

## **TRANSNATIONALITY BOOSTS GENDER EQUALITY**

### **Experiences and Achievements of Desegregation Partnerships**

## **1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT**

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This document is presenting the work of the [European Thematic Group on Equal Opportunities](#) (ETG 4), undertaken in 2005 and focusing on good practices developed by EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) whose work was concentrated on the theme of tackling gender gaps and desegregating the labour market.

In EQUAL transnationality is one of the transversal principles that should be integrated at both programme and project level. This means, as emphasised in the EQUAL Communication and Guidelines, to make it possible for individual DPs and national authorities to learn from each other and co-operate productively across borders.

The 25 DPs which have contributed to this report belonged to the first generation of projects and are now involved in the second round of EQUAL. Together, they identified the impact of their EQUAL transnational activities on the achievements which they were able to generate “at home”. Yet, their cooperation also focused on good practices in the process of setting up and managing Transnational Partnerships and also on the lessons learned and the tools produced through cross-border cooperation.

The report is covering the key components of successful strategies for transnational work that have enabled projects to improve the gender equality performance not only within their EQUAL partnerships but reaching beyond and influencing policies and practices at local, regional and even national levels. The main chapters are centred around the following crucial aspects:

- Setting up and managing Transnational Partnerships
- Preparing to get going
- Implementing the work programme
- Mainstreaming through transnational work

## **2. SETTING UP AND MANAGING TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

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### **2.1. FINDING AND SELECTING PARTNERS**

Working with the right partners makes all the difference for the success of a transnational cooperation. For various reasons, tracking down and selecting counterparts in other Member States has not been easy for many Development Partnerships (DPs). Some found that the European Database (ECDB) did not contain enough information on aims and intended activities of other EQUAL DPs operating under the same theme, others felt that due to the imbalances in the numbers of projects approved by the different Member States, it was often impossible to pick a partner from a country that has only few DPs. But the different schedules of the EQUAL implementation across the EU turned out to be a major problem. DPs reported they were compelled to choose amongst potential partners whose timing was more or less the same as their own, instead of looking at objectives and contents in the first place.

However, the majority of the DPs felt that the most important priority when embarking on partner search was to formulate the criteria in such a way that their national activities would benefit from the Transnational Partnership (TP). In this context, similarity of aims, means and actions versus complementarity were much discussed options. In some cases the decision was clear from very beginning:

The Dutch DP [Bridging the Gender Gap](#), which involved four universities, started looking for partners with one very firm criterion – it wanted to work with universities. This made it easy to select partners. A second criterion narrowed down the possible choices of partners even further: their focus should be on women in science. In Round 1, these strict selection criteria resulted in a [TP](#) with only one other partner. Looking back the Dutch project is very content: “It was very good for us to learn more about transnational co-operation in the first round”, says project manager Annelies van der Horst. “We were quite optimistic about using the same selection criteria in the second round.”

Similar to the first project, the second round DP [Participatie van vrouwen als Prioriteit voor wetenschap](#) is again being coordinated by the Centre for Gender and Diversity at the University of Maastricht. This time the Dutch partnership was approached by projects that have all gained a lot of transnational experience the first round, and that made things even easier. The new TP [Equality by degree](#) consists of three more partners, all universities, from Belgium (Flanders), Spain and the UK. During the process of putting the TP together the Belgium partners reported that they were often tempted by their National Support Structure to take on additional partners that did not meet the strict criteria. Yet, the TP members agreed that such requests would be sent on to the Dutch colleagues, who was willing to take the task to say, “no this DP does not meet our criteria”.

R1: [Divers@](#), R2: [Equality by degree](#)

The Danish DP “Gender, Ethnicity and Guidance”, which belongs to the second Round of EQUAL, was seeking to achieve as much similarity and common focus amongst transnational partners as possible. The Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality (CELI), which is leading the project, applied lessons from its first round “Youth, Gender and Career” DP. At the time it had been looking for partners with similar activities, in particular for organisations with more experience than itself. The project team found a partner in the UK, which seemed to be ideally suited because of its experience in working with multicultural guidance and counselling and integrating gender aspects. However, when taking the lead in organising the TP, this project changed the focus of the cooperation. Instead of guidance and gender, as expected, getting more women into the professional field of information technology became the major theme, an issue that was not directly central to the work of the Danes. Moreover, due to the different timing in Member States, the Spanish partner joined the TP almost a full year later. Also, this DP worked on women’s issues in general at the local (rather than a sectoral) level. So, in the assessment of the Danish partners the TP was not focused enough and they wanted things to be different in Round 2.

*This time, the aim of transnational cooperation is twofold – the DP wanted partners who have the same thematic focus and the individual DP partners to learn from people who have a different approach in order to give them new inspiration.*

*The criteria for finding transnational partners were the following:*

1. *English speaking;*
2. *Same focus area, at least one focus area in common out of 3 (Gender/ Ethnicity/ Guidance);*
3. *Same target group (migrants 16-25 years old – or ethnic groups similar to the dominant Danish ethnic minority group; immigrants from Turkey);*
4. *A partnership dealing with research as well as practice – preferably partners who work with a kind of “laboratory” where theory and daily life experience meet. The EQUAL programme is running for a very short period, argues the DP, so it is not appropriate to invest too much time in a huge research study. On the other hand it does not want just to do things without grounding them on research or survey.*
5. *More or less the same project period for practical reasons;*
6. *Not a big partnership – preferred: 3 partners, working in the framework of only one Transnational Cooperation Agreement (TCA).*

*“And this is how we did it”, explains Aase Rieck-Sørensen from the Danish Research Centre of Gender Equality:*

**Step 1:** *Searching the EQUAL database, this yielded a number of possible partners.*

**Step 2:** *Contacting one DP in Finland whose aims and activities are very close and securing this potential cooperation through a letter of intent.*

**Step3:** *Inviting four potential partners (Finland, Germany, Austria and Italy) to a two-day “partner search meeting” in Denmark and insisting on a very focussed agenda. Since most of those DPs were working with one of the required issues but not with all three, it was hard to find a way to fit together. As a result two different TCA’s emerged.*

*In the end, the Danes themselves got involved in only one. In addition to the Finnish DP they chose the Italian project because it has a research focus, and they also included a project from Spain recommended by Italy even though it was not present. Right at the meeting, the three partners started writing the TCA. They agreed both leadership and working structure of the transnational partnership: two 2 people from each DP, the project manager and a transnational coordinator, will join the transnational Steering Group. The host country for the Steering Group meetings will rotate, and only one big common transnational event will be organised. Finland will run the secretariat and Denmark will take care of the internal process-evaluation of the partnership.*

**Step 4:** *E-mail contact – clarifying the role of Spain.*

**Step 5:** *TCA adapted accordingly and completed.*

*R1: DP: [Youth, Gender and Career- DK-14 - R1: Equal Voices – TCA 2886](#) - R2: DP- [Gender, Ethnicity and Guidance – DK –30](#) – TP: [Choices - TCA 4433](#)*

When evaluating transnationality in the first round, the Spanish Mass-Mediacion DP found that the transnational activities initially presented by each partner had turned out to be quite different from what had been anticipated. In fact, each partner had planned those activities in line with the nature and main features of the national project, and although equality of opportunities was the main focus of all partners, their aims and key strategies varied greatly. So, the lesson learned from this first transnational experience was that a truly common transnational project requires to plan it in such a way as to include objectives, which are being shared by all partners. This may mean to give up some of the initial expectations concerning transnationality. This is what happened in the case of the Spanish Mass-Mediacion DP.

