



FINAL REPORT ON WOMEN'S CAREERS PROGRESSION

DELIVERABLE D3.3

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<http://www.change-h2020.eu>



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	
CoP	Community of Practice
EB	Executive Board
IAB	International Advisory Board
NLT	National Team Leaders
RFO	Research Funding Organization
RPO	Research Performing Organization
SC	Steering Committee
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

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ABOUT THE CHANGE PROJECT

The main aim of CHANGE is to support research performing organisations (RPOs) to design and implement gender equality plans. This will be achieved by involving key actors, called Transfer Agents (TAs), within each organisation who will together with the core consortium partners transmit co-produced gender equality knowledge inside their institutions.

This innovative approach will ensure the promotion and sustainable institutionalisation of the gender equality action plans (GEPs) beyond the project duration. Furthermore, through mutual learning and networking, CHANGE will enable partners to become resource centres skilled to provide gender equality knowledge and expertise to other RPOs and also RFOs (research funding organisations).

With such a co-production of knowledge approach and by building communities of practice among RPOs in each participating region, support and mentorship structures will be established and work even after the project is finished. Regular inclusion and exchange with national and European stakeholders (policy makers, researchers, ministries etc.) ensures a spill-over effect of CHANGE results to other RPOs and RFOs in their respective countries as well as with other ministries in the whole European area.

As one of many results, CHANGE will produce policy papers based on this strategic stakeholder involvement including actual policy makers and relevant stakeholders in the policy paper production. With this approach we aim at closing the research-to-action gap, respectively the theory-to-practice gap. Thus, CHANGE contributes to a structural change towards gender equality in the European Research Area by stimulating institutional cultural change towards gender equal work environments in RPOs and fostering the importance of gender dimension inclusive research and innovation programmes in RFOs.

For more information see <http://www.change-h2020.eu>



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main objective of this deliverable is to evaluate what impact the CHANGE project had on GEP implementing partners and CHANGE team members. The deliverable is based on the data obtained from self-assessment forms, which were filled in by CHANGE implementing partners in February 2022.

This report presents the views on how the participation in CHANGE project changed the institutional gender equality level and what impact was made to individuals included in the CHANGE project.

The results show that inclusion in CHANGE project had significant positive organizational and personal impact to the organizations and CHANGE team members.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 D3.2 DRAFT REPORT ON WOMEN'S CAREERS PROGRESSION

The deliverable D3.2 Draft report on women's careers progression was prepared in October 2020. The report was based on the information and data received from GEP implementing partners that were asked to fill in the joint self-assessment form, which covered WP3, WP4 and WP6. This exercise was performed in September 2020.

D3.2 presented how the CHANGE project and its activities influenced partners' institutional gender equality level and what influence it has had for individual careers of staff members of each GEP implementing institution at halfway of the project's duration. In addition, potentials of improving career progression opportunities and conditions for female researchers in each GEP implementing institution was assessed.

The analysis of self-assessment forms allowed to identify five factors for a sustainable change towards equal career conditions for women:

1. **Soft communication.** Soft communication is initially needed to prevent staff members from "shying away" from the gender-related topics. This can then be capitalized for other purposes, e.g., project coordination, fairer promotion that is based on meritocracy.
2. **Awareness raising.** This allows to educate people about gender-related topics as well as to open their eyes/to lead them to understanding that gender-related issues are existing in everyday life.
3. **Increased visibility.** The collaboration in projects such as CHANGE gives visibility to its team members and topics covered (gender equality and also research integrity, which are topics that are not always covered in CHANGE GEP implementing institutions). These kinds of collaborations and increasing importance of gender topic in the scientific community in future might have positive influence to the individual careers internally in the organizations, as well as nationally with other organizations (RPOs and RFOs).
4. **Targeted measures.** The planned activities need to be concrete, enabling the community building and exchange of good practices and opinions. Moreover, activities should be tailored to the national and institutional culture as well as institutional needs.
5. **National legislation.** Changes of institutional rules or even national legislation enables a more sustainable implementation of gender-related initiatives. Institutional and national changes establishing mandatory requirements related to the promotion of gender-related topics will foster development of a more gender-equal society. At the same time, gender-equal society allows a faster pace for career progression of female colleagues.

