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QUING

Quality in Gender⁺ Equality Policies

Integrated Project

Priority 7 – Citizens and Governance in a knowledge Based Society
7.1.2. Gender and Citizenship in a Multicultural Context

**Deliverable No. 57: Manual for gender trainers.
Guidelines towards a community of practice among gender⁺ trainers in Europe: a
manual for training trainers through 3 on-line forums**

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PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
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CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

Introduction

Initial objectives of WP 31

The initial focus of WP31, as stated in the full Annex, was the “training of trainers” as the best “multiplication”, or “spreading” strategy. Drawing on pilot training, expert meetings, and especially on D43 (‘Pilot manual for gender trainers including methodological and didactic guidelines’) and D65 (‘Guidelines for curricula standards for gender+ training’), a first emphasis had to be placed on the content of training, and a second major emphasis on training methodologies. Some trainers were expected to be selected among the QUING researchers and trained in this WP at the level of 11 European countries, and these trainers would then engage in training trainers in the other member states and candidate countries, and within countries. This second round of training was thought to be monitored and evaluated by the “first level” trainers. Therefore, a “trainer’s manual” (D67) was due for Month 37 that would have also included a monitoring and evaluation protocol for this second level training (D68). A first draft was to be circulated by Month 36 for comments to all partners, and actual training should start in Month 37, and to be evaluated by WP leaders between Months 45 and 50 for final reporting. The expected results of this Workpackage were to train a set of gender+ trainers, and to produce long-term and high-quality methodological training tools to be used by those trainers.

Justified modifications in implementing WP31

However, due to the differences between the allocation and timing of resources initially planned and those finally implemented during the first three years of QUING, the genuine content of WP31 – that is, offering a training the trainers activity for the QUING researchers in the eleven partner’s teams, was no longer possible and needed to be readapted. To date, there are much fewer researchers available for OPERA activities in the teams, as the biggest efforts in human resources have been carried out during the first two years of QUING, and there are no additional resources to maintain a ‘face to face’ training format at a European level (mainly in terms of travel expenses).

Nonetheless, the OPERA activity, through its own deliverables and in a fruitful conjunction with the TARGET project¹, has created a well spread and quite ample community

¹ The TARGET (Transnational Applied Research in Gender Equity Training) project is funded by the European Commission through the EU-US Atlantis Program. The project was held from November 2007 through November 2009, being all the European partners in that project also OPERA partners (Complutense University, Radboud University, and Humboldt University)

of gender+ training experts who have been in contact and answered the OPERA requests – such as the gender trainers data base, questionnaire to institutions- and attended OPERA expert meetings, and also the ones held through the TARGET project (Berlin, May 2008, Nijmegen, November 2008; Boston, March 2009; and Madrid June 2009). Through these expert meetings as well as other previous deliverables – especially, during the second management period, the pilot trainings and the fulfilment of the ‘Guidelines for curricula standards’ (D65)-, we have identified gender trainers’ needs, challenges and concerns.

Such needs and challenges have also been discussed during the OPERA Expert meeting (Oct. 5th 2007, Vienna, D32), the OPERA working sessions held during the biannual QUING workshops in Vienna (Oct. 13-14 2006; May 12-14 2007; Oct 5-6 2007; April11-12 2008, and Nov. 7-8 2008) , and the QUING conference in Budapest (2-3 October, 2009). From our discussions and from the conclusions of these expert meetings and work sessions, reported in D64 (“Report on curriculum workshops”) submitted by mid-November, 2009, has emerged the need for a “community of good practices between gender trainers” (see: below) that will be established on line. This significant shift from performing training-the-trainers activities in a face-to-face format towards an on-line training community had also an impact on the timing for the submission of D67 and D68.

As an extra preparation period was needed to explore online platforms and best options for technical support, a 1 Month delay in regards to the previously planned date for submitting D67 and D68 to the Commission has been accepted. This allowed enough time to discuss the innovative nature and the technical aspects of the planned format for this on-line community of good practices.

This deliverable thus intends to provide guidelines for QUING gender+ trainers involved in this training the trainers’ experience through the making of this virtual community. By “QUING gender+ trainers”, we mean those who will actively contribute to structure and foster on-line discussions, thanks to their preparation of the different on-line working sessions to be carried out, and their implication in the discussion.

From training-the-trainers towards a community of (good) practices

Therefore, the OPERA team has decided to convert “training-the-trainers activities” into 3 on-line monographic one-day forums moderated by OPERA team members and opened to the network of gender+ training experts built through the synergy between OPERA and TARGET.

The need for such a community of practices and its potential outcomes for trainers’ activities, as well as potential resistances to the sharing of good/innovative practices and the

ways to overcome it are discussed in Section 1. Consecutively, Section 2 lists and justifies the transversal topics to be addressed in the 3 monographic on-line forums, that is, 'How to include intersectionality and gener/feminist theory in gender+ training', 'How to use real participatory and experiential methodology', and 'How to deal with resistances'. A methodology is suggested in Section 3 that briefly expounds major technical solutions adopted and discusses the role of the administrator, the moderators and the participants, as well as the ways to work in a cumulative way.

