



*Parlamento del Consiglio dei Ministri*  
Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità

NEWSLETTER2

# STAGES PROJECT

"STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION  
TO ACHIEVE GENDER  
EQUALITY IN SCIENCE"

GA N°289051



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## STAGES... ONE YEAR AFTER

The STAGES Project, which started in January 2012, has been designed with the general aim to concretely implement different self-tailored Action Plans geared at introducing gender-aware management at all levels in each participating organisation. The first year of activities of the STAGES project has been devoted to the launch of the first measures included in the 5 Action Plans developed by the partners of the Consortium. In this number of the Newsletter the implemented actions will be illustrated, as well as the first results and problems encountered during the implementation of the Action Plans in view of the future challenges to be faced next year.

STAGES also aims at deepening understanding of the dynamics surrounding structural change efforts by constantly analysing, monitoring and assessing the process started in each institution, so as to start mutual learning practices among partners. A section of this Newsletter will be also dedicated to ASDO's point of view, that is the body providing technical assistance, with particular reference to the evaluation of the Action Plans.

Finally, the project intends to launch a very practical dissemination model aimed not only at providing information on programmes activated and their results, but also at spreading successful negotiation strategies implemented to build consensus and commitment around structural-level gender-equality initiatives among the European universities and research institutes, while addressing different leadership levels and the many

stakeholders directly or indirectly affected by change.

The Department for Equal Opportunities, acting as coordinator of the project, has been performing its activities concerning the administrative and financial management, while focusing its communication activities on the development of the new project's website and stepping up its efforts to spread the principles which have inspired this ambitious project to a large audience all over Europe, also through the participation in several important events such as, for instance, the European Gender Summit 2012 held on 29-30 November in Brussels.



THE NEW WEBSITE  
OF THE STAGES PROJECT  
IS NOW ONLINE  
AND AVAILABLE AT  
[WWW.PROJECTSTAGES.IT](http://WWW.PROJECTSTAGES.IT)

Although this has been a very hard and fruitful year for the whole staff of the project's consortium, the International Board of Advisors (i.e. the external body in charge of the evaluation of the Action Plans) as well as for the National Committees appointed by all partners, it is important to notice that all the activities began to run successfully and we are very proud and full of hope for the next 3 years.

You can also follow us on TWITTER: @ProjectSTAGES-FP7

## SUPPORTING CHANGE: STAGES FIRST YEAR FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ASDO

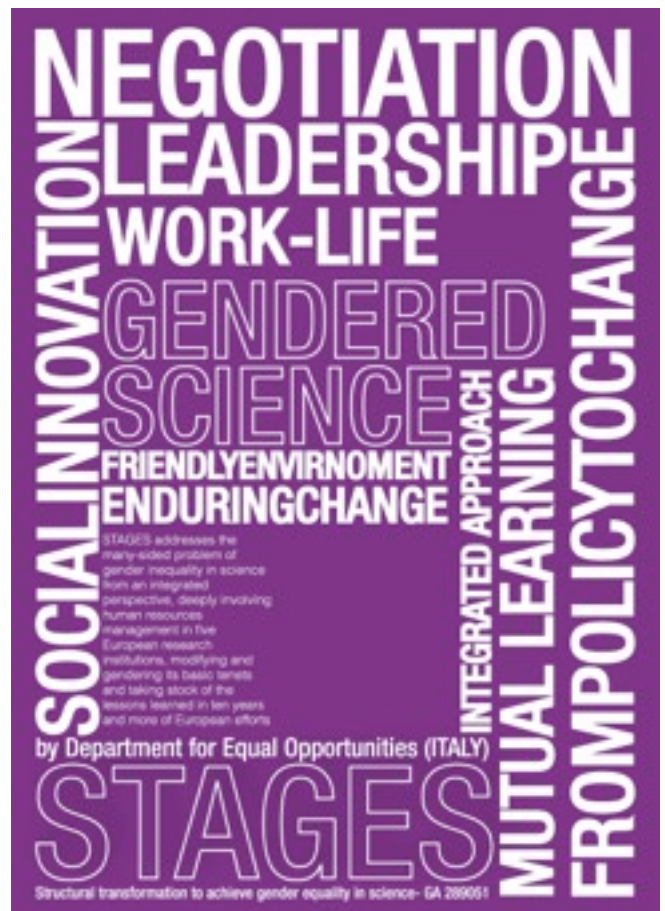
(ASDO TEAM VISITS FRAUNHOFER INSTITUTE)

One of the main features of the STAGES project is the constant support provided to the organisations implementing the Action Plans through a set of central services and tools, mostly in charge of ASDO: technical assistance, evaluation and in-progress research on the change dynamics activated by the project within each organisation.