Based on identified factors, roadmap to sustainability of GEP's implementation was presented visually (Figure 1).

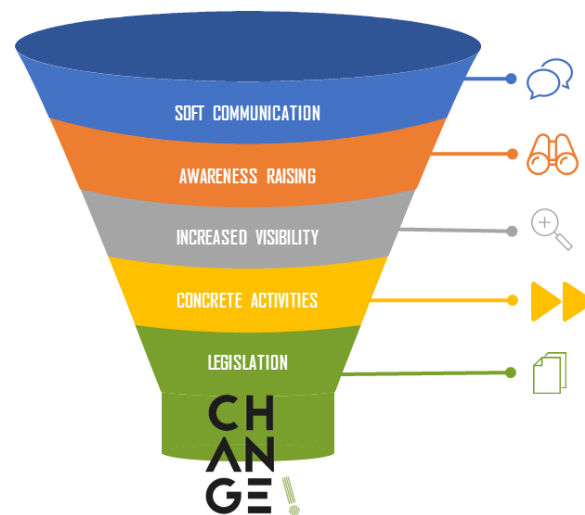


Figure 1: Roadway to sustainability, as defined in D3.2 (Draft report on women's career progression).

2.2 D3.3. FINAL REPORT ON WOMEN'S CAREERS PROGRESSION

CHANGE implementing partners were asked to perform another self-assessment of progress and achieved results in the WP3 "Boosting women's career in Science and Research".

The self-assessment form was drafted using data and results from the D3.2. Close connection between both reports and self-assessment forms gave a unique opportunity not only to follow the process of implementation of CHANGE project and its activities, but also to present what institutional and personal impact has been made to GEP implementing partners and staff members included in the implementation of CHANGE project.

Each GEP implementing project partner was asked to fill in the self-assessment form, which is provided in Appendix 1. The self-assessment form was composed of three parts:

- a) **Organizational impact.** CHANGE teams were asked:
 - a.1. To describe what negative and positive **impacts** resulted from the institutional involvement in gender-related topics. Respondents were asked to choose multiple choices from the list of 7 statements describing positive impacts and 2 statements regarding negative impacts. The statements were identified from D3.2. Respondents were also requested to provide a brief explanation on how a particular statement/impact was implemented/achieved in their own institution. Moreover, respondents had an option to supplement both lists by adding their own observations.
 - **POSITIVE IMPACT:**
 - a) Women get higher representation in institutional decision-making bodies, various committees, panels, etc.
 - b) The topic of gender is placed in institutional agendas.
 - c) Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity.
 - d) Improved dialogue with organizational administration.
 - e) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities.
 - f) Use of gender-sensitive language.
 - g) Gathering and use of data.
 - **NEGATIVE IMPACT:**
 - a) Observed resistance to gender-related topics, since women have "reached equality already" or the "topic is not relevant for us".
 - b) Appointment of uninterested/unqualified personnel to cover diversity topics.

D3.3. Women's career progression report

- a.2. To give feedback on listed **good practice examples** of activities and measures that were also identified in D3.2. In addition, respondents had an option to list down additional best practise examples. Listed good practice examples:
- a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities.
 - b) Use of surveys, creation of researcher databases.
 - c) Organization of workshops, round tables, trainings.
 - d) Soft communication tone.
 - e) Use of diversity instead of gender – adapt the terminology.
 - f) Build a network of supporters.
 - g) Exchange of good practices (organizationally/nationally, with sister projects, networks).
 - h) Identify the needs and tailor the activities accordingly, do not use general activities.
- a.3. To indicate and to give brief feedback on the listed topics for **further trainings**. Suggested training topics:
- a) Introduction to gender equality, setting the scene, gender awareness training.
 - b) Unconscious bias.
 - c) Communication.
 - d) Work-life balance.
 - e) Personal growth, burnout.
 - f) Teamwork.
 - g) Research integrity.
 - h) Gender in research content (e.g., in biomedicine, autonomous driving, etc.).
- b) **Personal impact.** Implementing CHANGE partners were asked to assess personal positive and negative impacts of the involvement in gender-related topics. Positive and negative impacts were listed in the self-assessment form, as identified in D3.2. Respondents were asked not only to select statements they agree with, but also to briefly present their opinion about selected statements. Finally, as in the previous exercise, CHANGE teams had an option to add their own experiences.
- **POSITIVE IMPACT:**
 - a) Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues.
 - b) Increased knowledge on soft skills (e.g., legislation, administration).
 - c) Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities.
 - d) Increased publications.
 - e) Increased visibility among peers and the management board.
 - f) Inclusion in informal mentoring activities, creation of support groups.
 - g) Promotes reflection on personal careers.
 - h) Empower women to be more ambitious scientifically/regarding advancing the career.
 - i) Empower women to voice loudly any signs of inequalities.
 - **NEGATIVE IMPACT:**
 - a) Become labelled as an activist for unimportant/unattractive topics.
 - b) Traditionalistic beliefs on gendered roles in society are in contrast to projects like CHANGE.
- c) **Roadmap of GEP implementation.** Implementing CHANGE partners were asked to describe process of drafting and adopting GEPs in their institutions, context of the GEP and CHANGE team member's involvement in this process. In addition, respondents were asked to give their opinion about measures to be used to guarantee the sustainability of CHANGE actions and maintenance of organizational GEPs. Finally, the last question contained the picture of roadway to sustainability. CHANGE teams had a possibility to give their opinion about it and to suggest any changes.

