BUDGET-IT

Building Gender+ Equality Through Gender+ Budgeting For Institutional Transformation

D 2.3
Report on focus groups used in GEP design

Grant Agreement N° 1010904391

Building Gender Equality Through Gender Budgeting for Institutional Transformation

Project Start Date	01.01.2023
Duration of the project	36 Months
Work Package	WP2
Deliverable Number	D.2.3 Report on focus groups used in GEP design
Deliverable Leader	UA
Status	Revised final
Submission Date	03.04.2024
Authors	All partners
Institution	Alicante University
Email	mloneil@khas.edu.tr

Modification Control

Version	Date	Description and Comments	Author
0.1	26.12.2023	First	Selma Değirmenci
0.2	31.12.2023	Final	Irene Bajo Garcia
0.3	30.03.2024	Revision	Mary Lou O'Neil

List of Contributors

All partners

BUDGET IT

Contents

Introduction

BUDGET-IT is a three-year project designed to use gender+ budgeting to transform institutions to advance inclusive gender+ equality and enhance the reputation, inclusiveness, and research excellence of the widening countries of Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey assisted by internationally leading university counterparts in Italy and Spain. BUDGET-IT focuses on gendered inequalities and the ways that gender is produced and reproduced in interdependent ways with other identities such as race, religion, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, nationality among others with an aim to enact tailored GEPs to ensure actual inclusion. The overall objective of BUDGET-IT is to create institutional transformation towards inclusive gender+ equality through a participatory and collaborative process of knowledge exchange, networking, capacity building and reputation enhancement for the widening partners.

One aspect of the BUDGET-IT project centres on the collection of gender+ and intersectional data in order to ensure the revised gender equality plans (GEPs) produced are both inclusive and data driven. To help achieve this partners conducted focus groups with institutional community members to both identify intersections and introduce individuals to each other. Focus groups help both identity areas of difficulty but also to begin to build a culture of institutional equality.

Methodology

Budget-It relies on a participatory change management model to guide the process of change. Change management recognises that change requires adaptation, innovation and overcoming resistance all of which take place over time. Change requires change agents, teams and coalitions of individuals and institutions that support a common vision of inclusive gender+ equality. To overcome resistance to change, participation is vital at each step. Wide participation of stakeholders not only helps identify previously unseen problem areas but also formulating innovative solutions and ensuring widespread implementation which leads to the creation of a culture of inclusive equality. Wide participation also contributes to buy in and sustainability over the long term.

The Budget-It model is divided into three iterative parts where all partners will concentrate on one major aspect of the project for each year. This will allow for a focused in-depth and concentrated effort for each major component of Budget-It. Each succeeding component of the project builds on the previous step and the acquired knowledge and experience culminating in an integrated document gender+ equality plan-gender+ budget (GEP-GB) for each partner institution. This repeating process will also allow for capacity building and reputation enhancement in the widening country partner institutions as they move through each step of the model.
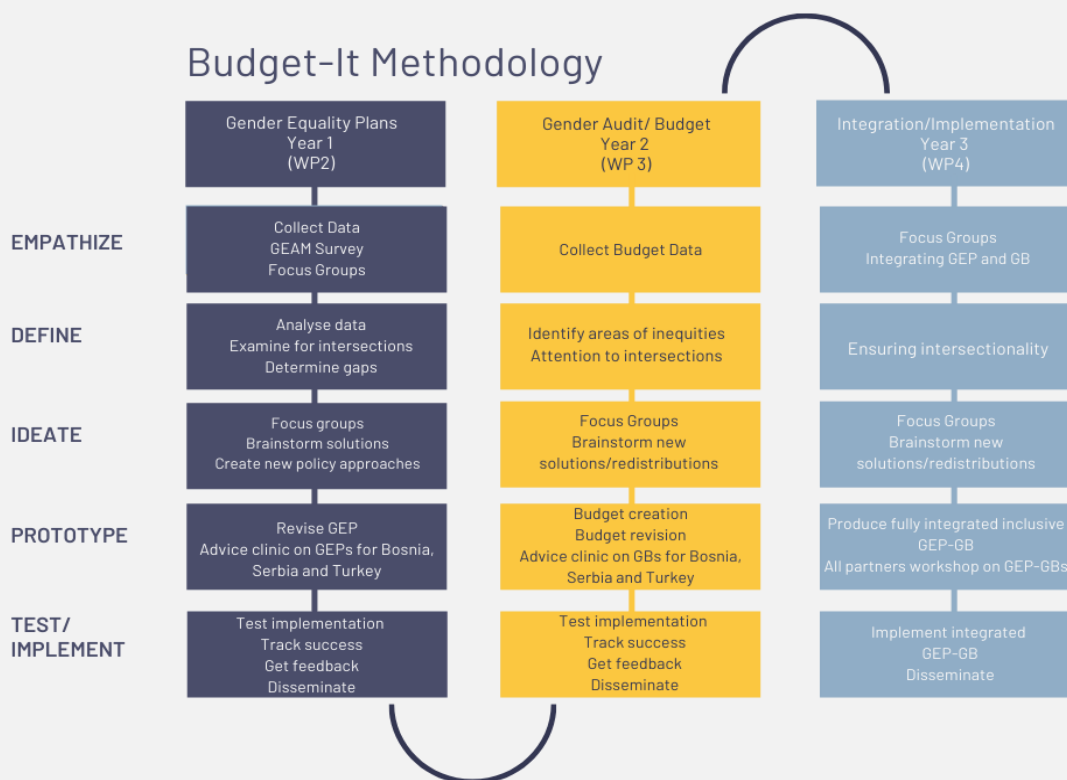
Underlying this three-step approach, Budget-It employs design thinking as a means of approaching GEPs and gender+ budgeting in an innovative way. Design thinking comprises a human centred approach to problem solving that is creative, collaborative, iterative and grounded in real people's experiences.[1] Although originating in the world of design in more recent years has been applied to the area of gender+ equality.[2] The use of design thinking is deeply rooted in context and therefore will ensure a GEP and gender+ budget that are tailored to each institution and their cultural context. For each step of the project, partners will move through the steps of design thinking resulting in an integrated inclusive gender+ equality plan and gender+ budget (GEP-GB) for each partner institution.

---

[1] https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/value-of-diversity-and-inclusion/design-thinking-business-gender-bias-workplace.html

[2] Christensen JF, Mahler R, Teilmann-Lock S. GenderLAB: Norm-critical design thinking for gender equality and diversity. Organization. 2021;28(6):1036-1048. doi:10.1177/1350508420961528

Budget-It Methodology

	Gender Equality Plans Year 1 (WP2)	Gender Audit/ Budget Year 2 (WP 3)	Integration/Implementation Year 3 (WP4)
EMPATHIZE	Collect Data GEAM Survey Focus Groups	Collect Budget Data	Focus Groups Integrating GEP and GB
DEFINE	Analyse data Examine for intersections Determine gaps	Identify areas of inequities Attention to intersections	Ensuring intersectionality
IDEATE	Focus groups Brainstorm solutions Create new policy approaches	Focus Groups Brainstorm new solutions/redistributions	Focus Groups Brainstorm new solutions/redistributions
PROTOTYPE	Revise GEP Advice clinic on GEPs for Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey	Budget creation Budget revision Advice clinic on GBs for Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey	Produce fully integrated inclusive GEP-GB All partners workshop on GEP-GBs
TEST/ IMPLEMENT	Test implementation Track success Get feedback Disseminate	Test implementation Track success Get feedback Disseminate	Implement integrated GEP-GB Disseminate

Empathize

Each partner will start the process by revisiting their GEP beginning with the **EMPATHIZE** phase. The empathize phase consists of building an understanding of the problem(s) that needs to be solved. Most importantly, design thinking asks us to put aside our own needs and assumptions and attempt to understand someone else's way of thinking. Empathy proves particularly important when addressing intersectional inequalities that are often ignored or rendered invisible. Budget-It partners will collect data on their respective institutions to develop a picture of the gendered state of things. To supplement this, partners have administered the [Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring](#) survey (GEAM) available from the ACTonGender project. Building on the data collected from the GEAM survey, partners conducted **focus groups** to both identify intersections and introduce individuals to each other. Focus groups help both identity areas of inequality and help to begin to build a culture of institutional equality.

Given that vastly different contexts and sizes of the partner institutions, each partner determined the number and size of the focus groups. The goal being to involve more individuals from the institution to contribute to the development of an inclusive GEP for each partner organization. During the process of preparing to conduct focus groups, the University of Alicante led an advice clinic which centred on the GEAM survey and focus groups. The discussion focused on how to best constitute a focus group including optimal size and number and areas of potential concern. Issues of concern included the internal dynamics that are often at play in group situations and how to constitute groups where participants felt safe and

secure to share. We also addressed issues of ensuring confidentiality and informed consent for participants.

Define

Once data has been collected and focus groups conducted, the **DEFINE** phase begins. Partners will analyse and attempt to make sense of gendered inequalities in their institutions in particular the intersections they have identified for specific attention. At this stage, partners identify the specific intersections they plan to address. The definition of the "problem" must be based on the data and insights gathered in the empathize phase.

Ideate

Once key areas to be addressed, including intersections, are clear, the **IDEATE** step begins. This stage comprises brainstorming solutions to the key areas resulting from the empathize and define stages. Here no idea should be considered invalid. The idea is to **generate as many ideas as possible**. Returning to the participatory nature of the Budget-It project, partners will organise groups for brainstorming solutions. Participants will be encouraged to think outside the box and to look for **innovative policy solutions**. This stage is the same for all steps of the project, continuing the participatory process but also in a sense crowd sourcing solutions to find new approaches to generating inclusive equality. We are currently in this stage of the process and getting ready to move to the next phase PROTOTYPE.