*In the second round, the DP therefore planned things in a different way and sought to combine core objectives with tangential benefits. In practice, this meant that the transnational partners first established a common objective for the TP: working together to explore and develop gender mainstreaming strategies. To design the TCA the partners tried, in addition, to keep the initial transnational objective of each DP and to integrate those objectives as a parallel line of activities into the development of the common work programme. This was being done by extracting the components that were similar in the different initial proposals of the partners.*

*This method ensures that the partners can also benefit from good practice in related thematic areas, which are no core parts of the TCA. For example, the Spanish DP is interested in learning from Universities that are involved in gender studies. Consequently, the Dutch partner organised interviews with people at Universities who are working on those issues. These activities happen in parallel to the work being done under the common objective. In this way, each partner involved in the TP can help the others by providing information and support related to their interests and needs at a bilateral level. So, the Transnational Work Programme is a kind of two-track system, which is reflected in the structure of each transnational meeting:*

- *The TP meeting is aimed to update project development; to programme and revise the next actions; and to review progress in terms of achieving the common objective;*

- *Each meeting incorporates a workshop that assembles the expert personnel of the participating DPs. They are working on the jointly established topics to contribute to the common transnational objective;*
- *Study visits and staff exchange to accommodate specific and individual interests and needs of partners, by, for instance, visiting other organisations in the countries involved.*

*R2: DP: [Iqualdader -ES20040102](#) – TP: [Integrating Gender Equality- TCA 4038](#)*

DPs represented in the ETG 4 working group on transnationality agreed that as a rule of thumb when looking for partners and considering “similarity” versus “complimentarity”, a project should consider the following: If the potential TP consists of organisations, which have worked together before, it can be very fruitful to build a transnational partnership whose activities are complementing each other. If everybody is new to everybody it may be better to look for partners with similar activities. *“In the First Round, the organisations in our DP had experiences of working together from previous projects and programmes. So a concrete consortium was already existing, everyone knew each other, knew each others’ ways of working and so on”,* says Gina Korella from Kethi, the Greek Gender Institute. *“In this case complementarity was an advantage for all.”*

## **2.2. WIN-WIN SITUATIONS FOR ALL PARTNERS**

An EQUAL DP consists of a number of smaller or bigger public and private organisations and institutions, each with their own objectives, identity and agenda. Their reasons for joining EQUAL are usually quite different and this is mirrored in their attitudes towards and appreciation of transnational cooperation. Sometimes transnational activities are being “centralised” and entrusted to the lead partner of a DP or to just one organisation whose work is specifically dedicated to transnationality. The idea is that those “transnationality implementers” should pass on all information, experience and good practice from other Member States to all partners of their DP. In reality, this kind of communication was often not well enough developed, happened scarcely or not at all, so that in some cases DP partners felt cut off, not only from the information, but also from possible benefits to be had through this very special dimension of the project.

In other cases coordinators of EQUAL DPs went at great lengths to ensure that all partner organisations could benefit from cross-border cooperation.

*The English JIVE DP whose lead partner, Bradford College, has a long standing experience in transnationality is advocating this principle. “For us it has been different between Round 1 and 2”, says Ros Wall, the DP coordinator. “In both rounds, we were clear that we wanted a TP that all of the members of our DP could participate in fully. We wanted more than a token involvement, we wanted to ensure that all the organisations on the DP could benefit from and contribute to the TP.*

*In Round 1 we were particularly looking for partners from whom we could learn and with whom we could get good discussions going. In Round 2, we were looking at new Member States as well, and we find that at the moment, we are giving a lot more than we are receiving. Later there will be an exchange of information, but at the moment its about us, i.e. all the DP partners, giving to them.”*

*R1: [Gender & Technology: From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B – TCA 3018 - Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735 - R 2: [Equality by degree](#) – TCA 4080*

The partners of the German DP Gender Mainstreaming in the Information Society, which are implementing a second round project under the name of DiverCity are using a similar strategy. Comprising a large variety of partners including mainstream and women specific training providers, schools, local and regional authorities, social partner organisations and enterprises both projects involve a whole series of sub-projects targeting different groups of women (and men), but also different key players. FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin (FCZB), the lead partner in both rounds, ensured that all those sub-projects and all the partners provided input to the transnational work programme and in turn get an optimal output through learning from transnational partners and through being exposed to other cultures, training, education and labour market systems.

In round 1 the DP “Gender mainstreaming in the information society” EQUAL partners tried to mirror all issues and approaches of the DP and its sub-projects on the transnational level. With partners from Finland, France and the UK a number of themes (“strands”) were agreed to be at the heart of transnational activities. This made it possible for most of the project’s **operational and strategic partners** to be involved – either in the thematic strands such as ICT training, e-Learning or Mentoring or in transversal issues like gender mainstreaming. Since the DP worked with a comprehensive approach, which combined desegregation, gender mainstreaming and reconciliation strategies, it asked its transnational partners that were focusing almost exclusively on desegregation to arrange for additional “counterparts” to meet the representatives of the work-life-balance and flexible childcare sub-projects.

In round 2 the partnership choose a different strategy: Berlin DiverCity aims at the development of gender-diversity products and procedures. This includes a gender-diversity knowledge management system, a gender diversity audit and criteria for gender diversity-based distribution of public funding. All operational and strategic partners are involved in this endeavour. Consequently, the project tried to find transnational partners with a comparable approach. Amongst other criteria (such as cooperating with a new Member State, DPs involving companies as partners or having experience with the implementation of gender mainstreaming and/or Diversity Management) an orientation towards product development was the key factor for selecting a transnational partner. As a result, the common TCA focuses on jointly developed transnational products.

R1:DP: [Gender Mainstreaming in the Information Technology – DE-EA-31910](#) - TP: [Gender & Technology: From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B](#) – TCA 3018 – R2: DP: [DiverCity - DE-XB4-76051-20-BE/217](#) - TP: [Pro\(e\)quality – TCA 3983](#)

### **3. PREPARING TO GET GOING**

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#### **3.1. RESOURCING TRANSNATIONALITY**

Transnationality requires specific qualities and skills for management and follow-up. Participation in earlier Community Initiatives and other European programmes has enabled many EQUAL DPs to successfully take that challenge and to make the maximum of transnational activities. An important insight gained over the years is that transnational cooperation is not something that the project coordinator can deal with on top of all her/his other responsibilities. Employing a transnational coordinator or manager proved to be extremely helpful, as demonstrated below by the case of the Jive DP.

*The lead partner recognised that, to deliver a complex national DP with many strands of activity and to ensure all partners were actively involved in transnational delivery, it was necessary to identify a member of staff who was experienced in transnationality to take care of the successful completion of the objectives in the TCA. So, a Transnational Coordinator was appointed on a part-time basis who has :*

- *Given dedicated time to transnational working;*
- *Ensured greater involvement by all partners by using inclusive methods of working, involving collaborative decision-making whilst choosing partners ( lots of flip charts, coloured pens and paper in DP meetings), liaising with managers to ensure the involvement of project staff in the transnational activities, talking with and enthusing project staff in addition to TCA strand coordinators.*
- *Ensured that the transnational activity is relevant and engaging for every partner -by discussing all aspects of the TCA and highlighting relevant activities.*
- *Ensured that all partners domestic and (on occasion) transnational, were carrying out their agreed tasks. This has meant assisting those partners whose domestic work has left them short of time to deliver on their transnational commitments -e.g. proof reading.*
- *Assisted the evaluators in their work by ensuring distribution of questionnaires and feedback material.*

- *Coordinated visits with project managers, set agendas, driven sluggish strands where management was weak, ensured representation by partners, hosted events, supporting project staff in caring for beneficiaries.*

*The Transnational Coordinator of the Round 2 DP was aware that, whilst there were partners experienced in working transnationally, some new partners and new staff working for experienced partners had not worked in transnational cooperation. She produced a set of simple guidelines, which drew out the benefits of working transnationally for the partner organisations as well as for the individual staff members and project beneficiaries.*

*R1: [Gender & Technology: From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B – TCA 3018 - Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735 - R 2: [Equality by degree](#) – TCA 4080*

## **3.2. ESTABLISHING EFFICIENT WORKING STRUCTURES**

### **3.2.1. Decision-making mechanisms**

Most TPs set up a transnational Steering Group as the decision-making body and often the members took turns in coordinating the various tasks. However, in large partnerships with multifaceted activities it was necessary to establish additional levels of decision-making. In the TP "From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious Working Life Balance", the co-ordination of the transnational work was dealt with on the basis of rotation; the periods of time during which each DP had to fulfil this responsibility were divided by the number of partners. The largest partners, Jive and WomenIT, had to take the lead for two periods.

