

Presentation on Group Activity: Exploring the Good Practice Database

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Two 90 minute sessions were held in one of the ICTP computer laboratories to allow conference participants to explore the pilot version of the Good Practice database, to provide feedback on how to improve it, and to propose additional initiatives that could be added.

A pilot version of the database was available at <https://www.mathunion.org/cwm/gender-gap-in-science-database>. This pilot version was organised by the following fields:

- Name
- Acronym
- Web link
- Year of origin
- Region/country
- Funding source
- Discipline(s)
- Dimensions of “good practice”
- Target level
- Evidence of effectiveness and impact

To explore the database, participants were invited to:

1. Browse all initiatives on the database home page
2. Try the search functions (search by discipline, country, region, target audience)
3. Offer written feedback on how to improve the organisation and functionality of the database (e.g., suggest additional search criteria)
4. Go to the web form and submit information about additional gender initiatives

Suggestions for improving the database were grouped into three categories, as summarised below.

1. Improving presentation and navigability

- Create a database landing page with background information about the Gender Gap project; information about database categories, navigation, and functionality; and contact details for reporting errors or updating information
- Add the Summary field to the database, and position this immediately after the initiative’s Name
- Consider showing fewer columns in the main view so that the display is neater
- Fields for both evidence of effectiveness and evidence of impact are not needed (only include the latter)
- Shorten the titles of the 7 Gender Objective List (GOL) categories
- Add clickable links (or mouse hover boxes) to explain GOL categories and subcategories
- Change field “Name” to “Name of initiative”
- Consider adding a field for “Owner/organiser of initiative” or similar
- Consider adding a field for “Type of initiative/strategy” (e.g., workshop, summer school, organisation, camp, mentoring, networking, leadership, recruitment and retention)

- Consider adding a map (that is automatically updated) to show geographical location of initiatives by country
- Find out whether “Empty” items can be made invisible in View pages
- Add a field to indicate whether the initiative is continuing or not
- Check all entries for dead or hacked links, correct naming of initiatives, categorisation of gender objectives etc.

2. Improving search functionality

- Ensure the list of countries in the drop down menu is in alphabetical order
- Make it possible to search for more than one country at a time
- Spell out disciplines in full
- Make it possible to search for more than one discipline (or add “Other” category as free text field)
- Add more disciplines that might be implicated in new entries added by users (existing database entries would need to be recoded)
- Explain that Technology (as a discipline) includes other equivalent terms such as informatics, computer science etc.
- Create a smaller, consistent set of categories for Target Level (e.g., primary school, secondary school, undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoctoral, research, industry, families, etc.). This would necessitate recoding of database entries.
- Add a search function for Gender Objective (top level only)
- If a search reveals no entries in the database matching the search criteria, create a message inviting the user to submit an initiative that does match these criteria.

3. Adding and verifying entries

- Web form needs an explanation that * indicates a mandatory field
- Create a way of checking whether a proposed new entry is already in the database (extra search function?)
- Clicking on “Results” or ”Submission” on the web form leads to a list version of whole database with administrative information that should not be visible to users
- After submitting a completed web form there is a message confirming submission and inviting user to “click here” to check their entry. This link does not work – the URL is incorrect
- After a new initiative is submitted, feedback needs to be sent to the proposer on the review decision (accept/not accept), and reasons
- Need a “Back to home page” button after submitting a new initiative
- Add a field for submitter’s email address