Prototype

With the generation of a variety of innovative solutions, the **PROTYPE** stage takes the form of revising the GEP to reflect the problems defined and solutions generated in the previous stages. This revision should also include the specific intersections identified; although GEPs are in no way limited to only addressing the identified intersections. In year two, partners will produce an inclusive gender+ budget and in year three the inclusive gender+ equality plan and gender+ budget will be integrated into one inclusive document (GEP-GB).

Test/Implement

Once the GEPs have been revised, the **TEST** phase consists of implementation, dissemination, and feedback. Revised intersectional GEPs will be implemented in part or in total as deemed appropriate by partner institutions in year one.

Kadir Has University Focus Groups (KHAS) Türkiye

As BUDGET-It team, we held preliminary studies and meetings with Yeşim Sümbüloğlu, Doğu Durgun, Mary Lou O'Neil, Ece Esmer and Selma Değirmenci on how and with whom to hold a focus group.

Design of focus groups

The guiding principles for the composition of the focus groups centred on trying to involve as many different groups as possible. This included both academic and administrative staff and personnel at all levels.

We created separate focus groups for administrative and academic staff. This was motivated by the fact that these groups often have different interests and concerns and we also wanted to circumvent any power differentials between academic and administrative staff that might prevent people from fully participating.

For the administrative staff we also created a separate focus group for managers to help avoid power issues that might silence individuals.

For academic staff for this round of focus groups we did not include academic staff with administrative assignments (deans, vice rectors, etc.). This was to avoid any power dynamics that might silence participants.

We set a limit of no more than eight people per focus group and the duration was approximately one hour. Focus groups were conducted in Turkish and recorded for the sole purpose of transcription. The focus groups were led by Dr. Yeşim Sümbüloğlu and Dr. Doğu Durgun both of whom are experienced in conducting focus groups. They were assisted by a reporter to ensure a quality recording and to take notes. The focus groups centred around a set of semi-structured questions (see below). Participants all signed consent forms and were given a contact address in case they remembered or wanted to add other topics.

Recruitment

Administrative staff

In order to communicate with the Administrative Staff of the University, the Rectorate initiated the process and sent an email to all administrative staff inviting them to participate in the focus groups. Those who responded to this call were contacted and two focus groups were formed from administrative staff participants. All those who wanted to participate were included in the focus groups.

Academic staff

To ensure a mix of academic staff, we contacted key people in various faculties to invite people to the focus groups. All those faculty members who expressed an interest in participating were invited. We specifically sought to create groups that were as diverse as possible in terms of rank, faculty, and gender. All those who wanted to participate were included in focus groups.

Questions:

1. What do you think about gender equality?
2. Are you aware of the gender equality plan at KHAS?
3. Do you think that other social identities (i.e. age, sexual orientation, disability, education etc.) impact gender equality?
4. What should we do to create more equality?
5. Is there anything you would like to add?

Timeline of focus group process

- **In March 2023**, discussions with the KHAS team about the focus group design.
- **In April 2023**, we applied to the ethics committee of Kadir Has University for the GEAM survey and focus group study to be carried out under the BUDGET-IT project,
- **In May 2023**, we received our Ethics committee approval report in May.
- **In July 2023**, we held discussions with the KHAS team on the communication channels and questions to be used for focus groups.
- **In September 2023** we began recruitment of participants.
- Our first focus group was held on **October 30, 2023,** with 4 academic staff.
- The second focus group was held on **November 22, 2023,** with 5 academic staff.
- The third focus group was held on **December 07, 2023,** with 4 administrative staff.
- The fourth focus group was held on **December 12, 2023,** with 5 administrative staff (management level)

Preliminary results

Academic Staff

1. Childcare Service: The university should establish a daycare facility for academics with children, as well as offer this service to administrative staff and cleaning personnel. The remaining workload should not be solely transferred to women; the institution should provide alternative solutions. Employment of Transgender People: The university should also employ trans workers. Whether this is an effective factor in the hiring process is unknown. Disability Restrooms for individuals with disabilities should be gender-neutral instead of female. Parental Leave and Gender Equality: Parental leave policies should be enhanced, and women's unpaid labour should be made visible.
2. CITOK (Harassment Prevention Unit) and Gender Equality Committee: CITOK is not working effectively; the university often avoids its responsibilities in conducting

investigation processes. While the existence of the Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Unit is seen as a positive step, more information is needed about its effectiveness and working methods. For this purpose, a committee should be established within the university to ensure that complaints related to gender equality are handled through a fair process. To ensure the effectiveness of CITOK, best practices should be analysed, and it should operate in a more independent structure. Under the same umbrella, another commission should be responsible for producing and implementing educational content, programs, and practices related to gender equality.

3. Social Participation and Diversity: Gender equality initiatives should not be limited to specific units; broader policies and programs should be developed.

4. Gender Equality Education: Gender equality training should be provided to university staff, and gender-sensitive performance evaluation processes should be developed. The importance of awareness-raising and education activities between staff and students on gender equality was emphasized. Continuous training and awareness programs should be organized. This education can also be extended beyond the institution to the neighbourhood through Community Engagement Centres.

5. Student Clubs and Activities: Student clubs should be encouraged, and clubs focusing on gender equality like Plus and Activism Club should be supported.

6. Subcontractors: The university should apply gender equality criteria to subcontractors and take responsibility for harassment cases. The situation of subcontracted workers should not be overlooked. Gender equality policies should also cover subcontracted workers and protect their rights.

7. Income Inequality Analysis: The university should conduct an income inequality analysis and develop policies to improve the situation of women working in labour-intensive jobs.

Administrative Staff

1. Gender Equality Training and Awareness Programs: Regular online or face-to-face training sessions should be organized for administrative and academic staff and student groups. Interactive approaches supported by real-life examples should be preferred during the training sessions.

1. LGBTI individuals should be included in gender equality discussions, and conferences should be organized.

2. Safe Campus Practices: Concrete steps should be taken to increase the safety of female students. These may include increasing security personnel, effective use of security cameras, and providing safe transportation options. Awareness-raising training should be provided to students, and reporting mechanisms for situations threatening security should be established.

3. Development of Equitable Ancillary Policies: Family-friendly policies such as paternal leave should be reviewed and extended. Paternal leave, currently three days, should be extended to longer periods.

4. Solution of Housing Issues: Solutions to students' housing problems should be developed. This may involve increasing the capacity of student dormitories or providing alternative housing options.

5. Inclusivity: Policies should be established to ensure that both local and international students are equally accepted in workshops where active scholarship students work.

Management administrative staff

1. Gender Equality Training and Awareness Programs: University-wide gender education and awareness programs should be established. These programs should be supported by content that enables students and staff to become aware of gender equality, gender roles, and LGBTI+ rights.

2. Establishment of Internal Audit and Monitoring Mechanisms: Internal audit and monitoring mechanisms should be established within the university to ensure the effective implementation of gender equality policies. These mechanisms should monitor policy implementation and take corrective measures if necessary.

3. LGBTI+ Club and Support Services: A special club or support services should be established within the university to support and increase the visibility of LGBTI+ individuals. This will provide a safe environment for LGBTI+ students and staff.

4. Development of Flexible Working and Family-Friendly Policies: The university should develop flexible working and family-friendly policies that allow employees to balance their family lives and work. These policies should be designed to provide equal opportunities for women and men.

5. Respect for Headscarves and Freedom of Belief: The university management should respect freedom of belief and take necessary steps to ensure that students and staff wearing headscarves are not subjected to discrimination. Policies should be established to ensure that personal preferences such as wearing a headscarf do not hinder academic and administrative staff selection.

6. International Student Cooperation and Integration: The university should organize various activities and programs to support the integration of international students. These programs should aim to increase understanding and reduce prejudice among students from different cultural backgrounds.

7. Participation in Policy-Making Processes: The university management should encourage the participation of students and staff in policy-making processes. This will ensure that gender equality policies are more inclusive and effective.

8. Monitoring Diversity in Education and Teaching Processes: The university should establish appropriate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate diversity in education and teaching processes. This will enable the evaluation of the effectiveness of policies supporting gender equality and diversity and allow for necessary improvements.

Maltepe Municipality (MALTEPE) Türkiye

Maltepe Municipality conducted three focus group interviews with 3 different personnel groups employed in the institution. (Respondent profiles can be viewed in the table below) First, we as the "Equality Department" sent a cover letter to all directorates in the institution, and the letter was intended for the relevant focus group interviews and distributed within the institution. The person responsible for organizing the focus group was Aslı Akman İri aslihan.akman@tskm.org.tr and the report was later translated into English by Ayse Gencer. In the cover letter, information about the BUDGET-IT project and project stakeholders were given, and a digital registration form (Google Forms) was created for personnel who wanted to participate in the focus group interviews.

Design of focus Groups

1.   Educational Status Undergraduate and Above Female directly Municipality
2.   Personnel/worker. Educational Status Undergraduate and Above Municipality's Company Office Personnel/worker
3.   Education Level High School Municipality's Company Field Personnel/worker

The focus group participants were organized considering the intersection of gender and educational status, consisting of 5 female officers with a bachelor's degree or higher. The discussion was semi structured, and participants were asked 17 open-ended questions related to gender equality. The interviews were conducted with 5 individuals employed as Civil Servants under Law No. 657 and lasted an average of 60 minutes each, conducted face-to-face. Content analysis was used to analyse the data.

Questions

BUDGET-IT Institutional Gender Equality: Interview /Research Introduction (5 Mins.) and getting to know each other (10 Mins.)