*The responsible partner for each period of coordination had to ensure that all the agreed actions were carried out and documented. A report was written at the end of each period.*

*In large projects, these responsibilities should definitely be taken into account in the planning and allocating of resources. In the case of the Finnish WomenIT DP the project director was responsible for both, the coordination of the activities related to transnationality, on the national level **and** those taking place between WomenIT and its transnational partners. This turned out to be an enormous work load. The problem was solved by having all the managers of WomenIT's sub-projects participating in the work of the transnational Steering Group. Moreover, within WomenIT each manager was entrusted with her or his own fields of transnational responsibility.*

*Those fields of responsibility were called "strands" and mirrored the common working areas agreed by the international partnership: Research was, for instance co-ordinated by WomenIT, whilst career guidance and mentoring was led by the UK DP Jive Partners, and work-life-balance was the responsibility of the IDA DP from Denmark. Yet, all partners had to implement their tasks related to each strand and "to deliver the goods". The strands met three to four times at meetings, seminars and in a common High Visibility Event. The joint output are two publications. In this way, the information and decisions ran from the top to the bottom and vice versa.*

*The transnational work was evaluated by two researchers<sup>1</sup> who regularly participated in the Steering Group meetings, in seminars,, conferences etc. and also, as much as possible, in the work of the strands. The researchers interviewed the partners, reported and gave oral feedback to the Steering Group. The reflecting work method gave assertiveness to the work of the Steering Group and helped it to concentrate on the essentials instead of routine things by asking pertinent questions, setting milestones and monitoring progress.*

*A final evaluation was drawn up (in English) and the findings address the eight key questions identified by the Steering Group:*

- *Did we learn from differences in culture and context?*

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Page and Marion Scott (Surrey University) : Transnational evaluation of EQUAL project "Gender and Technology - From Early Childhood Education to a Harmonious Work-Life Balance", 2004.

- *Did we enable effective learning processes within and between Steering Group meetings?*
- *Did we revisit and renew our sense of purpose for working in this area?*
- *Was the process for partner selection effective? How effective were the working methods of the transnational co-operation?*
- *How did the transnational partnership help the DP's move forward / add value to partner's local activities?*
- *What impact did the transnational project have?*
- *Did we achieve gender mainstreaming?*

*R1: DP: [WomenIT- Fi-12](#) – TP: [From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B](#) – TCA 3018*

### **3.2.2. Setting up a viable work programme**

The Breaking the Barriers TP, a cooperation of DPs from Germany, Finland, Denmark and the UK is a typical example of the category of huge multi-actor, multi-faceted projects. Given its broad variety of thematic activities, the German partners agreed to create a number of additional positions and transnational responsibilities.

*At national level, in Round 1 the DP organised so-called thematic cross-partner working groups, which focused on vocational orientation, career guidance and mentoring, new learning strategies and e-Learning, work-life-balance, gender mainstreaming and diversity and brought together team members from the different partner organisations of the DP. The idea was to ensure that the comprehensive, integrated approach of the project would involve and benefit all partners. The same approach was used at transnational level. This meant that members of the project teams from the DP who were working together with strategic partners at national level, cooperated transitionally with the same thematic focus or on a related theme (career guidance, mentoring, new learning/ICT training/e-Learning, company cultures or gender mainstreaming and evaluation). The working groups enjoyed a lot of independence and freedom. Their work was facilitated by a strand co-ordinator who had to report back to the transnational Steering Group. This structure gave autonomy to the working groups, whilst ensuring to keep the top responsibility level informed.*

*In round 2 the strict orientation towards the development of products is, on both national and transnational level, the link between the partners and the approach to implement the integrated strategy. Within the DP the product working groups are led and facilitated by coordinators and the partners contribute to the design and implementation of the product as do strategic partners from labour market agencies, public administration, universities etc.*

*These national product working groups “represent” the DP on the transnational level where the responsibility for the products is divided amongst the partners.*

*R 1: - [Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735, R 2: [pro\(e\)quality](#) - TCA 3983*

### **3.2.3. Enhancing the intercultural dimension of transnational work**

Transnational cooperation always has an intercultural dimension, i.e. whoever is involved should learn to deal with what happens when members of one cultural group interact with members of another. Training that enables this kind of learning is primarily practical: to discover and to apply techniques for helping people to understand and accept more readily an unfamiliar set of values, habits of thought, and patterns of behaviour and to be more successful at communicating and interacting with people from cultural backgrounds that differ from their own. Among other things, this means that they will be more effective in terms of getting useful work done and building trusting relationships.

For companies working globally it is quite common to prepare and train their staff to face the intercultural challenge, and many EQUAL DPs feel that preparing for transnational work requires a comparable learning experience that is adapted to the specific themes, interests and needs of EQUAL partnerships and their individual member organisations. They are well aware that

intercultural work is more than merely about etiquette and acting agreeably in polite company, although they deem it useful to make a list of do-and-don't rules available.

In some countries the NSS provided training that introduced project managers to intercultural work, in others it has been up to the DPs themselves to either carry out such a training programme or to buy it in from a promoter specialising in the issue. In some cases the efforts of enrooting basic principles of intercultural working in the TPs included the presentation and comparison of schemes developed in the different Member States.

*Within the TP M.E.T. the partners from France, Italy and Spain organised several intercultural training activities. The aim was, particularly, to improve communication, knowledge and common understanding. These activities were organised together with steering meetings or seminars, thus, in all the transnational rendez-vous some time was devoted to strengthen and facilitate the transnational cooperation. The first experience took place in Pamplona, where an expert explained cultural differences and similarities within European countries, their different working cultures and ways of learning to overcome intercultural misunderstandings.*

*At a seminar in Paris, participants were organised in groups in which five people formed a sub-group that played with another sub-group also consisting of five people. They were introduced to several games aimed at developing co-operation and trust between the different groups. One game was about having each sub-group choose different combinations of colours (e.g. red, blue and yellow). Depending on those combinations points were assigned. One group could earn 6 points and make the other group loose 6, or win 3 points and make the other group win also 3, and so on. The purpose of the game was to have the maximum amount of points. The idea of the game focused on developing win-win situations across the various partners, a positive sum game, whereby the benefits for one partner are not at the expense of other partners (that is, choosing a colour that makes your group and the other group win points is better than having your group win more points because that makes the other group loose many points).*

*Besides these practical activities, speeches were also given on topics such as different communication styles, trust and empathy, change and resitance or flexibility towards change. All these topics were then analysed in the framework of the joint development of activities.*

#### *R1: TP M.E.T. – [TCA 1230](#)*

Besides intercultural learning and working methodologies, some DPs put foreign language training and basic knowledge about key issues in the partner countries on the agenda for all staff and partners involved in cross-border cooperation. As a lead partner, responsible for transnationality, FrauenComputerZentrumBerlin (FCZB) is quite strict when it comes to the requirements:

*The DP made a precondition for all members of the TP to participate in trans-cultural training and to have English as a working language. In order to help TP partners prepare for transnational work the German project provided them with information about the labour market, the education and vocational training systems, gender gaps on the labour market and in education etc. The feedback from partners was quite positive; people said it was easier for them to understand the background and context of their transnational partners and thus the differences in the EQUAL approaches of the different Member States.*

*The specific approach which works best always depends on the experience people come with, and also on the time and money they can or want to spend on trans-cultural training. "It is not enough to have a one or two days seminar, because you have to take into account so many aspects of culture," says Renate Wielpütz, the Director of the FCZB. "You must work on a personal level, on your own culture and this takes a lot of time. But it is not just the individual who must be considered, the organisational background, the organisational culture you are working in must also be analysed and eventually changed." Basically, according to this DP and its partners trans-cultural training should be part of an on-ongoing process of organisational and personnel development.*



*In Round 1 the German DP spent four days on trans-cultural training and involved all its national partners. Another four days were spent when starting to work in the framework of the TPs it had joined. In the Round 2 TP trans-cultural training is, again, seen as a major foundation for working transnationally. This time the spotlight is on the interconnections of gender mainstreaming and diversity.*

*R 1: - [Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735, R 2: [pro\(e\)quality](#) - TCA 3983*

### **3.2.4. Developing communication and a common language**

Besides cultural differences that need to be understood and valued, there is also a wealth of terminology to discover whose meaning often differs, even if the same word is being used for key issues and concepts a TP wishes to explore. To ensure that all partners agree on the same definition of those crucial components of their work, and to facilitate transnational communication the Choices TP made a huge effort to develop a common vocabulary and web site.