Technical assistance is geared at helping manage problems in implementing the Action Plans. Bilateral monitoring is one of its most important tools, serving the purpose of overseeing the flows of actions concerning the performance of the activities included in the Action Plans, verifying state of advancement and emerging issues, so as to be able to continuously adapt the plans. To this end, detailed planning charts have been devised in cooperation with each partner in the first two months of operations, including both "soft" and "hard" aspects of implementation as well as negotiation activities with the different stakeholders involved. First-year detailed planning constituted the basis for the setup of monitoring schemes, collected in an electronic database and used during bilateral at-distance monitoring sessions. Technical assistance visits have also been conducted in each organisation, to the end of conducting qualitative monitoring sessions with the implementing teams, in the form of brainstorming about emerging problems and issues.

As for the evaluation of the Action Plans, it aims to ensure high-quality implementation of the envisaged tasks and provide information that can be used for both practical

and knowledge-generating purposes. Through annual controls, in fact, it helps partners adapt project activities to the changing needs and circumstances of their institutions.



The report on first-year evaluation has been drafted by ASDO in a collaborative process which has included all the partners and members of the International Board of Scientific Advisors (IBSA). Beyond verifying progress in planned activities and recording first structural changes achieved, the evaluation exercise aimed at highlighting main problems to be addressed in year 2, but also at stressing specific success areas and potential for improvement in each organisation. To this end, after an analytical part, where indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, impact relevance and sustainability were applied, space for comments was provided both for the implementing groups and the technical assistance team. Evaluation results are currently feeding second-year detailed planning.

The aim of the accompanying research, designed as a cross-cutting activity involving all the Action Plans, is different from and complementary to that of evaluation: it certainly uses evaluation as an information source (as well as monitoring reports), but it looks for deeper and more hidden phenomena related to the change process and its progress, using specific indicators. An "Observation model" has been drafted to this end in June, including the description of the theoretical and methodological approach of the research, as well as the areas to be analysed and the technical tools to be applied. It has been discussed with both the partners and the IBSA members in charge of specifically checking central activities and will be developed and implemented throughout the project: research results will in fact be entered into the cycle of project management during all the four years of implementation.

To sum up, STAGES first year has been devoted by ASDO to set up all the needed structures for cross-cutting support activities to the Action Plans, which will now be ordinarily run in the remaining part of the project, adapting and improving them with respect to the specific needs of each partner organisation. From the privileged viewpoint of ASDO, working in close contact with all the implementing partners, it can be said that year 1, which entailed the launch of 55 out of the total 78 actions envisaged in the 5 organisations, certainly put a strong pressure on all the partners, especially in the beginning, making it necessary to find a balance between common activities and the need to focus on each Action Plan. However, as the year progressed, all Action Plans started finding their original way to succeed in getting more deeply embedded in the complex structures and networks (both formal and informal) of their organisation, thus paving the way for a productive second year, which in most cases is already envisaging additional actions and impacts than those initially foreseen. In this perspective, it will be all the more necessary and useful to launch and support more substantial mutual learning processes among the partners, helping them to really exchange experiences and lessons learned and find inspiration in what the others are doing and achieving.



