

Regional Project

Female Academic Role Model Empowerment, Equality and Sustainability at Universities in Mediterranean Region toward Agenda 2030 ("FREE")

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education
598524-EPP-1-2018-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP



**External Monitoring
Report #1**

Consultant: EN POSITIVA. Grupo de Trabajo en Evaluación e Investigación Social
Date of submission: 30th April, 2020



Female Academic Role Model Empowerment, Equality and Sustainability at Universities in Mediterranean Region toward Agenda 2030 ("FREE")

External Monitoring Report #1

1 – IDENTIFICATION

Reported Period: 06/2019-03/2020	
Submission Date: 30/04/2020	
M&E expert: María Sarabia-Barquero	
Attached Files: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consolidated Baseline ▪ Consolidated and updated registration too ▪ Consolidated and updated results framework ▪ Presentation. M&E Workshop 	Annex: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Project’s Logic of Intervention B. Institutional reports. Synthesis of findings, conclusions and recommendations C. Training Conceptual Map D. Overview courses, sessions and submission status E. Quarterly monitoring report template F. Questionnaire for the appraisal of Online Courses

2- PRESENTATION

This document is the first of five external monitoring reports on the implementation of the Regional Project *Female Academic Role Model Empowerment, Equality and Sustainability at Universities in Mediterranean Region toward Agenda 2030* (hereafter Project FREE). The elaboration of the above-mentioned reports is part of the Project's External Monitoring System (EMS) proposal, which was foreseen under WP7 "Management & Quality Assurance".

In contrast to the internal quality control,¹ the external monitoring is the continual and systematic data/information collection to track how the Project implementation is progressing and whether objective/results are being achieved in using allocated funds. To facilitate effective and coherent monitoring of the Project within the development results-based management framework (RBM), minimal adjustments have been made in its design to align its programmatic content with a plausible Intervention Logic² (IL) that would allow this management approach. Annex A presents the IL that supports the Project’s RBM and around which the external monitoring of the implementation is structured

1 The internal quality control (WP5) has the specific purpose of insuring that the work packages activities are managed implemented with no deviation from the original plan in terms of budgeting and the schedule set for execution of the tasks and activities of the project. The internal quality control defines the quality expectations the Project and its activities that must be achieved in order to ensure the quality of the inputs at short and long term impacts.

2 The Intervention Logic (IL) graphically illustrates the Project’s activities, outputs, specific objectives (outcomes) and wider objectives (impact) that are linked with each other and represent the results chain. The IL provides a blueprint for a theoretical “optimal” intervention against which the actual implementation of the Project can be assessed. See annex A.



After presenting the context and overview of the Project implementation, the **External Monitoring Report #1** takes up the logic of the IL to present progress, challenges and recommendations in the three dimensions monitored at the outcome level (specific objectives):

- SO.1. Individual dimension. Female academics and professional's empowered at the targeted HEIs
- SO.2. Institutional dimension. HEIs committed to promote and to implement an institutional culture of gender egalitarianism
- SO.3. Partnerships dimension. Partnerships and research networks on gender issues strengthened (national and supra-national)

This first report covers the period June/2019- March/2020 of the Project FREE implementation. Its content has been elaborated from the data provided by the HEIs in the SMR through the monitoring tool (Register Tool, and the information available in the virtual platform of the Project. The information, guidance and explanations provided by the Project Coordination Team have complemented the inputs that have given concrete form to this report.

3 - OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The first monitoring report corresponds to the installation phase of the Project and the implementation of WP1. During this period, the focus and priority of the Project has been on generating a solid and shared working structure among its implementing partners to contribute to the results proposed by the Intervention. Part of the work has been setting up the common procedures and work processes, forging the necessary relationships of mutual trust among all the partners to generate synergies in the Mediterranean region, developing the work plans of the cross-cutting components -quality plan, external monitoring system and dissemination plan-. From the programmatic point of view, the Project has focused on completing of the process the HEIs institutional diagnosis, a key component for the subsequent phase of the Project center on strengthening of individual, collective and institutional capacities in SMR partner institutions.

Based on the information gathered through the **Registration Tool**, some relevant aspects are pointed out that show the "internal" work trends characteristic of the first phases of a Project. In the monitored period (10 months) a total of 9 events organized within the framework of the Project are reported. 5 of these events are technical meetings directly linked to coordination aspects of the Project. Without counting the NEO field mission, only three cases seem to involve external actors of the Project. Only in two of these cases contacts to establish alliances with other organizations/institutions are mentioned (RESUFF and Center for Career, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at LU) In these last events with external actors, the number of participants was 52, of those 41 were women

As shown in Figure A, the Project has a sequential implementation structure: the institutional diagnoses - already carried out - provide the necessary information to develop the capacity building component based on the needs detected and on the analysis. The diagnosis findings should also provide inputs for advocacy processes and evidence on which to build future alliances and collaborations with external actors.

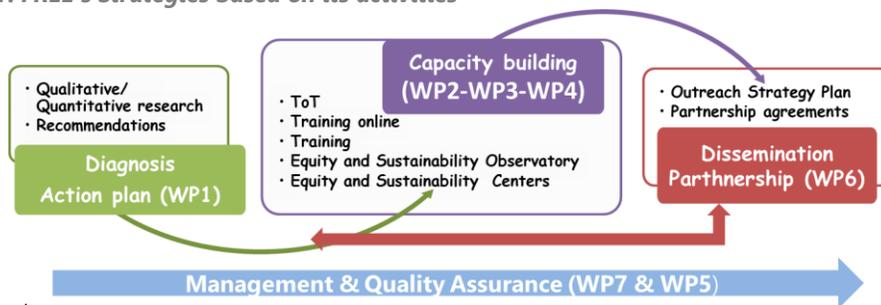
The capacity building component is a central axis of the Project FREE. Although dissemination events have been held, lobbying work has begun within the institutions, most courses have been designed, the capacity building



component (WP-2) has not yet started to be implemented³. This fact implies, on the one hand, the difficulty of presenting in this first report sustained assessments on the Project progress in the three dimensions at outcome level pointed out in the presentation. On the other hand, it implies directing the analysis towards the products (outputs) carried out to date in their future contribution to the Project's objective.

If this type of sequentially in the execution phases is feasible, coherent and aims at a greater relevance for the set of actions executed throughout the Project implementation, it also tends to have the disadvantage of slowing down the execution in its first phase and generating uncertainties about its effectiveness until the initial phases are completed. This sequence - or piped structure - condenses in the last period of the Project implementation a good part of the achievements and elements of sustainability, although there may be significant progress in both aspects (results/sustainability) before completing the axis of the Project

Illustration 1: FREE's Strategies based on its activities



Source: Own Elaboration

This implementation logic explains in part the feedback to the Project Coordination by the National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) on the occasion of the field monitoring visit at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon (19/12/2019). Not surprisingly, the monitoring team did not identify concrete results at individual/institutional level, nor did they identify elements already solidly established that would point to the future sustainability of the Project - quality of the trainings, Equality and Sustainability Centres and the Observatory - foreseen for more advanced phases of implementation.

Table 1. Email statement sent by European Commission/EACEA on 31/03/2020

<p>(...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monitoring team observed that little impact has been shown so far and only at individual level⁴ as many structural activities are planned to be carried out at a later stage. • The project sustainability plan is based on the capacity building that is expected to be made, on the Equality and Sustainability Centres that are going to be established and on the Observatory that will be hosted by UNED. There are not specific findings in this context yet. • More attention should be made to the sustainability of the project results. This can be done by a more realistic and concrete sustainability plan, given the universal, cultural and sensitive nature of the issue addressed by the project. • The sustainability of the project results can only be guaranteed by institutionalising the project at each partner institution. These results should be part of each institution's strategy. More attention should be paid to the establishment and the institutionalisation of the Equality Centres and the Observatory which are expected to play a

³ See page 9 on capacity building at the institutional level linked to the Project's setting up and its implementation in the HEIs

⁴ The Project's impact at the individual level indicated in the email would refer to changes in HEIs staff directly involved in the Project's implementation. Individual-level changes in the target groups (4) would begin with the implementation of the W-2 (capacity building).



crucial role in the sustainability of the project results and objectives.

Source: Email from European Commission/EACEA on 31/03/2020

Although some of the observations made do not seem to take into account the stage of implementation at which the project was (initial phase), the feedback provides clear references about which aspects should receive special attention during the remaining stages of implementation, since they are linked both to the project's effectiveness and its sustainability: the training courses, the equity centres and the observatory.