*To prevent communication problems the partners decided to make a list of “key concepts and definitions” from the very beginning that would then be extended along with the development of the project. The first Steering Group meeting agreed upon a number of proposals from the secretariat (Finland) and more explanations of key words were delivered as homework before 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Key concepts and definitions such as: Gender mainstreaming, ethnicity, disadvantaged groups, gender-sensitive guidance and counselling, minority youth, multicultural guidance, occupational segregation. The following example shows how important it is to be precise.*

*Minority youth could be:*

- *“at-risk minority youth”,*
- *“ethnic minority youth”,*
- *“gender minority youth” or*
- *“language minority youth”*

*To convey a real common image the transnational website will be managed by one DP. All partners can send contributions to the secretariat in Finland, but only one person, the web mistress, will decide how to deal with them. These strict rules were established because of bad experience in the previous EQUAL project, when everybody could place documents as part of the common Internet presentation, which resulted in too many documents and a lack of focus.*

*To facilitate internal communication amongst the transnational partners, the Steering Group agenda, minutes and presentations are put on the website and made accessible through a special password for Steering Group members.*

*The TP partners also felt that evaluators had not only a role to play when it came to monitoring and assessing progress and achievements, but also in the context of improving communication. The first round TP had a process evaluator who attended meetings and commented on decisions etc. “We had the idea to carry out peer reviews of the outputs from TP members,” reports Aase Rieck Sørensen. “One problem was, however, that the research results were very late, so it was hard to undertake peer reviews, because it took 18 months before the results were available. In Round 2, we have lowered our ambitions and introduced a concrete schedule for every common activity. We started by exploring the expectations which partners had of transnational working.”*

*R1: [Voices](#) – TCA 232 - [Equal Voices](#) – TCA 2886 – R2: [CHOICES](#) – TCA 4433*

## **4. IMPLEMENTING THE WORK PROGRAMME**

Transnational work programmes can take different forms and have many elements, ranging from exchange of ideas and experience to importing and/or exporting models developed in parallel by the different partners of the TP and to joint development of concepts, methodologies and tools or even strategies to mainstream transnational outcomes at national and European level.

#### 4.1. EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND EXPERIENCE ENTAILS CHANGE

Broadening horizons, both at project and personal level, through exposure to new ideas and ways to do things, does never happen without leaving traces. Even if the novelties from another country are not immediately applied “at home”, they become part of the “professional memory” of the DP and its member organisations. *“For some of the work we are doing now, we got the idea from a Danish partner a long time ago. That is the way transnationality works, you can pick up an idea and not implement it for many years”*, says project director Ros Wall from Jive Partners in the UK, who is now managing the second round DP named Jive – Joining Policy + Joining Practice. Building on those experiences may occur later and in a different guise or be disseminated to a wider audience. The latter can trigger new thinking about key problems, which are faced by all partners of a TP.

Five countries, five labour markets... and even more different ways of addressing the persistent gender gaps in employment. This was the point of departure of the [EQUAL Voices](#) TP that linked projects in [Denmark](#), [Austria](#), [Finland](#), [Spain](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). Whilst partners followed different avenues to dismantling the gender division of the labour market such as training girls and young women in non-traditional occupations (Austria and Finland), supporting women to become entrepreneurs (Spain) or gendering careers guidance (Denmark and the UK), they all shared a common commitment to tackling gender and ethnic stereotyping.

*In Round 1 the English [GERI DP](#) used a interactive theatre on non- traditional career choices in the framework of their national project to stimulate counselling without gender or ethnicity bias. The artists were hired to play for young people and their parents and travelled around throughout the UK.*

*The DP also produced an interactive DVD. By selecting different arguments on the screen viewers can support the different characters and thus influence the end of the story. An excellent tool to start discussions amongst students! Another strategy which the transnational partners found impressive is a database that assembles video portraits of young people who have made non-traditional career choices and can serve as role models to others.*

*The members of the TP were pleased to try the Forum Theatre live when the final transnational conference was held in London. Many partners of the local sub-projects of the national DPs were present at the conference. The common problem “stereotypes” related to gender and ethnic background was highlighted in this very special fashion and everybody agreed that the performance was a good way of learning from each other’s methods.*

R1: - [Equal Voices – TCA 2886](#)

Another example of a product created at national level that helped to raise awareness of gender and ethnicity related prejudices and discriminatory practices and to spark off new ideas within a transnational partnership is a card game, which was developed in Sweden. The LIBRA DP that linked the Swedish Employers Federation and relevant Unions in the construction industry, in the successful endeavour of creating forward looking strategies to tackle skills gaps and labour shortages in the building industry through opening up careers for women and ethnic minorities. Overcoming gender and ethnic stereotyping was one of the major challenges the DP had to face. The same was true for its transnational partners in [France](#), [Belgium](#) and [Portugal](#).

*The card game exercise is part of a method called MOD. The abbreviation stands for diversity and dialogue and, at the same time, is a pun in Swedish: “mod” means “courage”. The method involves group discussions about diversity and everything that is connected to it.*

*Participants of the card game exercise would be divided in sub-groups and placed at separate tables. Every table receives a paper that contains the rules of the game and then gets 10 minutes to learn those rules. During the run-through people are allowed to talk to each other, but quietly so that the participants at the other tables cannot hear them. After that the game is played in practice, but now talking is prohibited. People can laugh or make sounds, but not use any language based communication, neither verbally or in writing. Before starting the game the instructor or team leader collects the sheets with the rules from each table. At the end of the game both the winner and the loser from each table have to move to another table.*

*What participants do not know is that each table receives a different set of rules. The basic structure of the game is the same, but there are important differences. At one table the ace is highest, at another the ace is lowest. At one table hearts are trump, at another this applies to spades. A third table lacks trumps. Obviously the whole procedure triggers strong reactions. Some people get angry, others are flabbergasted or become very passive... Everybody realises that without using language and without knowledge of the rules people are really vulnerable. The exercise is then followed by a thorough discussion about what has happened and how people have reacted and how this mirrors the situation of someone who is struck by an entirely different environment, for instance, when moving to a foreign country where one does not speak the language nor know the existing rules.*

**R1: [LIBRA SE-23](#)**

For projects with little experience in or embarking for the first time on transnational cooperation sharing the experiences of a more “seasoned” partner is highly useful. And this is true for learning from both positive and negative results. The Austrian POP UP GeM DP which has, in the first round, under the name of Just GeM successfully introduced gender mainstreaming in the employment policies and practices of the region of Styria is actually working to make the achievements and pitfalls of this project available to its second round transnational partners.

*When the TP had its first meeting and, in different working groups, the participating DPs figured out the concrete tasks of the work programme, it became apparent that the Austrian project had specific experiences and achievements, methods and tools to exchange. All members of the working groups asked the Austrian delegation to share those strategies and products related to gender mainstreaming and also the theoretical framework on which these are based.*

*As a result, POP UP GeM is prepared a seminar as part of a transnational meeting and herewith fuels its achievements from the 1<sup>st</sup> Round into the development processes for gender mainstreaming, which are underway in the partner countries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.*

**R1: [Just GeM- AT-5-18/14- R2: \[POP UP GeM – AT – 5-18-212 - TP: \\[Gender@Work-TCA -4181\\]\\(#\\)\]\(#\)](#)**

The already mentioned Equal Voices TP used an approach that allowed for huge amounts of information to be shared amongst partners in a relatively short period of time: the so called World Café approach: people meet, people speak with nearly all other participants in just one session. The approach allowed everybody involved in the DPs to meet all the members of the TP. Each DP could decide how many participants to bring to the World Café.

*The World Café approach fosters communication between DP-members across nationalities. It is a more dynamic way of doing working group discussions and it is very useful when it comes to transnational exchange of experience among the grassroots groups that are running the projects at home. But it is necessary to speak the same language.*

*A core theme or problem of common interest is dealt with, for example “non- traditional jobs for women and men” or “stereotypes”. The process could develop as follows:*

### **1. Plenary inputs**

*The transnational workshop starts with inputs from a key note speaker followed by statements of the transnational partners. Key note 20 minutes – partners 5 minutes each.*

### **2. Café tables**

*Each transnational partner chairs a table where he or she is available for all questions from other persons. After 25 minutes attendants change tables.*

*For each table the guiding questions could be:*

- *How is your project dealing with non- discrimination and equal treatment?*
- *Which statements presented are most important ?*
- *Solutions, actions, comments ....*

*The idea is that people sit at a table chaired by one of the presenters and have a series of conversational rounds lasting about 25 minutes about one or more questions which are meaningful to them.*

*At the end of each round, the chair remains as the host and all the others travel on to the next table. The host of the table welcomes the new travellers and shares the essence of the previous conversation, the travellers also relate their impressions that they are carrying and the conversation deepens as the round progresses.*

*The entire process would last for 1 h 30 min.*

### **3. Plenary summing up**

*After the travellers have passed all tables the chair people wrap up their proceedings. A short break allows them to prepare for summing up. The result is usually a good impression about core issues, which the participants share. Of course the outcome depends on the quality of the initial inputs and on how well defined the guiding questions which were prepared for discussions at the tables.*

*R1: - [Equal Voices – TCA 2886](#)*

## **4.2. IMPORT-EXPORT ACTIVITIES**

Importing a model that has been developed elsewhere is not always easy. Key-players and sometimes even DP members are often not exactly encouraging this transfer of policies and practices. Usually, it is argued that both legal context and labour market systems are so different from country to country, that it would be virtually impossible to implant a concept or methods “not invented here”.