1.   Have you heard about our local equality action plan for 2023?
2.   If yes, how would you comment on it?
3.   How would you define equality at work? What does it mean to you?
4.   Do you think gender equality is considered in employment?"
5.   Do you think the selections/appointments of managers, chiefs, and coordinators are based on gender? Is gender equality considered?
6.   Do employees of both genders with the same educational level receive the same salary package at your institution?"
7.   "Do employees of both genders having the same occupation receive the same salary package at your institution?"
8.   "Do employees of both genders performing the same duties receive the same salary package at your institution?"

9. "Are the ideas/opinions of male and female staff equally valued in your institution?"
10. "Do you think both genders can perform heavy and hazardous tasks?"
11. "Are there special measures taken by your institution for corporate equality? What rights are granted to women for equality?"
12. Are there any policies in your institution regarding pregnancy and maternity processes? Do these meet your needs, are they sufficient?" (Separate answers for men and women, single participants could evaluate the issues or inequalities experienced during this process.)
13. "Are there any facilitation mechanisms for staff with children/caregiving responsibilities?" "Does your workplace provide convenience when you have to drop off/pick up your child from school, or when you need to attend an event at school?" "How do you handle work when your child is sick? (Leave, medical report, etc.)
14. What are the inequalities you might think of at your institution?
15. "How can inequalities be prevented, and what can be done?"

Timeline of focus groups process

Focus Groups	Date of Interview	Duration	Profile	Number of Respondents
Group 1	06.11.2023	1 hour	Undergraduate, Postgraduate, woman, civil servant	5
Group 2	07.11.2023	70 Minutes	696 KHK contracted Office employee	8
Group 3	08.11.2023	1 Hour	High school graduate, 696 KHK contracted field employee	6

Preliminary Results

The focus group revealed a lack of awareness and understanding of the Local Equality Action Plan. There are deviations in perceptions of equality between employees of both genders. Women are open to doing heavy and dangerous work, while men tend to think this type of work is not suitable for women. The institution has special measures for gender equality, like celebrating International Women's Day and providing menstrual leave. It was suggested that celebrating a Men's Day could promote equality.

In terms of employment policies, there were diverse views on hiring, the importance of political processes, age limits, and the need for equal opportunities. Managerial

appointments are influenced by the gender composition of the department, with a tendency for managers in more disciplined, heavy-duty departments.

Despite these observations, participants noted that women could do any job, but there is a perception that they can't handle heavy or dangerous work. Suggestions include employing both genders in every department and increasing gender equality awareness within the organization.

Sarajevo School of Science and Technology (SSST), Bosnia and Herzegovina

The organization of the focus group was done by the project assistant, Amina Katica, with guidance from the project coordinator, Dr Jasminka Hasić Telalović. Two student researchers conducted the focus groups (Ena Strika and Marko Cuze), assuming a monitoring role. Responses were collected between September 16, 2023, and October 11, 2023.

Design of focus groups

To obtain a comprehensive investigation into potential direct and indirect gender inequalities within the academic structure at SSST University, as well as the representativeness of the focus groups, there was a need to adhere to the University's structure. Due to the small size of the target research population, the use of random stratified sampling was not adequate even though it is generally used to obtain the greatest level of representation. Hence, the research resorted to selective sampling, arranged in terms of academic subgroups. Another prominent reason for the utilisation of selective sampling is the salience of creating a natural and relaxing setting to facilitate open discussion by creating groups based on shared characteristics among participants. Thus, the comfort of participants was a salient consideration, relating to the target population size.

The focus groups were conducted within the academic position stratum and included diversity in terms of gender and departments according to the stratum's composition. The employment status and work hours of both academic and administrative staff were deemed as significant characteristics to consider. Therefore, full-time staff in particular were invited to participate in the focus groups. Similarly, the focus groups aimed to involve individuals with long work experience at SSST. It was recognised that these factors, alongside gender and departmental differences, could notably shape perceptions of gender equality within the University. Therefore, efforts were made to include individuals across these dimensions to capture diverse perspectives on gender equality and its perception within SSST.

The size of the focus group was influenced by the size of the academic subgroup. According to Carlsen and Glenton (2011), the ideal focus group size when n<100 would be between 6 to 8 participants for social issues research in which the investigation of gender equality would fall. However, Greenbaum (1998) argued that for small target populations in research (n<100) that contain a variety of strata, if the total number of members of a stratum does not exceed 15, all members may be included as participants within the focus group research. Considering the aforementioned factors, there was a need to create four, different focus groups moderated by the two undergraduate researchers.

Recruitment

Focus groups were formed based on SSST University's staff divisions: coordinators and deans, professors, assistants, and administration. Considering the focus group sizes, special attention was paid to the gender balance within these groups. The questions asked followed a semi-structured approach to allow participants to engage in a narrower discussion. Invitations were extended to coordinators and deans across all departments at SSST University, including Political Science, Medical School, Computer Science, Economics and Business, Pharmacy, Dentistry, English Language, German Language, and the Rector's office. Almost the same number of women (5) and men (4) hold the positions of coordinators or deans at the university. However, only two participants, i.e. female deans, took part in the session.

Similarly, the second focus group was designed to comprise 10 associate professors from different faculties: Medical School (3), Economics and Business (1), Political Science (2), and Computer Science (4). However, some distinctions in gender-balanced composition are noticeable in the observation of the focus group. Notably, all participants from the Medical School were female, while only male professors were present from the faculties of Political Science and Economics and Business. On the other hand, Computer Science had an equal number of male and female participants. The participant turnout was lower than anticipated, with five professors attending, three of whom were female and two of whom were male. Nonetheless, this representation covered all departments except for Economics and Business.

The third group consisted of 9 assistants from the following departments: Medical School (5), Language Faculties (2), and Computer Science (2). Notably, almost all participants, except for one, were female, shedding light on the higher representation of women in assistant positions across the university. The number of attendees was slightly lower, with four women and one man, all being assistants specifically within the Medical School.

The final focus group, centred on administration, was segmented among heads of administration departments such as Legal Advisory, Finance Department, ORPA, Registry, IT, PR, and the regular staff within those departments. Some units, like PR, the Chancellor's Office, and the library, had only one person working within them, thus, the department size was an essential consideration. In total, 18 administration staff were invited, comprising 6 heads of administration and 12 regular staff members. Regarding gender representation, the IT Department was exclusively staffed by men, and out of the 6 heads of administration, only 2 were male. This resulted in the administration field leaning significantly toward women, with 78% of the 18 participants being women. The focus group with the heads of administration had one of the lowest turnouts, with only two participants. In contrast, among the regular staff, there were five participants, with only one being a man. The administration staff, despite a substantial number being invited, demonstrated the lowest turnout in terms of participation.

In total, 46 staff members were invited to participate in the focus groups, consisting of 32 women and 14 men. Notably, the majority of those invited were women. However, when the focus groups concluded, only 19 participants took part, indicating a turnout of 41%. This low participation level suggests a limited degree of cooperation. Despite the lower turnout, considering the lower staff count at SSST University and across faculties, the gathered results remain valuable for analysis.

The focus groups were held in five sessions to accommodate the number of groups and the fact that one of the groups, administration, was divided into two additional groups. They were led by student research moderators who used a semi-structured approach to stimulate discussion around the questions. The questions were created with a specific focus on professional advancement, institutional governance, work-life balance, and recommendations to the organisation in the final remarks. The audio of the discussions was captured and later transcribed to protect the participants' anonymity.

The staff was categorised into different strata, including deans and coordinators, professors, assistants, and administration. Invitations for voluntary participation were extended to these groups. During the focus group sessions, participants were asked for their explicit consent to take part, with a clear understanding that they had the freedom to leave at any time. A consent form, outlining the nature of the research, ethical guidelines, and the intended use of provided data, was presented, and signed by the participants. It was explicitly stated that the focus group discussions would be recorded. Student researchers were present in the focus groups, assuming a monitoring role without leading the conversation but merely adapting the questions to suit the composition of each focus group. At the end of the focus group discussion participants were debriefed and reminded of their rights as participants. Subsequently, the student researchers transcribed the recorded audio and commenced the data analysis phase.

Questions

Depending on time management, the following questions were used in focus groups:

General work environment

To start this focus group, let's consider a general question - How would you describe your work environment in SSST? Would you recommend SSST as a good place to work?

1. Do you feel there is a positive work environment? If yes, what contributes to this? If not, what are the main obstacles?

Perceived fairness/discrimination and reporting

1. Do you feel that you are treated differently in your work life because of your gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.?
2. Do you feel the allocation of work is fair and transparent in your department/school? Do you feel there are any gendered dimensions to this? If so, why?
3. Would you feel comfortable reporting a problem about any of the sexism/racism/homophobia/ageism etc. that SSST? Please explain your answer. Do you feel there are barriers in relation to reporting? If you are comfortable reporting issues, why is this?
4. Would you feel comfortable reporting if you had been treated unfavourably/unfairly? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. Would you feel comfortable reporting instances of others being treated unfavourably/unfairly if you witnessed them?

Career Advancement

1. How do you feel about advancement opportunities in SSST? How supported do you feel in this regard?
2. Do you feel you can reach your full potential at SSST? What have the main barriers and enablers to career progression been for you?
3. Do you feel that the progression criteria in SSST are transparent and fair? How would you explain/interpret these gender differences?

Work-Life Balance

1. Is maintaining a good work-life balance important to you when considering going for a promotion?
2. Do you have difficulties balancing your work and personal life? If so what are the main factors involved in these difficulties?
3. Have you any experience of taking family leave/ special leave of absence/flexible working? If you have taken family leave, were you supported by your superiors/colleagues? If you had the option to take family leave but didn't do so, why not?
4. What is your experience with your line manager/supervisor regarding care-related needs?
5. Does the experience of work-life balance differ for men and women academic/research staff? Do women and men face different issues in balancing work and personal/family demands?

