

# REPORT

## Focus Group

In this report we present the results of some focus groups carried out in July 2022 in which we investigated the main areas of the Gender Equality Plan using the narrative analysis method of Lucia Zammuner. We remind that the focus group is a qualitative research method that obtains information from an in-depth group discussion. In recent decades this method has been used more and more frequently in social research, being particularly useful for thoroughly investigating opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviors both of subjects belonging to the reference sample, and of stakeholders and key figures who can allow the research to derive important addressing considerations. The method is also well suited to complex multi-method research with exploratory and in-depth purposes.

### Investigation Areas

- 1) Work Life Balance and Organizational Culture
- 2) Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision Making
- 3) Gender Equality in Recruitment and Progression
- 4) Integrating the Gender Dimension into Research and Training Content
- 5) Gender Based Violence including Sexual Harassment

### I Focus Group

#### Area 1

With regard to the organizational culture, in the focused group interview, the dialogue factor emerges, as a tool within the Institute and its working groups, to find a meeting point between the various interlocutors both horizontally and vertically, based on the roles covered within the organization.

The balance between work and private life has been facilitated by the ritualization of the transition phases of the individual and family life cycle, through events of sharing and collective participation of the whole community.

(In the interaction the participants look at each other and show mutual assent)

#### Area 2

Interns and researchers were involved by seniors in research activities, which favored career progression, and thanks to their interest and guidance, the collaboration that developed produced not only results but also and above all integration, inclusion and meaning of belonging.

#### Area 3

During the selection phase, the perception of all the participants was one of acceptance and closeness on the part of the commission, however the advice that emerges is to introduce more women into the evaluation group to make it more balanced in terms of gender.

#### Area 4

As regards the integration of the gender dimension in research activities and teaching contents, the participants unanimously refer both to specific research activities (such as the one on the possible differences between men and women in the activities of the musculoskeletal system under stress) and to the fact that the gender dimension is usually included, becoming a constant reference in many research activities.

## **Area 5**

The participants talk about experiences lived outside the Institute, even before entering it, where in 80% of the situations and work experiences they experienced a prevalence of aesthetic appreciations compared to the skills they possessed. They report this still happens frequently today in the working world, while within the Institute they have always felt valued and appreciated for their skills, abilities and preparation regardless of their aesthetic appearance.

In the investigation of this area, a strategy spontaneously emerges that we plan to adopt in the future, namely that of creating videos in which to interview the Women of the IEMEST engaged at various levels in the fight against inequalities and who through storytelling can become a model and a reference for the new generations, especially facilitating cultural change. This strategy also emerged thanks to the discovery that one of the participants, Federica, is a member of an association that deals with the fight against violence against women.

## **II Focus Group**

### **Area 1**

In this group, the quality of the organizational climate and culture emerges as a determining factor, the understanding that has always been much appreciated, especially in life situations in which one can go through periods of crisis or emotional difficulty. "A family! No working context has ever been so welcoming." The theme of hospitality emerges preponderantly, as an important and distinctive value of our Institute, also in the considerations and reflections on the balance between work and private life.

The adjectives and nouns that were used to describe this area were: harmony, friendship, fun and exciting.

Federica, director of the NIMA department and deputy scientific director of the institute, referring to her experience as her mother, says: "Flexibility has allowed me to reconcile the activities carried out in the Institute with being a mother."

### **Area 2 and 3**

Always Federica, referring to her career progression, says: "I entered as a researcher in 2017, then I was involved in the Interdepartmental Centre, I created the NIMA department within 1 year, finally I was appointed deputy scientific director; taking on this latter role has given me a broader vision!" Giulia, the youngest of the group, says she is happy hearing Federica speak precisely as a model of growth and success.

In the interaction, all the participants agree on the consideration that the trump card was the team, as a tool for sharing ideas, activities, making skills interact.

### **Area 4**

Also, in this group it emerges that the theme of gender has been included in European research projects with a particular focus and attention on the theme of social inclusion in particular of disadvantaged categories or with specific disabilities also with regard to the theme of accessibility.

### **Area 5**

A member of the group refers to the differences found between our Institute and the other institutions where she reports having been appreciated or having received indications on the neckline to wear, the type of shoes, the clothing to use, etc. "I felt looked at in a certain way..." referring to the ambiguity of intention.

An extremely interesting element emerges in this area regarding the level of awareness that the participants had with respect to certain behaviours and/or attitudes towards them: none of them knew and therefore were aware that these actions are attributable to the category of sexual harassment and

in as such punishable by law. From this point of view, the research, conducted through the focus group method, has become and has taken on a research-intervention function.