It is the experience of many DPs that a positive climate that values all partners’ contributions to the common goals can foster the willingness to consider importation and trigger a whole string of actions to happen in the participating countries. The Swedish LIBRA DP, for instance, reports that all partners of the national projects were inspired by transnational work.

*At every meeting every DP was represented. The feedback was clearly that they all took it very seriously. When countries see other countries are ahead of them in terms of gender equality, it propels them to take action. Transnationality inspired them to make things happen. For instance, one training programme was introduced in Sweden to make labour market people aware of gender issues as a result of this process.*

*In the Integration in Construction TP, which, besides Sweden, involved Portugal, France and Belgium, partners felt that it makes a great difference for transnational cooperation if people can speak in their own language. At the beginning English was chosen as the working language to “make everyone equal”, since nobody could thus use their native language. When the Portuguese DP dropped out of the TP because its national activities ended, the remaining partners began to use French and Swedish with simultaneous translation. Everyone felt more comfortable speaking in their own language, it was more creative and more productive, particularly if DP partners such as construction companies were involved whose daily work does not include the use of foreign languages.*

*“We experimented in parallel with our partners in France and at compared our results”, says project manager Asa Douhan. “The focus of the test runs was to get women into apprenticeships in the construction sector. France is much bigger than Sweden and had twice as many companies involved as Sweden. Our French partners tried to get 100 women into apprenticeships, we tried for less than that. Then we discovered that the French Government provides funding to companies to take mature women on apprenticeships and that they were employed from the first day. So, now we have imported that strategy and lobby the Swedish Government to follow suit. This too is an outcome of transnationality!”*

*R1: DP: [LIBRA SE-23- TP: Integration in Construction- TCA 1754](#)*

The Spanish Tecnica DP experimented with concepts related to the process of training, job search and entrepreneurship that had been found successful in France and Italy. The objective of those experiments was to understand the developmental processes, which the women participants of Tecnica’s different actions were undergoing. The idea was also to analyse the

impact of the various programmes and to detect the fields of application where they were most effective and/or ineffective.

*The chosen methodology consisted of three components of the project activities that were screened in seven so-called Listening Groups. Three different moments in time were chosen to carry out this investigation. These crucial moments were the training process; the access to employment, i.e. when the women found a job, with or without a contract and the labour market integration (either completed or failed).*

*The results of the exercise included a number of findings such as changes of attitudes and perceptions of participants regarding their subjective vision of personal career plans could be observed, particularly amongst older, less qualified and/or immigrant women. In addition, to these overall findings, specific needs were revealed at the different periods of the investigation and in terms of the training programmes. For instance:*

- *The women considering and/or undertaking **entrepreneurship** felt they needed more special assistance such as psychological and group support during their planning and creation of a business.*
- *Concerning the **training periods** the women felt that – in the face of the theoretical training as it is offered in the regular training system – they required more practical tools and course contents to improve their interaction with future co-workers and colleagues. Before the training, some women had had a restricted vision of their labour market perspectives since they did not possess the skills in demand nor useful professional experiences; after the training they felt that their career prospects had improved, but it was the confidence in their new skills and knowledge that had grown significantly.*
- *Getting hands-on experience with **NICTs** led the women to understand that this is an emerging world in which they must find their place (programming, design, developing and handling Enterprise Resource Planning, consulting) in a predominantly male workforce. Continuing training is considered necessary to keep career options open, even though this is particularly hard for women, given their responsibilities for housework, family, the financial cost and competitiveness in this sector. The participants are now convinced NICT skills are necessary for any professional position. The idea that jobs and career on today's labour market are not stable had been emphasised to them which created a strong motivation for continuing training.*
- *Specific aspects related to the **introduction periods** (work experience placements or trial periods) were another crucial element amongst the results. These periods appear to have been the main link to, and reason for, continuation of Técnica courses by students who were less satisfied with the programme. The support of Técnica tutors was highly appreciated, particularly during this period.*
- *Companies were initially reluctant to recruit workers with “reconverted” professional profiles. In Spain over-qualification is a frequent problem. Many employers want to have highly qualified employees to assume tasks that someone less qualified could do as well or even better. So, Técnica tried to show employers that sometimes it is better to hire people who know how to do the job although they don't have an official degree.*

*Since the beginning of Round 2 the new DP has established more of those initially imported working groups which help women test their opinions about business creation as a solution to unemployment. Again, changes are being tracked that occur during the process. “We want to identify the factors that influence change so that these factors can be made fruitful for the learning and assessment process”, says project manager Arantxa Ibarrola. “In the first round, we combined a focus on technical issues with entrepreneurship, which was probably too wide. In the second round, we are concentrating on the latter. In Navarra, it is not common for women to create an enterprise.”*

*R1: [M.E.T.](#) – TCA 1230 – R2: [Entrepreneurs Unlimited](#) – TCA 3729 \_*

Import-export activities can also help to improve existing training or active labour market measures in a partner country. This happened, for instance, to the benefit a German sub-project of the Gender Mainstreaming in the Information Society DP that specialises in attracting, counselling, training and supporting women in non-traditional occupations

*In the framework of the so-called careers strand of the transnational work programme a team member of that sub-project participated in a gender training organised by the UK partner. The training was targeted at teachers and trainers at Colleges and functioned as a real eye opener for the German partners in terms of improving their awareness raising efforts targeting trainers. Thus, the UK good practices discovered through direct participation, were imported to Germany and integrated into the training concepts designed for German trainers from both vocational schools and companies.*

*R 1: - [Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735*

### **4.3. STUDY VISITS AND DIRECT EXCHANGES AMONGST BENEFICIARIES**

In most cases the transnational encounters were restricted to project managers and staff. Yet, some TPs implemented exchange programmes that included various categories of key players and a small number enabled their ultimate beneficiaries to participate in transnational visits. The JIVE DP from the UK was one of them. Cross-border exchange was targeted at women training for or already working in traditional male occupations, whilst being supported through JIVE's mentoring schemes.

*A transnational networking event for mentors and mentees allowed these women, who were often extremely isolated with in their own organisation as well as in their sector as a whole, to meet other women from different European countries in similar situations. The meeting proved to be very fruitful for both the DP and the participants:*

- *It was an opportunity for the women to exchange experiences with others in similar positions. The young woman who laid tarmac in the north of England and the young female NASEC apprentices (working in the North Sea Oil industry) were certainly empowered by these exchanges. The event gave them a unique opportunity to get to know mentees from Deutsche Telekom and Finland's Forestry Division. It affirmed the position these women were in and made a small impact on their level of confidence.*
- *The fact that they had to be released from their employment to attend the visit raised the importance of women working within their sectors.*
- *It allowed discussion to take place which was used in writing the 'Good Practice in Mentoring: European Guidelines' booklet. This guidebook was jointly developed by the European partnership and reflects the fullness and value of the work undertaken;*
- *The effect on the organisations was also significant; it reinforced them in trying to combat the isolation of women in those positions.*

*R1: [Gender & Technology: From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B](#) – TCA 3018 - [Breaking the Barriers](#) – TCA 735 - R 2: [Equality by degree](#) – TCA 4080*

Another example of a successful exchange programme for – this time – intermediate beneficiaries were the visits of a group of Finnish teachers to schools in the UK, Germany and France. The WomenIT DP had carefully prepared those study visits and also developed a specific system of monitoring and evaluating them.

*The main principle of these trips was co-operation and common reflection. The programme had been planned in such a way that it covered the school levels at which the participants of the group are working at home and it also took account of WomenIT's special interests and needs. In addition, the programme was geared to always allow for individual benefits for all participants.*

Regular monitoring was carried out during the trips. The themes and subjects to be explored were divided between the participants, who then reported amongst each other. The reporting exercise had two parts: common questions for all and everyone's own observations. Every day the observations and findings made during the visits and the reports were collected. Every night, during a short meeting the "high lights of the day" were discussed by all participants, who then agreed on the next day's programme and on possible additional observation tasks.