On the other hand, the overview on the Project cannot leave aside the national context of implementation in countries such as Syria and Lebanon, contexts of political, economic and financial crisis that have stressed the HEIs in the implementation of planned activities and have made great demands on the universities in order to meet their commitments with the Project. In this first phase, the strong economic inflation, the severe capital control measures adopted by the banking systems are making it difficult to purchase work equipment, to make payments to HEI staff involved in the project, the risk to staff mobility posed by the loss of funds due to different exchange rates (Euro/LBP). Likewise, day-to-day difficulties - outages, slow and unstable Internet connections, weak ICTS structure - are obstacles to the smooth implementation of the Project and hidden costs that university staff assumes personally in order to continue the schedule of activities.

It must be borne in mind the complexity of implementing a project composed of 11 partners in 6 countries, the political and economic volatility of some countries where it is implemented, the cultural and institutional challenge involved in successfully addressing the project's subject and the challenge of working in a coordinated and synergistic manner at the regional level to achieve common goals. Context elements must be taken into account in any assessment of the scope and achievements of the Project to contextualize the true value of what has been achieved and to identify possible explanatory causes for those activities that may be progressing at a slower than expected rate.

The context sheet submitted by 6/7 universities gives a more detailed description of (i) the contextual factors that have conditioned the implementation in the three countries during this period; (ii) the responses and/or mitigation measures addressed for each HEIs for their resolution. These sheets can be accessed through the Project's platform.

Access route [WP7 MANAGEMENT>CONTEXT IMPLEMENTATION](#)

Recommendations:

- It is suggested to request that the follow-up report prepared by NEO be sent to the Project Coordination to know in greater detail the findings and conclusions of the monitoring visit carried out on 19/12/2019. In this regard, and if necessary, mitigating measures can be adopted by the Project in the presence of the weaknesses and/or areas of improvement identified during the aforementioned visit
- It is suggested to register the factors of the national/institutional/other context that negatively influence the proper Project implementation, as well as the mitigation measures that the affected implementing partners have put in place to address them. This recommendation is particularly relevant in the context of the public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) constituted by the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). By way of example, the template completed by the HEIs in March could continue to be used in the next phases of the Project to register the contextual constraints and limitations that affected its implementation.



- It is suggested to increase the practice of registering activities and to have updated the Register Tool provided for the Project external monitoring. It is strategic to be able to count on sufficient traceability of the possible contributions to changes in the individual and institutional dynamics that may occur in the HEI/national/regional level during the next years within the subject addressed by the Project FREE. In the monitoring of actions and in the assessment the Project's contributions to the result., **what is not recorded, of which there is no means of verification, does not count.**
- It is suggested to incorporate as part of the collective reflections, an honest exercise to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the process of project implementation, and to leave a record of these important reflections in the minutes. This exercise should include the "context factor", the difficulties of mobilizing gender issues in the institutions, and even the personal/professional cost that working for gender equality in adverse institutional contexts can entail. Only thus these issues can be part of the final evaluation of the project and their relevance is not eluded

3 - PROGRESS RELATED TO PLANNED RESULTS

At the end of each outcome and output, an assessment of the progress status has been entered according to the selected tags: Status: *Achieved*, *On track*, *Off-track*, *No status*

OUTCOME 1: Female academics and professional's empowered at the targeted HEIs (Individuals)

WP.1. - Output 1.1.

Increased knowledge of HEIs about explicatory factors on the lack of women presence in HEI's senior positions

Status: *Achieved*

WP1 has been completed and has fulfilled its purposes of providing (i) an updated diagnosis of the women's situation in the partner HEIs of the Program, while endeavoring to be representative of analogous situations in other HEIs in the region; (ii) identifying strategies related to empowering female academics by identifying training needs in related field for the Project's target groups. **The institutional diagnoses carried out by the HEIs partners of the Project are a pioneering exercise in the region.**

The diagnoses were carried out in record time, in a period much shorter than that required for an exercise of this nature and of its complexity to be carried out in 7 HEIs in three different countries. The lessons learned from the WP-1 are accessible to all partners on the Project platform.

Access route [WP7 MANAGEMENT](#)>Monitoring Tools>Lessons Learned and Good Practices

The process of preparing the diagnoses involved an active participation and collaboration among the academics of the Project in the conceptual consideration and design of the data collection tools. The phase of data collection, analysis of the information gathered, and the elaboration of the diagnostic report was carried out in a decentralized



manner. Although the decentralization of the process clearly contributed to the relevance and ownership of the diagnoses results by each HEIs, it is appreciated that it also entailed heterogeneity in the emphasis of analysis and data processing carried out by each institution.

It is interpreted that this heterogeneity influenced the content and final definition of the regional diagnosis that was developed from the individual reports' findings and conclusions. Although the content of the reports in each HEI responds to the possibilities and realities of each of the HEIs, this intra-institutional perspective may have conditioned the ability to carry out an analysis with a more ambitious regional focus.

Among the advantages of using quantitative methodology for this kind of diagnosis is the possibility of aggregating and/or comparing data and realities. If this is not done, qualitative methodologies are usually considered more effective for exploring cultural/institutional factors and conditions that generate situations of gender inequality, offering you the opportunity to delve into the causes and consequences of such factors.

Heir to the strengths and areas of improvement of the HEIs diagnosis, the regional report currently has a more descriptive approach - participating HEIs, national education systems and methodological elements - and less analytical approach in terms of exploring - comparatively or in an aggregate manner - factors that influence the experience and career progression of women academics and the lack of academic representation at senior management levels (one of the purposes of the diagnosis).

It is illustrative to understand the relevance of qualitative methodologies for this type of diagnosis, the content of the exchange among the women attending a dissemination event of the Project at the University of Damascus. Among the obstacles and recommendations presented in the synthesis of the meeting are those shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Women's inputs at dissemination event in DU

At the end of the session the obstacles and recommendations were as follows:

- **Obstacles:** (a) Marital status (difficulty in choosing between work and home); (b) Lack of awareness of claiming rights; (c) Marginalization of women in society; (d) Lack of skills (soft skills); (e) Lack of knowledge of electronic programs related to academic work.
- **Recommendations:** (a) Review university policies to enhance equity between male and female; (b) Amending the legislative and legal environment for women's rights; (c) Highlighting success stories of women or academics to highlight their role in society; (d) Focus on women's entrepreneurship as a career; (e) Training courses for males and females about cases of sexual harassment and the way in which they should be dealt with; (f) Create a policy at the university to address sexual harassment problems (g) Focusing on leadership skill; (h) Awareness of the need to develop competencies and skills during the studying period.; (f) Community awareness of the role of women

Source: "Dissemination of FREE Project at Damascus University" (Damasco, 08/03/2020)

The profile of the participants is unknown, but the coincidences with the result of the diagnoses and the new topics incorporated are striking. It is noteworthy that among the recommendations, sexual harassment is emphasized when it had not been identified as a significant problem or obstacle during the diagnosis.

However, a relevant aspect to highlight from the conclusion of the diagnosis is that, regardless of the country -except MUBS-, one of the hypotheses of the diagnosis is validated: the prevalent organizational environment of Higher Education is within a male-dominated paradigm which is characterized by

- deficiency in the development of a sustainable development training programs for its human academic resources particularly in the scope of female executive leadership,



- lack of career support and counselling centres for female academics and students subject to different forms of discrimination;
- lack of integration of gender issues and sustainability at courses and curricula levels;
- lack of strategic emphasis and investment in development of scientific research centres in the scope of Gender Equality, Sustainability Issues and Female Empowerment

As suggested by the NEO comments, all the diagnoses have been published on the Project's website and the dissemination of their results has only started in 2020. However, in light of the events and information on dissemination provided by the HEIs themselves, the potential of the diagnostics to promote institutional reflection and dialogue on gender egalitarianism has not been optimized.

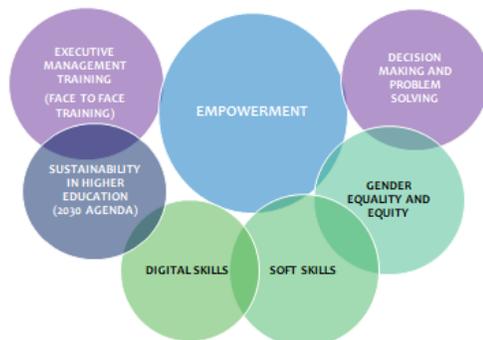
On the other hand, it would also be pending to be able to analyze and exploit the institutional data collected during the diagnoses. These results are an important raw material for the elaboration of the Action Plans, for the creation of the Equity and Sustainability Centres, as well as for the development of the HEIs Institutional Policies that will serve as a general framework for the two previous products.

