CrowdEquality: The Idea Crowdsourcing Platform facilitating co-design of tailored Gender Equality Plans

Role in the EQUAL-IST Project

CrowdEquality acted as a central mean for participatory co-design of tailored Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) within the EQUAL-IST project ("Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions", equal-ist.eu).

The EQUAL-IST project:
- Funded by the European Commission within the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme.
- Goal: to introduce structural changes at the participating Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) to enhance gender equality, diversity, and work-family balance by designing and implementing tailored GEPs.

Main Ideas

Goals:
- To collect ideas and trigger discussions about promising initiatives for promoting gender equality, diversity, and work-family balance at RPOs.
- To be an inclusive community that empowers men and women to freely discuss the issues of gender equality in Information Sciences and Technology institutions.

Methodology

Phase 1: Identification and submission of a challenge

Phase 2: Brainstorming of ideas, commenting and ‘Liking’

Phase 3: Review and selection of the feasible ideas

Phase 4: Voting for the best ideas

Phase 5: Operationalisation and implementation of the best ideas

Results of the participatory co-design of tailored GEPs within the EQUAL-IST project

- The platform most active phase took place in March – June 2017, when the staff members and students from the six RPOs participating in the EQUAL-IST project, as well as external users, had an opportunity to contribute to the platform.
- First, the challenges and potential ideas to address them were collected on the platform. Second, the users could vote on the (pre-selected) feasible ideas. As a next step, RPOs developed action plans for implementation of the ‘winning’ ideas. The developed action plans then formed the core of the tailored GEPs, which are currently being implemented by RPOs.
- In total, 331 users registered and contributed to CrowdEquality (including 142 students, 107 academic staff members, 28 non-academic staff members, and further 54 users). Furthermore, 54 challenges and 104 comments to the challenges, as well as 91 ideas and 75 comments to the ideas were submitted to CrowdEquality.

Conclusion and recommendations

- Application of CrowdEquality within the EQUAL-IST project confirmed that a bottom-up collaborative way for identifying challenges and trigger creativity in GEP design can facilitate internal raise of awareness and provide valuable input to involved stakeholders and decision-makers to set up GEPs that consider the needs and perceptions of affected staff members.
- Running a crowdsourcing initiative right after or in parallel with a Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) at the RPOs based on face-to-face interviews and workshops, as well as (online) surveys, could in some contexts limit the participation, as staff members and students who have already expressed their views and perceptions during the PGA could perceive contribution to CrowdEquality as redundant.

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