Section 1: Building a community of practices in Gender+ training: Challenges & expected outcomes

1.1 Defining gender+ training and training-the-trainers activities

General definition for OPERA

From the launching of the OPERA activity and QUING project, "gender+ training²" as the object analysis of this activity, was defined as the training planned, organized and/or commissioned by *public* institutions, which primarily targets public agents, civil servants and other professionals working within public administrations or regularly working for them, and aims at facilitating the incorporation of "a gender equality perspective in all policies and at all levels and at all stages of the policy-making process" (Definition of mainstreaming, Council of Europe 1998: 15). By 'Gender+ training' thus we mean formal official training on gender that is provided by relevant public bodies and is targeted at politicians, civil servants and other professionals working for public administrations ('professionals' can be, for instance, doctors of a public hospital), and we specified that gender+ training courses and activities officially established can be either online or face-to-face classes. Equally we defined 'Gender trainers' as people (academics, private consultancies, free-lance gender experts) who are contracted by public bodies –or other intermediate bodies, such as NGOs- to give gender training to professionals, politicians and public administrators involved in the policy making process and the implementation of public policies.

Consequently, and according to the general definition adopted by OPERA activities of the QUING project, Gender+ training is one component of an overarching strategy towards gender+ equality. As part of this strategy, it is considered that the acquisition of gender competence by policy makers and policy executors is a *sine qua non* criterion for the establishment of gender+ mainstreaming policies. Gender theory is the basis of gender+ competence, and rooting practical tools into a solid conceptual framework is the pre-condition to gain a transferable and long-lasting result. Besides, gender+ theory must always be accompanied by practical contents, as the main expected outcomes of gender+ training in general are, beyond enhancing gender competences of individuals, the implementation of a strategy of gender+ mainstreaming and the operationalization of equality, be it in a specific policy field, an organization, or a program (see also: D43 and D65).

² Gender+ refers to how gender intersects other inequalities (class, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, etc.)

From a more substantive point of view, Gender+ training is *transformative* since it aims at transforming both attitudes and working procedures. Although it acknowledges that gender can never be considered as a single, isolated inequality strand, gender+ training strongly maintains a focus on gender, while the “+” refers to its intersection with other inequalities.

Gender+ training: a highly contextual activity

Nonetheless, the goals of gender+ training are highly context-specific and will vary according to the target group, but also the type of organization or administration by which it is commissioned / organized, and the policy sector in which they are applied. As a consequence, defining the goals of a training paying attention to its specific context will strongly impact its content and those goals need to be discussed by commissioners and trainers. It is also assumed in this project, that gender+ training enhances gender+ competences of the individuals in their respective fields of competence. Yet, as it may also affect their values and representation, in a social context where gender and other inequalities are deeply rooted in society, the goals of gender+ training may be also to overcome prejudices and stereotypes around gender. The cognitive dimension of gender+ training, i.e. its capacity to provide knowledge on gender and other inequalities, including findings from gender studies, ethnicity, diversity, age or sexual orientation studies, will also depend on the context where it is carried out. Moreover, a gender+ training is always embedded in the broader context of gender+ equality policies, and aspects such as existing gender machineries, gender mainstreaming history, or available data and expertise on gender+, need to be taken into account when designing gender+ training (see: D43, 2008: 13).

Defining quality criteria: a problematic process

Defining quality criteria for gender+ training always results problematic since gender+ training is highly contextual and can also vary in terms of approaches, concepts and methodologies. This makes quality of gender+ training a very sensitive issue, and recommendable not to create general standards that would fix a particular meaning of the quality of gender+ training, excluding other definitions and actors that might be included. However, some guiding principles are requested in order to avoid everything being labeled gender+ training (for in-depth discussions on quality criteria, see: D43 *Pilot manual for gender trainers including methodological and didactic guidelines*, D65, *Guidelines for curricula standards* and D64, *Reporting on curricula workshops*). Beyond general principles

(Gender+ training as part of a gender+ equality strategy that aims at building gender+ competence and fostering processes of change within organizations and institutions), quality criteria have to be set according to the typology of gender+ training, to which specific goals are attached (discussed in D64 and D65) :

- *Basic awareness training* (providing basic introduction on gender as a social construction and gender & power relation, as well as its intersection with other inequalities. Makes participants aware of the mandate to place gender+ equality at the core of organizational practices and institution goals. Also touches upon participants' values and representations)
- *Gender+ analysis training* (The goal is to think about participants' own organizations as part of a system of disadvantage, about the role they play in this system and how awareness could be applied to produce change)
- *Gender equality strategy training* (help institutions to develop their own strategic plans, to establish sustainable and concrete commitments toward making the necessary organizational changes. The focus is on identifying priority issues for intervention taking into account their feasibility in terms of resources)

Training the trainers: specific challenges

As it has been extensively discussed in previous deliverables, training the trainers presents specific challenges. While it can be assumed that training-the-trainers activities target people who supposedly do not need to get back to gender+ theory, train-the-trainer training shall nonetheless place the emphasis on the need for trainers to be self-reflective about their own practices since the dependency of gender+ training on contexts implies the need to permanently adapt it in terms of content and methodology. For this purpose, networking with the community of active gender trainers may help to foster self-reflexivity.

However, trainers themselves constitute a rather vague category. Indeed, the pool of those who may eventually be commissioned to facilitate the above-listed gender+ training activities may designate external trainers (who work as consultants for different organizations in one or more specific fields), as well as trainers internal to the organization itself. Among the first sub-category, trainers can present much differentiated profiles, alternatively dominated by characteristics drawing from consultancy, academic, juridical, corporate management and other activities. Such diversity, which is correlated to different practices, methodologies, perspectives and possibly, priorities, makes even greater the need for commonly and widely accepted, though broadly defined, quality criteria. Moreover, since

training external trainers produces a resource for change across a whole organization, university-based training may endorse specific relevance for this type of external train-the-trainers training. Generally speaking, among trainers, trainers commissioned to train future trainers surely constitute a specific category, as they are in the frontline to establish quality criteria, define the content of training-the-trainers curricula and the self-definition of what a trainer-of-trainer should be.