Access route [WP1 DIAGNOSIS> FINAL REGIONAL REPORT](#)

Access route [WP1 DIAGNOSIS> INSTITUCIONAL REPORTS](#)

WEBSITE: <https://freeproject.eu/resources/reports/>

TRAINING NEED AREAS IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE CONCEPTUAL MAP DESIGN AFTER DATA COLLECTION PROCESS



One of the clearest output of this process has been to develop strategies related to empowering female academics, by identifying training needs in related fields for project target groups. Currently there is a **Conceptual Map** for the design of virtual training courses according to the identified needs of target groups (See Annex C) The areas to be addressed are those reflected in the Illustration and are presented in more detail under output 1.2.

On the other hand, through the data gathered by the institutional diagnostics it has been possible to build the baseline of the Project for monitoring and evaluating its performance. The Project FREE purpose is to enhance the role of female academics in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria through increasing the Jordan and Syria through increasing the number of women present in decision making and senior management level. In this respect, the baseline of the intervention will facilitate to assess the Project's contribution whether there is an increase in the number of women in positions at these levels, whether and where a gender gap is being closed. Having the baseline as a reference, it will enable the assessment of change dynamics in the aspects/dimensions that have been assessed as critical in the institutional diagnoses carried to characterize gender egalitarianism in HEIs and in their promotion of female leadership roles

Access route [WP7 MANAGEMENT>MONITORING TOOLS>CONSOLIDATED DATA](#)



WP.2. - Output 1.2.

Enhanced women leadership and management skills in order to be promoted to senior positions in HEIs

Status: *Off-track*

Based on the results of the institutional diagnostics, the FREE conceptual map is to develop theoretical model to design training courses based on identifying needs of the Project target groups namely academics, administrative, decision makers and female students. This conceptual map is developed grounded on the earlier diagnosis identified a set of core and primary training needs and skills to be acquired for all target groups through Project life cycle (See Table 3) .

Table 3. Training Needs Matrix

Training Topics	Academics	Administrative Staff	Decision Makers	Female Students
1. Digital Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills • Online research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills • Online research 	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills • Online research
2. Soft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Time management • Team Dynamics • Negotiation • Big Five Personality traits • Sustainable leadership • Contemporary Approaches to leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Time management • Team Dynamics • Negotiation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Five Personality traits • Sustainable leadership • Contemporary Approaches to leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft Skills • Networking skills • Teambuilding • Leadership skills
3. Gender Equality and Equity	Gender equality			
4. Sustainability in Higher Education	SDGs Agenda 2030 Sustainability in Higher Education			
5. Female Empowerment in Workplace	Self-Empowerment Female Empowerment in HE Decision making competencies Critical and structured thinking			

Source: Institutional Report, pag. 23

With the transfer of knowledge, a critical phase begins for the purpose of the Project, both in strengthening the capacities of each institution and in reinforcing the collaborative and synergetic efforts among the implementing partners. Something that is evident to all of them, it is also pointed out in the NEO's comments: "The project should pay more attention to building capacities and competences at each institution, to the institutional ownership and to the dissemination and visibility of its results across the different Faculties. In this regard, the selection of the trainees should respect a carefully defined set of criteria taking into account the multiplication effect and the wider capacity building at each institution"

With around 3 months behind the schedule, the set of concerns shown in the previous verbatim are being effectively addressed to initiate the delivery of courses in June 2020. Five (5) courses are being developed. Each of the courses consists of 6 to 7 chapters/sessions. Two of the five courses are already completely submitted, the other courses are about to be completed. It is necessary to point out the value that course development has in itself as learning and institutional capacity building. Not only the content of the courses, but also the guidelines, structure and technical requirements for the digitalization of the sessions are part of the learning. The Annex D provided the details of the current submission status.

In line with the NEO's observation, the relevance of the course development process has allowed to address the concern about "to building capacities and competences at each institution, to the institutional ownership". According to the initial planning, the development of such courses was the responsibility of the European HEIs. However, at the request of the SMR-HEIs, they have been actively involved in the entire process, including the development of some of these courses. This fact is not only a relevant indicator of the level of appropriation that



the Project is achieving among its partners, but it has also created a framework for the institutional strengthening of all the participating HEIs.

The delays in output 1.2. were mainly due to the following factors: (i) The design phase of the courses was not properly scheduled and it was underestimated how long it would take to create about 30 sessions of the 5 planned courses with the necessary quality by coordinating 11 institutions; (ii) In addition to the complexity of coordinating 11 institutions while respecting the different institutional work times, a slow decision-making process was added to bring together criteria on aspects related to the design and technical characteristics of the courses, their dissemination, selection of participants and evaluation of the training; (iii) It was no small challenge to bring together common positions among the different visions of the institutions and their representatives, to balance the different levels of dedication of the institutions in order to overcome the accumulated backlog, as well as the political and economic factors of the context in the SMC countries that also have an impact on the educational institutions.

Nevertheless, as the WP2 lead institution points out, it must put into perspective the success of "coordinating 11 institutions in 3 months "for 4 target groups, 5 online courses with 32 sessions, amounting to 250 hours of empowering content" Currently, almost all of the courses have been completed and many of the training sessions have entered the digitization/virtualization phase⁵ to be able to teaching the courses in all of the institutions as from June. The criteria and the means for the dissemination, and selection of the participants have been equally decentralized in order to contextualize them to the particularities and needs of each HEI. The application form as well as the application and selection process is the individual responsibility of each institution. Although several guidelines have been designed by the consortium, and a target audience in training has been specifically defined by each partner institution, in order to cover all the personnel that is going to be working on the ESCs.

Access route [WP2 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER > 1. Online Courses](#)

According to the WP2 leader, this delay will not significantly affect the achievement of the Project's results. However, it is interpreted that there may be two possible risks for which mitigation measures would be required. The delay affects the dates of the courses, now very close to the non-teaching period in the universities (summer). Now any delay in the courses initiation could affect their completion (an average of 6 weeks per course is required). Also, the coincidence of the course delivery with the end of the teaching period makes a gap between the possible movement that the courses can generate within the institution and other Project's actions addressing female empowering at the HEIs.

From the above observations, it would be desirable to consider a new edition of the online courses once the E&S Centre starts its activity, in order to make it known and to reinforce it institutionally, In the next cycle of teaching, the courses can incorporate improvements based on the assessments and recommendations of the first cycle . It should be noted that the weakness of Internet connections, requires technical simplicity in the virtualization of courses - a lightweight, without videos or audios - which must be completed with links to complementary resources. On the basis of a core content, these resources can be modified or incorporated in successive course editions based on the audience profile and/or participants' assessments of the courses

⁵ The "Gender Equality Awareness" course has already been virtualized and is accessible at <https://externos.cursosvirtuales.uned.es/webpages/01course/index.html>



As in the case of the WP1 diagnoses, it is also a challenge to articulate the centralization and decentralization of processes. The good balance between both is conditioned by creating a good balance between structure and flexibility to capitalize on the added value of working with this double approach with such diverse HEIs. While it was necessary to create a solid framework for the design of the online courses, it seems to have been equally important to be open to new ideas, changes and additions of topics within the courses at all stages. Bearing in mind that significant differences may exist between regions and even between institutions within a region or a country, that measures need to be adapted accordingly

INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION. Recommendations output 1.1./1.2

- In the phase of delivering the training to the target groups, it will be of strategic importance to assess the quality and usefulness of the training through standardized questionnaires. This will allow not only the aggregation of data and their comparability, but will also facilitate (i) the reporting and accountability to the European Commission of the training provided; (ii) the identification of areas for improvement and the identification of lessons learned that can be applied to future coursework once the project is completed. Annex F provides a questionnaire Model for the appraisal of Online Courses. The use of the same - or variations on the model - to the extent that it is standardized and common to all courses regardless of the HEI that provides it, will allow the specific and aggregated assessment of all training courses
- The dissemination of the institutional reports should be understood as part of the strategy of awareness-raising and advocacy with internal and external actors to contribute to the Project results and strengthen the conditions of sustainability of the achievements by adding external actors, alliances and collaborations to the Project purposes. Awareness raising and lobbying work is carried out more effectively when it is based on solid evidence, on rigorous empirical analysis. Specifically, collaboration and partnership should be based on solid knowledge about and recognition of the sensitivity of the issue of women's rights in the given context, where it is not uncommon for it to be an issue without sufficient legitimacy for some actors who may be critical to the Project's main purpose. Many partnerships and collaboration proposals are based on mutual interest, relevance of the subject matter and the competence that potential partners attribute to each other.
- All the events/training financed by the project require the application of the survey regarding the objectives of the training to check if: relevance, quality, usefulness of the training and closing the gap. See Annex E for the standard questionnaire format to be applied pre-post training.
- Attached is some European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) documents that may be useful as references for future research work on issues related to gender equality, to mainstream gender into non-gender-specific researches, but also as a reference for the future implementation phases of the Project.