# AARHUS UNIVERSITY

## TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RESTRUCTURATION TO BUILD A FULLY GENDER EQUAL INSTITUTION

(AARHUS UNIVERSITY – FACULTY OF ENGINEERING)

The initial STAGES actions at Aarhus University-AU aimed at stocktaking the current situation and collecting data on developments within gender equality in order to proceed with further activities. The STAGES research team, in collaboration and cooperation with the Human Resources and the Communication Department, has engaged in the development and launching of a new website - [Gerau.au.dk](http://gerau.au.dk) – Gender equality in research at AU, that includes all the different levels of information that might concern female researchers at AU, such as, for instance, workshop activities, courses and mentoring programmes, career advice, maternity leave rules, rules for the evaluation of productivity, access to decision making-bodies, information about available job opportunities, articles on women's scientific excellence, etc. Additionally, the website will provide an excellent platform for disseminating research results and implementing activities with respect to the STAGES project. Furthermore, an agreement has been made with the Communication Department about an ongoing exchange of ideas and inputs concerning gender equality, research on gender in academia, promotion of the visibility of female role models and women's scientific excellence. More specifically, the research team has committed itself to report new and interesting stories to the Communication Department.

Conversely, the Communication Department has committed itself to disseminate selected stories in relevant organizational media (for instance, in the university newspaper, in the homepage of the university website and in the newsletter of each of the main scientific areas). So far, the collaboration has been very fruitful. For instance, a topic section on gender equality has been

integrated into a recent edition of the university newspaper reaching 18.000 people and the Communication Department has been very helpful with the promotion of the STAGES workshop in September. The STAGES workshop "Diversity Management in a Transitional Time", organised on 26 September 2012 at AU, provided stakeholders and researchers with the opportunity to meet European experts on the topic of gender diversity management.

The workshop was a catalyst for action, giving the opportunity to explain the gender diversity management initiatives and planned interventions; the barriers connected to women researchers' career at the university but also in Denmark in general; the targeted areas to work on and the actions that will be implemented. Finally, the workshop at Aarhus University fostered internal discussions among researchers, university staff and other stakeholders on how to enhance the implementation and improve the scheduled actions and reach the university target figures on gender equality. The drafting of a code of conduct that establishes a career development procedure for researchers is another action implemented, which is geared at making the new operational setups permanent. A permanent research leaders training programme was established in 2012. Part of the content and objectives of the leadership course's module "Leadership in complex organisations" and its contributions is dedicated to the promotion of gender diversity management at AU. The STAGES research group has been asked to lecture on gender diversity management within the framework of this module.

<http://www.au.dk/en/>



# UNIVERSITY OF MILAN

## ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: HOW TO ENHANCE CHANGE IN SCIENTIFIC CAREERS

(UNIVERSITY OF MILAN)

The STAGES Project at the University of Milan (UMIL) is coordinated by the **Interdepartmental Centre "Women and Gender Differences"**. The tailored Action Plan at UMIL was drafted after carefully taking stock of previous initiatives on equal opportunities implemented at UMIL's, gathering data on female presence in research at all levels and after a detailed analysis of contextual constraints and opportunities. The Plan targets the **Faculties of Food and Agricultural Sciences** and **Medicine** both exhibiting peculiarities in terms of size as well as type of horizontal and vertical segregation that make them ideal settings for intervention. However, it also includes actions targeting the whole University. The actions comprised in the Plan aim at introducing different types of transformations:

**Institutional changes** - equal opportunities in the agenda and university practices; direct commitment of senior managers and leaders; gender studies included in S&T curricula; **Support to young women** researchers - increased writing and publication capacity; increased participation as research coordinators; enhanced competitiveness in the international scale; **Cultural changes** - raised students' awareness; increased visibility of women's contribution to S&T and women as role models; increased awareness on gender stereotypes; **Knowledge generation** - production of evidence-based data on women's condition at UMIL's; **Changes in work environment** - creation of a women-friendly environment.

