

FESTA-GARCIA joint conference

Bruxelles

7-8 November 2016

The two EU sister projects on gender equality in academia FESTA and GARCIA are happy to invite you to their joint conference in Bruxelles in November 2016.

We will launch a broader discussion on gender equality initiatives, focusing on their effectiveness and possible future developments.

Some of the topics will be:

- Raising awareness on gender practices through data collection and analysis
- The notion of excellence and its relation to gender
- Communication, decision-making and gender

Registration details and more information can be found at:

www.FESTA-EUROPA.eu

For more information please visit our website:

www.FESTA-EUROPA.eu



Female Empowerment in
Science and Technology Academia



Who is FESTA?

Uppsala University, Sweden
University of Southern Denmark
RWTH Aachen University, Germany
University of Limerick, Ireland
Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Italy
Istanbul Technical University, Turkey
South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Bulgaria



RWTH AACHEN
UNIVERSITY



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FESTA update

FESTA is an EU project running five years from February 2012 until January 2017. FESTA has received funding from the European Union, Seventh Framework Programme, FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2011-1, under grant agrm287526.

What is FESTA about?

The objective of FESTA is to foster the full potential of the entire academic workforce.

FESTA is a change project. While implementing change in the participating organizations, the change processes are recorded and analyzed in order to become effective tools for other organizations in the future.

The aim of the change processes developed in FESTA is to create a well-functioning working environment that values and nurtures the competencies of a diverse workforce and allows individuals to fulfill their potential.

In FESTA, focus is on gender related issues and the ultimate goal is to increase the participation of women in high level research and decision making in academia.

We find the working environment of researchers in the lower levels of their careers particularly interesting, because it is from this level advancement to the ranks of highest scientific expertise takes flight.

We look into the daily environment of researchers: formal and informal decision making processes, meeting cultures, PhD supervision, perceptions of excellence in hiring processes and in the work environment, and at resistance to equality measures.

Preliminary results

– always look at the practical side of life...

In the following you can find selected themes and findings of the FESTA project. You can read the full reports at the FESTA website: www.FESTA-EUROPA.eu

The myth of excellence in academia

It is a myth that academic excellence is a gender neutral standard based on scientific achievements. It can be seen as a central mechanism in how gender inequality is reproduced in academia. It is possible to change this with awareness:

- Train committee members to be aware of gender bias and gender-sensitive criteria
- Increase transparency in hiring processes

Change means resistance – how to deal with it?

Resistance is an inevitable part of change processes. For people who aim to foster cultural change it is useful to understand barriers and how to act to reduce or counter them. One part of the FESTA project aims to unfold and understand resistance towards structural change for gender equality and on this basis to devise strategies and actions that deal successfully with resistance.

This will result in a handbook addressing strategies to deal with resistance in gender projects in academia to be published in November 2016. It will be based on cases of resistance recorded during the FESTA project. The handbook will be a useful tool for researchers involved in gender equality projects.

A toolkit to raise gender awareness

No toolkit on how to implement gender change is a *one-size-fits-all*. Individual contexts are of vital importance when we want to make changes and raise awareness.

However, a FESTA toolkit does provide information and inspiration on a practical and applicable level, by giving tips and practical information on how to conduct data-supported dialogues on how to improve the gender balance in academic environments – from which data to collect, how to present it and how to plan and facilitate dialogues and debates in order to come up with policies and plans.

The primary target group is gender and HR practitioners, who are in a situation where they know action has to be taken in order to effect change at different levels in the way organizations deal with gender inequality and imbalance, but find practices and examples hard to come by.

Gendering decision making and communication

Recommendations of the FESTA project concerning gender sensitive decision making and communication processes can help raise awareness in specific contexts:

Here are a few examples of recommendations elaborated in this report:

- Publish gender data of your organization
- Establish an independent equality committee
- Train decision makers in gender awareness
- Encourage women's participation in management positions.