that the mentee can trust that this information will be treated confidentially.

Indeed, lack of confidentiality is not so unusual, and literature warns against the risk of a formal mentoring program becoming a sort of 'spying system' of mentees (Meschitti and Lawton Smith, 2017, p. 184, see also Gibson, 2006). This can produce a dramatic losing of trust, which may result in a failure not just of the specific mentoring dyad, but also of the whole mentoring program. In this sense, thus, it is appropriate to adopt adequate measures to prevent this risk.

A solution can be to include a confidentiality clause in the learning agreement between mentor and mentee (RSM, 2020, p. 6-7). Another option, although more complex from the structural point of view, is to adopt cross-faculty or even cross-institutional mentoring. In this case, if mentoring dyads are established between a mentee of a department and a mentor from another one, the mentee will feel more comfortable, without risks of being penalized for criticizing work processes in the work environment (Leenders et al., 2020, pp. 385-386). Furthermore, the risks of breach of confidentiality are reduced, since the linkages of the mentor with colleagues most related to the mentees are weaker. These linkages, and the related risks, can be even more reduced if mentor and mentee belong to two different higher education institutions.

2.4.2. Organizational side

A further feature of a mentoring program is that it can work as a factor of **organizational change** towards gender equality.

Specialised literature identified three possible approaches for mentors, with different degrees of impact on organizational change (de Vries, 2011b):

- **Instrumental approach**, where mentors just transfer to mentees the knowledge to navigate and thrive within existing organisational parameters, thus meeting organisational needs, without disrupting the gendered *status quo* and without further involvement in gender equality issues.
- **Developmental approach**, where mentors are engaged in a mutual learning relationship with mentees. Mentees' issues and needs are at the centre of the mentoring relationship, with the mentor that supports and guides the mentee, rather than "teaching" to her/him. Such a mentoring relationship entails a reduced power distance, engaging mentor and mentee in a mutual learning process. In this sense, a mentor can increase her/his awareness of gender equality issues, and include a gender sensitive perspective in personal everyday business (for instance, paying more attention to avoid gender bias, or giving more relevance to the integration of gender dimension in teaching and research).
- **Transformative approach**, where mentors become agents for change. In this view, mentors are not only a guide, but a gateway for mentees to raise gender equality issues at institutional level. On this basis, mentors



act to transfer these issues to decision-making, sustaining organizational change. As an example, proposing new policies based on their experience, if they are members of decision-making bodies. Or otherwise advocating for change with colleagues and management. In this sense, mentors can as well act as role models for mentees. In a way that also mentees, following the example of mentors, may decide to assume, in their own field, a pro-active behaviour. For instance, contributing to sensitize colleagues, or taking an active role in academic organisations advocating for gender equality.

	Instrumental Approach	Developmental Approach	Transformative Approach
Orientation	Career promotion	Personal development	Institutional change
Main Function	Transfer of knowledge, to assist the mentee in the current and next roles	Establish a collaborative partnership working on a range of issues identified by the mentee	Conjugate mentees' development and institutional change
Institutional goal	Increase the number of women in higher academic ranks	Guide and support the mentee in her/his scientific and personal development	Sharpen awareness of mentors and mentees on gender issues, encouraging to challenge stereotypes.
Mentoring relationship	One-way and unequal power relationship. The mentor is not expected to learn from the mentee	The mentor acts as a guide. Mentor and mentee both engaged in the learning process and in its monitoring.	Mentor indicate to mentees how to challenge gender stereotypes and makes her/himself an agent of organizational change.
Organizational impact	No organizational impact except for individual situation of mentees	Mentors are agent for gender equality in their everyday business	Mentors advocate for institutional and organizational change

In this view, the impact of a mentoring program is highly influenced by the role played by **mentors** and on the relationship that they develop with mentees.

A mentor, for instance, can limit her/himself to provide mentees with the standard knowledge usually required to overcome obstacles for career progression (**instrumental approach**). Another option for mentors is to support mentees establishing collaborative partnership with them. And thus providing each mentee with suggestions and information aimed to address the specific obstacles that she/he encounters in her/his career development (**developmental approach**). A third way is to conjugate this support with a pro-active behaviour. Not only advising mentees, but also valorising the gender equality issues the mentor becomes aware during the mentoring program, and taking initiative to fix them at institutional level (**transformative approach**).