Checklist for gender in research. Gender Toolkit-Yellow Window (EC, 2009).

https://www.yellowwindow.com/genderinresearch/downloads/YW2009_GenderToolKit_CheckList.pdf

Checklist for gender in research

<https://cca91782-7eea-4c09-8bff->

[0426867031ff.filesusr.com/ugd/17c073_22d7b327acc8434a91dbceba1898e7d2.pdf](https://cca91782-7eea-4c09-8bff-0426867031ff.filesusr.com/ugd/17c073_22d7b327acc8434a91dbceba1898e7d2.pdf)



Gender Equality Training

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-equality-training>

Gender Equality in Academia and Research. What is a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

Gender Equality Training: Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-training-gender-mainstreaming-toolkit>

OUTCOME 2: HEIs committed to promote and to implement an institutional culture of gender egalitarianism (Institutional)

WP.3. – Output 2.1.: Equality and Sustainability Observatory in place to update and deep HEI personnel knowledge on gender culture and 2030 agenda

Status: *On track*

The E&S Observatory is a key element for the effectiveness and sustainability of the Project. The Observatory will be constituted by all the partner institutions of the FREE Project and experts in gender, sustainability and Agenda 2030 that will advise in the implementation and creation of the Equity and Sustainability Centres in each of the HEIs of SMR. The Observatory connected both to the institutional dimension and to the strengthening of capacities at the individual level, is within its implementation timeframe. According to the work schedule, the process of setting up the Observatory would begin in June 2020. At present, a preliminary version of its structure as a virtual platform is available

Access route [WP3 OBSERVATORY> OBSERVATORY ARQUITECTURE DRAFT.docx](#)

WP.4 - Output 2.2:

Equality and Sustainability Centers (ESC) in place to enhance gender equality situation in HEIs

Status *Off-track*

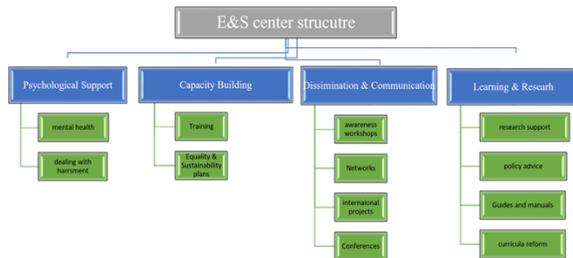
During this period, progress has been uneven in the first phase of the installation of the Equity and Sustainability Centers. This phase has been aimed at the physical and infrastructure aspects by providing the equipment of hardware and software of the Centers. According to the initial Work-Plan, this phase should be completed by 2019. However, contextual factors have weighed heavily on the procurement of suppliers by delaying the bidding processes. At a slower pace than initially planned, the procurement process is gradually being completed in all the HEIs, with the exception of the University of Lebanon, which is experiencing serious difficulties in carrying out equipment purchases due to the severe restrictions of the banking system in the country. Changes on the bank conditions in Lebanon, have affected the accounts from this public university negatively (problems withdrawing money from accounts, or having accounts in certain currencies).

LU reports that after the changes in the situation in Lebanon, the supplier they had selected as best bid, will only be paid in cash for the equipment. Since this process is not allowed within EU rules, several requests have been made to the projects contact person to find a solution, but EC has still not issued a formal changes in payment conditions



regarding Lebanon. UNED and LU agree on (i) contacting again the local point in Beirut, as well as EACEA to confirm there is no change in the official position to this day; (ii) getting in contact directly with the other Lebanese institutions, to see if they can share information on their vendor, to facilitate this negotiation and purchase.

Preliminary E&S Center Structure



Source: Project Free⁶

In spite of this delay, the following two phases - organizational and strategic aspects- in the installation of the Centers are progressing in parallel, conceptualizing the model of the Center to be installed (see Illustration), its characteristics and, very importantly, lobbying the decision makers to agree on its location in the organization chart of the institution. This point is critical so that with the establishment of the Centre have the opportunity to contribute to democratization of HEI and promote an institutional culture of gender egalitarianism and empowering female academics and professional at HEIs.

Implemented within WP2, the next step in the establishment of E&S Centers is the knowledge transfer by the "Face to Face Training". The implementation timing for this important step may be affected as a result of the health emergency of COVID-19. It would be convenient to consider a contingency plan as if that were the case

The "face to face" training will also be critical in the conformation of the Observatories, and how it can support the Centers in transforming the opportunities and strengths identified in the diagnosis of each HEI to minimize the risks and weaknesses of the institutions in relation to the progress towards the objective of the Project

According to the consulted sources, inputs derive from the Project's implementation are part of the partners learning process that contribute to strengthen the institutions' capacities to support the Project's progress towards the planned results. Examples of these are the meetings and coordination forums among the HEIs, the collective reflection on the meaning and purpose of gender equity and the female's empowerment in the academic setting according to the context of each institution, the collaborative work in the design of the questionnaires (4) and the coordination in the elaboration of the diagnostics, as well as in the design of the training courses etc., The same consulted sources maintain that since the first phase of the Project's implementation, it is significant that a greater number of female academics have expressed their interest in be involved in the achievement of the Project's objectives, as well as it is relevant the growing interest among HEI stakeholders in participating in awareness raising events/process on gender equality, ODS-5 in Agenda 2030, etc. All these are necessary steps to gradually contribute to building a HEI community committed to substantive equality between women and men in the university settings

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION. Recommendations output 2.1./2.2

Given the "pipeline approach" in the Project's implementation , where results linked to the effectiveness and sustainability are observed at the end of Project's execution, the accumulated delays take time to evidence how all the efforts made are reflected in concrete changes in the consortium's and in positioning the key themes of the

⁶ Awareness Workshop. Serene Dalati . AIU. 9/03/2020



project at national or regional level. Within this logic, some parallel actions are identified that in the medium term can allow to overcome delays and provide indications to orientate some key decisions referred, especially, to the Centers.

- Mapping of courses in MOBs, institutions, international and national organisations in English whose quality is subsequently endorsed by the Observatory's experts, and classifying them thematically according to training concept map and other aspects that are considered relevant. This previous work, which is open to all HEIs, will speed up the provision of relevant content to the Observatory and will provide relevant resources to the E&S Centers from the initial moment of their official establishment.
- Analyze the data collected by the diagnostics and the evidence gathered on the challenges of each HEI at the institutional level. The results of this analysis can be of great value to support the internal HEIs awareness-raising processes (act. 5.1.), the future strategic plans of the E&S Centers (act. 4.2) and even serve as a ground for the elaboration of the Institutional Policies on Gender Equality in each HEI (act. 5.3).
- It is recommended to review the content of the following link <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-equality-training/step-2-integrate-gender-competence-development-initiatives-broader-strategy-gender-equality>

OUTCOME 3: Partnerships and research networks on gender issues strengthened (national and supra-national)

WP.6. - Output 3.1.: Dissemination of the knowledge on gender issues and HE developed during the project implementation.

Status:

VG TU leader has presented the FREE Dissemination Plan to be executed along the following months (See Illustration), also uploaded in the platform. In it, 2 workshop per institution are established para be implemented by the end of 2020.



WP 6. DISSEMINATION: Responsible partner

Activities	First year, 2019	Second year 2020	Third year 2021
6.1 Project's webpage for dissemination and visibility	M1, M2		
(6.1.1) Homepage for the project	UNED		
6.2 Promotion of center activities to stakeholders		M9, M11	M1, M3, M5, M7, M9
(6.2.1) 7 workshops for project stakeholders	Assistance by: VGTU, UNED, UA, OL	AIU, DU, MUBS LU, AUB, PSUT, UOP	AIU, DU, MUBS LU, AUB, PSUT, UOP
6.3 National policy paper of gender equality (GE) in Higher education (HE)			M1-M6
(6.3.1) National policy paper of GE in HE	Assistance by: VGTU, UNED, UA, OL		AIU, DU, MUBS LU, AUB, PSUT, UOP
6.4 Partnership building project stakeholders			M1, M4, M6, M9, M11
(6.4.1) Network and partnership agreement with stakeholders sign 5 partnership agreements with partner universities, HEIS, Unions, and agencies including chambers of industry and Commerce	Assistance by: VGTU, UNED, UA, OL		AIU, DU, MUBS LU, AUB, PSUT, UOP
6.5 Develop cases on Female Academic Role Models in Higher education (HE)			M1-M6
(6.5.1) Cases on Academic Female role models	Assistance by: VGTU, UNED, UA, OL		AIU, DU, MUBS, LU, AUB, PSUT, UOP
6.6 International workshop on gender equality (GE) in Higher education (HE)			M9-M10
(6.6.1) International workshop in Beirut	Assistance by: VGTU, UNED, UA, OL, AIU, DU, MUBS, LU, PSUT, UOP		AUB

Fuente: VGTU, Project FREE Virtual meeting minute (March 27, 2020)

Currently there is few record of dissemination activities within the platform, although a lot of acts have taken place in partner institutions, but this information is shared through WhatsApp⁷

Based on the information gathered through the Registration Tool, Seven dissemination events have been registered, from which five were dissemination events for people outside the Project and two were a mixed type of event. All these activities were held in 2019, there is no record of the number of participants and three of them lack the means of verification. In 2020 only internal dissemination events have been recorded and mostly in Syria. Likewise, actions have been carried out to disseminate the Project FREE by presenting papers at three international conferences - UTAD, EADTU and OCUD -, the Project's website and a relevant alliance has been established with Center MINE of the Lebanese University to support the Project dissemination.