3 UAVR – UNIVERSITY OF AVEIRO, PORTUGAL

The University of Aveiro is among Europe's top 100 institutions for higher education. It is a public Foundation under private law since 2009. It is currently attended by approximately 17,000 graduate and post-graduate students, 9% of which are international students. The academic community further comprises around 1,400 teaching staff and researchers, and 630 technical, administrative and managerial staff¹. The University of Aveiro is oriented towards research, covering areas from technical, natural, social sciences and humanities. It supports entrepreneurship and maintains a close collaboration with the community through open doors and trainings.

3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. UAVR team agreed and commented all listed statements describing positive organizational impact:

- a) Women get higher representation in institutional decision-making bodies, several committees, panels, etc. Incorporating gender-related topics in institutions allows making visible the existing gender imbalance, particularly at the decision-making and senior management bodies. At the same time, this can be treated as an awareness raising activity highlighting the need for greater representation of women in leading positions.
- b) The topic of gender is placed in institutional agendas. The inclusion of the gender-related topics in institutional agendas leads to the development of various initiatives and facilitates partnerships with national and international stakeholders in order to respond to the existing challenges related to gender inequality. Additionally, early inclusion of gender-related topics into institutional agenda made it easier to respond to the newly imposed requirements under Horizon Europe to adopt institutional GEPs. Finally, placement of gender-related topics in institutional agendas shows institutional commitment and efforts that are made to eliminate/minimize gender inequality.
- c) Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity. Awareness raising is the first step towards the recognition of existing inequalities and the main predictor of the success (acceptance) of initiatives that will later be adopted to correct these inequalities.
- d) Improved dialogue with organizational administration. During the implementation of CHANGE project, a lot of communication with human resource officers was made in to address issues related to various human resources management aspects such as recruitment and promotion.
- e) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities. The multidimensional and transversal nature of gender inequality allows to incorporate the topic in most scientific areas. In terms of scientific research, the need to incorporate the sex/gender variable in the proposals has a great potential to trigger new collaborations and the involvement in activities with a transdisciplinary character.
- f) Use of gender-sensitive language. The use of gender-sensitive language, although very controversial in the Portuguese context, can help convey the idea that the institution values all stakeholders equally, regardless of their gender.
- g) Gathering and use of data. The collection and analysis of sex/gender disaggregated data is crucial for the design of appropriate actions and for the development of analysis/studies aimed at a deeper understanding of gender inequalities.

Negative impact. UAVR agreed with both statements related to negative institutional impact. Additionally, one more negative impact was observed by UAVR team:

- People involved in initiatives aimed at promoting gender-related topics are more easily - and with some frequency - the target of depreciative and/or joking comments that may be more or less explicit.