Practical examples	
Instrumental approach	<p>A mentor receives a mentee, mechanically addresses the questions posed by the latter, and in 15 minutes terminates the meeting, telling the mentee to raise any further issue the next time they will meet.</p> <p>→ Explanation: This approach is instrumental because the mentor is not interested on the experience of the mentee. The mentor provides just punctual answers to mentee's questions, transferring only essential knowledge.</p>
Developmental approach	<p>A man -faculty member and managing a research group- after having served as mentor to a woman with family responsibility, becomes more sensitive about family-care duties and of their job-related implications and, for example, stops scheduling meetings after 5 p.m. (Leenders et al., 2020, p. 388).</p> <p>→ Explanation: This is a case of developmental approach, since the mentors also 'learn' from the mentoring relationship, adjusting work practices accordingly.</p>
Transformative approach	<p>A mentee inform her mentor that she has been told by a supervisor that for an academic career is necessary to choose between motherhood and research activity. The mentor decides to adopt a pro-active behaviour and takes actions to prevent similar situations to occur again in the whole organization (for example, reports the situation, although keeping confidential the name of the people involved).</p> <p>→ Explanation: adopting a transformative approach means that a mentor also takes the initiative, at organizational level, to remove gender-biased dynamics or practices that she/he becomes aware because the mentoring activity.</p>

In this view, instrumental, developmental and transformative approach are not compartmentalized attitudes, completely different between each other. At the opposite, they are located on an ideal progressive line, the so-called **mentoring continuum**. That is, the **developmental approach** includes elements of the instrumental approach -the transfer of standard knowledge from mentors to mentees to address obstacles for career progression- and integrate that with the capability to focus on mentees' specific issues, and to work on them also making more gender sensitive the mentor's behaviour in everyday business. As well, the **transformative approach** includes the elements just mentioned and, in addition, see the mentor acting on the basis of the experience acquired, as a pro-active agent at institutional level.

In this sense, the **transformative approach** is the **more complete**, and the **most effective approach** that an institution may propose to mentors to foster organisational change.

Choosing between instrumental, developmental and transformative approach usually depends on the inclination of each mentor. Higher education institutions may orient mentors, in particular towards more pro-active approaches, **through training and guidelines** (Adam et al., 2016, Meschitti et al., 2016). For instance, organizing training which aims to explain to mentors the differences on these three attitudes, showing the different pros and cons, and stressing on the relevance of transformative approach in order to provide a better service both to mentees and to the whole institution.



3. SET-UP AND IMPLEMENT A MENTORING PROGRAM

As suggested by models and approaches addressed above, setting-up a mentoring program is a complex exercise involving resources in terms of time and personnel. This section, following the analysis already conducted by the GARCIA (Adam et al., 2016), OPEN Euraxess (Lacunza et al., 2020) and TRIGGER projects (Meschitti et al., 2016), will provide a brief roadmap to deal with this issue.

The process of design and implement a mentoring program can be subdivided in 5 phases:

1. Design.
2. Promotion and attract mentors and mentees.
3. Matching and running the program
4. Training mentors and mentees.
5. Monitoring and evaluation.

While **phases** and **main steps** indicated in the tables below should be all addressed while implementing a mentoring program, **hints and resources** are conceived as a stimulus and suggestion. In this view, it is also important not to overload mentors and mentees with excessive additional tasks and reporting duties. If the mentoring program becomes too much time consuming, the parties may get tired, obtain less benefits or even quit the program.

3.1. DESIGN A MENTORING PROGRAM

The first step of implementing a mentoring program is the designing phase. In this phase, the objective is to identify the issues to tackle, the goals and actions of the program, and the target groups. As well as defining what resources are needed.

