

Gender Equality Plan at the University of Banja Luka

Website: <https://unibl.org/en/news/2021/12/gender-equality-action-plan-at-the-university-of-banja-luka-adopted>

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Geographical focus: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Scientific field/Thematic focus: Cross-thematic/Interdisciplinary

What is the good practice about?

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) at the University of Banja Luka (UNIBL) for the period 2022-2026 has been developed as a result of the UNIBL team's effort and management commitment to bringing institutional change and fostering gender equality. It is based on the first-ever gender equality audit conducted throughout 2021 at UNIBL and it used an adjusted combination of methodologies for GEP audit and development from different projects (such as PLOTINA, SAGE etc.).

GEP at UNIBL represents a starting point for continuous improvement and regular monitoring of gender equality at UNIBL. It has been endorsed not only by UNIBL top management but also by the Senate (gathering Deans of the Faculties, student representatives and the top management) as well as by the Gender Equality Advisory Board at the UNIBL (appointed in September 2021).

Why is this initiative needed?

UNIBL had no analysis of the current state of affairs in terms of gender equality prior to engaging in the gender equality audit and subsequent GEP development in 2021. A dedicated team at UNIBL suggested to top management that there is no knowledge of the current situation, and in light of the HR Excellence in Research logo that has been awarded to UNIBL, as well as in light of the requirements of the Horizon Europe participation, the top management decided that there should be a detailed analysis of the situation followed by a plan for action.

What are the main objectives?

The main objective of GEP at UNIBL was to define the mechanisms and actions for improvement of gender equality at the institutional level, based on the gender equality audit conducted.

What are the main activities?

The activities towards the development of GEP included the following steps after there was a commitment by top management to dive into this endeavour: 1) Setting up a "task force" for GEP audit and development; 2) Obtaining funding from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of B&H through grant (support to



ongoing H2020 project WBC-RRI.NET), 3) Team of 4 dedicated persons at different levels and with different tasks established, 4) Exploring the landscape and useful examples/tools (GEAR, SAGE, PLOTINA), 5) Obtaining advice and support – Centre for Social Innovations (ZSI), Vienna, 6) Taking part at events to exchange knowledge and experience (Gender Equality Event, July 2021, WBC-RRI.NET), 7) Conducting gender equality audit (quantitative check and qualitative interviews with employees + legal documents analysis), 8) Drafting of the Gender Equality Plan with specific actions under 6 domains (Institutional setting; Work-life balance and organisational culture; Gender balance in leadership and decision-making; Gender equality in recruitment and career progression; Integration of gender dimension into research and teaching content; Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment), 9) Having the draft GEP reviewed by internal (Gender Equality Advisory Board) and external (ZSI) parties, 10) Finalizing the GEP and 11) Adoption by the Senate and publishing at UNIBL website.

Who is involved?

The top management has been involved from the very beginning (in the planning phase) by committing the resources for gender equality audit and GEP development. The employees at UNIBL have been involved as interviewees, but through the interviews, they had the possibility not only to describe their views of the current state of gender equality at UNIBL but also to provide their ideas and opinions on what should be done for improvement of the situation.

The Gender Equality Advisory Board provided comments and suggestions to the draft GEP and they will be actively involved in the implementation of the designed activities of the GEP. The Senate was involved in the final part of the process, adopting the GEP as an official document of UNIBL. Our partners, ZSI, have been actively engaged in the process as support for the development of the methodology and approach, sharing their knowledge and experiences, and providing comments on the draft versions of the gender equality audit and GEP.

Can this good practice be replicated?

UNIBL is available to share the experience in conducting gender equality audit and subsequent GEP development, provide advice on what to avoid while planning and developing the methodology (based on our own mistakes), and what to bear in mind when conducting qualitative interviews and analysing them, how to approach the stakeholders and have them involved (especially the decision-makers) etc.

It can be done through one-on-one consultations/meetings or through the development of a "best practices and mistakes to avoid" manual (maybe together with others who have gone through the same process) bearing in mind some of the specifics of the public universities in B&H/WB.

GEP at UNIBL (and gender equality audit) are publicly available in both English and the local language. However, one has to bear in mind that it is a document developed for a university with around 15000 students and around 1400 employees and the approach to gender equality audit and GEP actions might be different than for larger or smaller size organizations.



More information about the necessary resources is available and contacts with the project promoters can be established in case of interest!

Further links:

- ⇒ GEP at UNIBL (bilingual):
https://unibl.org/uploads/files/strane/ostali_akti/Gender%20Equality%20Plan%20-%20Akcioni%20plan%20za%20rodnu%20ravnopravnost%202022-2026.pdf
- ⇒ Gender equality audit (bilingual):
https://unibl.org/uploads/files/strane/ostali_akti/Gender%20Equality%20Audit%20-%20Analiza%20stanja%20rodne%20ravnopravnosti.pdf
- ⇒ <https://unibl.org/en/news/2021/12/gender-equality-action-plan-at-the-university-of-banja-luka-adopted>

Relevant RRI keys: Gender Equality in Research and Innovation (R&I)

Type of practice: Dedicated plan, strategy document (e.g., Gender Equality Plan, Open Access Strategy, etc.)

Target groups: researchers (starting from PhD-candidates, on the individual level), universities, research performing organisations, research administration