In view of the lack of information on the events held, the WP6 leader has called on all partners" to please keep leaders informed of their dissemination activities, and also be sure to upload relevant supporting tools and evidence of this activities, in the form of pictures, videos, etc. into Alf platform. That way all information can be taken into consideration when the Project has to report this activity to the EC" It has also been recalled that once the dissemination events are held, they should pass on a satisfaction questionnaire. **As of today, there is no information on the feedback from the participants of the dissemination events held**

A significant aspect of the Project dissemination is the use of social networks and the Project's website. Although the Project has a website and presence in social networks, data on the use of and access to these tools indicate that there is significant under-utilization of them. The important area of improvement in this respect has already been noted by the NEO ("The project website is poor and needs to be enriched with more information on the project

⁷ Project FREE Virtual meeting minute (March 27, 2020). It is reported on 1 act of dissemination in DU, 2 acts of dissemination in AIU, 1 act of dissemination in PSUT, 1 act of dissemination in LU, 2 acts of dissemination were cancelled for health restrictions at AUB and MUBS



results and activities"). Although the website has been enriched with new content, it is a clear area of improvement that must be addressed by the Project in the short term. The same applies to social networks. The VGTU leader stresses that institutions should try to use social media to engage contact with external stakeholders and public in general, through comments, questionnaires, etc".

WEBSITE:

<https://freeproject.eu/>

SOCIAL NETWORK PRESENCE:

https://twitter.com/freeproject_eu

<https://www.facebook.com/eu.freeproject>

https://www.instagram.com/eu_freeproject/

WP.6. - Output 3.2.: Increased knowledge and Institutional cooperation on gender equality issues in Higher Education in MR

Status: No Status

In terms of establishment and partnerships there is limited information on record. Through the Register Tool it is known that there have been conversations with Center for Career, Innovation and *Entrepreneurship and Réseau Francophone des Femmes Responsables dans l'Enseignement Supérieur et la Recherche* (RESUFF). The meeting's objective, their content, the agreements reached or how the relationship has continued are not known.

Feedback from the NEO shows that more decisive efforts need to be made in this regard: " "Female empowerment is an issue of interest at national and regional level. The project should make more effort to join forces with other NGOs and organisations form beyond the academic circle in order to consolidate and confirm the achievements expected to be made by the project. This would help to influence the policy makers to work out legislations that protect female rights in the different sectors including higher education"

PARTNERSHIP/DISSEMINATION Recommendations output 3.1./3.2

- Seek solid partnerships, alliances and synergies with other actors. Certainly, in each of the NMS countries, there are organizations and initiatives ongoing linked to gender equality, empowerment and women's rights at the local and/or national level. The Project needs to be known and to know in part this ecosystem of possibilities in order to identify possible collaborations, generate synergies, and maximize the impact of the project. Generating virtuous alliances between the academy and other actors - women's organizations among them - will pay the conditions for the future sustainability of the project. With the Observatory as a framework, it could be assessed whether a regional partnership strategy can be created, given the territorial



approach of the project, or whether a national approach to partnerships is more feasible

- The dissemination component of the Project should be strengthened, but the non-reflective and indiscriminate use of social networks should not be encouraged. To this end, the Dissemination Plan should include clear guidelines for all the HEIs on when, what, how to use social networks, as well as a series of key communication messages on which all the HEIs should agree and disseminate in all the dissemination events they will carry out. It is also very important to keep a record of the dissemination events and means of verification. To this end, the recording tool is useful to systematize the information in an aggregate manner for subsequent analysis. For the assessment of the dissemination events, the Quality Plan (UA) presents a questionnaire template on the satisfaction of the participants that must be rescued for its use.
- It is suggested to reinforce the content of the web with regional data. Possible sources are:
 - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
<https://www.unescwa.org/unbis/middle-east>
<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/statistical-portrait-western-asia-region>
 - “Arab Gender Lens 2019 pocketbook” provides a statistical portrait of the 18 member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) through key gender indicators on population, disability, education, inequality, health, empowerment and work.
 - “Global education monitoring report 2019: gender report: Building bridges for gender equality”
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368753>
 - “Gender equality and education in the Sustainable Development Goals”
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245574>
- To strengthen the advocacy capacity of the outreach events, as well as the lobbying processes within the HEIs, some advocacy materials can be used to. Along with numerous other examples, here are some suggestions that, with the proper contextualization, can serve this purpose
 - UNESCO (2010) Gender issues in higher education: advocacy brief
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189825>
 - UNESCO (2017) Higher education in the world, 6: Towards a socially responsible university; balancing the global with the local <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248150>
 - AQU CATALUNYA (2018) General framework for incorporating the gender perspective in higher education teaching
http://www.aqu.cat/doc/doc_21331700_1.pdf
- Coinciding with the closing of the Project, it will be held **XI European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education**. (Madrid, 15 – 17 September, 2021). This forum could be a great platform to (i) present the advances, learnings and challenges of a Project as ambitious and complex as those that characterize the intervention; (ii) establish potential alliances with other educational institutions that reinforce the sustainability of the achievements and advances to which the Project has contributed. If that were the case, we would have to initiate the institutional contacts to have a place in this forum
<http://upm.genderequalityconference2020.com/>



LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lessons Learned (LL)

LL.1. The preparation prior to the process of implementing a WP. The preparation phase prior to the implementation of a WP is critical to its success and its contribution to the rest of the elements articulated and synergistic with the WP content. As one of the members commented "the WP leader must be clear about the whole picture, as well as the details (...) needs to be clear about the implementation process, to know how the implementation should start, progress and be completed (...) The WP Leader must be prepared with the Action Plan because it makes all the difference in the implementation process".

LL.2. Strengthen the link between the Project's actions and the promotion of and contribution to Agenda 2030. In the events, trainings and communication products, reflect more clearly how the actions undertaken by the HEIs in the framework of the Project contribute to the Agenda 2030 and, specifically, to the SDG-5. While it may seem obvious, the NEO's remark indicate that such contribution should be visible and have a means of verifying how specifically the Project has addressed it. Likewise, making visible the Project's anchoring and contribution to Agenda 2030 can strengthen the lobbying and advocacy efforts within the HEIs, mobilize the issues addressed by the Project at the national and regional levels, and establish a wider range of possible partnerships. See <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248150>

Good Practices (GP)

GP. 1. Systematization of learning and lessons learned in the key processes/WPs of the Project. The Arab International University and the Lebanese University have conducted a systematization exercise on lessons learned in conducting the survey/research on implementation of WP.1. This exercise can be a general practice after the completion of a Project's WP or the implementation of some key product/process: the E&S Centres, the Observatory, the training courses, the delivery of the trainings, etc. This exercise of ex-post reflection on the action and working practices in multi-stakeholder consortia is valuable material for spaces of exchange with other academic actors and beyond.

GP. 2. The American University of Beirut formed a dedicated Task Force for exploring gender equity issues at the university in order to improve the lives and careers of women faculty. "The task force issued its report outlining areas that are comforting in some respects and other areas of concern that require follow-up. The leadership of the university has prioritized women's issues aiming at improving the well-being of female academics and staff at the university. The President of the university has emphasizes that AUB has already made genuine strides in instituting changes to improve gender equity among faculty. It has offered leadership positions to women, including one VP, three female Associate Provosts, two female academic Deans, several female Unit Directors and Associate Deans, and many female Department Chairs".