Following is a table with the main steps and hints and resources:

Main steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a diagnosis of the institution, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine the state of the art of the institutional environment. Is there already a mentoring program ongoing? What are institutional goals about mentoring? ○ Intercept the issues relevant for prospective mentees: lack of information about everyday research practice, lack of support from supervisors etc. 2. Appoint a responsible for the mentoring program, and a mentoring team to assist her/him/them. 3. On the basis of the results of the diagnosis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify the target group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Men and women (recommended) or women only? PhD and postdocs or also young academics? ○ Define objectives and activities of the mentoring program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What type of mentoring? (formal/informal/transformational etc.) - What model? (face-to-face; group mentoring; cross mentoring etc.)
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Hints and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What scale for the project? (program open only to a limited number of mentees, or to everyone interested) - What duration for the program? (short-term; yearly or pluri-annual). - What expected duration of the mentoring relationship? (6-12 months/15-18 months/Until the mentee obtains the next academic qualification/accreditation). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o While conducting these evaluations, consider and define the resources needed to implement the plan. <p>4. Have the plan validated and approved by the competent decision-making bodies.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For the diagnosis of the institution, consider using (i) workshops/seminars with stakeholders; (ii) surveys/interviews with early-stage researchers/young academics . ▪ Use ad-hoc planning tools to design a gender sensitive mentoring program, like SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis.

3.2. PROMOTION AND ATTRACT MENTORS AND MENTEES

After having designed the mentoring program, further stages deal with its implementation. The first of them concerns promoting the mentoring program, making the institutional community aware of its setting-up. As well as attracting mentors and mentees available to join the program.

A summary of the main steps to do that, and some hints and resources, are reported in the table below.

Main steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the participation of a sufficient number of mentors to the mentoring program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Agree with the management measures to make mentoring more attractive. o Ensure the championing of higher management and/or senior academics. o Consider adopting a cross-mentoring model to compensate shortages of mentors. 2. Organize a communication campaign to recruit mentees and, if possible, secure in advance a sufficient number of mentees to start the program. 3. Make available, duly in advance, enrolment forms structured to collect information useful for matching mentors and mentees, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is the background of studies of prospective mentees? o What are expectations of prospective mentees about mentoring program? o What are the immediate next steps of mentees' career? o In what areas the prospective mentor feels more comfortable to provide support?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realize a database with all the potential mentors and mentees to contact. ▪ Make clear incentives for mentors to join the program, like partial courses discharge or links with international networks of mentors, or wage bonuses (if legally and financially feasible). ▪ Reach mentees, including information about mentoring in traditional channels (newsletters, institutional website etc.) and/or organizing orientation meetings for target groups. ▪ Obtain the championing of key figures (high management, senior academics, successful ex alumni etc.) to rely on word of mouth and encourage both mentors and mentees to join.
Hints and resources	

- Provide **clear information** about the mentoring program (brief description of contents, expected benefits for mentors and mentees, commitment required in terms of time).

3.3. MATCHING AND RUNNING THE PROGRAM

A central aspect of the mentoring program is matching mentors and mentees. A good match, indeed, is likely to ensure that the mentoring relationship will develop without specific issues, and providing the best assistance to the mentee. After the matching stage, it will be the moment to kick-off the mentoring relationship.

The table below recaps the main steps of this stage, also providing some hints and resources.

Main steps	<p>1. Matching mentors and mentees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the number of admitted mentees is limited, the matching process should be preceded by the selection of mentees. ○ Matching can be spontaneous or directed by human resources office. ○ Shape the matching process according to the model of mentoring program (face-to-face, group mentoring etc.). Take into account mentees' needs and mentor's profiles. ○ Adopt in advance transparent criteria both for selecting mentees and for matching. <p>Appoint a contact person that can advise mentors and mentees, solve issues and clarify doubts.</p>
Hints and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To smoothen the matching process of mentors and mentees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask mentors and mentees to fill in a profile with main details about them, including education/professional path, scientific interests, expectations for mentoring program. ○ Organize brief one-to-one meetings for mentees and mentors to test each other. ▪ Activities to help running a mentoring program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask mentors and mentees to clarify the objectives of their relationship through a Learning Agreement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A quite comprehensive example of learning agreement (in French) is available on the website of the program <i>Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes</i>, further described in Section 4 of this Toolkit. ○ Mentees may also keep a "Mentoring notebook" where annotate reflections, goals, contacts made. Provide templates of these documents. ○ Mentors-mentees relationship building sessions. For instance, a first meeting where all mentors and mentees are present, and matched people are introduced to each other. ○ Ad-hoc resources for the discussion between mentors and mentees, like handbooks, games and reflexion methodologies. ○ Networking sessions for mentors and, separately, for mentees. ○ Conferences, focus groups, seminars, webinars, FAQs. ○ Seminars and group sessions with associations of women in science.