The first STAGES year at UMIL has been intense as several actions such as the Launch Conference (8 March 2012), the course "Equal Opportunities and Scientific Careers" (March-June

2012), the workshop "*Gender Medicine in Europe: Developments and Perspectives*" (23 May 2012), the Annual Reporting to the UMIL's Academic Senate, have been implemented. Important institutional changes regarding the composition of UMIL's governance, moreover, have occurred. Such changes put UMIL to the forefront of gender equality in the top management not only in the Italian academic landscape, but more generally in our national context. Following the 2010 Reform of Italian Universities, indeed, UMIL underwent a process of re-organisation started with the approval of the new Statute in March 2012. The Statute regulates the composition of the main UMIL's governance bodies, among which the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors, and includes a quota measure according to which among the 8 appointed members of the Board (the Board also includes the Rector and two students' representatives who are ex-officio members) each gender must be represented by at least 3 members. The examination of the candidates was completed last week and 3 women were appointed. The quota, thus, implies that at least 27.3% of women will be part of this body (in 2010 the average proportion of women in Boards in Italy was 17% - Source: She Figures, 2012). The quota system introduced at UMIL thus represents an advanced measure in the Italian context. In this vein, also the new UMIL's Academic Senate – composed of 35 members among which 15 women (43%) – shows a good rate of female representation. In particular, if considered together, the two main UMIL's governance bodies will have a female representation rate of at least 39%, that is plus 7 percentage points if compared with the baseline of 32% at the beginning of the Project. Moreover, after the election of the new Rector, a woman, Prof. Maria Daniela Candia, has been appointed as Vice Rector for the first time in UMIL's history.



# RADBOUD UNIVERSITY OF NIJMEGEN TAKING CHANGE ONE STEP FURTHER

(ASDO TEAM VISITS THE RADBOUD UNIVERSITY)

In this first year, the STAGES core team at the Radboud University was installed under the coordination of Professor Inge Bleijenbergh. The first meetings took place with the Advisory Board and the National Committee (respectively the external and internal committee) and helpful suggestions were made about the implementation of the project.

As for the evaluation of the Mentoring programme, in spring 2012 the team wrote an evaluation of the mentoring programme at the RU for 2010. Based on a survey amongst all mentees and a focus group with mentees at Nijmegen School of Management, the programme was positively evaluated. The Board of the University decided to continue the mentoring programme and in 2011 a new group of 24 mentees entered the programme. As for the Women's Network of Young Female Scientists, in June, the core team brainstormed with two young PhD students at the Nijmegen School of Management about the establishment of a women's network for young female scientists at the Radboud University. In the months thereafter, the staff became involved in writing the plans, meeting stakeholders and setting up a Board for this network. The kick-off meeting of the network took place on 22 November, with more than 70 women and several men participating. A link to the network and a report of the meeting can be found at

<http://www.ru.nl/halkes/>

As for gender awareness training, the first meetings took place in August and September at the Donders Institute. Inge Bleijenbergh and Vincent de Gooyert cooperated in the organization of these meetings and seven members of the management team and two gender experts participated. The participants spent eight hours to build a system dynamics model of the causes of gender inequality in the Institute. Finally, a list of interventions was identified including quota in hiring women and putting women on the shortlist.

As far as computer-based modelling in gender analysis is concerned, in September and October a focus on gender equality was integrated in the "Group Model Building" master courses. Six students of these courses did an internship in the Nijmegen School of Management and Donders Institute to support qualitative and quantitative modelling of gender inequality in these organizations.

The STAGES project was presented during many events organized within the university, for example at the Nijmegen School Management Research day in June (poster presentation), the Gender Institute (in October) and to the research group on Gender and Diversity in the Nijmegen School of Management (November).



# IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY (UAIC)

## BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP THROUGH AN ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE BROKERAGE

(NETWORK OF WOMEN ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS AT UAIC UNIVERSITY)

UAIC's Action Plan is framed by a synergic, multidimensional approach structured around *three strategic areas*: a women friendly environment, gender aware science and women's leadership of science. Each strategic area is associated with several objectives and activities aiming at implementing the planned structural transformations.

The UAIC's Action plan has been drafted taking into consideration the peculiarities of the organizational culture in Romanian universities as well as the (radical) political changes after 1990 and its impact on the national educational and research strategies. It is also important to remind that that the universities' autonomy (granted by law) creates important 'room' for negotiation and for possible agreed changes. Built on patriarchal values and the hierarchical/vertical distribution of power and authority, the organizational culture of the UAIC has to stand for important transformations in order to really implement gender equality and to make it a normal fact of everyday academic life.

From each faculty involved in the project a *core group of dedicated women* – senior and young academics and researchers from Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Computer science, Geography and Geology, Letters, Mathematics, Biology and Sociology sectors has been selected.