Since such definitions cannot be arbitrarily established from above, but should result from an intensive dialogue between trainers and academics, in order to be further defended and promoted towards commissioners, it seems crucial to strengthen the capacity of the actors of training-the-trainers activities to act as a *community of practitioners*.

1.2 Why a CoP in gender+ training?

Community of Practice: a definition

According to one of the most praised theorists of CoP, Etienne Wenger, “Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. In a nutshell: Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2007)³.

While it is generally assumed that learning 'has a beginning and an end; that it is best separated from the rest of our activities; and that it is the result of teaching' (Wenger 1998: 3)⁴, social anthropologist Jean Lave and pedagogue Etienne Wenger opposed that learning is a social process and stems largely from experience in daily life. This assumption was the basis for a significant rethinking of learning theory, as it considered that learning involved a process of engagement in a 'community of practice'.

As shown in the above-mentioned definition, a community of practice may designate

³ Wenger, E. (2007) 'Communities of practice. A brief introduction'. *Communities of practice*, <http://www.ewenger.com/theory>, accessed November, 1st, 2009. See also: Lave, J. and E. Wenger (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Wenger, E. (1998) 'Communities of Practice. Learning as a social system', *Systems Thinker*, <http://www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lss.shtml>. Accessed November 1st, 2009.

a number of configurations where mutual learning and sharing experience to enhance skills and capacities is at stake. However, according to its main theorists, it shall have “an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people” (Wenger, 1998). Its members, while “pursuing their interest in their domain (...), engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other”. Additionally, “members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a shared practice” (*op. cit.*).

A supportive network

Communities of practice (CoP) are a support for on-going professional training as they enable trainers/experts to keep interchanging ideas beyond face-to-face encounters as those carried out during expert meetings or academic seminars. They can be groups made of academics, policy makers and trainers, and constitute a living context for the integration of practitioners to a larger community, a context for safe explorations of new ideas and expanding the boundaries of knowledge from mixed experiences.

Therefore, building a CoP means to create “supportive” networks rather than “expert networks”, i.e., a platform which aims at fostering *effective changes* and to enhance communicational and tutorial skills of its members. While performing Gender+ training does not always imply strong pedagogical abilities or a clear perspective on the structural goals pursued by gender+ training, trainers and experts engaged in this community rely on a strong expertise and assume they are feminists interested in producing structural changes. As gender knowledge is in itself a life-long learning process, it needs to be dynamic and draw on self-reflexivity. Building a CoP appears as an appropriate mean to trigger this self-reflexivity. In particular, it is an appropriate venue to think about issues such as:

- How context of gender change and agenda matters
- Tradeoffs in which individuals are getting involved to balance between what is good for their business/career/reputation and what is good for producing changes in gender roles/relations
- Think about contexts in which “trainers meet activists” or “trainers meet commissioners” or “trainers meet academics”, every of these situations having an impact on training effectiveness
- How to incorporate supportive environment for trainers.

From these points of view and many others, contacts between academics, experts and trainers are useful for confronting respective positions and generating reflection.

From mutual isolation to shaping collective norms

As Gender+ training has become increasingly important outside from the feminist theory and movement, acquiring significance to a larger audience, it has also become a matter of market competition. Understandably, as a consequence of its success, Gender+ training activities are gaining relevance and in many cases, now require financial means that most of the actors originally involved in this activity do not have. This means, in particular, that companies which have had so far nothing to do with gender but have the appropriate organizational and financial resources, are likely to carry out the most important (and most funded) projects. As in any developing sector, the accreditation and selection of the actors will take a long time and surely produce contention. Building a CoP can be conceived as a way to take an active part in the process of legitimization / accreditation. Indeed, a CoP can perhaps constitute a collective voice to push for what we, as a network of gender experts and trainers, contemplate as best practices in the field of gender+ training.

CoPs can constitute a first step in a long term process, by which disconnected or isolated individuals are progressively encouraged to join a community of practitioners. Then it becomes clear to most of the professionals in Gender+ training that joining the community is a matter of legitimacy, and CoPs progressively acquires a statute which makes them instances able to produce norms, to mainstream quality standards and to give trainers basic credentials as professionals. A further step might be to strengthen communication between Communities of practices emerging in a common area (or market) as the European Union, in order to identify common interests, objectives (in terms of social change) and quality criteria that would make them and their memberships stronger when it is necessary to negotiate with commissioners what Gender+ training is about, and how it should be designed to be effective.

More pragmatically, it emerged from the discussions reported in D64 that the main potential outcomes expected from a CoP are the following:

- Facilitating resources to gender+ trainers

Generating a supportive network by providing gender+ trainers with new arguments, methods, points of views, tools. Making such resources easily accessible on-line.

- Generating and diffusing knowledge

Producing knowledge, by mutually sharing experiences in Gender+ training in very different contexts, but also by producing cross-analysis of respective experiences. Contributing to the diffusion of knowledge in an innovative format, less stabilized than Gender training manuals or on-line courses, but more opened to self-reflexivity.

- Sharing ideas and learning about new situations

To create a space for actively sharing experiences and ideas that emerged from very distinct situations, due to the rich and multi-faced tutorial background of the members of the CoP. Learning about unexpected situations generated by unexpected audiences, institutional contexts, constraints, resistances or relationships with commissioners.