3.4. TRAINING MENTORS AND MENTEES

Training mentors and mentees is important for an impactful mentoring program. The objective of this stage is to prepare training, select trainers and implement the training process.

The main steps of the training stage, and further hints and resources, are available in the table below.

<p>Main steps</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prepare training sessions, you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilize multiple-choice questionnaires to understand what the most relevant topics for mentors and mentees are, in a sample of topics previously determined according to the goals of the mentoring program. ○ Prepare a list of possible trainers to invite. To prepare this list, you can consider trainers who already participated in similar activities organised by other universities or in the framework of sister projects, as well as authors of important handbooks for training. ○ Plan sessions with a limited number of attendees and a length of no more than 2-3 hours. This is the best way to keep the audience focused and participative. 2. Training sessions for mentors and (separately) for mentees should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be facultative or mandatory (recommended option). ○ Include kick-off meetings for mentors and mentees, to provide information on the basics of mentoring, the structure of the program, objectives and resources available. ○ Be mostly aimed to prepare for the mentoring program, providing instrumental competences (e.g. communication and networking skills, project management, information about funding etc.). ○ Possibly include also further training, more centred on developmental competences (active listening, awareness of gender equality issues etc.). ○ Schedule specific training session for mentors addressing skills relating to their general functions, like psychological, career-related, and role-model skills (see above, Section 2.2 for details). 3. After each training, consider organizing a follow-up, for instance through a brief questionnaire, to get aware what aspects could be improved in subsequent sessions.
<p>Hints and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you plan to make training sessions mandatory, inform in advance mentors and mentees involved, in order to avoid complaints about a too demanding program. ▪ Tools for training for mentors and mentees are workshops, seminars, ad-hoc handbooks. ▪ Utilize your research and academic networks to set-up multi-institutional trainings. This will allow to have more options in terms of trainers, and to save resources. ▪ Ask trainers to organize interactive sessions, mixing theory and practice. This will improve the experience of participants. ▪ Consider spending a training session to explain to mentees -and mentors if needed- key concepts relating to gender equality issues in academia, like leaky pipeline, glass ceiling, cloning phenomenon.

3.5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The last stage of the setting-up process of a mentoring program concerns monitoring and evaluation. Its objectives are to monitor if mentoring relationships are carried out properly, to assess the results of mentoring, as well as to adopt consequential measures to improve the mentoring program and the organizational context.

Main steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intermediate monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan periodical monitoring, through reminders, online questionnaires, follow-up e-mails. ○ Ensure that the side activities (workshops, training) are held timely, and that people attend them. Take care that resources, personnel, rooms are available. ○ Set-up a strategy for the diverse obstacles that could hinder a smooth mentoring, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of a relationship of trust between mentor and mentee. - Mentor and mentee are not meeting regularly/the mentee quit the program. - The mentor is not acting according to the agreed mentoring objectives. 2. Final assessment of the program: consider holding a more structured evaluation session, for instance through interviews and/or a survey for mentors and mentees, and collecting quantitative and qualitative data. 3. Sum-up the results of the final assessments and their analysis in a public report. Meet with the relevant stakeholders and offices to discuss the required changes and updates of the mentoring program.
Hints and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask mentor and mentee to draft brief relations of their meetings, and a final longer report. ▪ Provide mentors and mentees with evaluation tools, for instance a grid that they can fill in. ▪ Set-up dedicated channels to allow mentees to report inconveniences in a confidential manner, avoiding that the hierarchical relationship with the mentor may discourage them. ▪ Utilize quantitative and qualitative data to assess the mentoring program. ▪ Quantitative data may deal with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The number of people of the target group that participated in the program: expectations should be adjusted according to the nature of the program/the objectives of the institution. ○ Participation to side activities: e.g. if a workshop is attended just by a residual number of participants to the program, maybe something should be changed. ○ Career path and scientific outputs (articles, books, papers presented at conferences, grants) of participants to the mentoring program, compared to those that did not. ▪ Regarding qualitative data, surveys or interviews could be conducted during or after the end of the mentoring program, to assess its long-term sustainability (for example, by asking attendees if mentoring relationships are likely to last in the future), and/or the satisfaction of participants. ▪ Inform the institutional community about the results of the final assessment, organizing <i>ad hoc</i> seminars for key stakeholders, and publishing the report on the website, newsletters etc.