Additional Questions

1. Have you witnessed any instances of discrimination (based on gender, ethnicity, age disability) at work?
2. What is it like to be a woman/man working in your field in this institution?

3. Does gender make any difference in access to resources at this institution, for example in relation to salary, teaching loads, committee assignments, lab space, access to clerical or other support, institutional research funds, sabbatical or other leaves?

Closing question

1. What are the top 3-4 changes you feel are necessary in order to enable progression and equitable participation in SSST? If you like you can frame these in terms of short, medium, and long-term changes given that some changes are dependent on outside factors such as government funding/national agreements etc.

Interview Questions

A semi-structured interview will used for the interviews which will be conducted via volunteer sampling from the stratums based on academic titles.

1. How did you get to where you are today in your current position at SSST? Start as early as you like.

2. Let's talk about your department/unit/lab.

a. Briefly describe it to me (how large? Diversity of gender, race, age, etc.?)

b. What is the working environment like?

c. Do you have, or have you had, a leadership role? Would you like to have one in the future?

d. Are there initiatives that could be implemented to improve your experience of the working environment? (e.g. leadership training, professional development workshops, unconscious bias training for staff in management roles)

3. Work-Life Balance

a. Describe your commitments and interests outside of work.

b. How do these commitments affect your work?

c. What would you like to be able to do differently?

4. Career Development

a. How has your career evolved during your time at SSST?

b. Do you feel that your work has been supported and recognized?

c. If so, how?

d. Are there ways in which you feel you have not been supported?

5. Gender

a. In your view, did gender affect your early career aspirations, experiences, or plans?

b. Does it affect your current experience of working?

c. What is it like to be a woman working in your field in this institution?

d. How, if at all, do you think gender might play a role in your future career?

e. Have you observed any differences between the career choices or paths of women and men in your department/unit?

6. Are there any additional comments you would like to make?

BUDGET→IT

Timeline of focus group process

Responses were collected between September 16th and October 11th, being open for approximately four weeks.

Preliminary Results

Work Environment

Participants across all focus groups reported mixed feelings about the work environment, citing both positive and negative aspects of working at SSST. The majority of interviewees cited a **supportive atmosphere** among colleagues and a **strong sense of community** within each department. **Cross-departmental cooperation** was also mentioned as a contributor to a positive work environment and as beneficial to success in international research projects. However, several groups mentioned that this sense of comradery among staff is not facilitated through the official structure of the university and management, but rather stems from employees' own willingness to cooperate and be friendly. Another factor contributing to positive feelings about their work environment mentioned by several of the respondents was the sense of fulfilment teaching and helping students brings. Deans of departments and medical school faculty both emphasized the need to be passionate about education to truly enjoy working at SSST. The intrinsic motivation and love for teaching and guiding students are crucial for satisfaction in this environment. In addition, the survey indicates that the greatest percentage (36%) of participants were *somewhat satisfied* with their working conditions, followed by 32 % *satisfied* participants, 24% were *not satisfied at all* and just 8% were *very satisfied*. Out of men, 75% said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the conditions. Women, on the other hand, provided a broader range of responses, and it is difficult to discern gender differences given the significant number of women who completed the survey in compared to men. Furthermore, the survey sought to determine whether there is a difference in how men and women are treated in their departments, as no gender disparity was identified according to the focus groups. Thus, in response to the statement ''*In general, men and women are treated equally in my department*'', 87.5% said they *strongly agree* or *agree*, with only one man (12.5%) choosing *neither agree nor disagree* option. In terms of women, the majority (64.7%) answered that they *neither agree nor disagree* with the statement, with 35.2% choosing either *the agree* or *strongly agree* choice, and the smallest percentage (17.6%) choosing the *disagree* or *strongly disagree* option. In general, male participants had a more widespread perception that men and women are treated equally, whereas the majority of female participants were undecided. However, it is worth noting that just a small proportion of women disagreed with the remark.

Career Progression

There were several issues raised regarding career progression. Main issues raised across all groups were: **business-like operational model of the university, lack of organizational structure**, **lack of a Human Resources Department** and formal procedures related to

workplace issues, **lack of clear channels of communication** to upper management, **lack of transparency in promotions and workload distribution**, **lack of recognition and compensation for achievements**. Other issues mentioned were more specific to certain focus groups, specifically to associate professors, deans, and medical school professors. Professors felt outrage at the guilt-inducing practice of having to clock in and out of work. Further, many professors mentioned **low salaries** "not reflective of the time, effort and skills that the academic profession requires". **Academic staff felt not supported in their research efforts**, particularly with matters such as having to fund their own publishing fees, conference travel and other activities necessary to publish and maintain their positions. According to the survey, 67.8% of respondents acknowledged that they were never encouraged or invited to apply for a promotion or a higher-level position at SSST. Only 21.4% of individuals claimed they had such an opportunity, while 10.8% were unclear. This also suggests a lack of opportunities for advancement, implying slow career growth, a concern voiced throughout the focus groups. Similarly, 82.1% stated that they had never gotten a complementary bonus. The survey revealed that staff had very few training possibilities; for example, in terms of HR courses or accreditation programs, 96.2% of participants have not received such an opportunity. Only professional development training opportunities had a higher number of people attending, with 40.7% reporting they had such an opportunity and 59.3% stating they did not.

Gender was not perceived as a relevant factor in any of these issues. Respondents only spoke of gender discrimination when asked about past experiences outside of SSST and academia more generally. Surprisingly, several female professors cited negative gender-based experiences during their studies abroad, particularly in Western countries, while they reiterated the lack of such incidents at SSST. On account of this, when asked whether participants agree that their job offers good prospects for career advancement, the majority of participants (44%) stated that they *agree*. Furthermore, based on the difference in several female and male participants, it can be said that both the majority of women and the majority of men chose this option. Interestingly, only female participants chose the disagree (12%) or strongly disagree (8%) options. Lastly, 24% of participants chose the option *neither agree nor disagree* and 12% of participants *strongly agreed*. Overall, the overrepresentation of women among the academic staff at the university is a likely contributor to this.

Work-life balance

The discussion related to the maintenance of work-life balance was most diverse in perspectives. Associate professors mostly found **difficulty maintaining a healthy work-life balance**, citing the nature of academic work and research being such that it has no set work hours. Several professors mentioned regularly working after hours and bringing their work home. Similar responses were recorded among heads of departments. Many of the departments are severely understaffed and thus unable to complete their work within regular work hours. The only group satisfied with their work-life balance were deans, however, they emphasized that this is due to their individual ability to set boundaries.

When asked about the impact of gender on their work-life balance, participants **acknowledged the inherent differences in household responsibilities women face outside of work**. All male respondents pointed out these differences and acknowledged their perceived privilege in that regard. Female interviewees agreed that women are societally expected to carry the larger part of household responsibilities, but several also noted that their home life does not prevent them from effectively completing their professional tasks. Two male participants were noted as having arrangements with the management to accommodate their regular travels to visit their families who live outside of the university's city, while none of the female staff had this kind of arrangement. In order to delve deeper into work-life issues, participants were asked how frequently they felt it was difficult for them to fulfil their responsibilities due to the amount of time they spent on the job. In the case of women, 33.3% stated it happened several times a month, and the same percentage (33.3%) said it happened several times a week. Furthermore, 22.2% claimed it happened once or twice, while only 11.1% indicated it was never an issue. However, for men, the situation is almost the opposite; 50% stated it had only happened once or twice, while the other possibilities were never, several times a week, and many times a month. Men, on the other hand, are almost the opposite; 50% of males stated this had only happened to them once or twice, while there was just one answer per choice for never, several times a week, and several times a month. The survey data indicated that an equal number of female participants reported feeling too tired after work to attend to household chores several times a week or several times a month. Conversely, the male responses suggested a lower frequency, typically once or twice. This divergence in responses between genders aligns with qualitative research findings. Qualitative insights highlighted that both women and men expressed a sentiment that women tend to have an additional workload at home, often referred to as a "second job" in comparison to men. According to the survey, it was also difficult to establish a link between work-life balance and elderly or childcare. None of the male participants provided adult care and were neither parents nor legal guardians. In contrast, 33.3% of female participants were parents or legal guardians, and only one female participant had care responsibility for an adult and children. While this might be due to reasons other than gender such as simply the place of residence, it still presented itself as a possible discrepancy between accommodations made to men versus women employed at the university. Women also reported **feeling supported and not pressured when taking vacation or family leave**, although a significant number of interviewees across both gender groups expressed **dissatisfaction with the number of vacation days** and being limited to taking them only in the summer. Taking leave during the academic year was discouraged as most professors could not be substituted when missing lectures. This results in professors feeling pressured to come back from leave earlier than desired.

BUDGET-IT

Commune di Brescia (CBS_BRESCIA) Italy

In the Municipality of Brescia, the CUG (Committee for Equal Opportunities - President: Dr. Giorgia Boragini) meets regularly and officially. The Committee consists of 16 members, 8 of whom are appointed by the unions. It has to be noted that in January 2024 the new PIAO - Integrated Activity and Organisation Plan has been approved and published on the institutional website (https://www.comune.brescia.it/sites/default/files/2024-01/PIAO%202024_2026.pdf) In Italy, PIAO is mandatory for every public organisation since 2022 and includes a specific section on Aiming for and Acting on Equal Opportunities, similar to the UE Gender Equality Plan.

The new PIAO has been implemented with the milestones of the Budget-it project. KPIs for management include taking into account the GEAM survey and engaging in actions under an intersectional perspective (gender/age/disability). Drafting and revising both Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and the specific section of PIAO is one of the Committee's tasks.

