

Mentoring in Academia and Research: a Tool to Improve Gender Equality in Human Resource Management

The international mentoring conference *Mentoring in Academia and Research: a Tool to Improve Gender Equality in Human Resource Management* took place on Friday October 23rd 2020. The conference was held by the Center for Gender and Science and the European network of mentoring programs eument-net.

Due to the Covid19 pandemic the conference was held online. The initial doubts about difficulties with networking in online format were balanced by registration of over 70 participants from 18 different countries. That wouldn't be possible in standard format for logistic reasons.

The program of the conference was divided into three parts. The conference started with welcome word by Marcela Linková the Head of the Center for Gender and Science. It was followed by a brief introduction of the activities of eument-net by its Chair Ekaterina Masetkina and the introduction of the Mentoring programme for Early Career Researchers by the coordinator Kateřina Maršálková.

The main part of the conference were three sections that were held in two discussion blocks: *How to start a mentoring program, How to work with mentors, How to work with mentees*. Each section was introduced by the expert presentation and followed with discussion. The participants who signed up beforehand were also able to present during these sections.

During the first section focused on creating of the mentoring programs (with the experts Dr. Martou Chiarinotti and Dr. Ruth Kamm from the University of Kiel and Dr. May Morris from the University de Montpellier) we discussed the importance of outline the objectives, its target group and networking. It was stressed to keep the focus of mentoring on women - scientists. There were also useful tips for negotiating with the institutions.

In the second section the experts Dr. Evelyn Rusdea from the University of Freiburg, MA. Kerstin Tiefenbacher from the University of Vienna and Dr. Maria Rosaria Masullo from the University Federico II of Naples focused on working with mentors. The main points were the expectation from the position of mentors, benefits that they may gain from the cooperation with mentees and the process of creating mentoring pairs. The emphasis was on voluntary cooperation, no hierarchy, preparing mentors for their role and helping mentees with their specific goals. From the experience of the experts and participants it is also evident that group mentoring may be a great addition to individual one-on-one mentoring. Last section with the experts Dr. Julí Batut from the Centre de Biologie Intégrative de Toulouse and Dr. Phuong Glaser from the University of Cologne was all about working with mentees. The burning issue of the discussion was especially motivating mentees and their lack of proactivity. The lack of empiric evidence focused on specific needs of the mentees was also mentioned. As well as the tendency of young generation to be over-coached. The experts and participants also agreed on the irreplaceable benefits of peer mentoring that gives the mentees more confidence and also assures them that they're not alone in their struggles.

The last presentation was given by Michaela Gindl from the University of Continuing Education on evaluation and monitoring of mentoring programs. The conference was closed by Marcela

Linková and Dagmar Höppel from eument-net who summarized the main points and conclusions of the three sections.

From the evaluation form that was send out after the conference, it is evident that the participants were satisfied with the topics and they also appreciated the discussions and feedback given by the experts. Despite the limitations of the online format some of the participants managed to make new contacts and learn more about different institutions. The online format also enabled the participation of people from distant countries (f.e. Turkey and Canada) who wouldn't be able to participate if the conference was held in Prague like it was planned.