¹ <https://www.ua.pt/en/university>

Good practice examples. UAVR team provided detailed comments to 4 out of 8 good practice examples:

- a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities. Informal and non-binding initiatives is an example of good practice bringing positive results.
As a creative way to conduct activities, combining formal and informal activities revealed a good successful example. UAVR combined formal actions (such as workshops) with essentially informal actions (such as brown bag sessions and/or informal conversations). This allowed stimulating women and men to be more aware of gender differences in career progression.
- b) Use of diversity instead of gender – adapt the terminology. The preferential use of the concept 'diversity' instead of 'gender' seem to be very relevant for the success of the initiatives as it contributes to decreasing resistance to gender-related topics.
- c) Build a network of supporters. A monitoring group (sounding board), composed of key actors of the university has been created. Members of the monitoring group are supporters of CHANGE project and its initiatives.
- d) Identify the needs and tailor the activities accordingly, do not use general activities. All activities conducted in UAVR were planned carefully taking into account the organizational and national context as well as institutional needs.

Topics for future trainings. UAVR team identified different needs of trainings based on the staff members experience or/and familiarity with gender related topics. According to UAVR team, staff members who are not familiar with the topic should learn about the experience of others who have already gone through the various stages of implementation of GEP and have experience with gender related topics. Another important training topic is to introduce the concept of resistance to gender equality initiatives to the newcomers.

Staff members with some experience in implementing GEPs or working with gender related topics could attend the trainings of all listed topics as this would be beneficial for them.

3.2 PERSONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. UAVR team highlighted that they observed 3 personal positive impacts related to the involvement in gender-related projects such as CHANGE:

- a) Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues.
- b) Increased knowledge on soft skills (e.g., legislation, administration).
- c) Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities.

Involvement in the CHANGE project gave UAVR team an opportunity to acquire knowledge in the area of gender equality. In the same vein working in the framework of CHANGE project allowed to developed some soft skills such as teamwork.

Negative impact. UAVR team did not observe any negative impact related to the inclusion in CHANGE project.

3.3 ROADMAP OF GEP

GEP of UAVR can be found [here](#).

Milestones. The introduction of the GEP as an eligibility criterion under the Horizon Europe was an important milestone and helped to accelerate the whole process of creating and disseminating the GEP.

CHANGE involvement. The UAVR team and transfer agents were highly involved in the process of designing the GEP developed GEP.

Sustainability. Involvement of senior managers in promoting gender equality, creating structures, and hiring gender in/equality specialists are key to ensuring the sustainability of CHANGE project and institutional GEP.

Roadway to sustainability. UAVR team agreed with the roadway to sustainability, but at the same time added one observation - a monitoring and evaluation phase should be added. It is essential to follow the concrete activities and actions and understand its effects.

4 UNIZA – UNIVERSITY OF ZILINA, SLOVAKIA

In its over 65 years of successful existence, the University of Zilina has become the alma mater for more than 80,000 graduates, highly skilled professionals specialising mostly in transport and technical fields as well as in management, marketing or humanities. At present there are about 8,000 students being educated at seven faculties in 184 accredited fields of study. UNIZA participates in 200 national and 41 international scientific projects and organises about 60 scientific and professional events annually².

4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. The UNIZA team highlighted as a positive impact of the inclusion of gender issues in the institution that:

- Gender topic places on institutional agenda.
- Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity.
- Use of gender sensitive language.
- Gathering and use of data.

The UNIZA team is proud of the fact that within a STEM university in the GE non-advanced country like Slovakia, the GEP has been successfully implemented since 2018. The UNIZA CHANGE team members are particularly proud of the implementation of concrete actions which helped to contribute to the improvement of the working conditions at UNIZA (new benefits) and enhanced the understanding of adopting a gender-sensitive language. The latter is already in use and will be even more widely used in the future (e.g. welcome handbook for new employees involving also section on usage of gender sensitive language which is for the employees recommended to be utilized).

Negative impact. As a negative impact of working with gender related topics, resistance was identified to gender topics. Most of the staff members of UNIZA had preconception that "topic is not relevant" and "women already reached equality."