4. BENCHMARKS FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS

The last section of this toolkit is aimed to provide further support in the exercise of setting-up a mentoring program through some examples of such initiatives already implemented in diverse European higher education institutions.

These examples are meant to work as benchmarks, showing how different mentoring models, approaches and side activities can be combined realizing impactful gender-sensitive mentoring programs addressing diverse target groups. They have been chosen according to 3 main criteria: excellence, relevance for gender equality and variety of approaches.

Specifically, the mentoring programs that will be presented below are:

- **Mentoring GENOVATE@UNINA**, implemented by the University of Naples, in cooperation with the University of Cork and in the framework of the FP7 EU-funded research project Genovate.
- *Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes*, organized by a consortium of Swiss Universities.
- **Baltic Gender Mentoring Scheme**, developed in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Baltic Gender Project.
- **FELISE**, resulting from a cooperation of the Gearing Roles Horizon 2020 consortium and the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT).
- **UniTn Mentoring Web Platform**, developed by the University of Trento in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Garcia project.

Mentoring GENOVATE@UNINA

Institution	University of Naples
Model	Face-to-face (possibly cross) mentoring
Side activities	Training
Target group	PostDocs and researchers (women only)
Duration	1 year

The [Mentoring GENOVATE@UNINA](#) has been organised by the University of Naples, in cooperation with the University of Cork. The program aimed, first, to accompany and support women postdoc and young academics in their professional and personal orientation, planning and development. Furthermore, it was integrated by an extended training program, that addressed mentors and mentees. The former were also encouraged to adopt a transformative approach (see above, Section 2.4). The program was structured around two blocks:

- **Face-to-face mentoring**, consisting of minimum 6 meetings during the academic year. Mentors were professors at the University of Naples or of other (also international) research centres. The matching process has been steered by the academic management, although both mentor and mentee might ask to change their pair.
- **Training**: was for mentors and mentees, and provided useful knowledge for the face-to-face block, as well as supporting professional development. The training was structured to address diverse topics, like: (i) women leadership in research; (ii) diversity management; (iii) conciliation policies, (iv) research opportunities in the private sector, and (v) gender dimension in EU-funded research projects.



Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes

Institutions	University of Lausanne together with University of Fribourg, University of Geneva, University of Neuchâtel and of the Federal Polytechnical School of Lausanne.
Model	Face-to-face mentoring
Side activities	Networking and training
Target group	PhD candidates, postdocs and researchers (women only)
Duration	1 year

The [Réseau romand de mentoring pour femmes](#) (Besson and Füger, 2011) has two main goals:

- Help early-stage researchers or young academics to address **practical issues relating to their academic career** and to their scientific projects.
- Create a **network of women operating in the institutions involved in the program**, to foster exchange of information, as well as current and future career opportunities for women.

The program consists of a **face-to-face mentoring model, integrated with group meetings**.

Access to the program is restricted to 24 mentees, selected on the basis of their motivation, their experience and their personal project. Mentees and mentors are matched according to their profiles and taking into account the expectations of the mentee. At the beginning of the program, mentee and mentor are requested to sign a **Learning agreement** defining the conditions and the goals for their relationship. Mentees and mentors are free to establish the frequency of their meetings that, nonetheless, cannot be less than 4 during the program.