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON PROGRESS OR CHALLENGES IN THE PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION

ON EFFECTIVENESS

The Project addresses the issue of gender equality in higher education beyond the numbers, moving from a mild notion of gender equity to assimilating it to statistical parity among university students. The "numbers game" mentioned by some authors does not alter the social, economic and cultural relations of higher education. In fact, it may incorporate traditional structures that ignore the deeper systems of oppression, harassment and sexual abuse. The Project is a more ambitious intervention. It seeks to contribute to gender justice by analyzing what happens to academics, professors and administrators, the extent to which gender issues are present in research concerns or how the HEIs address their commitment to Agenda 2030 and, specifically, with the SDG-5. **This merit should be recognized and valued as a general framework when assessing the Project's effectiveness**

The Project FREE focuses on contributing to change ideas, concepts and structures that generate situations of inequality so deeply rooted that have been normalized in society, institutions and oneself. It is exponentially more complex than with other themes, to carry out diagnoses, awareness raising processes and capacity building, etc. in a subject as sensitive as gender (in)equality or female empowerment. It should be recognized that any progress in this area, any potential contribution of the Project to changes in the *status quo* will tend to be slower and any step, however small it may seem to some, and it should be acknowledged and appreciated even the smallest changes because it may be of capital importance to someone else.

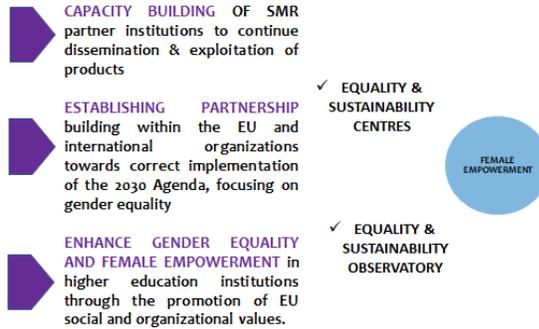
The **quarterly monitoring report** - focused on qualitative reporting complementing the quantifiable data reported in the Register Tool - will allow these identified changes to be documented at the individual level and in the dynamics of the institution. (*Annex E. Quarterly monitoring report template*)

ON SUSTAINABILITY

Project FREE is a transnational intervention by Consortium of 11 HEIs working together to produce outcomes that benefit principally and directly the higher education institutions by contributing to: (i) enhance the role of female academics in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria through increasing the number of women present in decision making and senior management level; (ii) democratization of higher education by empowering female academics; (iii) to improving operations management of HEIs in LB, JR & SY by promoting a culture of gender egalitarianism, female leadership role model, and empowerment. The sustainability of progress in these areas is as challenging as ambitious the purposes of the Project. It is understandable that the sustainability concern reiterated by the NEO in its observations ("More attention should be made to the sustainability of the project results. This can be done by a more realistic and concrete sustainability plan, given the universal, cultural and sensitive nature of the issue addressed by the project")



How can we guarantee SUSTAINABILITY of FREE project?



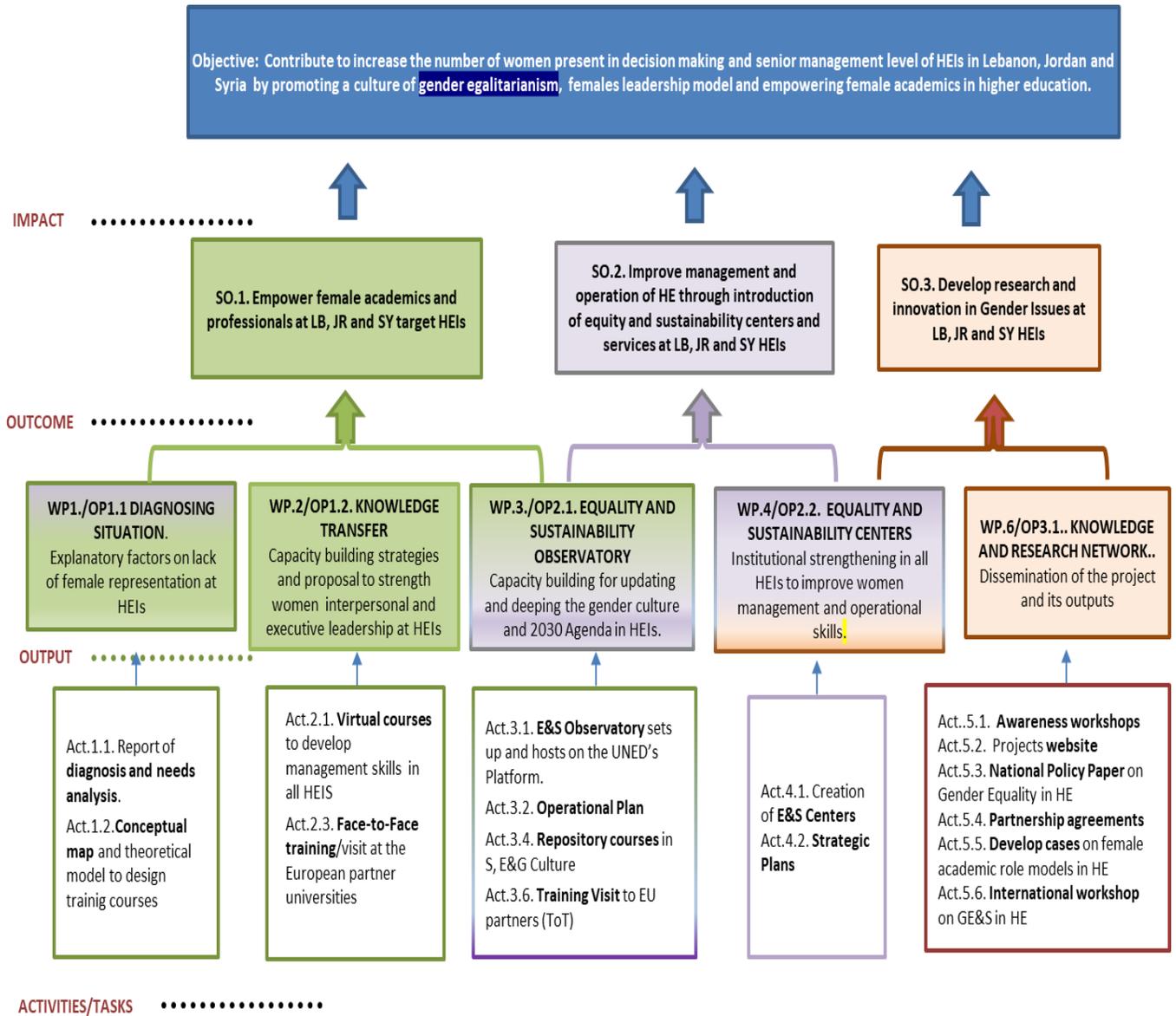
However, among its feedback, the NEO also provides a recommendation clearly aligned with the Project's own sustainability strategy since its inception phase: the institutionalization of the Project's products/results in each HEI. ("The sustainability of the project results can only be guaranteed by institutionalising the project at each partner institution. These results should be part of each institution's strategy. More attention should be paid to the establishment and the institutionalisation of the Equality Centres and the Observatory which are expected to play a crucial role in the sustainability of the project results and objectives." The Illustration on the left showed this strategy very well during a presentation of the Project that took place in October 2020 in Madrid, Spain during the European Association of Open and Distance Training Universities, Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference.

Therefore, if it were the case to design a concrete sustainability plan as recommended by the NEO, the strategy already pointed out in the Illustration should be recovered as a general framework. This same image also recalls how strategic the new implementation phase is for the effectiveness and sustainability of the Project, where the robustness of the E&S Centres in each HEIs and the relevance/value that the Observatory has for the HEIs in the SMR can make the difference in assessing the success of the Project. ("More attention should be made to the sustainability of the project results. This can be done by a more realistic and concrete sustainability plan, given the universal, cultural and sensitive nature of the issue addressed by the project"



ANNEX A. PROJECT FREE. LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

Source: Project FREE, System M&E





ANNEX B. INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS. SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Source: Project "FREE" Final Regional Report (2019)

Academics

Individual Level and Group Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender equality and equity require adequate examination ▪ Integration of gender equality in faculty course is minimal and to a minimum extent ▪ Little awareness about gender issues exists at SMR HEIs ▪ Lack of research developed in the scope of gender issues. ▪ Lack of gender equality and sustainability centers at SMR HEIs ▪ Mentoring support schemes are needed ▪ Opportunity to acquire network professional training
Institutional Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of Gender Quota is not positively endorsed. With the exception of AIU (59% are in favor of imposing a gender quota), the majority of partner institutions' results indicate moderate to high unfavorable attitudes towards the introduction of gender quota (47%, DU, 50%, UOP, 57% LU, 80% PSUT and 83% for MUBS ▪ Sexual Harassment at institution. Results across SMR institutions indicates that the majority of academics neither experienced nor observed sexual harassment behaviours at the workplace, including teasing or sexual remarks, request for sexual favours, or sexual assault⁸ ▪ Positive Academics perception of female academic role model.
Curriculum and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Courses that address gender issues are at the minimum levels. ▪ The subject of gender equality and equity is not addressed adequately, with limited exceptions ▪ Little awareness exists on the subject of gender equality. ▪ Minimal levels of gender research
Project FREE training Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The investigation of training areas for academics discloses a set of digital, soft and decision-making skills. ▪ Management and leadership skills are identified including skills related to communication, time management, decision making, creativity and innovation, team leadership and teamwork ▪ Leadership training is significant in the scope of personality traits, behaviors and relationships. ▪ Moreover, the results show that training in the scope of self- empowerment and Gender Equality are very significant and crucial for this target group.
Conclusion	<p>The findings for academics disclose that motivation for performing research in the scope of gender is a critical need and area of development for SMR universities in the scope of FREE. The topic of gender requires examination and development. Sexual harassment was not found to be a significant problem, although it remains a future area of investigation requiring a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The topic of female role models is another crucial area of investigation and discloses positive perceptions and attitudes of academics towards female role models.</p>