Good practice examples. UNIZA team agreed with all listed good practice examples. In this section is presented only those good practice examples that were additionally commented by UNIZA:

- a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities. UNIZA team highlighted that they had a good experience with creative activities, which were new to staff members (e.g. photo exhibition). Creative activities included the element of novelty, which attracted more attention and aroused the curiosity of employees.
- b) Use of surveys. UNIZA team launched a survey to evaluate the existing working conditions and needs of staff members. The analysis of survey results allowed to determinate state of working conditions/environment and the ways to improve it. Moreover, concrete actions/corrective measures were put in place.
- c) Soft communication tone. UNIZA team emphasised that a soft communication tone is extremely important and should be used every time gender topic is communicated to staff members or other individuals who are not familiar with the topic.
According to the UNIZA team, the definition of soft communication should include patience as usually gender-related topics need to be communicated and explained multiple times. Finally, not only verbal communication, but also the behaviour, conducted activities and team's approach to the topic are important to achieve the impact.

² <https://www.uniza.sk/index.php/en/>

- d) Use of diversity instead of gender – adapt the terminology. It is not only about terminology in the sense of diversity. It is also about inclusion of the gender topic to broader ones such as principles of moral, ethics and other similar topics that are understood as values by majority of the society. Additionally, UNIZA team gave an example about discussion, which took place during drafting of the GEP. A senior manager included in the process did not like term “sexual harassment”. However, such behaviour, as according to him, is going against the morality and it should not be existing in any organization. Nevertheless, following the discussion, it was concluded that UNIZA team and senior manager agree that both are talking about the same thing, but are seeing the same issue from different angles. In the end a compromised option was included in the GEP – part C. of the plan: “Physical and psychological violence” (including the sexual harassment). A similar experience was observed by the CHANGE team when organising the workshop for the RFOs within the WP2, which was framed as new trends in the evaluation of the project proposals. Meritocracy in science was questioned during the project and the workshop had a surprisingly high attendance rate and positive feedback..
- e) Build a network of supporters. Resistant people cannot be ignored because sometimes they become supporters of one or more concrete activities or even supporters and promoters of gender topic within the institution. CHANGE supporters willing to be more actively involved (e.g., in brainstorming activities) are called CHANGE ambassadors.
- f) Identify the needs and tailor the activities accordingly, do not use general activities. UNIZA team emphasised that one of the most crucial parts when implementing the activities is “to get on the pulse of the organization”, to listen, to try to understand the institutional problems and internal relations. After identifying the need, the actions should be proposed, which would be perceived as meaningful for potential participants. One of the needs was to build a sense of community at UNIZA and share the work done by particular UNIZA institutes. As an example was the activity- presentations of research of female colleagues. The events combined the gender topic (female researchers were selected as presentors) and science (presentation of the research) and created the opportunity for building an informal community within the university. Another example is the media training, focused on communication of the research results towards general public. All participants stated in the feedback form that they would recommend the training to their colleagues. All of them also expressed their interest in future media trainings.

Topics for future trainings. UNIZA team pointed out that 7 out of 8 suggested topics would be useful for staff members. UNIZA team commented following topics:

- a) Unconscious bias. The positive feedback and interest in the training entitled “Unconscious bias (not only) in academic practice” that was organized in June 2022 confirmed the experience from the RFO workshop. There is still a need to speak more about unconscious bias.
- b) Communication. The feedback received from previous trainings enabled to identify the need to conduct further trainings on communication with the media.
- c) Personal growth. As with the communication topic, attendees of previous trainings expressed interest to participate in trainings about personal growth.

The UNIZA team highlighted the importance of trainings. First positive feedbacks were received after the three initially planned trainings took place. To implement the GEP, designed according to the Horizon Europe programme requirements, 3 more trainings were organized.

Organisers of the trainings should have good knowledge of the institutional internal environment to effectively identify concrete institutional needs.

Based on the experience of organizing workshops, it is important to consider the professional background of the target groups and adapt/tailor the agenda accordingly. UNIZA CHANGE team has never organised the same training in relation to the content, however efforts have been made to bring new perspective to some commonalities. The team has recognised that it is worth to invite also participants who already attended trainings of similar nature in the past. Such participants and CHANGE project members themselves confirmed that the attendance to further trainings will

allows them to a) refresh their already existing knowledge, and b) evaluate the progress they personally have achieved since the previous training. Finally, c) their participation can have a positive impact on the dynamic of the group.

Trainings can have a positive impact on individual's behaviour and are essential for newcomers who recently started working with gender-related topics.

Finally, good and comfortable training atmosphere cannot be forgotten. Coffee breaks with some snacks and lunch breaks helped participants to relax and start informal communication with each other.