The institutions coordinating the mentoring program offer **documentation** to guide mentees and mentors in their relationship. Furthermore, arrangements to **monitor** the mentoring program are in place. As side activities, the mentoring program is integrated through **workshops** and with **networking meetings**, where mentees and mentors have the possibility to share experiences and support each other.

Baltic Gender Mentoring Scheme

Institutions	Baltic Gender Consortium (GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel; University of Tartu; Kiel University; Kiel University of Applied Sciences; Klaipėda University; Lund University; Finnish Environment Institute; The Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research).
Model	Face-to-face and cross mentoring
Side activities	Networking and training
Target group	PhD students and postdocs (women only)
Duration	2 years (2017-2019; 2018-2020).

The Baltic Gender Mentoring Scheme (Kunz et al., 2020) was carried out, from 2017 to 2020, by the Baltic Gender Consortium steering the namesake Horizon 2020 project. The program was aimed to sustain young marine scientists or engineers to obtain a leading position within the marine science and technology community.



The program consisted of a **face-to-face mentoring**. Mentees were admitted to the program upon a selecting procedure involving candidates from the partners institutions. Once admitted, they were allowed to choose their mentors, among professors (of any gender) belonging to universities or research institutes also beyond the Baltic Gender Consortium. The institutions coordinating the program assisted mentees in establishing contacts and relationships with mentors.

The face-to-face mentoring was integrated by training and networking activities. **Training** was mainly aimed to raise awareness on gender in research, and to provide key qualifications for successful academic career. Training sessions were held during annual mentees meetings. **Networking** took place in annual meetings, which included workshops and opportunities to get together and exchange experiences.

FELISE – Feminist Leadership in Science

Institutions	Gearing Roles consortium (University of Deusto; University of Lisbon; University of Ljubljana; Sabanci University; Oxford Brookes University; Estonian Research Council) together with Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT).
Model	Face-to-face mentoring and cross mentoring
Side activities	Networking and training
Target group	PhD students (women only)
Duration	8 months (2020-2021)

The [FELISE mentoring program](#) was developed by the Gearing Roles consortium, in the framework of the namesake Horizon 2020 program. FELISE was aimed to **support 35 PhD students from partners institutions to advance in their academic careers** and participate in decision-making bodies.

FELISE consisted of a **face-to-face cross mentoring**. Selected mentees were matched with **senior researchers** (tenure-track or permanent positions) sensible to gender equality and working in partner institutions. Most of the mentees were matched also with an **international sponsor**. Matching of mentees with mentors was based on their profile, while for sponsors the main matching criterion was the common scientific background.

Mentees were requested to have at least **five bilateral meetings with their mentors and two bilateral meetings with sponsors**. The goals of the relationship were to foster personal growth and institutional and cultural feminist change within the institutions. As well as supporting participants in their career development and international outreach within their field of knowledge.

FELISE also offered participants **two training sessions** about career development and academic progression, and a **kick-off session** to train mentees and mentors to manage expectations and carry out a smooth mentoring relationship. The Gearing Roles annual conference was the occasion for **networking**, and the consortium carried out a **final evaluation** at the end of the program.

UniTn Mentoring Web Platform

Institutions	University of Trento
Model	E-mentoring
Side activities	N/A
Target group	PhD candidates, postdocs and young researchers (women and men)
Duration	Always available

The [UniTn Mentoring Web Platform](#) was developed by the University of Trento in the framework of the Horizon 2020 GARCIA project. It is a **collection of short videos** for PhD candidates, postdocs and young researchers, addressing topics selected through a participatory process that involved the prospective mentees.

The aim of the web platform is to **provide guidance and suggestions for the development of mentees' academic career**. In this view, videos address topics like (i) creating a network of academic relations; (ii) tips for publishing in important journals; (iii) communication of scientific results also through of social media; (iv) tips for writing a project proposal; (v) funding; (vi) suggestions for apply for a tenure track position. Furthermore, a **specific section is dedicated to advices for women early career researchers**.

The web platform is open to public. Therefore, there is no selection of mentees and anybody -even not linked with the University of Trento- have access. Mentors, instead, are all professors at the University, selected according to their position, experiences abroad, grants and role in their departments, to act as "models" for mentees in the STEM and SSH area.



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