Design of focus group and Recruitment

The GEAM results made it possible to organise specific focus groups during the month of March. CUG split into three subgroups (5 people each) with the task of focusing on the GEP guidelines, with the specific purpose of rethinking actions and proposals in an intersectional way, with regard to the three main categories, i.e. gender/age/disability:

Group #1: WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Group #2: WELFARE

Group #3 GENDER EQUALITY - FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION (COORDINATION BUDGET-IT - TRAINING - COMMUNICATION)

The three groups will be worked on GEP audit - done and to be done + GEAM results + new proposals taking into account intersectionality issues. A second focus group of 15/20 volunteers interested in discussing the GEAM results from an intersectional perspective will take place in April to further explore the issues raised by the survey.

Finally, a third focus group will be organised with the participation of professionals who have a proactive and decision-making role within the municipality, with the aim of disseminating these important results throughout the organisation.

Questions

1. What are the most important issues concerning gender equality and gender balance in our community?
2. Which are not visible, but are very significant?
3. What are the triggers for these problems?

4. What can we learn from the results of the survey?
5. What can we do concretely and how?
6. How can we interpret the concept of gender intersection in our municipality?

Timeline of focus groups process

Focus Groups	Date of Interview	Duration	Number of participants
CUG Subgroup 1 - Work/life balance	18.03.2024	2 hours	4/5
CUG Subgroup 2 - Welfare	19.03.2024	2 hours	4/5
CUG Subgroup 3 - Gender Equality - fighting discrimination	14.03.2024	2 hours	5/5
Volunteers	TBD - April 2024		15 employees
Professionals	TBD - April/May 2024		HR, welfare, safety & health officers, psychologist, confidential advisor

BUDGET-IT

Università degli studi di Brescia (UNIBS) Italy

The University of Brescia is a medium-small university that has actively participated in various EU projects. Presently, it is a partner in the BUDGET-IT project, which includes plans for focus groups. However, based on prior experiences, the UNIBS Unit has decided against conducting focus groups. Past attempts revealed limitations due to its smaller size, resulting in a) limited participation from a small group, typically those already familiar with the subject; b) reluctance to engage due to privacy concerns among the small, closely-knit group (mutual familiarity). The smaller scale ultimately restricted the diversity and depth of insights within the focus group sessions, diminishing their overall value in communication exercises.

For these reasons, the decision was made to explore alternative research methodologies like individual interviews, quantitative surveys, or mixed-method approaches. These methods are being considered to attain a comprehensive understanding of the institutional context while overcoming the limitations previously associated with focus groups.

Considering that the University of Brescia has already initiated and developed gender budgeting tools (implemented in 2020 and approved in January 2021) and a gender equality plan (approved in 2022), and notably, the impact of the special commission established by the GEP as a specific academic body to implement the document:

The University of Brescia has initiated two gender budgeting updates, beginning the process of integrating the gender equality plan. This process has provided a comprehensive overview of gender dynamics within our organization, pinpointing challenges, and opportunities. Moreover, the positive initiatives outlined in these documents underscore the efforts made to promote gender equality.

Consequently, extensive information concerning participants' perceptions, experiences, and opinions on gender-related matters has already been assimilated into the broader framework of promoting gender equality. Reflecting on the implementation of the GEP can benefit from the wealth of data and perspectives collected through previous gender budgeting exercises, negating the necessity for additional focus groups. This not only optimizes resource utilization but also consolidates existing information to effectively steer future gender equality promotion initiatives within the Institute.

Acknowledging that implementing Gender Equality Plans is pivotal for institutional change within research organizations, our focus turns towards analysing data derived from the engagement of certain participants in the Gender Equality Plan Commission using the 'Delphi methodology'. This approach aims to better evaluate the institutional capacity for setting up and executing Gender Equality Plans (GEP).

The UNIBS Unit has opted for a modified version of the similar Delphi method involving members of the Gender Equality Plan Commission to aid in formulating our project guidelines and comprehensively assessing the mode, effort, and challenges in implementing GEP and Gender Budgeting. This approach is believed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the institutional context while mitigating the limitations associated with focus groups. Our modified version of the Delphi method consisted in two parts, and we launched during the month of January until the first days of February.

The first part of our modified Delphi method is composed by seven questions with sub-questions. We asked to focus the attention only on our university and in their role as a member of the Gender Commission, to observe and rethink the work done, especially in the phase of implementing the measures outlined in the GEP (not in the document production phase) and to highlight any connection between the reflections and a specific Area of the GEP (if it is relevant or useful). In this phase, we can note: 6 member of the Gender Commission took part. All the respondents consider the GEP as an appropriate tool for institutional transformation towards inclusion and equal consideration and respect for individuals of different genders or sexes. However, it is explicitly expressed that it cannot and should not be seen as an endpoint. Because the risk identified is that it might be only theoretically effective but not practical. It is useful to stress that during this phase of discussion it emerged that if the GEP could be considered an adequate institutional transformation tool, it adopts an approach that predominantly views genders in a binary perspective.

Regarding reflections on the involvement of leadership and administrative direction, both in terms of awareness and the actual implementation of the envisaged measures, the first critical issues emerge. It seems that there is still a perceived need to explain exactly what it is and what it can be used for (many still do not know it). Finally, another problematic aspect concerns the internal and external communication of the Gender Commission and the Institution regarding GEP actions. In general, it could be noted that the Commission has advertised initiatives to the best of its institutional capabilities. The institution has not been collaborative, limiting itself to the bare minimum without giving any prominence to either activities or results. In the second and last part of our similar Delphi method, we proposed a kind of brainstorm composed by four points. They could be summarized by four terms: persistence; nudging; awareness and institutional vertical structure.

To conclude our analysis in terms of intersectionality, it can be observed that there is a lack of female candidates in top roles within the institution, such as the position of rector. Furthermore, there is a complete lack of gender parity in committees (such as selection, parity, evaluation committees, etc.). There is an absolute absence of gender-focused analysis and reflections. In order of this, it is interesting to emphasize the importance of introducing a

mandatory collection of separate gender data in all scientific, legal, and social fields, investing in cultural change. There is also a significant gap in female representation in leadership positions, department composition, and governance. Finally, the male counterpart seems to be largely passive in addressing these issues.

BUDGET-IT

University of Belgrade Faculty of Law (UBELGRADE) Serbia

The first focus group was led by Branko Radulović (full professor and a lead project member of the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Law) with the support of Lidija Živković (assistant professor and a member of the project team of the same consortium partner) as the reporter to ensure note taking. Focus group was conducted in Serbian and was recorded for the sole purpose of the subsequent transcription. Prior to the commencement of the focus group, all the participants signed the preformulated consent forms. A contact address was provided to the participants so that any subsequent comments and suggestions could be shared.

Design of focus group

The first focus group consisted of 10 participants including the facilitator. Participants were recruited from both the academic and administrative staff of the Faculty of Law. More specifically, the focus group included 1 participant per department (6 departments in which academic staff is employed and 2 departments in which administrative/technical staff is employed) plus 2 participants who were previously responsible for the drafting of the initial GEP of the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Law (members of the academic staff).

The first focus group was intended to:
- enable participants to share their experience regarding the work on gender equality which had been conducted so far at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Law, and to discuss the benchmarks achieved so far;
- identify three gender intersectionalities which they consider to be of crucial relevance within our Institution.
- identify crucial deficiencies and pitfalls in the steps undertaken so far to address the issue of gender equality, and propose ways in which these could be overcome in the future;
- explain the hurdles (administrative, hierarchical, etc.) which they faced in trying to implement certain measures aimed at improving gender equality and inclusiveness at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Law;
- devise operative steps in implementing the outcomes of the Project within our Institution.

In order to be able to address the said topics/questions from a variety of perspectives, participants in the focus group were chosen in a way that allows for representation of different social groups. Representatives of the academic staff were chosen from different academic ranks (3 full professors, 1 associate professor, 1 assistant professor, 3 teaching assistants and 1 teaching associate). In addition, all the recruited participants had a chance to, during their previous engagement, contribute in some way to the advancement of the level of gender

equality at our Institution (e.g. publications on the topic of gender equality, drafting of the initial GEP of our Institution, participation in international projects of relevance for the issue of gender equality, etc).Both academic and administrative/technical staff were chosen from different age groups (25-70 years of age), as well as taking into account that individuals with different marital (single/married/divorced) and familial status (with dependents/without dependent family members) are represented.

Questions

The focus group questions directly address the project's overarching goals, particularly in exploring gender intersections within the specific institution.

Timeline of focus group process

The first focus group was organized 27 December 2023 and the second one on 26 March 2024. The third one is planned to take place on 11 April.

Preliminary Results

On the basis of the results of the first focus group and the outcomes of the GEAM Survey, it was decided that two additional focus groups should be organized. Each of these focus groups were decided to be organized in a way that enables more in-depth discussion on a particular previously identified gender intersectionality. The same procedural steps (i.e. informed consent, recording for the purpose of transcription, Serbian language) were followed as in the case of the first focus group.

The second focus group was led by Lidija Živković and included 4 participants. This focus group was aimed at discussing the first previously identified gender intersectionality: the intersection between gender and age, or more specifically, taking into account the internal organization of our institution: gender and rank within the hierarchical structure among academic staff (which to an extent reflects both age and educational level of a member of academic staff).

Participants for the second focus group were recruited from the strata of young female researchers employed at the Faculty of Law, since it was previously (in the first focus group) concluded that, due to the strict hierarchical organization of our institution, these individuals are at particular risk of being discriminated against. Results of the GEAM survey also showed the importance of this intersectionality. Not only was the rate of response among young researchers the highest, but they were also more inclined to explicitly identify gender related issues they are faced with.