- Stretching boundaries of individual experiences

Triggering self-reflexivity by contrasting individual experience and make others' experiences easily accessible and more directly relevant and/or applicable to ones' daily practice.

A possibility for innovative and common self-reflection

While there is an inflation to be observed in terms of manuals, e-learning modules, workshops and training for trainers (mainly in the international development policy sector), those are being usually developed by different institutions and networks active in different contexts. This reflects the need for ad-hoc methodologies and contents; however, it also limits the potential for cumulative work and a joint reflection on curricula, quality criteria, pedagogical content and evaluation. Similarly, this rather *sui generis* development of Gender+ training worldwide undermines the possibilities to share about commonly faced resistances and problems. A Community of practices in the form of on-line forums thus constitutes an innovative attempt to commonly address well spread situations (as negotiating with commissioners about the format of a training, for instance). It is also designed to provide a forum for trainers and experts who already do share a number of definitions and practices and who need to go further into the detail of their daily practice, rather than being provided with additional theories or definitions.

What an on-line CoP is NOT about

At this stage, it is essential to emphasize what the CoP we suggest to establish is not about. E-learning nowadays offers a promising avenue to make pedagogical contents in Gender+ training easily accessible to larger numbers of practitioners. However, e-learning

instruments (such as on-line manuals or step-by-step modules) mainly constitute an alternative model for enhancing qualifications and knowledge among trainees which requires specific skills and pedagogical capacities that differ from those developed through face-to-face training. The CoP we propose does not aim at teaching gender+ training to gender experts and gender trainers. Neither does it pretend to provide “hard” pedagogical content or ready-made methodology. Instead, it is conceived as a way to continue on creating a critical mass in gender+ training and as a supportive network for practitioners that stems from the diversity and richness of their daily experience and which offers an opportunity to commonly address 3 main issues identified as of major relevance across the community of gender trainers.

1.3 “Changing places”: Pedagogy through reflexivity

The members of the community are well aware that pedagogical skills do not come automatically with knowledge about gender and strongly differ according to the way to interact – face-to-face/virtual. Therefore, rather than providing contents and directly enhancing qualifications, this CoP intends to provide a space to actively discuss tutorial experience as well as practical issues very much related to the effectiveness of training activities. Theory will be convoked only to support the cross-analysis of individual experiences, to improve the daily practice of the members of the CoP and to trigger their self-reflexivity.

Learning through participation, not observation

While it strongly differs from on-line manuals or e-classes in terms of interaction, a CoP built around 3 monographic forums is nonetheless and definitively part of a learning process. Learning, however, is here conceived as the result of exchanging knowledge and actively sharing experiences. This implies that participants will assume an active part in the discussion and appropriate themselves the Community as a mean to achieve better practices as professionals. The very idea of Community thus strongly contradicts a passive status of consumer receiving insights and pre-defined knowledge according to pre-established pedagogical plans.

Building a CoP is also about “changing places”, since it places trainers and gender experts in a situation of greater insecurity where there are strong incentives to question their daily practice, as well as to share professional challenges – such as negotiating with commissioners – for which they have usually developed very specific proper reacting modes and procedures.

Triggering self-reflexivity

As it has been stated above, on-line forums will primarily aim at fostering self-reflexivity. By self-reflexivity, we mean this discursive process by which actors can distance themselves from their experience and practice and possibly adopt another perspective. This is to be facilitated by an exchange of views but also the opportunity to put oneself into a different context, facing similar problems. Self-reflexivity, however, also means rethinking situations of resistances, contention or negotiation from the trainees' point of view, with the help of different experiences, experiential methodologies or gender theory. Triggering self-reflexivity is possible only if establishing a climate of mutual confidence and with a strong commitment of the moderators of the forum towards the active participation of the CoP's members. It will be at the core of the monitoring and evaluation protocol to be adopted (see: annex III).

Building self-identification to a CoP

Gender+ trainers primarily targeted by the on-line forums are diverse as regarding the countries where they perform gender+ training, the organizations and institutions by which they are usually commissioned, their professional and academic background, the methodologies they opt for and their association to the feminist movements. Although they already share a few general concerns and theoretical references, and commonly face similar situations, as it emerged from previous discussions, their interest and needs when sharing experience might undermine the making of a real Community of Practice. Therefore, on-line forum management will also aim at fostering "alignment" through self-reflexivity and broad enough topics, in order to collect a relatively broad range of experiences. Alignment will also be made possible by the participation to the 3 "monographic" forums which enables, for instance, trainers well-versed in experiential methodologies to learn more about including intersectionality, and vice-versa. A progressive alignment of participants around a set of shared needs and interest will be of importance to initiate self-identification to a real Community of Practice.

As a consequence, it can be said that the CoP will not pre-exist to the on-line forums, but will possibly emerge from them. A true community of practice involves much more than some knowledge or skills associated with undertaking some tasks. The fact that its members are organized around some particular area of knowledge and activity can generate a sense of joint enterprise and identity. To be functional and sustainable, it needs in particular to generate a shared repertoire of ideas and to develop various resources able to carry the accumulated knowledge of the community (such as tools or shared references).