A common report was produced at the end of each trip. Those study visits created added value for each individual participant, but also for the DP and its sub-projects. Marja-Leena Haataja, Women's IT's director, believes that the added value is the result of the common reflection, which was used as a learning method during the study trips. In the sub-projects the trip was followed by lot of discussions that focused on teaching and learning methods and by explorations of how aware teachers are of gender issues in the classroom. This led to inviting various experts as trainers. "After this process you are not the same teacher; there must be some kind of "mark" in you which makes you look at and integrate gender issues in your work".

R1: DP: [WomenIT- FI12- TP: From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B – TCA 3018 - Breaking the Barriers – TCA 735](#)

#### **4.4. CROSS-BORDER PILOTING**

A very specific kind of exchange programme that can demonstrate the added value of transnational cooperation is cross-border piloting. Trainers and/or experts from one DP are delivering awareness raising and/or training to counterparts in another Member State. In some cases even short seminars or workshops triggered lasting impact. This was the experience of the Gender Mainstreaming in the Information Society DP, which invited its UK partner to offer training workshops in Berlin.

*In order to widen young women's vocational choices, one of the DP's transnational activities focused on bringing about structural change in career counselling and guidance. A team member from the UK DP who provides training of trainers and career counsellors conducted a 3-days transnational workshop on gender sensitive career counselling in Berlin.*

*Besides German DP members, strategic partners from companies, schools and career guidance services, all involved in providing vocational counselling and training were sensitised to encourage and train young women in male dominated occupations and to promote non-traditional careers for women. The evaluation stated a highly positive feedback of the participants and the surprising information that "a trainer from abroad" was one of the main factors that had motivated participants to take part in the workshop.*

R1: DP: [Gender Mainstreaming in der Informationsgesellschaft – DE-EA-31910- TP: R1: DP: JIVE Partners- UKgb-35- Breaking the Barriers –TCA 735](#)

In the second Round the JIVE DP is running transnational piloting in a new Member State.

*During round 1 of EQUAL the Partnership developed and piloted, innovative methods of intervention with employers by using a Culture Analysis Tool (CAT) to identify the culture within a engineering , construction or technology company. Where evidence was shown that improvements could be made to encourage a more inclusive working environment and practices for women, DP staff worked with that company using a tool box of interventions to assist the change process, that has been produced thanks to EQUAL.*

*Participating companies developed an interest to arrange for their personnel to attend JIVE staff development training as a result of participating in the CAT. Being able to provide helpful information and JIVE 'products' (e.g. Good Practice Guides) as well as training, mentoring support and so on, worked well in the feedback of results. The companies were also very interested to see how they compared with others, which may be a key selling point in the future.*

*The Culture Analysis tool (CAT) is now being piloted in Round 2 transnational cooperation with Latvian partners . JIVE is training and supporting project staff to deliver the CAT, analyse the results and learn to use the appropriate technologies.*

*R1: DP: [JIVE Partners- UKgb-35](#)- R2: [JIVE – Joining Policy + Joining Practice – UKgb 136](#)- TP: [Gender@Work - TCA 3644](#)*

#### **4.5. JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTS**

Besides all the above, many TPs have jointly developed a whole range of products. These products include concepts for training and labour market integration, methodologies, teaching, training and learning materials in various shapes – from printed materials to CD-ROMs, DVDs and Internet platforms.

“Benchmarking the glass ceiling, a framework to compare and rank European companies and countries”, was one of the deliverables of the EQUAL TP Ariadne, which linked the Greek Andromeda and the Dutch Mixed DP. The innovative tool was tested in both countries. The objective of the TP was to support and convince organisations and companies to open doors to women and in general to develop an interest in mainstreaming gender equality in their human resource policies. The transnational dimension in the development of the benchmarking tool, added value to both the cross-border and the national projects in the following ways:

##### **Qualitative - It enriched the quality of the outcome:**

- *All kinds of data which were used and analysed were collected from national, European and global agencies such as Eurostat, the OESO and the ILO. This was inevitable because the national projects did not anticipate this type of field work.*
- *The differences in definitions among countries or among companies can produce problems when their performance is being compared. E.g. the exact meaning of terminology such as term manager, top position, medium sized company etc. must be agreed. In order to produce reliable comparisons, definitions were harmonised so that compared data was accurate, valid, “translated”.*
- *Differences in the two partner countries’ legal systems had to be taken into consideration, as they might have an impact on the organisation of the very top positions, or on the authority of executive positions.*
- *The outcome of the project has been tested in two different markets, of two extremely different Member States. This guarantees safe and valuable results.*
- *Good practices can be disseminated with more focused statistical evidence, by taking differences between countries, sectors and occupations into account.*

*Qualitative data about the structure, culture and policies of companies are rarely publicly available or documented in public data bases. For example, the SMOP’s (Surface Measure of Overall Performance) is a tool which was used in order to reduce the complexity of a problem such as to rank and monitor the glass ceiling in different countries, as it only measures the thickness of the glass ceiling and no other aspects of the position of women in society.*

##### **Methodological:**

*Studies or databases focus either on country-level data, on company-level data or on specific sectors. A combination of transnational data is a different task.*

*To raise awareness of the differences between the glass ceiling phenomenon in different countries requires other data than developing a mechanism to assess company or sector specific policies for equal opportunities. Based on the goal and the level of the benchmark, one defines the indicators for the data needed. For example for comparisons at the national and European level the use of data on wages or the number of employees*



is recommended, **because of** the differences in terminology used in different Member States.

**Practical - Transnationality as an incentive for cooperation with employers:**

Companies are not very willing to give information, so gathering valid data is difficult. Referring to the transnational dimension of the project, makes it easier to persuade companies to cooperate, as this adds value, prestige and importance.

Also, transnationality helps to stimulate companies to get real insights of their own situation and then act according to their possibilities. How are they doing in comparison to other corporations in their sector and market segment? Are they in a leading position or rather lagging behind?

**Political:**

The comparison of data between different countries can be an incentive for national governments to change, continue and/or reinforce their policies. It may assist the acknowledgment of differences between countries. It is a good starting point for governments to become more open minded about their failures and lack of success when it comes to female participation in decision-making and senior management.

**Transnationality and Transferability:**

The benchmarking mechanism is easily transferable to other EU countries.

- The working language is English, so no need for translation;
- It already contains data from national and European level, which means that other Member States only need to add their own country's data, in order to extract statistical results and comparisons, which would not be possible for a solely national project.

*R1: TP: [Ariadne – Leading women upwards](#) – TCA 1955*

The common outputs of a TP assembling partners from the UK, Finland and Germany are focusing on gender sensitive career guidance and on mentoring for girls and women.

*The three publications include a Careers booklet targeting career guidance staff and documenting good practice developed by the EQUAL partners in the three countries; a set of European Guidelines on Mentoring and a manual presenting Mentoring Models<sup>2</sup>.*

*The transnational cooperation on mentoring with colleagues from the UK helped their German counterparts to fine-tune objectives and implementation of the mentoring programmes developed in the German context. This applies to a coaching scheme for girls and young women who were training in or going through the early stages of employment in a male domain as well as a mentoring programme for women who were more advanced in their career and wished to develop it further, whilst ensuring a satisfying work-life-balance.*

*The evaluation of that programme mentions several positive effects for the mentees, including improved self-awareness and clarity concerning the intended career path, getting familiar with female role models, support and advice concerning both professional and personal issues. The mentors emphasised that the programme helped them to reflect on their own working style and daily routine, to transfer knowledge and know-how in a well targeted and strategic way and to contribute to increasing the group of female highly skilled employees and workers.*

*[Breaking the Barriers](#) –TCA 735*

## **5. MAINSTREAMING THROUGH TRANSNATIONAL WORK**

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### **5.1. TRANSNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS CAN BOOST NATIONAL DISSEMINATION**

For many DPs the activities and achievements of their transnational work were becoming a corner stone in their dissemination and mainstreaming strategies “at home”. Projects could count

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<sup>2</sup> Both books are also available on the WomenIT web-pages [www.womenit.info](http://www.womenit.info)

on their partner DPs to channel learning and change strategies into their own organisations and beyond. The Danish first Round DP Youth, Gender and Career reports:

*Transnational conferences were used to disseminate information about transnational activities whilst at the same time “marketing” national products. Sometimes in connection with a Steering Group meeting the host country would hold a event to which local key players were invited. Some of these were involved in the DP, others who were not so closely connected politicians, counsellors, teachers, trainers etc. Clearly, these events raised the profile of the national DP. “One or more foreign key note speakers would always attract more people”, says Aase Rieck-Sørensen. “The leaders or experts from the transnational partner projects acted as speakers, who presented the findings and results of their DPs that were particularly relevant to our national aims and context. You could put a spotlight on the national DP if you thus included a transnational dimension into the event, since this made it more interesting to key actors and policy makers.”*

*R1: Choices- TCA 4433 - R2: [Gender, Ethnicity and Guidance – DK –30](#)*

A Spanish DP had carefully planned and implemented a huge final conference at national level. The event organised at the end of the first Round under the title “International Seminar of Integration and Closing of the project EQUAL *Mass-Mediación*” in Madrid was aimed to transfer the DP’s results into the mainstream of employment and social policies in Spain. It was designed as a macro level activity in which all partners of the project must be represented. So, the agenda incorporated different lectures by national and transnational experts and round tables involving the different players with key roles in the mainstreaming process, but also other DPs, beneficiaries, and TP members. The transnational partners participated in a specific round table “Transferring Good Practice from the Transnational Gem Net Partnership” , where they presented and discussed the main achievements of transnational cooperation.

*The audience was large and strategically chosen. Invitations had been sent to the Spanish Employment and Social Affairs Ministry, the National Women’s Institute, other bodies dealing with women’s issues and gender equality at national and regional level, vice-chancellors of the universities participating in the project, managing directors, participants in other national EQUAL projects, politicians...Not all of the key players targeted could attend the seminar but, a document compiling the main conclusions of the event was sent to all of them and to any other relevant institution or entity.*

*However, when evaluating the seminar the DP managers and partners noticed that most local policy makers had not participated because they could or would not travel to Madrid for the event. Yet, local policy makers are perceived as being of key importance to adopt the various approaches and models developed by both the DP and the TP. Being present and discussing such achievements with other key players has, assumed the project, quite a different impact than being sent a document to study.*

*So, in the **second round** the partners of the new DP have decided to organise, without excluding the final conference at national level, various decentralised events throughout the lifespan of the project. These will focus on the different thematic areas and ensure local policy makers’ active participation. Conclusions achieved in these seminars will, of course, be also included in the final outputs. The DP is convinced that this is a formula to avoid the dissemination of results only as “final products” and to integrate key players in the whole development process of the project. It is expected that this helps to involve these key people in the mainstreaming efforts from early on. Keeping them informed about the transnational activities offers them a wider perspective and enables them to get as much profit as possible from the experiences achieved in the countries of transnational partners.*

*R1: DP: [Mass-Mediación- ES-ES187](#) – TP: [Gem NET- TCA 258](#) - R2: [Igualdader - ES20040102 - Integrating Gender Equality- TCA 4038](#)*

The Finnish WomenIT DP benefited from experiences with single sex education and training of one of its transnational partners in the UK and made them fruitful for its own “women only programmes”.

As a result of the study trips for teachers mentioned earlier, the teachers of WomenIT started to discuss single sex teaching: its advantages and disadvantages. "This discourse got wings by the experiences we discovered in Great Britain on single sex schools. We compared them to girls' schools and boys' schools which did exist earlier in Finland, too", says Marja-Leena Haataja, the project director. "The subject is fascinating, it raises passions, and is worth studying."

And this is what WomenIT decided to do more thoroughly. Besides looking into its own multi-fold operations which were targeted at girls only, the DP organised, in autumn 2005, several study trips to the UK to extend its research to more examples. As a result in December 2005 the DP published<sup>3</sup> a study on single sex teaching in Europe and in North America, which also contains a comparative analysis with the relevant Finnish experiences. This kind of comparison had never been undertaken in Finland and it provides a lot of food for thought and discussions on positive action and gender mainstreaming.

R1: DP: WomenIT- FI12- TP: [From Early Childhood Education to Harmonious W- L-B – TCA 3018 - Breaking the Barriers – TCA 735](#)

## 5.2. CREATING A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Organising meetings where key players such as political decision-makers, representatives of public authorities and social partners or employers can meet their counterparts from other Member States have succeeded to produce increased interest and motivation to support the EQUAL activities at the national level. This is also due to the fact that no key player is insensitive towards comparing and benchmarking of gender equality performance.

For KETHI, the Greek National Gender Institute organising transnational meetings that bring together high level politicians and administrators of different Member States is the most successful instrument for convincing policy makers. In Round 1 Kethi coordinated the Andromeda DP that has been focusing on women's access to non-traditional occupations and to positions of leadership. In Round 2, KETHI is a partner in 8 DPs, ensuring the integration of the gender dimension into all project activities.

*In both rounds peer encounters enabled change at the national, regional or local level in Greece. Clearly, this strategy has proven its capacity to:*

- *Improve the credibility and to add importance and value to the project;*
- *To trigger competition amongst the counterparts, which creates pressure to work towards an objective already achieved by the others;*
- *produce personal commitment vis-à-vis their counterparts to promote issues;*
- *motivate company key actors who feel part of a transnational and therefore prestigious network.*

*For example, a peer meeting between major companies involved in the ARIADNE TP, turned out to be extremely influential and decisive for the mainstreaming activities in Greece. A member of the Administrative Council of the Greek Commercial Bank, who is also the director of the Bank Committee for Equality has been convinced and motivated to proceed with the gender equality agenda of her institution and to implement the policy planned.*

*The HR Manager of the Athens Metro Company, after meeting with her counterpart from another Member State, felt reassured that she is working on an internationally accepted policy, which, although difficult to implement, is currently in force in similar companies in other Member States.*

*The fact that the Mayor of an Italian city that is a partner in one of the second round EQUAL TPs in which Kethi is involved, arrived in Athens has "obliged" the President of our National Council of Mayors to attend a meeting whose aim was to set the scope of activities in the TCA. In addition, during the meeting, he became more and more*

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<sup>3</sup> Erillis-opetus tänään - WomenIT-projektin selvitys yhden sukupuolen opetuksesta (Separate Teaching Today - WomenIT study on teaching of single sex, only available in Finnish).

*personally committed through the presence of the highly motivated Italian Mayor to advance the issues related to the project.*

*Now, both First and Second Round Partners agree that tangible transnational products are not the only valuable outcomes of transnational cooperation, but that peer contacts and meetings have influenced significantly the building up and implementation of the national projects.*

*R1: TP: [Ariadne – Leading women upwards – TCA 1955](#)*

### **5.3. TRIGGERING CHANGE THROUGH CROSS-BORDER PEER SUPPORT**

A crucial element of these transnational events involving strategically chosen key players were specific approach that enabled them to support each other. Obviously, good practices recommended by another company, public administration or political decision-maker appeared to be much more credible and was more likely to be seriously considered for adoption by the respective counterparts than messages and statements delivered by project staff. The visit of the British JIVE DP to its partner in Berlin focused on mentoring and is a good example for what peer contacts can achieve:

*The mentoring exchange visit was useful to the work of the JIVE DP nationally. This visit :*

- *Improved activity in the national DP:  
One of the partners, who was involved in the DP to change practice in its' organisation to improve recruitment and retention of women, had been reticent in its pro-active involvement to set up a networking /mentoring scheme within the organisation. The visit raised the profile of mentoring, in particularly when a corporate German company (German Telecom) was so obviously supporting mentoring. After the end of Round 1 this UK organisation is now running a networking/mentoring programme for its women apprentices.*
- *Increased learning:  
Some members of the JIVE DP are very experienced in mentoring , but learned from the different types of mentoring used by partners particularly from Germany. Indeed there was a feeling that the projects 'mentored' each other through the process of setting up, monitoring and evaluating their programmes.*

*JIVE, together with its transnational partners was able to trigger similar reactions when it came to implementing gender mainstreaming – both inside and outside of the DP. Transnational meetings presented opportunities for detailed discussion around interpretation and shared understanding of the whole GM concept. This was shown by genuine shared learning and the DP's initial study visit to Germany gave insight into the EU strategy, GM in practice and gender budgeting.*

*Further impact within the UK was achieved with a high profile meeting at the Welsh National Assembly attended by a Finnish Member of Parliament and Ministry of Labour official and a Berlin Council Member and ESF staff . The event was organised by an NGO whose profile was considerably raised by the event which was chaired by an eminent academic and addressed by the Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning.*

*R1: DP: [JIVE Partners- UKgb-35- TP: R2: DP: R2: \[JIVE – Joining Policy + Joining Practice – UKgb 136\]\(#\)](#)*

### **5.4. TRANSFERS AND MAINSTREAMING**

Transferring the concept of a women's resource centre focusing on the so-called male domains of the labour market from the UK to Finland is an outstanding success story of transnationality and of bringing key players together.