Unlike the participants of the first group that were far more familiar with the existence and content of documents published and previous actions undertaken with the aim of improving

gender equality within our Institution, in the second focus group only one participant was familiar with these documents. Although this is understandable since the participants of the first focus group were themselves a part of various gender equality focused initiatives, it implies that the results of previous actions were not shared or disseminated in a way that would have ensured a wider reach. As a potential explanation, the participants mentioned the formalistic support to gender equality by the management of the Faculty of Law.

In order to familiarize themselves with the content of the existing GEP, participants were given time to read it and raise their concerns with respect to crucial elements thereof. Similarly to the participants in the first focus group, participants in the second focus group objected to the title of the existing GEP, as it does not adequately reflect the content of this document and is, as a result, misleading for potentially interested readers. Participants also emphasized that they do not recall any official announcement regarding the publication of these documents, nor were they provided with any kind of feedback, despite the fact that they previously participated in surveys organized at the Faculty of Law for the purpose of designing the initial GEP.

Importantly, participants emphasized that the current procedure for appointing the Commissioner for Gender Equality is inadequate as it does not guarantee that the person will be independent of the members of the management of our Institution, nor is it required that this person is sufficiently educated and has credible references in the field of gender equality research/protection. They underlined the fact that seniority needs to be a factor in the appointment process, since members of staff at lower positions do not have sufficient freedom to act on matters of relevance and are at a greater danger of experiencing a backlash. As an alternative to having a Gender Equality Commissioner, participants suggested the formation of a committee that would be responsible for addressing GE related issues. Such Committee would ideally have several (e.g. three) members, and procedures for their actions would need to be explicitly regulated in a sufficiently detailed manner.

As for the question of career progression, participants noted that, in certain instances, the advancement (i.e. promotion) of female researchers involved extra procedures that have not been required de facto (although de jure such option exists) for their male counterparts. They moreover emphasized the difference in the type of work delegated to young female research, as opposed to their male colleagues (e.g. non-creative administrative work).

Participants also noted that there is no adequate representation of women in governing bodies at the Faculty of Law. This was said to be the case not only in the case of managerial positions which are appointed from the pool of academic staff (e.g. dean and vice-deans), but also in the case of the crucial managerial positions of administrative departments (even

though the overwhelming majority of employees in these administrative departments are, in fact, women).

Participants mentioned several instances of unequal treatment related to the second intersectionality (women with childcare responsibilities). E.g. higher ranking academic staff has precedence in determining the time slots for lectures, which leaves the lower ranking staff with childcare responsibilities with fewer options to organize childcare. In addition, all the participants expressed their unwillingness to consider pregnancy prior to defending their PhD, as they feel these two are irreconcilable. They added that postponing pregnancy until after they finish their doctoral studies is also implicitly expected of them by their superiors.
Several participants also emphasized that women who are not mothers but still have caring responsibilities of a different sort (e.g. most often care for disabled or sick parents), are at an even greater disadvantage, as this type of a caring responsibility is almost completely invisible and disregarded by the Institution.

As a result of the first two focus groups as well as the outcomes of the GEAM survey, it has been decided that the third focus group should include employees with childcare responsibilities. This focus group is planned to be organized in the following weeks and the intention is to conduct it online since some of the expected participants are at this moment on parental leave. In case organizational issues are encountered, which prevent the timely organization thereof, semi-structured interviews will be conducted instead of the third focus group.

BUDGET IT

Universidad de Alicante (UA) Spain

From the University of Alicante, we conducted 2 focus groups as part of the analysis and exploration of gender intersections within the Budget It project framework. The first of these focus groups was conducted at the beginning of the project and included the entire research team from the UA involved in this project. The second focus group was conducted later in the research process and included representatives from all sections or job levels within the University of Alicante's workforce structure. This second discussion group focused on identifying specific gender intersections at UA, using data collected and information about vulnerable areas identified in the first focus group.

Design of focus Group

First focus group: June 6, 2023
This focus group took place on June 6, 2023 (12pm – 2pm) in-person. The duration of the focus group was 90 minutes, and a total of 8 people participated, all of them members of the Budget It team within the University of Alicante. It was conducted online using the Google Teams platform. Several key issues related to the project's initiation and its implications for the University of Alicante were discussed.

Facilitator of the Discussion Group
The focus groups were organized by María Concepción Torres, a professor at the University of Alicante, with the approval of the project director, Dr. Irene Bajo García.
María Concepción Torres led the focus group, assuming a supervisory role.

Data Handling and Consent
The session was recorded and later transcribed. Participants signed an official document in which they approved their participation in the focus group, the recording of the session, and their consent to the treatment of the extracted data.

Selection and Recruitment Modality
The selection of this sample refers to all individuals included in the Budget It team at the University of Alicante. Individuals were selected through direct contact via informal channels. The composition of this sample refers to the total members of the Budget It team in Alicante.

Sample Composition:

Focus Group Participants
Internal team

Focus Group Structure

The structure of this first focus group was divided into 4 main areas to initially address the project. Each of these areas incorporates a minimum of 3 questions per section. Due to the large number of questions asked, in this section we only present the sections in which they are grouped. At the end of the discussion group, a final section of much broader suggestions and key aspects to highlight was conducted.

1.- Actions carried out in the framework of the European project
2.- Discussion on areas of action and work methodologies
3.- Pending completion: Focus Group 2 and GEAM (pending validation and modification)
4.- Deliveries and documentation

Relevant information

Additionally, concrete actions were outlined to implement these tools and methodologies, along with identifying the necessary resources. These exchanges provided a solid foundation for the project's development, addressing key aspects such as strategic planning and defining responsibilities within the research team.

Second Focus Group: September 8, 2023

This second focus group took place on September 8, 2023 (13:00 to 14:30) in-person. The duration of the focus group was 72 minutes, and a total of 9 people participated, all of them employees of the University of Alicante, representing all existing job levels within the institution. The focus group was carried out in person in a specific classroom at the university's Faculty of Law.

Several key issues related to the project and its implications for the University of Alicante were discussed. Simultaneously, discussions were held regarding the most vulnerable areas concerning gender equality within the University of Alicante. The exploration of gender intersections within the institution was particularly relevant.

Facilitator of the Discussion Group

The focus groups were organized by María Concepción Torres, a professor at the University of Alicante, with the approval of the project director, Dr. Irene Bajo García.
Pablo Martínez Rico led the focus group, assuming a supervisory role.

Data Handling and Consent

The session was recorded and later transcribed. Participants signed an official document in which they approved their participation in the focus group, the recording of the session, and their consent to the treatment of the extracted data.

BUDGET IT

Recruitment

In order to obtain a sample as representative as possible of the actual workforce structure of the University of Alicante, a preliminary study was first conducted to analyse the total number of faculties within the university as well as the different job levels existing in the institution. Based on this, the Budget It team contacted the representatives (vice deans for equality of each of the faculties within UA) of each faculty to invite them to participate in the discussion group.

At the same time, profiles were sought out for representative job levels. Faculty representatives were contacted via institutional email, inviting them to attend the discussion group or to delegate their participation to someone representative of their faculty involved in equality matters. The aim was to ensure that, beyond the university's repetition in all faculties, there was an expert in gender for each of the different job levels within the workforce structure at the University of Alicante.

Sample Composition:

Focus Group Participants by Job Levels
1 Rector/decanal representative.   1 PAS representative   1 PDI representative   1 PhD representative   1 Student representative   1 Representative member of the budget it team   1 Associate faculty representative   1 Researcher representative   1 Doctoral student representative

It is also worth noting that in the gender composition within the focus group, the vast majority of participation in the focus group discussion was from females. The gender distribution in the focus group was as follows:

Focus Group Participation by Gender	
Men	Women
22.22%	78,88%

The focus group consisted of individuals representing diverse age demographics, with participants categorized into three main age groups: young adults aged 18 to 39, middle-aged

adults aged 40 to 65, and older adults aged over 65. This ensured representation across different age brackets. Additionally, participants' marital statuses varied, including individuals who were single, married, or divorced, and their family situations encompassed those with and without dependent family members.

Focus Group Structure

Before commencing the focus group, a brief introduction was given about the topics to be discussed and data handling. Subsequently, a presentation was conducted which outlined the project, the role of UA within Budget It, and provided a brief explanation about gender budgeting in general, as well as gender intersections in particular.

Questions

To analyse the study topic, the session was divided into 3 areas of analysis, each with several questions (Sample questions):

Area 1: Intersection

Can you share personal experiences or those of acquaintances regarding specific instances of gender discrimination at the University of Alicante?

Area 2: Discrimination in Admission. Presentation of data and relevant information.

Have you ever encountered additional obstacles during the college admissions process?

What would you say are the main challenges you perceive due to your gender status within UA?

Area 3: Discrimination in the Academic Environment

What is your opinion on the impact of discrimination on women's academic performance?

At what stage of your educational journey, based on your experiences at all levels, have you felt gender discrimination?

Relevant Information

Several interesting themes emerged from the discussions. The main ones included difficulty in balancing work and home life, the glass ceiling, working conditions, increased challenges in pursuing an academic career, and workplace treatment. Finally, various gender intersections were identified to be incorporated into the project.

Once this discussion group was completed, several clear gender intersections were identified at UA. Of these, the 3 most relevant and impactful on the institution were prioritized to be addressed in this project. Intersections Detected:

Women and disabilities

Women and attaining managerial positions

Women and motherhood within the university environment

BUDGET-IT

Timeline of focus group process

First focus group took place on June 6, 2023 (12pm – 2pm) in-person. This second focus group took place on September 8, 2023 (13:00 to 14:30) in-person.