1.4 Possible resistances

Gender+ training as a market of skills and competences

Discussions held during TARGET-OPERA expert meetings in Berlin, Nijmegen, Boston and Madrid have led to emphasize the marketization of Gender+ training activities across Europe. Marketization not only tends to shape what gender training looks like; it also makes the tools and methodological approaches developed by trainers a matter of competitiveness, as trainers need to sell their competences on a developing market. This market, however, does not have neither certification / accreditation instances nor commonly accepted quality criteria. It is shaped around a number of sub-markets/arenas linked to concrete gender issues or mechanisms (mainstreaming, Gender-based violence, Gender and Justice, Development, participation, etc.) and specific institutional and organizational arenas.

The absence of rules and accreditation procedure (be it informal, for instance through the socialization within a CoP) introduce strong concerns as regarding the willingness of trainers to share knowledge, tools and experience. The Community of Practice, we suggest, takes into account the competitive issues of trust, “fair use” and honesty about sources and credits. In its terms of conditions (see: section XX) and functioning mode, it places the emphasis on the importance of a fair exchange. As it emerged from previous discussions, trainers appreciate the tools they have developed to be used and improved by others, but at the same time, they need to promote it in a competitive context. From this point of view, academics, which are also part of this community, are placed in quite different situation, since they are committed with knowledge diffusion.

Different audiences, different markets, different concerns?

Additionally, it is clear that domestic contexts matter as regarding the degree of competitiveness and reluctance to share information. In some countries, like Germany, training activities already constitute a rather stabilized market where actors are strongly competing to promote their skills and methodologies. On the contrary, it seems that other contexts are more favorable to exchange and knowledge diffusion.

Given its international dimension, our community takes into account these different situations and intends to provide basic guarantees of fairness and privacy. But at the same time, it stems from the conviction that knowledge doesn't grow unless it is shared. This, however, implies to make sharing easier and more attractive keeping in mind that all

practitioners need support networks to complement what they do in practice with others experiences as well as theoretical inputs.

“Take the idea and run”: what about “learning, but not sharing”?

The social construction of knowledge needs to be collective, but this construction can face resistances, especially among professionals who enjoy a relatively strong autonomy in the development of their pedagogical skills. We expect that the common need to overcome resistances about gender+ equality faced by gender+ trainers, as well as the on-going discussions on experiential-participatory methodologies and the inclusion of intersectionality to gender training will encourage participants to the on-line forums to actively share ideas, references, methodologies and experiences. The on-line forums thus also aim at making sharing easier by abolishing hierarchies between trainers, facilitating self reflexivity and providing new theoretical support.

Section 2: OPERA-tionalizing a CP: 3 on-line forums on gender+ training

2.1 Description of the forums

Forum 1: How to include intersectionality and gender/feminist theory in gender+ training?’

Justification

We consider gender theory to be the basis of gender+ competence. This conceptual framework is key to help trainees understand which power mechanisms are at stake in gender+ inequalities, how inequalities are maintained and reproduced, and how they can be tackled. Rooting practical tools into a solid conceptual framework is the pre-condition to gain a transferable and long-lasting result (see: D65: 18). Gender+ theory includes reflections on the structural causes of gender+ inequality, but also the multiple interconnected causes which create an unequal relation between the sexes in the areas of family, work, politics, sexuality, culture, or intimacy. Elements of change and transformation, of empowerment and participation of civil society have also been pointed as relevant part of gender theory to be used in gender+ training.

Yet, gender+ theory needs to be balanced with practical contents, in order to make newly acquired ideas and theoretical insights transferable into daily work. This may entail reshaping the most advanced gender theories so they can be communicated to a larger public but avoiding simplifications that often reveal to be exclusive. One of the main challenges in using gender theory consists in the priority order set up between notions such as inequality, equality, gender and gender “+”. While it can be difficult to separate gender from inequality, deciding what to start with often depends from the audience, from time limit and from the kind changes the training pretend to achieve.

It can be also highly relevant to address the different meanings of gender equality strategies implied by gender+ equality policies, as those put in evidence by QUING. One of the main justification for dedicating a forum to the inclusion of intersectionality and gender/feminist theories in gender+ training is thus the need to operationalize the huge contribution of QUING to the knowledge of gender equality policies in Europe.

More specifically, as it has been stated in previous deliverables, integrating the concept of intersectionality in gender+ trainings “highlights the importance of understanding and reflecting on multiple inequalities and multiple discriminations” (D65: 20). The main challenge is to operationalize intersectionality theory into training activities avoiding

simplifications that stems from its complexity. The question of what intersectionality is cannot be answered easily as different conceptualizations, and different terminologies still coexist to designate the intersection (and potentially, the mutual consolidation) of different inequality strands. Moreover, for the last 20 years, intersectionality has been theorized from the points of view of feminisms and gender studies, critical race studies, queer studies and disability studies. In this guidelines manual as in previous OPERA documents, we use intersectionality to refer to different overlapping inequalities and the interactions between them. This second forum will draw on the ongoing dialogue on how to transfer intersectionality theories into training practices. We will work on questions such as:

- How to make intersectionality a quality criterion for training activities?
- How to properly use intersectionality theories in trainings?

Here, we aim to share experiences and practices by which intersectionality can be included in all aspects of the gender+ training, in order to make of the “+”, an integral part of gender+ competences acquired during training activities. The issue tackled in this forum shall reflect the variety of training methods used by the participants, as well as the need to reflect on the role that intersectionality plays with regard to the context and conditions of gender+ training activities.