The implementation of the climate and organizational values evaluation survey represented an important step of UAIC's Action Plan, as it documented and assessed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the perception of young and senior researchers of the issue of discrimination and equal opportunities at UAIC. The survey involved two samples: senior researchers and young

researchers. The analysis of the collected data indicated that for both young and senior researchers the issue of gender discrimination and equal opportunities in the workplace and in science does not represent a problem that UAIC University should address. Both senior and young researchers are '**gender blind**', according to findings.

The first year of STAGES implementation at UAIC benefited from a large number of activities aiming at raising awareness of both top and middle managers as well as of young and senior researchers on the hot issue of gender equality in our university. To this aim, several workshops and training activities have been organized, each one targeting a special group of beneficiaries (top managers, women in the academic network, young researchers, and officials from Human Resources Department). The dissemination of the STAGES project, its partners and its activities has been a priority for the UAIC's team. For more information on this aspect, please visit the new website:

[www.stages.csmcd.ro](http://www.stages.csmcd.ro)

A special attention has also been paid to the media dissemination of the activities.





# FRAUNHOFER BUILDING AN INTERNAL MARKET FOR GENDER DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

(GERMAN-LANGUAGE BROCHURE OF THE STAGES PROJECT)

During the first year, Fraunhofer-FRAU has planned in detail to work on three main priorities: the development and implementation of a structure for regular "Exchange of Experiences" on activities in gender equality among the regional "Commissioners for Equal Opportunities" (BfC) – at the local FRAU Institutes (Regional Group), the survey about the activities concerning gender equality at the FRAU Institutes and their participation in the change process.

When FRAU staff planned the activities, a local group of Commissioners for Equal Opportunities ("BfC") at the Fraunhofer Centre Stuttgart had already been established and FRAU wanted to address it initially. However, in November 2011, regional groups of BfC were founded. FRAU staff had to adapt to these developments and decided to take this opportunity to support and accompany the already founded regional BfC groups in their work and exchange processes, instead of starting their own competing BfC exchange structure. One of these groups consists of all the FRAU-Institutes in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate, including the abovementioned group of BfC at the Fraunhofer Centre Stuttgart. FRAU staff addressed this group first. In summer 2012, a meeting of the group was organised and later the FRAU staff also contacted all other regional groups to evaluate their concurrent status of establishing and exchange procedures. So they are and will be supported by the STAGES core team to further deepen the exchange opportunities.

Another organisational change affected the second activity: during the starting phase of STAGES, a survey on gender diversity topics had been launched by the headquarters of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. The initiated survey involved all female employees working in research with questions regarding their situation, their needs, plans, working conditions as well as their view on leadership. We welcomed that activity very much and appreciated the offered opportunity to be part of the Fraunhofer internal project team for this survey, this allowing us to combine the two activities.

The planned survey for STAGES, in fact, aimed to collect and assess the best practices in gender equality activities existing in the different Fraunhofer institutes. As a consequence of the concurrent events, FRAU staff decided not to conduct a first and a final survey as initially planned, but to develop an instrument to continuously collect good practices on gender diversity from the various Fraunhofer Institutes instead. Decision-makers from the headquarters and FRAU staff agreed on having an internal toolbox filled with the collected activities and not only available on the STAGES project's website:

[www.stages-online.info](http://www.stages-online.info)

but also on the intranet which will have connections to every-day work processes. FRAU staff have also set up a German STAGES Committee and are very happy that all other German big research groups have agreed to participate in the German STAGES Committee. The Committee's first meeting took place on 23 November 2012 in Stuttgart and the next one will be held in June 2013.



## INTERVIEW WITH THE ITALIAN ASTROPHYSICIST VERONICA BINDI

"Veronica Bindi completed her doctorate in physics in 2006, and she has worked in some of the most famous laboratories throughout the world - such as USA's NASA [National Aeronautical and Space Agency], and CERN [European Organization for Nuclear Research], based in Switzerland. By 2011, just 6 years later, and though only 35 years old, she successfully reached the position of Professor of Physics, at the Physics and Astronomy department of the University of Hawaii"

**What do you enjoy the most about working in the scientific research field?**

I love Space and Science matter.