Preliminary results

1- Enhanced Monitoring of Gender Actions: There is a suggestion for the University of Alicante to intensify the monitoring of gender-related actions to evaluate the effectiveness of equality policies and identify areas for improvement in implementing specific measures aimed at promoting gender equality.

2- Centralized Unit for Gender Studies: A proposal has been made for the establishment of a centralized unit at UA to coordinate and promote all gender studies, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and ensuring a comprehensive approach to understanding gender issues within the university.

3- Addressing Specific Intersectionalities: The identification of specific intersectionalities, such as disability, motherhood, and challenges in accessing managerial positions, highlights the need for targeted measures to address these areas and ensure greater equal opportunities for all members of the university community.

4- Work-Life Balance Policies: Improving work-life balance policies for female staff at UA is crucial, recognizing the importance of balancing professional and personal responsibilities to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment conducive to the well-being of all employees.

5- In-Depth Research on LGTBI+ Experiences: There is a call for in-depth research into the experiences and challenges faced by the LGTBI+ community at the University of Alicante, aiming to promote inclusion and diversity across all aspects of university life and ensure a supportive environment for all students and staff.

6- Addressing Ethnic Minority Experiences: It is essential to address the experiences and challenges of ethnic minorities at UA, promoting inclusion and equal opportunities for all members of the university community, thus fostering a more diverse and welcoming university environment.

7- Mentoring and Support Programs for Female Students: Recommendations include the implementation of mentoring and support programs specifically targeted at female students, particularly in areas where they have historically been underrepresented, to empower them and enhance their academic success.

8- Workplace Inclusion Policies: Proposals include establishing workplace inclusion policies that promote gender diversity and pay equity at all levels of the University of Alicante, ensuring fair and equal opportunities for professional advancement for all employees irrespective of gender.

9- Awareness and Training Campaigns: Suggestions involve conducting awareness and training campaigns on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the university

environment, targeting both students and administrative and service staff, to foster a more inclusive and respectful university culture that celebrates diversity.

10- Promotion of Intersectional Perspectives: Advocating for the integration of intersectional perspectives in academic curricula and research agendas to ensure a more holistic understanding of gender issues and their intersections with other social identities.

11- Development of Diversity Initiatives: Recommendations include the development of diversity initiatives that actively involve the participation of students, staff, and stakeholders in decision-making processes to create a more inclusive and equitable university environment.

12- Collaboration with External Partners: Emphasizing the importance of collaboration with external partners, including NGOs, government agencies, and community organizations, to leverage resources and expertise in promoting gender equality and diversity initiatives within the University of Alicante and beyond.

The University of Alicante utilized focus groups to analyse its workforce structure and detect gender intersections within the Budget It project framework. Two focus groups were conducted, involving representatives from various job levels and age groups. The discussions explored gender-related challenges and identified key intersections within the institution. The findings highlighted issues such as work-life balance, career advancement barriers, and gender discrimination. These insights informed strategic planning and initiatives aimed at addressing gender inequalities within UA.

Municipality of Stari Grad (MOGS) Serbia

The City Municipality of Stari Grad conducted focus groups with the aim of mapping important issues for advancing gender equality in the Stari Grad municipality and developing a new Gender Equality Plan (GEP). The focus group took place on Friday, November 3, in the space of the Department for social affairs and development projects, organized and led by Snežana Vuković. Participants signed an official document consenting to their participation in the focus group and providing informed consent for the processing of collected data. The second focus group was held on March 7, 2024, in order to analyse the current situation in the field of gender equality, organized and led by Snežana Vuković, in the space of the Department for social affairs and development projects.

Design of focus group

The focus group consisted of a total of 19 individuals, representing various key areas within the activities of the city municipality of Stari Grad (officials, employees, appointed individuals, and those in responsible positions). Representatives of the Stari Grad municipality, members of the Working Group for drafting the Local Action Plan for the advancement of gender equality in the city municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026, appointed by the City Council of Stari Grad, and experts engaged in the project for developing the new Local Action Plan for gender equality in the Stari Grad municipality for the period 2024-2026 (GEP), were present at the focus group.

The public discussion ended in mid-January. The GEAM survey was completed in the meantime, so the obtained data were analysed and the final draft of the GEP was completed. The second focus group was held on March 7, 2024, in order to analyse the current situation in the field of gender equality. The focus group was organized and led by Snežana Vuković, in the space of the Department for social affairs and development projects. The focus group consisted of a total of 15 persons (officials, officials, appointed and responsible persons), representatives of the City Municipality of Stari Grad, members of the Working Group for the preparation of the Local Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in the City Municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026, which appointed Stari Grad City Council, experts engaged in the project of developing a new Local Action Plan for Gender Equality in the territory of the Stari Grad Municipality for the period 2024- 2026 (GEP) and employees. Participants signed an official document consenting to their participation in the focus group and providing informed consent for the processing of collected data.

Questions

The questions of the focus group directly relate to the comprehensive goals of the project, particularly in analysing the respect for gender equality within institutions and throughout the

territory of the Stari Grad municipality. All this is aimed at creating a new Local Action Plan (GEP). Collecting relevant data for the GEP is one of the key activities in the planning document development process. The data collection process includes identifying key local actors responsible for implementing policies and measures for improving gender equality, analysing existing data, identifying priority areas, workshops and roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, and questionnaire completion, meetings of the Working Group, Council for Gender Equality and engaged experts, etc.

The topics of the focus group were:
- Are gender equality taken into account and to what extent?
- Will the adoption of a plan for gender equality change anything?
- What should we do to create more equality?

Working Group for Local Action Plan

The Working Group, in collaboration with the Council for Gender Equality and engaged experts under the BUDGET IT project, is tasked with creating a planning document and undertaking all activities for its adoption by the Stari Grad Municipal Assembly.

Data Collection for the Local Action Plan (GEP)

Collecting relevant data for the GEP is one of the key activities in the planning document development process. The data collection process includes:

- Identifying key local actors responsible for implementing policies and measures for improving gender equality.
- Analysing existing data.
- Identifying priority areas.
- Workshops and roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, and questionnaire completion.
- Meetings of the Working Group, Council for Gender Equality, and engaged experts. The collected data is categorized into demographic and geographical data and data on gender equality in priority areas.

Strategic and operational planning involves defining the general goals of the Local Action Plan for gender equality and specific goals for each priority area. For each specific goal, activities, expected results, indicators, stakeholders, and participants in activity implementation are defined. This phase also includes defining mechanisms for monitoring implementation and conducting evaluations of achieved results, through specifying verification sources for each activity. The output of this phase is the Draft GEP.

When developing the Local Action Plan (GEP) for advancing gender equality, special consideration is given to the principles of gender equality outlined in the European Charter for Gender Equality at the local level:

- Equality between women and men is a fundamental right.
- To guarantee gender equality, issues of multiple discrimination and handicap must be addressed.
- Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes is a precondition for a democratic society.
- Eliminating gender stereotypes is crucial for achieving equality between women and men.
- Inclusion of a gender perspective in all activities of local and regional authorities is necessary in the process of improving gender equality.
- Action plans and programs with adequate funding are essential tools for enhancing gender equality.

The focus group addressed the following issues:

- Analysis of the impact of gender equality in priority areas (geographical and demographic structure, socio-economic development, education, employment, health, safety and social protection, respect for gender equality within the municipality).
- Creating a questionnaire to be distributed to employees in the city municipality of Stari Grad.
- Strategy for drafting the Local Action Plan for gender equality in the city municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026.
- Analysis of questionnaire results in the process of developing the Local Action Plan for gender equality in the city municipality of Stari Grad.

Timeline of focus group process

The focus group took place on Friday, November 3, 2023, and the second focus group was held on March 7, 2024.

Preliminary Results

The City Municipality of Stari Grad has already analysed all information gathered from the focus groups. Important issues related to improving gender equality have been analysed in the draft Local Action Plan for gender equality in the City municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026 (GEP). The plan has been completed and forwarded for public discussion preceding the adoption of the public policy document. A public invitation has been issued to representatives of institutions and organizations, associations, economic entities, expert communities, and other interested parties to participate in the public discussion on the Draft

Local Action Plan for gender equality in the City municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026.

The City Municipality of Stari Grad has accepted the suggestions and proposals of the focus groups and the Working Group for the preparation of the Local Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality in the City Municipality of Stari Grad for the period 2024-2026 and Gender Equality Council, and acts in the field of gender equality are in the process of being adopted.

Ayuntamiento de Novelda (NOVEL) Spain

In Novelda, two focus groups were conducted as part of this initial phase of the research. In order to accurately analyse the gender situation within the municipal team and adequately detect existing gender intersections within the organization, a single but highly representative focus group was initially considered. However, due to the demand for participation in the focus group, the decision was made to create a second focus group that would replicate the first in all aspects. We believe that the ideal maximum number of participants per focus group is nine people, but since 17 people wanted to participate, it was decided to conduct two focus groups with identical structures. To facilitate the composition of the group, the profiles of potential participants were analysed, and one focus group was conducted for the management and coordination levels, while another with the same structure was conducted for the basic levels.

Focus group facilitator

The focus groups were organized by Ana María Navarro, Agent for Equality of the City Council of Novelda, with the approval of the Councillor for Equality and Cooperation, Paqui Beltrá Navarro. An external technician specialized in sociology and gender led the focus group, assuming a supervisory role.

Data Handling and Consent

Partial textual transcription was conducted by the sociologist leading the group. The participants consenting to data handling and being briefed on anonymization.

Participants were actively engaged in granting explicit consent for the proper handling of their data, ensuring that their privacy and confidentiality were respected throughout the process. Additionally, they were thoroughly briefed on the procedures for data anonymization, providing them with a clear understanding of how their information would be safeguarded, while partial textual transcription was conducted by the sociologist leading the group.