Learning objectives

To reflect on the transferability of gender theory to a larger public / to identify the ways to make theory accessible without simplifying / to discuss on how to organize a training around interconnected notions such as equality/inequality/gender...? / to debate on how to keep a training a feminist act by explicitly labelling theories as feminist? / To identify which kind of intersectionality theory a gender+ training should include / to give clear examples of gender+ training practices which include intersectionality in its aims and programme / to identify challenges for that inclusion / to assess their potential, effectiveness / to discuss their limitations

Moderators: Mieke Verloo and Maxime Forest

Approximate schedule

Registration: January, 11th – February, 12th, 2010

Communication of the outline and topics: February, 1st, 2010.

Active opened on-line working session to be held by February 15-19, 2010*.

Additional (closed) on-line working session to be held by March, 19th, 2010*.

* see: section 3

Forum 2: 'How to use real participatory and experiential methodology in gender+ training?'

Justification

If it should be always kept in mind that methods and instruments are not good or bad *per se*, given that gender+ training touches directly at the personal level, experiential learning are thought to be particularly helpful, particularly for basic gender+ training. Experiential learning implies participants locating themselves the object of study and appropriating it. Experiential pedagogy usually includes the work with real cases of participants' daily tasks, to starts from participants' own definitions of gender equality, to try to meet people's needs and avoiding the standardization of contents and methods. Experiential methodology also permits to deal with cognitive resistances, progressively bridging the gap between ones' representations, beliefs or values, and a theoretically informed perspective on gender (in)equality, through better exemplification and a balanced combination of theoretical and practical elements. The main limitations of experiential methodologies is that it takes longer to transmit contents, while its applicability will particularly depends on trainers' ability. This makes especially relevant to tackle the very content not only of experiential but also participatory methodologies through a forum mobilizing the CoP. Actually, discussions carried out during expert meetings on gender+ training curricula held within the QUING and TARGET projects did not permit to fully answer such basic questions as :

- Are there any 'minimum characteristics' that should be present in an experiential training?
- Are there any 'minimum characteristics' that should be present in a participatory training?
- How to provoke a real active participation of trainees?

Drawing on the experience of participants, these questions will be central to the first on-line forum proposed by the community.

Learning objectives

To precise which kind of characteristics, techniques and methods an experiential and participatory training should include / to give clear examples of experiential and participatory oriented practices / to identify preconditions in terms of audience, material, time, mandate, to adopt such methodologies / to assess their potential, effectiveness / to discuss their limitations

Moderators: María Bustelo and Maxime Forest

Approximate schedule

Registration: February, 22nd – March, 19th, 2010.

Communication of the outline and topics: March, 8th, 2010.

Active opened on-line working session to be held between March 22-26, 2010.

Additional (closed) on-line working session to be held by April, 23rd, 2010.

Forum 3: 'How to deal with resistances to gender+ training?'

Justification

Resistance to gender+ training is both a common and diverse phenomenon. From an institutional point of view, resistance aim at maintaining the status quo and preventing change. It may be integral to the gender+ training context, through the denial of the relevance of the gender+ equality policies, the refusal to accept responsibility for dealing with gender+ equality policies or simply through non-implementation. From an individual point of view, which is not mutually exclusive with the institutional one, it stems primarily from the fact that trainers are questioning the beliefs, paradigms and social position of (some of) the trainees, and change management literature underlines that the more personal attitudes and behavioral patterns are addressed, the stronger resistance can be. Resistances can then take different forms of denial of a specific issue, from the mere negation of its existence to the dismissal of its changeability and the rejection of ones' own ability to contribute to change. Locating the origin of resistances may help formulating adequate answers, but their management can result problematic.

Time, a top-down policy change as a source of legitimacy for pursuing equality and experiential and interactive learning techniques are some of the elements that have been praised to overcome resistances. Establishing a dialogue with participants is also perceived as a good way to meet resistance, as well as making things concrete and ask people for collaboration. However, their location at different levels (cognitive, emotional, and intentional – in the form of (in)action and routines – levels) make especially difficult to deal with resistances through a stable and narrowly defined set of instruments. This makes a forum especially useful to share about a great variety of possible resistances faced by gender+ trainers.

Objectives

To identify different types of resistances which appear in gender+ training experiences / to understand how they should be included in the curriculum and how they can be overcome and be converted into learning results / to assess different types of resistances / to debate on a possible 'list' of reactions to resistances.

Moderators: Emanuela Lombardo and Lut Mergaert

Approximate schedule:

Registration: March, 26th – April, 23rd, 2010.

Communication of the outline and topics: April 12th, 2010.

Active opened on-line working session to be held between April 26-30, 2010.

Additional (closed) on-line working session to be held by May, 21st, 2010.

2.2 The audience

As it emerged from initial discussions, the Community of Practice (CoP) will be primarily opened through invitation by email to the gender trainers' included in the OPERA data base (D26, Database on relevant gender training experts), and to the members of the expert network built through the TARGET expert meetings and to the QUING community (For a description of the network and of the synergies between OPERA and TARGET, see: D64 on curricula workshops). We think that these experts can fruitfully participate to the community with their experience and specific skills, and their closeness to one or more of the issues to be discussed during the forums.

Two main criteria have driven the choice to restrict the CoP to a relatively limited number of participants:

- Firstly, as QUING deals with Gender+ equality in 29 European countries, the supportive network in gender+ training this Community of practice aims to build up, will also primarily target gender+ trainers working in the Enlarging EU. However, since the issues to be addressed during on-line forums can be fruitfully debated from non-EU perspectives and since discussions aim to proceed cumulatively drawing on previous face-to-face encounters, the participation of high-profile US experts in gender+ training drafted from the TARGET network will also be encouraged.
- Secondly, the purpose of our CoP is to produce high-quality exchanges around a set of core issues previously identified as of major relevance for gender+ trainers. Therefore, it will privilege the quality criteria over the number of participants. Our main objective is that of deepening more the most contentious aspects of gender+ training practice in the discussion, rather than providing basic competences and definitions in the area. This will allow us, in line with what it has been one of the main OPERA aims, to keep on generating a 'critical mass' on gender+ training in Europe.