Building on its achievements and expertise the British (First Round) Development Partnership (DP) JIVE has bid successfully for a government contract to host and run a [National Resource Centre for Women's Training in Science, Engineering and Technology \(SET\)](#). The centre was launched in 2005 and is an important component of the [UK Government's strategy to increase](#)

[the number of women in science and engineering](#). The concept is linking gender equality policies to forward-looking strategies enabling the country to face the challenge of demographic change and to tackle emerging skills gaps. The remit of the centre is to improve the participation and position of all women in SET employment across academia, industry and public service in the UK, including those from ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, caring responsibilities and those disadvantaged in accessing the labour market. This will be achieved by providing a focus base for advice and support to the SET community, and developing and sharing good practice with employers seeking to support, recruit, retain and promote women in employment and education. The provision will be accessible to all parties across the UK, including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and work closely with existing interest groups and stakeholders.

*Through transnational cooperation WomenIT, the Finnish partner of the JIVE project got inspired and set out to transplant the idea to its own country. WomenIT organised a visit to the UK for policy makers, other key people and a journalist. JIVE gave a presentation about the activities of the centre and also brought the Finnish delegation to the funding department in the Ministry of Trade and Industry so they could talk to people there, to show them how important the Government considered the resource centre.*

*Meanwhile Finland is undertaking to create similar centres at regional level. One of the first will be set up in Kajaani, the home town of WomenIT's lead partner. The Finnish DP partners have succeeded to convince policy makers that these centres are breaking barriers not only by encouraging women to venture into technical occupations, but also into non-traditional fields of entrepreneurship and that this is clearly an asset to economic development.*

*DPs: [JIVE Partners- UKgb-35- - WomenIT- Fi12](#) – TP: [Breaking the Barriers](#) –TCA 735*

The following example demonstrates that transfer of new concepts that are especially valuable at the local level can also be facilitated by peer encounters in the framework of transnational cooperation. In Equal's Round 1, the Scottish Work Adaptability Partnership (WAP) was part of the "ETNA" TP which comprised two more DPs, viz. SILOC@L (Spain) and ARTE (Italy). All DPs operated in rural as well as urban areas and were funded within the Adaptability Pillar 3 of EQUAL. The main joint activities were grouped into three themes: e-learning, e-business and e-government.

*In its national project, one of WAP's areas of interest was to promote the extension of broadband and the concept of "communities of practice", particularly in the rural areas of Scotland with a view to making learning more accessible to those that were disadvantaged in obtaining employment due to rurality and/or care responsibilities. The spread of broadband is relevant to issues of equality of access for women as well as being relevant for more industrial issues. Broadband availability also provided the means of making companies more able to take advantage of e-business opportunities and make local government more able keep contact with its rural communities.*

*During Action 3 of Equal Round 1, WAP's activities were mainstreamed through the Scottish Executive, providing good practice for policy makers that were developing and implementing policy for broadband in Scotland.*

*As part of the transnational programme, a delegation of mayors from Asturias in Northern Spain undertook a fact-finding learning journey to Scotland for a week in February 2003. These mayors represented municipalities in the Asturias region. They met their Scottish counterparts in Stirling, Fife, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Also they visited projects concerned with the extension of the availability of broadband and telecentres in each region. They discussed with senior officials of these local authorities the strategies within their communities for extending broadband and developing its use for the benefits of these communities and the local economies. Related sub-projects within WAP's national project were demonstrated to them.*

*Feedback from SILOC@L has indicated that this visit "opened the eyes of these local leaders to the possibilities offered by IT and broadband in their areas". Since then an action plan for the region has been developed which aims to make broadband available throughout the Asturias region by 2008.*

*The focus in Asturias will be on local telecentres – those currently in operation have each reported 17 – 18k attendances in the past year. Plans focus on the use of this technology on e-business and e-administration as well as ensuring the availability of e-learning to rural communities and those that otherwise have difficulties in accessing continuing education. One essential advantage perceived is strengthening the communication links between central government, town halls and local people.*

*R 1: DP: WAP- UKgb-69- TP: E.T.N.A.  
E-learning-Training-New ideas and good lessons from Adapt – TCA 801*

Thanks to the active support of the Spanish Management Authority and National Support Structure transnational activities launched Round 1 were extended and went beyond the cooperation between individual DPs. This is the case of the Austrian POP UP GeM DP, which is keen to compare and to harmonise the understanding about what Gender Mainstreaming is and what the implementation of this tool really means and requires. The DP feels that it has not been able to complete this mission during the lifespan of its first round Just GeM project and the partners of the second round DP are convinced that more efforts are needed to further develop the implementation of gender mainstreaming at all levels of employment policies throughout Europe. To that end the DP has, in addition to its transnational work in the framework of a TCA, joined forces with several partners in Spain. After its presentation at the EQUAL visibility event “Gender equality a Key to Change” which took place in June 2005 in Madrid, that DP was approached by several projects and key players and the NSS has facilitated further contacts and cooperation. An on-going process of transnational discussions and agreements has thus been launched to overcome structural discrimination which causes the well known disadvantages, mainly for women, but sometimes also for men.

*The Austrian DP is now working closely with Spanish DPs as well as with Spanish regional authorities to develop a common model, methodologies and tools to be used for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within employment and training policies and programs.*

*Austrian project managers and trainers have been invited to a seminar organised by the Junta of Andalusia “El Mainstreaming de Género en la nueva Agenda Política” where they introduced the theoretical background and methodical approach developed thanks to EQUAL. They also taught a workshop that explained Just GeM’s the 6-steps method and in the evening after the seminar, they held small exclusive tutorials with an organisation which supports the Regional Government’s gender equality unit (Unidad de Igualdad y Género). This organisation was very interested to add this systematic method to their knowledge base on gender mainstreaming. So, step by step more and more actors are using and enhancing the implementation of GM into their regional and/or national policies.*

*After this performance in Sevilla, Just GeM approach was recommended to the Junta of the Basque Country, which is carrying out an EQUAL Project in Round 2. Again the Austrian team was invited to hold a seminar and improve the DP’s access to the top level decision-makers within the public services and local authorities they asked for a practical example how to establish this kind of top-town support.*

*The Austrian DP complied. One of its partners in 2<sup>nd</sup> Round project “POP UP GeM” is the City of Graz, the capital of the region of Styria. The Head of Municipal Administration was persuaded to travel to Bilbao and to share his positive experiences with gender mainstreaming with his Basque counterparts. He presented the impressive advancement and the changes concerning the integration of gender equality into strategies and policies, structures and personnel development which have been achieved during Round 1 and explained about the next steps that will be undertaken in Round 2. He spoke openly about prejudices and misunderstandings which had made it difficult to start the process; including those harboured by himself. Yet, he also reported about the growing interest and commitment of policy makers and employees of the administration after having seen their real successes. And he conveyed to the audience that working with administration and public services often needs a lot of patience before old and rigid structures start to change.*

*“Only Equal made it possible to have such a lively face-to-face discussion of peers from different parts of Europe”, says project director Heide Cortolezis. “As we understand Gender Mainstreaming – as an international tool to achieve gender equality and a process that can be implemented within all cultures, systems and organisations – we need transnational exchange and common development. In this sense, changing and/or establishing processes and structures, which enhance equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market, is not possible just as a national or regional action. We have to learn from each other, to consolidate our methods and experiences, so that finally in the EU, all Member States, all regions and municipalities share a common understanding of ‘ Who at which level has to do what, to make gender equality a reality!’ Without the transnational activities our work would never have a European dimension, and our success at regional level would be a drop in the ocean.”*

*R1: [Just GeM- AT-5-18/14- R2: \[POP UP GeM – AT – 5-18-212 - TP: \\[Gender@Work-TCA -4181\\]\\(#\\)\]\(#\)](#)*