Decision Makers

Individual Level and Group Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career Satisfaction across Gender ▪ Career Ambition across Gender
Institutional Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender equality is largely not adequately integrated at the university strategy, its mission and its vision. ▪ Lack of integration of gender equality into university strategy. Gender equality is not reflected at

⁸ As the discussion of this topic is sensitive, it is suspected that the results do not fully reflect the state of sexual harassment in higher education. For the future, the alternative methodology would bring deeper insights on the topic, including focus groups or individual in-depth interviews



	<p>the target universities' strategic planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no equality plans established, measurement of actions for gender equality or gender equality as a framework to report sustainability impacts
Project FREE training Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive leadership training for decision-makers and senior levels in the scope of contemporary leadership dimensions reflecting on current and modern dimensions of executive: leadership behaviors examined democratic, participative, supportive, and directive leadership are the dimensions with the highest ranks
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings for decision-makers disclose that career satisfaction is an area of critical development, specifically for female decision makers, which disclose lower levels of career satisfaction. Gender equality is not currently integrated into the university strategy. Strategic planning for gender equality, as well as developing gender equality as a framework to report sustainability impacts, and measurement of actions for gender equality are considered as critical areas of development and investigation. There is a lack of awareness of gender equality.

Female Students

Individual Level and Group Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate motivation to pursue a career in HE sector Interest in studying gender-oriented courses Gender is not integrated in faculty curriculum
Institutional Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexual Harassment at institution Institutional Support Stereotypes and social expectations
Motivation and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation among female students to pursue a career in academia is evident. The subject of gender is not currently integrated at faculty curriculum across target universities in the South Mediterranean region. Thus, there is lack of knowledge and awareness for this topic Interest in studying gender-related topics including social justice, gender equality and empowerment training. The findings indicate the need for female role modelling, where academic expertise is critical factor associated with a female role model.
Training Areas The results indicate that there is a need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft skills, technical skills, and leadership skills are identified as a set of training which female students need. Self-empowerment is critical training for female students. Networking skills are also identified as a training need for female students
Conclusion	<p>The findings for female students disclose adequate levels of motivation to pursue a career in academia, as well as interest in studying gender-oriented courses. Gender issues are not currently 30 integrated at the faculty course offerings and curriculum. Policies related to institutional support are areas of investigation. The findings disclose that stereotypes and social expectations exist as challenges that require examination.</p>

Administrative Staff

Individual Level and Group Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Motivation levels for progression in Career path High Motivation levels to take part in implementation of SDGs Lack of awareness in the subject of gender equality High levels of motivation of administrative staff to take part in implementation of sustainable development goals and gender equality policies at institutional levels.
Institutional Levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of gender equality in university strategy Lack of awareness in the subject of Gender Equality Lack of Centre for Gender Equality Integration of gender equality within HEI mission and strategic planning



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sexual Harassment at institution. Sexual harassment do not reveal a significant concern▪ The subject of Gender Equality is not established sufficiently at institutional levels across the SMR partner institutions in project FREE, except one partner namely American University of Beirut▪ Lack of existence of multidisciplinary centers dedicated to Gender Equality and Sustainability issues, again with the exception of AUB.▪ Gender equality is largely not adequately reflected at SMR target university strategies, missions, and vision statements
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The findings for administrative staff reflect high levels of motivation to ascend along a clear career path, as well as high motivation levels taking part in the implementation of sustainable development goals at SMR universities. The integration of gender equality at university strategy is crucial, which requires development. Lack of awareness of the topic of gender equality and equity reflects a significant area of development. Managing social and organizational resistance is critical, which raises awareness in regards to gender equality at Arab International University. The social and organizational environment are considered as major threats for project FREE

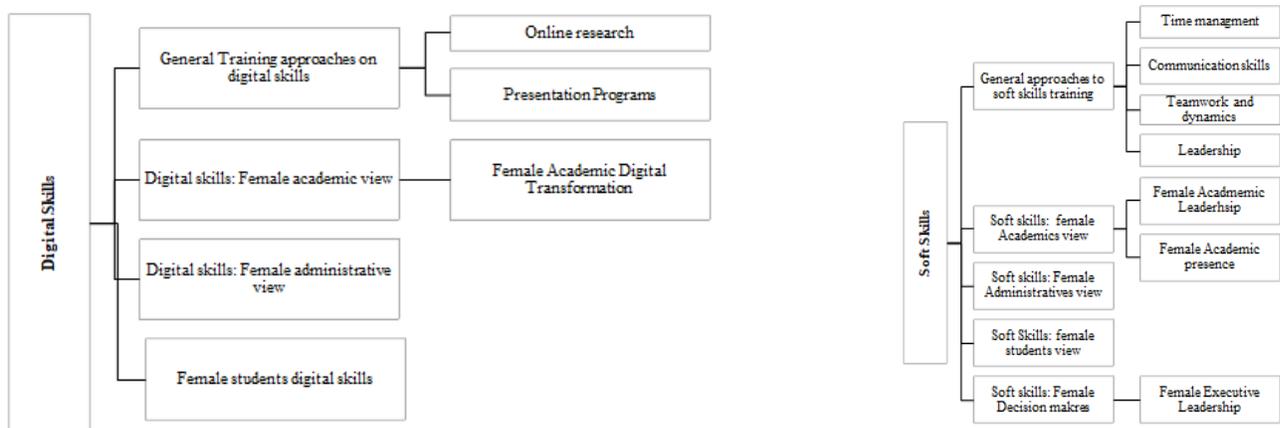
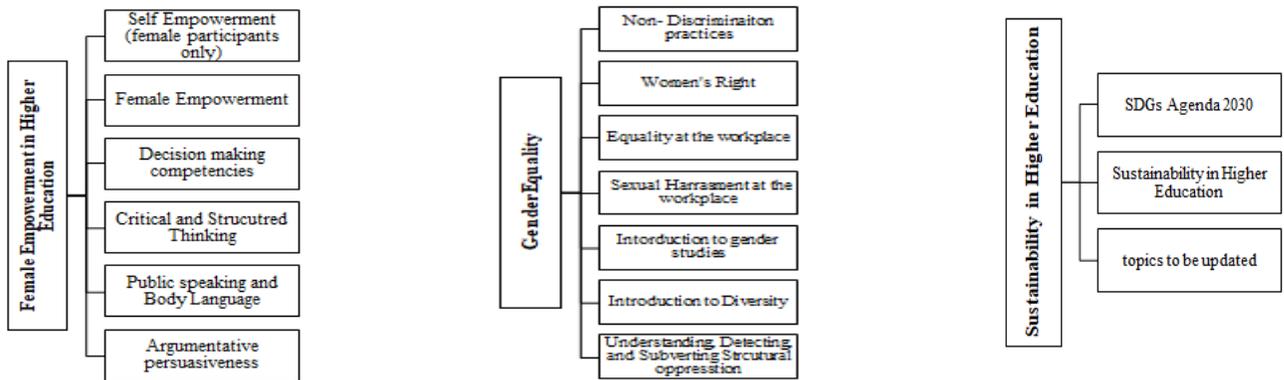
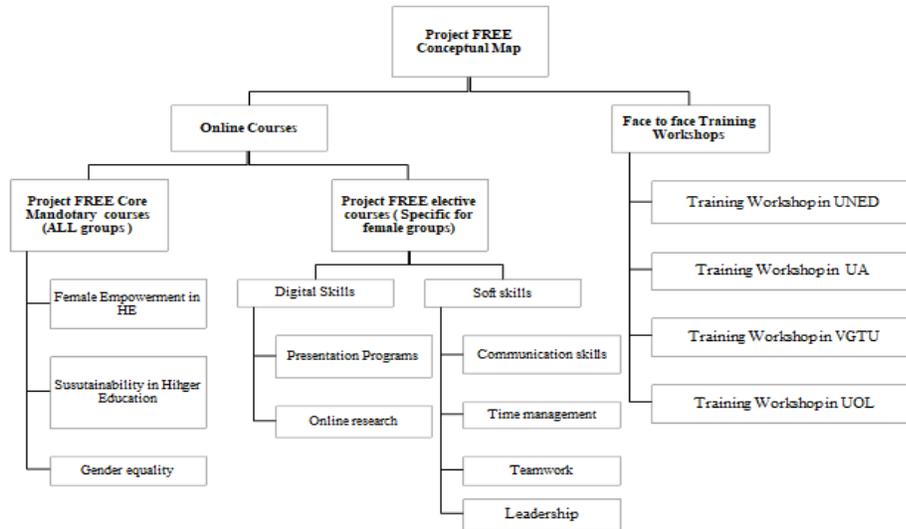
Recommendations: (pag. 18)