I really enjoy dealing with new challenges where you and your team have to find by yourself the right path to the results.

To do science means to deal with a marvellous mixture of different disciplines.

As physicist, I collaborate with mechanical engineers, computer scientists, chemistry scientists and technical staffs. I have been working in international and competitive environments, which imply different cultures, opinions and way of thinking.

Thanks to my job I have the opportunity to work in the top quality research institutes and visit wonderful places.

<http://www.phys.hawaii.edu/people/faculty/bindi.html>

**Do you think that being a woman had any impact on your career?**

Physics is male-dominated. I had to work really hard to be respected and my work taken into account by male colleagues. I had to overcome several obstacles to arrive at my present position, but all these uncomfortable situations made me grow and helped me in producing my best works.

At this stage of my career, being a woman gives me more visibility compared to my same-level male colleagues, and this interview is kind of a proof. But I don't have to forget that prejudices are around the corner and I'm sure I'll have to face them many times again.

**What would you like to say to young women who want to start a scientific career?**

Science is a fascinating world and it's a privilege to be part of it. Women are a great resource for Science.

It could sound naïve, but I sincerely think that life is too short not to try to achieve your dreams.

My suggestion to the young girls is to never lose track of what they consider important and focus all their energies following their dreams, you can achieve them! It will not be an easy path and they'll have to face many difficulties, but the greater difficulty is to be brave enough to choose your own destiny. It will always be challenging, but once you reach your goal the satisfaction will be greater than your efforts.

I want to summarize my message with this sentence: "Shoot at the Moon! ...no matter if you miss it... you will be among the Stars!!!"

<http://www.bo.infn.it/~bindi/Welcome.html>

# NEWS



## 29-30 NOVEMBER THE EUROPEAN GENDER SUMMIT 2012



The 2012 Gender Summit under the theme 'Aligning **Agendas for Excellence**' was held on 29-30 November at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The Staff of the STAGES Project participated in this important event giving active support to the dialogue, in order to assess and agree on the best evidence-based gender equality strategies for science.

The STAGES Project poster has also been showcased online in the virtual Gender Summit Exhibition. All the submitted posters are

available for consultation and download on the gender summit website [www.gender-summit.eu](http://www.gender-summit.eu) and the STAGES postcard is available on the project website: [www.projectstages.it](http://www.projectstages.it), in the "gallery" section relating to 2012.

For further information on the recommendations and conclusions of the 2012 Gender Summit, please refer to the "Report from 2012 European Gender Summit on Developing Systematic Implementation Strategy to advance EU Policy on Gender Equality in Science, as part of Horizon 2020, European Research Area and Innovation Union", available on the gender summit website.



## 26 OCTOBER 2012 1ST MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS- IBSA

The 1st Meeting of the IBSA took place at the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers in Rome and was opened by Mr. Michele Palma, Director General of the Department for Equal Opportunities (DPO) and project coordinator, who described the challenges and objectives the STAGES project intends to achieve, as well as the importance of IBSA's task for the successful implementation of the Project. After a brief introduction by all participants, the representatives of the scientific partner ASDO described in details the main actions of the project, the technical assistance system, the accompanying research and the internal monitoring activity. Also representatives from the 5 Consortium partners took part in the meeting and illustrated the major actions developed within the framework of their respective Action Plans. The meeting was attended by the

following 7 internationally renowned experts, members of the IBSA: Judy Wajcman (Director of the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics-UK); Alice Hogan (Former Director of the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE program-USA); Maria Rimini-Döring (Senior Expert in Human-Machine Interaction at Corporate Research and Advance Engineering of BOSCH- DE); Chiara Tonelli (Full Professor of Genetics at the Faculty of Mathematical, Physical and Natural Sciences of Milan- IT); Adrian Ifitene (Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Computer Science, from UAIC, Iasi-RO); Letty A. de Weger (Senior Researcher at the Department of Pulmonology at Leiden University Medical Center- NL); Inge Henningsen (Senior Researcher in Applied Mathematical Sciences and Statistics at Aarhus University-DK).