

# GEARING-Roles launches the Nobel Run board game to give visibility to women in science

GEARING-Roles is a four-year (January 2019 – December 2022) Coordination and Support Action project that brings together a pan-European group of academics and industry professionals to collaborate and exchange knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned on designing, implementing, and evaluating six gender equality plans (GEPs) across six academic institutions.

The project, therefore, has a firm objective of challenging and transforming gender roles and identities linked to professional careers and working towards real institutional change. This multidisciplinary, multinational, and multi-sectorial collaboration is supported by training, mentoring activities, awareness-raising campaigns, bi-annual videos and podcasts, and annual networking events centred around gender equality.

Despite efforts to eliminate gender disparities in research and innovation, women continue to be under-represented in science, especially in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) disciplines, such as engineering. When considering all disciplines, only a third of researchers in the EU are women and only 15 per cent work in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects. Women also represent less than 10 per cent of patent holders, and only 8 per cent of women have founded start-ups in Europe. Furthermore, only 25 per cent of start-ups in Europe included at least one woman in the founding team. The Nobel Prize has been awarded for 119 years. In this time frame, it has been awarded 876 times to men, 58 times to women, and 28 times to organisations.

GEARING-Roles seeks to create real structural change that eliminates these disparities by focusing on community involvement. It will do so by expanding its network, building gender sensitivity and awareness amongst students, staff members and the general public, and encouraging the public to move away from gender bias and towards diversity and inclusion. GEARING also seeks to engage with university communities and foster gender mainstreaming in campus life.

## Awareness-raising videos on gender roles and gender equality

Awareness-raising videos are shared on the project's social media channels and/or YouTube channel. These videos can also be used for teaching and fostering gender mainstreaming in research. Part of these activities has also been developed in collaboration with the sister project GE Academy. The GE Academy project developed a DOCC (distributed open collaborative course), in which several GEARING-Roles partners were involved. This includes Lut Mergaert (YW), Maria López Belloso (Deusto), Anne Laure Humbert (OBU) and Mieke Verloo (RAD).

Building on this, the GEARING-Roles project has developed a series of resources grouped in different themes. These resources include a video that can be used for awareness-raising, a module narrative and instruction booklet, PowerPoint slides and/or a recorded lecture, all available on the project website.

## Key facts dissemination

In order to raise awareness about gender equality generally, and more specifically in the context of science, the GEARING-Roles project disseminated a list of key facts in 2020. These 'key facts' were used as a basis for a list of questions and answers that could be used visually and interactively to engage with the community, both face-to-face and online. This activity was part of the project's events, but it was expanded into a travelling exhibition due to the large amount of attraction it gathered. This exhibition provides a response to the phenomenon of co-opting, watering down and 'branding' of feminist messages by marketers, social media influencers or celebrities. The exhibition aims to provide an alternative to the commodification of feminism and increased trends towards 'postfeminist' femininity or neoliberal feminist ideals.

The key idea is to print these designs on T-shirts and use them for the following activities:

- **Exhibitions on campus.** These can raise awareness and promote discussions among staff, students and campus visitors, including the general public. The T-shirts are used as an alternative format to posters, and are displayed on hangers. This provides visibility to the issue of gender equality but also raises awareness of the GEARING-Roles project and its aim to achieve structural change.

The logo for 'NOBEL RUN' is displayed in a bold, orange, blocky font against a dark blue background with a subtle pattern of small white stars.

NOBEL RUN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apwDzQlpvwQ>





Photo: GEARING-Roles team members wearing T-shirts that display a variety of key facts distributed by the project in 2020.



- **Exhibitions at events organised by GEARING-Roles**, such as annual conferences, pairing visits, etc. These T-shirts can be easily transported and are displayed in ways that encourage attendees to interact with the material. There is also scope for project team members to wear the T-shirts, prompting further discussions and debates on the event and the issue.
- **Social media campaigns.** Images of project members and other stakeholders wearing the T-shirts can be instrumental for social media campaigns. For instance, several project partners have worn these T-shirts on feminist walks, but they can also be used for other collaborative and awareness raising events that can be shared on socials. Exhibits on campus and as part of annual conferences would also contribute to a sustained and targeted social media campaign using the designs and messages on the T-shirts.

## Nobel Run board game

With a playful and innovative approach, this initiative wants to question and transform gender stereotypes and inequality in science.

The development of this board game resulted in GEARING-Roles being featured as the European Commission's "Project of the Month" in June 2021. The EC highlighted the project's "intrepid work in the field of gender roles and gender equality in the research and innovation sectors".

The game's objective is to manage a research team and win the Nobel Prize. At the beginning of the game, a player has an 'effort card', a small local project and the help of a PhD student ('predoc'). As the game progresses, the player is awarded more projects and a research team, and they can publish in prestigious magazines to collect points.

The game is a deck-building game, in which a starting deck of cards expands after the collection of new cards every round. Relevant scientists and inventors help the player along their journey by telling them part of their story. For example, Mary Somerville, Ada Lovelace's mentor, provides a player with 'extra effort' because there is nothing more valuable than a good mentor. Hedy Lamarr, the inventor of frequency-hopping spread spectrum, which led to WiFi or Bluetooth, gives a player extra data. But other cards can have negative effects on a player's game. Rosalind Franklin, for example, allows a player to take data away from other players.

The game was developed by Pablo Garaizar and Lorena Fernández (University of Deusto) and illustrated by Íñigo Maestro. It is recommended for two to four players and is for those over the age of 10.

## Some Nobel Run stories



### Ada Lovelace (England, 10 December 1815 – England, 27 November 1852)

Augusta Ada Lovelace is often considered to be the first computer programmer, as she was the first to publish part of a program (specifically an algorithm) intended for implementation on Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. However, she only gained recognition many years after her death. Nowadays, there is a programming language with her name, created by the U.S. Department of Defense. Every year, on the second Tuesday of every October, Ada Lovelace Day is celebrated to highlight the achievements of women in STEM careers.

### Hedy Lamarr (Vienna, 9 November 1914 – Florida, 19 January 2000)

Hollywood actress and inventor, Hedy Lamarr was a woman who wanted to make her mark on the world, but that world could not see past her beauty. Alongside George Antheil, she invented and patented the first version of the frequency-hopping spread spectrum (FHSS) that would enable long-distance wireless communications. When Hedy Lamarr tried to join the National Inventors Council, her director, Charles F. Kettering, told her that she could better serve her country by promoting war bonds, belittling her invention that is now the basis for Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technologies. International Inventors' Day is celebrated in her honour on 9 November.

<https://gearingroles.eu/nobel-run/>

## PROJECT NAME GEARING-Roles

## PROJECT SUMMARY

GEARING-Roles aims to implement six equality plans to pursue the recognition and promotion of the research career of women, their incorporation in decision-making positions, and the promotion of a culture of equality in organisations, deconstructing sexual roles to unveil gender biases that operate in processes of decision-making, selection and promotion of people and in the attribution of value and recognition.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

GEARING-Roles is a multi-stakeholder network of seven academic (six universities and a public research funding body) and three non-academic institutions (a public body and two private companies), supported by 19 stakeholder organisations, built on a solid collaborative track and expertise, and a myriad of regional realities, unique national contexts, and diverse organisational cultures.

## PROJECT LEAD PROFILE

DEUSTO was founded in 1886 and has a long and well-established tradition. UDEUSTO's mission and educational goal is firmly grounded in academic excellence and social responsibility, aiming to generate economic sustainable growth and make positive contributions towards the construction of a fairer and more inclusive society.

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