4.2 PERSONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. UNIZA team identified that out of nine positive impact statements, four were observed as a result of implementation of CHANGE project:

- Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues.
- Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities.
- Increased visibility among peers and the management board.
- Empower women to voice loudly any signs of inequalities.

Additionally, UNIZA team listed 3 more positive personal impacts observed during implementation of CHANGE project:

- a) Empowering women to reflect their collaboration with males. CHANGE project activities opened women's eyes and let them see that often when working in male-dominated teams, women are not treated equally to other team members. For example, it is presumed that women should make coffee (as expressed by one of the respondents in the feedback form to one of the events), check whether meeting room is clean, to prepare minutes and to perform other administrative tasks (office "housework").
- b) Increased creativity. The "think outside the box" approach was one of the most important factors during the implementation of CHANGE. New, creative and not traditional ways were used to communicate such unpopular topic as gender equality and to attract people to join activities.
- c) Professional and personal growth. In case when the individuals are the pioneers of gender related topics in their institutions, they have to determine the direction, to "pave the way", deal with challenges and resistance to the topic as well as to face their own frustration and go out of their "comfort zone".

Negative impact. UNIZA team agreed with both listed negative personal impacts:

- a) Become labelled as an activist for unimportant/unattractive topics. Gender equality is labelled as a "first world problem" that is tackled only in the societies with high standard of living. Gender related issues are not real and not important comparing to the starvation of people living in the global south.
- b) Traditionalistic beliefs on gendered roles in society are in contrast to projects like CHANGE. UNIZA team highlighted that people often do not have a clear position/opinion on gender-related topics. The reason is the missing information on GE or even its misinterpretation. Additionally, gender equality does not relate only to professional but also to private life of the individuals and is therefore perceived very sensitively.

4.3 ROADMAP OF GEP

UNIZA GEP was approved in November 2021. GEP can be found [here \(in Slovak language\)](#).

Milestones. UNIZA team had six milestones related to the implementation of CHANGE project, while only one milestone has a direct link with GEP.

The new EU Framework Programme Horizon Europe established that each institution applying for EU funded projects must have institutional GEP. The UNIZA team emphasised that GEP as a

requirement for Horizon Europe was a real game changer. GEP became visible on the institutional level as well it was included in the agenda of senior managers.

CHANGE involvement. The UNIZA team leader Veronika Mešková led the amendments of the CHANGE GEP towards GEP acceptable for the Horizon Europe programme.

Sustainability. The activities in the current GEP are approved until 2025. The UNIZA ambassador of the equal opportunities (one of the university vice-rectors) is in charge of the overseeing of GEP implementation. The new GEP is expected for the year 2025. Future sustainability can be maintained by searching and using various windows of opportunities. A functional EU GEP monitoring system would be of benefit.

Sustainability of GEPs can be ensured if EU would establish monitoring system of implementation of GEPs.

Roadway to sustainability. Commenting the Figure 1 (Roadway to sustainability) the UNIZA team highlighted that the "awareness raising activities" could/should be perceived as one type of concrete actions as considering their importance.

In the opinion of UNIZA team, none of the steps in Figure 1 is finished in the time, thus maybe instead of funnel, a circle would be more appropriate.

5 NIB – NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGY, SLOVENIA

With almost 200 employees, National Institute of Biology (NIB) is the largest independent Public Research Institution for Life Sciences in Slovenia. The Institute was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 1960. The basic activity of the Institute has been and continues to be basic, developmental and applicative research in the fields of biotechnology, biophysics, biomedicine and system biology. NIB works in close cooperation with affiliated higher education and research institutions in Slovenia and abroad. This synergy ensures that the knowledge produced at the Institute is widely accessible to the society through education and outreach activities and is beneficial to the economy by being transferred into practice. At present, NIB is mostly a project-oriented institution³.

5.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. NIB team pointed out that all listed positive organizational impacts were observed during the implementation of CHANGE project. NIB team commented each statement:

a) Women get higher representation in institutional decision-making bodies, various committees, panels, etc.

The composition of decision-making bodies is discussed, and the distribution of gender is respected wherever possible (but not on the account of scientific excellence).

b) The topic of gender is placed in institutional agendas.