Selection and Recruitment Modality

For the composition of the sample and the recruitment of participants to participate in the focus group, the official channels of the city council were chosen. Initially, a circular was distributed to all responsible individuals in the internal areas. Later, the same invitation was sent to all employees to increase the number of participants and make it as representative as possible. In this circular, all municipal staff were informed and invited to participate, with particular emphasis on those in positions or roles tangential to gender equality.

Participation was close to 40% of the municipal team, which represents a notable number of participants in terms of the total representativeness of the institution.

Sample Composition

BUDGET IT

The first focus group was conducted with the specialized team in the field of equality, specifically organized by the Novelda City Council. It took place on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at the Department of Equality of the City Council. A total of 8 individuals participated in the focus group: The Deputy Mayor, the Councillor for Equality, two equality technicians from the Novelda City Council, a representative of local workers specialized in gender, an administration technician responsible for carrying out actions related to equality, a manager responsible for training among municipal staff, and a representative of non-civil servant municipal workers.

Participants	Position within the institution.
1 Participant	Deputy Mayor
1 Participant	Councilwoman for Equality
2 Participants	Two Equality Technicians from Novelda City Hall
1 Participant	Representative of local workers specialized in gender issues
1 Participant	Administration Technician in charge of carrying equality actions
1 Participant	Officer in charge of training among municipal staff
1 Participant	Representative of permanent non-civil servant municipal workers

The second focus group was conducted with the overall municipal workforce. It took place on Thursday, November 20, in a venue at the Department of Equality of the City Council. The focus group comprised one worker representative from each of the areas delineated within the municipality of Novelda. Given the numerous council departments, they were consolidated into 9 areas, enhancing the inclusivity of the representation of all employees.

Participants	Department or Council
1 Participant, worker of…	Councils of General Services.
1 Participant, worker of…	Gardener and lawn and garden service
2 Participants, workers of…	Urban Planning and Environment.
1 Participant, worker of…	Culture and Heritage.
1 Participant, worker of…	Education and Youth.
1 Participant, worker of…	Social Welfare and Health.
1 Participant, worker of…	Sports and Leisure.
1 Participant, worker of…	Councils of Citizen Participation and Transparency.

It is worth noting that in both focus groups, the representation of females compared to males is above 80% in both cases, which is a significant aspect to consider in this research.

Focus Group Structure

Before commencing, participants were briefed on the project's objectives, the purpose of the focus group, and how their data would be handled. A 15-minute presentation was conducted, outlining the Budget It project, gender budgeting, and specifically, what gender intersections are and how to identify them.

Questions

As for the questions that make up the focus group, it was divided into blocks. The first refers to the performance of daily life in the municipality of Novelda, while the second block refers to the scope of work activities within the city council itself (sample questions):

Block 1 Municipal daily life

How do they assess the response of the community and local authorities to gender discrimination in Novelda, and what suggestions do they have for improving the situation?

How does gender discrimination affect interpersonal relationships in Novelda, and what measures do you suggest promoting gender equality in the social sphere?

What suggestions do you have for improving gender equality in social interactions within the municipality?

Block 2 Work activities within the city council

In the context of Novelda City Council's activities and functions, how do gender dynamics influence decision-making and the equal participation of women and men?

What measures do you suggest promoting greater equality in these specific areas?

How do you perceive intersections of gender with other factors such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or age influencing decision-making processes within the activities and functions of the Novelda City Council?

Additional Question

Are there any specific instances or examples of gender discrimination in Novelda that you would like to highlight? *Suggestions and clarifications

Timeline of focus group process

The first focus group was conducted with the specialized team in the field of equality, specifically organized by the Novelda City Council. It took place on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at the Department of Equality of the City Council.

The second focus group was conducted with the overall municipal workforce. It took place on Thursday, November 20, 2023, in a venue at the Department of Equality of the City Council.

Preliminary results

After analysing the data from both focus groups collectively and employing a content analysis methodology using the ATLAS.ti program, a series of preliminary results have emerged. These findings have been instrumental in comprehensively examining the study phenomenon and extracting gender intersections:

1. There is a pressing need to encourage men's active involvement in caregiving for the elderly in Novelda. By promoting shared responsibilities in eldercare, we can alleviate the disproportionate burden placed on women and foster a more equitable distribution of caregiving duties within families. This initiative aims to promote family co-responsibility, enhance gender equality, and support women's participation in the workforce by relieving them of the sole responsibility for caregiving tasks.

2. It is essential to prioritize the development of women's sports programs in Novelda. By creating inclusive sports initiatives tailored to women, we can address existing barriers to participation and promote physical activity among women of all ages and backgrounds. Enhancing women's access to sports facilities, organizing female-focused sports events, and providing coaching and mentorship opportunities can contribute to improving women's health, well-being, and empowerment in the community.

3. There is an urgent need to strengthen measures to prevent and address gender-based harassment in Novelda. By implementing comprehensive strategies to combat harassment in public spaces, workplaces, and educational institutions, we can ensure the safety and well-being of all residents, particularly women and marginalized groups. This includes raising awareness, providing training on bystander intervention, and establishing robust reporting mechanisms to support victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

4. Specific programs and support services are required to facilitate the social and economic integration of immigrant women in Novelda. By offering language classes, job training, and cultural orientation programs tailored to immigrant women's needs, we can promote their inclusion and empowerment within the community. These initiatives aim to break down barriers to integration, foster diversity, and celebrate the contributions of immigrant women to the local economy and society.

5. It is essential to empower women from ethnic minorities, such as the Roma community, to actively participate in community life and decision-making processes in Novelda. By providing targeted support, advocacy, and leadership development opportunities for women from marginalized backgrounds, we can promote their representation, amplify their voices, and address systemic inequalities. This initiative aims to build bridges across communities, promote social cohesion, and advance equity and social justice.

6. Creating sisterhood spaces is crucial to strengthen the support network among women in Novelda. By establishing safe and inclusive spaces where women can connect, share

experiences, and support each other, we can promote solidarity, mutual assistance, and empowerment within the community. These sisterhood spaces serve as platforms for advocacy, collective action, and the celebration of women's achievements, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience among women in Novelda.

7. Implementing an early action plan in schools is essential to address gender inequality from a young age in Novelda. By integrating gender equality education into the curriculum, promoting positive role models, and challenging gender stereotypes, we can foster inclusive learning environments and empower students to become agents of change. This initiative aims to lay the foundation for a more equitable society by promoting respect, diversity, and equal opportunities for all children.

8. Promoting policies that encourage women's representation in leadership positions and decision-making bodies is critical for advancing gender equality in Novelda. By implementing measures such as gender quotas, mentorship programs, and leadership training initiatives, we can increase women's participation in governance and ensure their voices are heard in shaping local policies and programs. This initiative aims to create more inclusive and responsive institutions that reflect the diversity of the community and promote women's rights and interests.

9. There is a need for mentoring and professional development programs tailored to women in Novelda. By providing women with access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and skills development workshops, we can support their personal and professional growth, enhance their confidence and resilience, and empower them to pursue leadership roles and career advancement opportunities. These programs aim to address barriers to women's career progression, promote gender diversity in the workforce, and build a pipeline of female talent in the municipality.

10. Ensuring access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services is essential for women's well-being and autonomy in Novelda. By providing information, counselling, and healthcare services that are respectful, confidential, and rights-based, we can empower women to make informed decisions about their bodies and lives. This initiative aims to promote reproductive rights, prevent gender-based violence, and improve women's overall health outcomes in the community.

11. Implementing work-life balance policies is crucial to support working women in Novelda. By offering flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and childcare support, we can help women juggle their professional and caregiving responsibilities more effectively. These policies aim to reduce gender disparities in the workplace, promote women's economic empowerment, and create a more inclusive and family-friendly work environment.

12. Promoting education in equality values from an early age is vital to fostering a culture of respect and inclusion in Novelda. By integrating gender equality into school curricula, promoting non-discriminatory practices, and challenging stereotypes and prejudices, we can empower young people to become advocates for gender justice and social

change. This initiative aims to create a more equitable and harmonious society where everyone has equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender.

13. Strengthening local partnerships to amplify gender equality initiatives in Novelda, fostering collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community groups.

14. Developing gender-sensitive urban planning and infrastructure in Novelda is essential to create safe and inclusive public spaces for all residents. By incorporating features such as well-lit streets, accessible transportation, and gender-neutral facilities, we can enhance the safety and accessibility of public spaces for women, children, and marginalized groups. This initiative aims to promote social inclusion, prevent gender-based violence, and improve the overall quality of life in the municipality. Training of professionals to improve the care for women in vulnerable situations in Novelda, ensuring a gender-sensitive and prejudice-free approach in providing support and assistance.

Additional Information

After conducting an exhaustive qualitative content analysis of all the insights extracted from these focus groups, we can assert that Novelda, despite being a relatively small municipality, undertakes numerous actions aimed at gender equality. However, three main intersections or factors of double discrimination have been identified within the municipal team:

1. Women and elderly care: Despite efforts towards gender equality, there's a prevalent trend where women bear the primary responsibility for elderly care in Novelda. This imbalance in caregiving roles may hinder women's participation in other areas of life and professional advancement.

2. Women and sports success: While Novelda promotes gender equality in various spheres, there's a noticeable gap in the realm of sports success, where women face barriers in achieving recognition and support compared to their male counterparts. This disparity underscores the need for initiatives to level the playing field for female athletes.

3. Women and migration: Within the municipal team, women belonging to migrant communities often face compounded discrimination due to their gender and immigrant status. This intersectional experience highlights the necessity of addressing the unique challenges faced by migrant women in accessing resources and opportunities within Novelda."