- Proposed actions to reduce the imbalances and inequalities and measures to promote gender equality should be included among the different aspects of the law, policy or programme.
- Promote the access of women in HEIs where they are under-represented;
- Promote the access of women to decision-making;
- Promote the co-responsibility of public administration at the HEIs
- Promote the use of gender statistics and studies;
- Prevent gender-based violence;
- Promote proactive actions to eradicate gender-based violence;
- Eliminate gender stereotypes and roles



ANNEX C. TRAINING CONCEPTUAL MAP AND CORE MANDATORY COURSES

Source: Project "FREE" Training Need Analysis (November 2019)





ANNEX D. OVERVIEW COURSES, SESSIONS AND SUBMISSION STATUS (27.03.2020)

Source: Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg

Female Empowerment in Higher Education

Week Session	Topic	Partner responsible	Submissions
#1	Introduction - Unconscious Bias	UOL	Submitted
#2	Female Empowerment in Higher Education	MUBS	Submitted
#3	Decision making competencies	UA	In progress (70%)
#4	Female Personal Development	AIU	Submitted
#5	Female Presentation Skills	AIU	Submitted
#6	Female Career Empowerment	UA	In progress (70%)
#7	Dimensions of Female Empowerment	PSUT	

Sustainability in Higher Education

Week Session	Topic	Partner responsible	Submissions
#1	Introduction to Sustainability in Higher Education	AIU	Submitted
#2	Social Sustainability in Higher Education	UA	In progress (80%)
#3	Environmental Sustainability in Higher Education	AIU	Submitted
#4	Economical Sustainability in Higher Education	DU	Submitted
#5	Curricula for Sustainability in Higher Education	UA	In progress (80%)
#6	SDG Agenda 2030	UOL	Submitted
#7	Sustainable leadership in Higher Education	AIU	In progress

Gender Equality in Higher Education

Week Session	Topic	Partner responsible	Submissions
#1	Basic concepts around equal opportunities between women and men: Gender Diversity and Inclusion	UA	Submitted
#2	Women's Right & International Framework for Gender Equality: Actions by international organizations to promote equal opportunities between women and men:	UNED	Submitted
#3	Equal opportunities policies between women and men in ME countries: Lebanon, Syria & Jordan	UA	Submitted
#4	Analysis of the socioeconomic situation of women in ME countries: Lebanon, Syria & Jordan	UA	Submitted
#5	Introduction to gender studies & non-sexist communication	UNED	Submitted
#6	Gender violence: Sexual Harassment at the workplace	UA	Submitted



Digital Skills

Week Session	Topic	Partner responsible	Submissions
#1	MS Office advanced tools	LU	Submitted
#2	Fundamental security principles for e-safety	UOP	
#3	Social networking for academic environment and impact of dissemination and target audiences	VG TU	Submitted
#4	Scientific databases, academic platforms and systems	VG TU/UOL	Submitted
#5	Learning management systems	UOP	
#6	Creative Presentation	LU	Submitted

Soft Skills

Week Session	Topic	Partner responsible	Submissions
#1	Personal development: personality types, behavioral modes, analysis of personal type	MUBS	Submitted
#2	Communication: the communication process, barriers to communications, persuasiveness, building goodwill, doing effective presentations, assertiveness in communication, communicating in teams, managing social media, listening, writing, and speaking.	MUBS	Submitted
#3	Team work: group versus teams, team development stages, how to build effective teams, how to handle conflicts in teams	MUBS	Submitted
#4	Critical thinking and problem solving: defining the problem, considering who and what is at stake, gathering information and verifying it, conflict resolution modes	DU	Submitted
#5	Leadership: the nature of leadership, leadership Vs. management, approaches to leadership: trait and behavior, leadership styles in different situations, your true north, who are you as leader	AUB	Submitted
#6	Time management: how to spend our time, what is important Vs. what is urgent, putting first things first	AUB	Submitted



ANNEX E. Quarterly Monitoring Report Template

Source: Project FREE, System M&E

1 – IDENTIFICATION

Reported Period
Submission Date:
Institution:
Person completing this report:

2 - OVERVIEW OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION DURING THE LAST QUARTER AT YOUR INSTITUTION IN RELATION TO THE PREVIOUS SEMESTER. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION.

3 - PROGRESS RELATED TO PLANNED RESULTS

OUTCOME 1: Female academics and professional's empowered at the targeted HEIs (Individuals)

WP.1. - Output 1.1.

Increased knowledge of HEIs about explicatory factors on the lack of women presence in HEI's senior positions

Status: *Achieved*

WP.2. - Output 1.2.

Enhanced women leadership and management skills in order to be promoted to senior positions in HEIs

Status:

OUTCOME 2: HEIs committed to promote and to implement an institutional culture of gender egalitarianism (Institutional)

WP.3. – Output. 2.1. Equality and Sustainability Observatory in place to update and deep HEI personnel knowledge on gender culture and 2030 agenda

Status:



**WP.4 - Output 2.2:
Equality and Sustainability Centers (ESC) in place to enhance gender equality situation in HEIs**

Status:

OUTCOME 3: Partnerships and research networks on gender issues strengthened (national and supra-national (Partnerships)

WP.6. - Output 3.1.: Dissemination of the knowledge on gender issues and HE developed during the project implementation.

Status:

WP.6. - Output 3.2.: Increased knowledge and Institutional cooperation on gender equality issues in Higher Education in MR

Status:

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES



ANNEX F. Questionnaire. Training

Source: Adaptation of the proposed questionnaire included in Project "FREE" Quality Assurance Plan

IMPORTANT: In any event training related to the Training Conceptual Map and Core Mandatory include section A,B & C.

This feedback form has been prepared to better understand your level of satisfaction with the training conducted. Filling out this questionnaire will help us to know what are the positive aspects of this course but also the aspects to improve and thus, better prepare the next training according to your needs.

Thank you very much! Your response is confidential.

SECTION A: Information about the PERSON that completes the questionnaire

1. Basic data <input type="radio"/> Name of institution <input type="radio"/> Country	2. Gender <input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male	3. Profile <input type="radio"/> Academic <input type="radio"/> Administrative position <input type="radio"/> Researcher <input type="radio"/> Student <input type="radio"/> Other
4. Faculty <input type="radio"/> XXXi <input type="radio"/> XXXX <input type="radio"/> XXX <input type="radio"/> XXXX <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/>	5. Age <input type="radio"/> Over 56 years old <input type="radio"/> 46- 55 years <input type="radio"/> 36-45 years <input type="radio"/> 26-35 years <input type="radio"/> Less than 25 years <input type="radio"/> I prefer not to answer	6. How did you hear about this event? <input type="radio"/> XXXi <input type="radio"/> XXXX <input type="radio"/> XXX <input type="radio"/> XXXX <input type="radio"/> Other

SECTION B: Closing Knowledge Gaps (pre-post assessment)

Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is none and 6 is complete. How much was your knowledge of the following topics before and after attending the training?

	BEFORE THE TRAINING						AFTER THE TRAINING					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Complete with the TOPICS/SKILLS addressed by the training												



SECTION C: EVENT Assessment.

- 1 *I totally disagree*
- 2 *I disagree*
- 3 *I rather disagree*
- 4 *I rather agree*
- 5 *I agree*
- 6 *I totally agree*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. The objectives of the training were clearly defined						
2. Selection and topics were appropriate to my role and responsibilities						
3. The training improved my understanding of the subject						
4. I will be able to apply the knowledge acquired						
5. Visual and supporting material were useful and easy to follow						
6. Participation and interaction were encouraged						
7. There was a correct balance between theoretical, exercises and discussion						
8. The trainers were well prepared						
9. The training objectives were met						
10. Overall evaluation of the training						

11. Which topics would you suggest for future training sessions?

12. Which aspects do you think could be improved for the next training sessions?