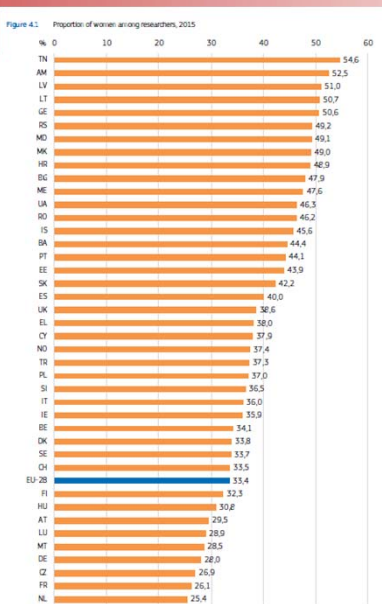


The Complexity of GEP implementation: in research performing and funding organisations

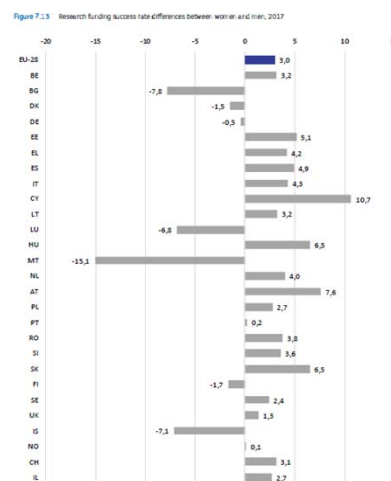
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Introduction

- European research and innovation landscape is highly fragmented and ambiguous (also) in terms of gender equality.
 - Significant variation in terms of participation of women and men as researchers in different R&I sectors and scientific disciplines but also in terms of framework conditions of GE and GE policy implementation
- EU promotes GE in R&I through implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)



Source: She Figures 2018, p. 59



Source: She Figures 2018, p. 173

Starting Point

- GEPs are aiming at making research performing organisations more gender inclusive and divers
 - Changing the system: structures, processes and practices
- Gender Equality Plans are complex interventions into a complex and dynamic system (Kalpazidou Schmidt et al. 2020)
 - Developing and implementing GEPs is complex as it involves multiple and interrelated actors, activities and objectives
 - Coordination with other strategies/processes as well as with existing equality measures
 - Also the system (universities/research system) is characterized by a high degree of differentiation and interdependencies
- Gender inequalities do not originate from a single cause rather they are produced and reproduced through a dense and highly interrelated network of structures, processes and practices (Kalpazidou Schmidt & Cacace 2017)
 - Needs to be understood as a multi level and layered problem

Empirical data & evidence

- The following considerations are based on findings and experiences from different FP7 and H2020 projects
- From 3 structural change projects in which we are/were participating as independent evaluators
 - GARCIA (2014 - 2017)
 - GENERA (2015 - 2018)
 - SPEAR (2019-2022)
- From the EFFORTI (2016-2019) project developing a framework for the evaluation of GE measures in R&I and a toolbox with indicators for specific measures
- And other H2020 projects like ..
 - ACT (2018-2021)
 - GRANteD (2019-2023)
 - CASPER (2020-2021)

Contextuality and Tailoring

- Context is highly relevant for developing and implementing a GEP
 - Context often defines what is possible, necessary or feasible for a GEP
 - What does context for GEP implementation mean:
 - Type of organisation, resources, ongoing policy processes etc.
 - Regional or national framework conditions: from societal discourses about gender (equality) to GE policies in R&I or higher education to grassroots movements (associations, networks etc.)
- There is no single blueprint for a GEP that fits all organisations
 - GEPs cannot be transferred easily one to one from one organisation to the other
 - Needs to be tailored to the organisation and its context
 - Systematic implementation of different measures that aim to mitigate gender inequalities in organisations at structures, processes and practices
 - Mix of measures that should focus on different levels:
 - Changing processes and structures (long term focus)
 - Building capacities to promote GE
 - Establishing supportive environments through awareness raising

Participation and Ambiguity

- Participation and inclusion are important features of GEP development and implementation
 - Plurality of voices, empowerment and representation
 - Increases ownership and commitment of different groups
 - Generates support, capacities and momentum
 - But: which groups/stakeholders are relevant and important?
- Ambiguous strategies and changing objectives
 - GEPs often exhibit not clearly defined objectives or ambiguous strategies
 - Resulting from organisational negotiation processes and differential power relations
 - Even if, they are clear and unambiguous there is no guarantee that they will be realized in practice
 - Understanding GEP implementation as continuous process of negotiation and refinement of GEP objectives and strategies
 - Adaptation to newly arising opportunities or contestations

Implementation and Impact

- Implementation is a dynamic process
 - A GEP is a compass but not an unambiguous treasure map
 - Complexity does not end after a GEP has been established
 - Implementation is not a linear and straight forward process
 - Doing implementation is often messy: it involves forging alliances or compromises or making concessions
 - Requires complex experiences and competences: gender knowledge, change processes, tacit knowledge about procedures within the organisation: often lack of knowledge within the ROs
- Impact
 - Implementation is often accompanied by unintended consequences
 - Monitoring and evaluation of implementation processes is important
 - Impacts are best visible or measureable in a long term perspective
 - But: causal relations are often hard to establish

Conclusions

- Simple criterion of GEP in placement will not automatically promote GE in the long run;
- GEP implementation, understood as a complex and dynamic process, is important and needs to be considered as a criterion in the new Horizon Europe Criterion as well;
- Opening the black box: Looking beyond output, outcome and impact of GEP implementation - shifting the focus towards understanding the GEP implementation processes - the concrete practices of implementation;
- Enhance our understanding of success and failure of GEPs in specific contexts;

Thank you for your attention!

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