Previous discussions on Gender+ training carried out within OPERA and TARGET have repeatedly suffered from duplication as many participants did not participate to every expert meetings previously held nor had necessarily strong expertise in the field. Therefore, this on-line CoP has been designed as a mean to work in a cumulative way, strengthening reflection and competencies by drawing upon previous debates as those reported in D64 (Reporting on curricula workshops) and by involving on a first place experts in gender+ training who did already participate to face-to-face workshops. Yet, in order to bring new, but well-informed perspectives on the issues that will be debated online, we agreed to open the CoP to a

limited number of external participants around this network. Our CoP intends to gather gender trainers with a strong expertise and able to exert self-reflexivity, as well as academics with a long-standing reflection on the specific challenges of Gender+ training. In line with the focus ascribed to D67, this CoP thus primarily targets a network of trainers working in gender+ training in the enlarging EU.

Section 3: Building a virtual CP through on-line forums: a methodology

3.1 Justification of the major technical options adopted

Location and basic technical specifications

To create an on-line forum is a relatively easy and inexpensive operation which does not suppose heavy costs in personnel, time or maintenance. "Open source forums" are the main instruments to set up a virtual community. To date, the most widely used Open Source forum solution is phpBB. This solution can be easily installed and provides basic, but highly customisable interfaces. It is possible to use this protocol to create a forum within an existing website, such as www.quing.eu. In order to ensure the privacy of exchanged information, to upgrade the interactive applications of the website of our project and considering that Opera is, with Fragen, the Quing activity that will last until the end of the project, we have opted for using quing.eu. The forums that constitute the CoP will be made accessible under the public part of the website, in order to have a specific login access to the community/forum. Therefore, the staff of the CoP (the OPERA team) will share access to some applications with the webmaster.

Duration of the on-line workshops

A virtual community, especially when it is shaped around on-line forums, usually works cumulatively on a relatively long period. This is made possible by the fact that generally speaking, its objective is not pedagogical, but sharing experiences. But at the same time, the very objective of our CoP is to draw on the active individual participation of its members, and to produce a consistent and exhaustive reflection on Gender+ training practices, especially as regarding a cluster of selected issues. This means that although it differs from an on-line training, which is granted with a strong pedagogical content, our methodology aims nevertheless at exchanging and developing knowledge. This objective

makes necessary a relatively strong commitment of the participants which is only possible if the latter dedicate a concrete period of time to the discussion, to be carried out *live*. Yet, working on-line in a written mode does not allow the same degree of reactivity to the participants than face-to-face discussions. Therefore, latency period between launching the discussion and obtaining reaction can be rather long. For this reason, thanks to the commitment of the staff of the CoP (see: community management), “active sessions” will be relatively long, in order to enhance the chance for each participant to take an active part to the discussion. Moreover, active sessions will be also complemented by the mild-activity period of the forum: an extended period for posting comments and contribution without moderators. This thus makes necessary to distinguish between 3 time elements:

- The duration of the active working sessions:

The monographic forums will mainly consist in the on-line exchanges during 1 working sessions per issue/monographic forum, to be held during 4 hours the same day (see: approximate schedule). Sessions can be divided around sub-issues (called topics), to be defined in advance. Nonetheless, an additional active working session per issue/forum, limited to the administrator + moderators, will be held about 1 month after the opened active working session (see: below).

- The duration of the forum (“mild-active” period):

One of the main arguments for creating a virtual community consists in the opportunity to work in a cumulative way, i.e., drawing on previous posts and discussions to go further and deeper on the debated issue. This also supposes that community members have enough time to exert reflexivity and to develop well-articulated arguments. For this reason, each monographic forum will remain opened from the date scheduled for the active working session until the day before the date scheduled for the following session (see: schedule). During this period of time, contributing to the discussion by posting comments will still be possible for initial participants.

By the end of this period, an additional active working session limited to the administrator + moderators will be held, in order to summarize the main additional arguments and comments posted after the completion of the first (opened) active working session.

- Life expectancy of the CoP

The on-line community of practice will be maintained accessible (including for posting new comments), from the day after the last active working session until day + 30, and for consultation of previous posts only, until the expiry of the QUING project.

Registration and regular participation

This aspect is very much related to the issue of the audience, but also to the mode of participation which is expected from participants during the active on-line working sessions. As we opted for the principle of a ‘full’ dedication over a concrete period of time (4-hours long working session for each forum), this makes necessary a pre-registration. Pre-registration will be performed by potential participants, by e-mail, once they have been approached by the administrator.

Pre-registered participants will then receive a login (password) and a username as “hosts” on the QUING website, in order to participate to the on-line forums. Pre-registration will be valid for the whole duration of the CoP, but registration (log-in procedure) will be necessary for each session. Although attending the 3 sessions will not be compulsory, given that dedicating a total of 24 hours to the discussions might result difficult to some of the participants, it will be nevertheless encouraged (see: incentives to participation).

Active participation will mainly consist in posting comments and remarks as regarding the topics submitted for reflection about 2 weeks in advance by the moderator, once the related topic is opened for comments on-line the day of the active session (see: approximate schedule). Under certain conditions (see: opening/closing topics), active participation will also consist in suggesting new topics for discussion. The design of the forums will also make possible to scrutiny the active participation of the members of the community, and their commitment through the submission of posts and new topics. In order to prevent participants from dropping out or silent, moderators will encourage – including individually – registered participants to post comments, emphasizing the added value of their own experience. This will be facilitated by the limited number of participants, and the fact that most of them have already participated to expert meeting held by TARGET and QUING (see also: community management).

Ensuring confidentiality

Security of exchanged information is of high relevance in the case of a community of practices corresponding to a “market” of skills and competence. In our case, sharing practices can be problematic for some practitioners in Gender+ training and the value of the CP highly depends on mutual confidence. For this reason, it is especially important to ensure the confidentiality of the information and data exchanged on-line, with two main challenges:

- Ensuring a fair and dynamic exchange of experiences and practices among forum participants, which means especially avoiding the presence of passive hosts (A)

- Ensuring the privacy of exchanged information towards the larger public (B)

While (A) will be ensured by the preparation in advance of the issues/topics to be tackled during active working sessions and the role of the moderators in fostering the discussion, (B) will be ensured by hosting the forum on the QUING website, above-mentioned registration procedures, as well as accepting terms and conditions.

Opening/closing topics

Opening and closing a topic to the discussion will be mainly the responsibility of the moderator. Topics, set in advance and communicated to the pre-registered participants, will be successively opened for discussion during the active (live) working session. They will be closed by the moderator after a pre-defined period of time. In order not to place too much burden on the moderator, topics will not be kept opened simultaneously.

Nonetheless, once the active working session has been completed, topics will be reopened for additional comments till the expiry of the interactive period of the forum, as stated in 3.1.1. During this period, it will be also possible for participants initially registered, to suggest one or more additional topics strictly related to the same issue. Those will not be moderated and placed under the responsibility of the administrator (see: 3.2).

Other applications/technical potentialities

The web support will offer the possibility to upload documents (such as sample manuals, pedagogical support, toolkits...) that could illustrate the content of the discussions and the challenges faced by gender+ trainers in their day-to-day practice.

3.2 Community management

Terms and conditions

In order to guarantee a fair and dynamic exchange of experiences and practices among forum participants, as well as the privacy of exchanged information, the granting of a username and password to access the CoP will be bound to the formal acceptance of the terms and conditions, as stated below:

I hereby acknowledged that I have received all the requested information about the functioning of the QUING on-line Community of Practice (CoP) in Gender+ training and that I am therefore ready to take an active part to an exchange of experience, reflection and good practice in this field. Drawing on my own experience as a trainer or a gender expert, I accept to share my expertise with other participants, thus contributing to transfer knowledge but also to enhance my own pedagogical and communicational skills. I am aware that the text content of the information and experiences posted on-line both by the participants and the moderators, is strictly limited to the registered membership of the CoP and cannot be communicated or ceased outside from the CoP. Once integrated to my own tutorial experience or practice, its wide spreading is welcomed and recommended, but would I need to quote any of the established practices in Gender + training posted on-line, I will do so only using appropriate quotation standards.

The role of the administrator

The administrator, contracted by the UCM team for months 40 – 45, will be in charge of the maintenance of the on-line CoP, in relation with the webmaster of the supporting website. The administrator will also be in charge of advertising the CoP among the targeted networks, to send and collect pre-registration forms and to check on-line registration (log-in) and the acceptance of terms and conditions. S/he will be also responsible for uploading the basic version of the 3 monographic forums including a general outline, the classification tree of the different topics to be addressed during the discussion, and possibly additional resource documents (manuals, pictures, references...) communicated by the moderator.

The role of the moderators

Six moderators have been designated, two for each of the on-line active working sessions, who will be in charge of structuring and fostering the debate. This will include a preparation work. In order to frame the discussion, about 15 days before the working session, moderators will communicate (with the help of the administrator) a set of topics corresponding to different sub-issues to be addressed, and a brief outline as regarding the way they expect the topics to be addressed during on-line exchanges. During the latter, the moderators will open and close the topics successively addressed, and encourage participants to share views and experiences. When needed, moderators will ask for clarifications/examples They will also attempt to briefly synthesize the major axes / arguments of the contributors before moving to another topic. Once the active working session is completed, the suggestions of new topics made by the participants will be

systematically communicated to the moderator. The most relevant will be validated and opened to further (non-moderated) discussion.

The role of the participants

An active participation is expected from the members of the CoP, that will take at least three forms:

- Once pre-registered, preparing the on-line active working session by revising major questions, arguments or experiences related to the topics to be addressed by the forum. Possibly, collecting web links or references that can be communicate to the other participants during the working session
- Actively contribute to discussions by posting comments, remarks and questions. Those contributions will be especially relevant if they take into account previously posted comments and if they attempt to provide synthetic or conclusive remarks
- Suggesting new topics to be addressed once the active working session is completed, during the period of access to the interactive functionalities of the forum

Incentives for participation/involvement in the CoP

Although the main argument to actively participate to the CoP will consist in the potential outcomes that people may expect from their in terms of practical knowledge and support, it is also important to provide other kind of incentives such as a certificate of participation, granted upon a regular attendance criterion.

Another incentive would consist in establishing a sustainable community, which, beyond previous experts workshops held within the TARGET and the QUING projects and on-line forums, helps to maintain strong ties between a community of practitioners, and relations that would go beyond a mere activity of networking, to foster long-term mutual learning opportunities.