Gender, equality and wellbeing are placed highly in the institutional agenda to guarantee the satisfaction of the staff members.

Gender-related trainings were approved by senior managers. Trainings covered a wide array of topics that are influenced by gender but not only (unconscious bias, communication, burnout, mentoring, employment, work-life balance, science integrity).

³ <https://www.nib.si/eng/index.php/o-institutu>

Staff members now have a possibility to be consulted by a professional psychologist. Such services are paid by NIB. In this way NIB ensures that in the case of need professional help is available to its staff.

c) Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity.

Various trainings that were composed of gender-related topics and topics closely related to it (for example, unconscious bias, burnout or communication) received great feedback and were attended by high number of participants.

Gender awareness was raised using creative measures such as photo session and portfolio of female researchers and card game.

The topic of gender was promoted not only during the formal trainings that took place during working hours, but as well during informal meetings out of work place and working hours.

d) Improved dialogue with organizational administration.

With the change of top leadership in high management, there is increased sensitivity to gender and equality topics and CHANGE team members are often contacted as point of reference with most knowledge on the topic.

CHANGE project, its activities and team became an informal platform for open discussion, knowledge and practice exchange, support and empowerment systems.

e) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities.

Many staff members started seeing the topic of gender as an important horizontal addition to the hard sciences that are being conducted at NIB.

The collaboration within CHANGE increased the appreciation of collaborating in truly transdisciplinary teams where knowledge from social sciences and humanities always positively affects natural scientists in their written and oral communication skills.

f) Use of gender-sensitive language.

In the end of 2021, the Committee for ethics and equal opportunities adopted the document governing its work. This was the first time in the history of NIB that any document was prepared using gender sensitive language instead of gender neutral language.

g) Gathering and use of data.

The GEP adopted in the framework of CHANGE project established mandatory yearly gender benchmarking.

Negative impact. Both listed negative institutional impacts were spotted during the implementation of CHANGE project:

a) Observed resistance to gender-related topics, since women have "reached equality already" or the "topic is not relevant for us".

NIB is an organization working in the field of natural sciences, thus involvement in a gender-related project was treated sceptically at first. The main reason for this treatment was the fear of a possible negative impact on the institutional scientific excellence. Additionally, the common societal opinion that women already reached equality was very often faced in NIB, where staff members did not see any particular problems related to gender topic.

b) Appointment of uninterested/unqualified personnel to cover diversity topics.

The gender topic still faces resistance in the society and at institutional level, thus the person spreading the word and being the face of this topic must have at least minimal knowledge of the topic and be willing to promote this topic. Appointment of unmotivated and not-qualified personnel can increase institutional resistances to gender-related topics.

Good practice examples. NIB team agreed with all listed good practice examples and provided brief comments for each of it.

a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities.

These activities are very important as they help to set the scene and establish networks of interested and motivated staff members. Such activities enable to know each other informally, which helps in future collaborations.

b) Use of surveys, creation of researcher databases.

Surveys and even more interviews are important to obtain direct feedback from the staff members. Interviews take more time but are personal and allow the interviewee to be more open. Importantly, they demand follow up actions.

c) Organization of workshops, round tables, trainings.

Various workshops and trainings are essential for raising awareness. However, the topics must be selected carefully so that the already busy staff members would not ignore these events thinking that participation in events not directly related to their scientific activities will result in another waste of productive hours.

d) Soft communication tone.

Soft, non-shaming, non-aggressive and non-clustering ("us VS them") communication is essential. Communication tone and behaviour should always be a friendly and inclusive.

e) Use of diversity instead of gender – adapt the terminology

In order to attract/include more staff members in the gender–related topics, it is advisable to use all genders including terminology such as diversity instead of gender equality. This is important in environments that are dominated by female (e.g., biology, education) or/and majorities (e.g., sexual orientation, nationality etc.) so male colleagues or colleagues belonging to various minorities do not feel left out.

f) Build a network of supporters.

Everyone needs a support system – informal networks, go-to place to ask questions and provide feedback. These are especially important for promotion, integrity and violence issues.

g) Exchange of good practices (organizationally, nationally, with sister projects, networks).

To avoid the duplication of efforts, increase the impact of activities and enlarge the collaboration circles, joint activities are always useful. In addition, there might be need to support each other in future, so it is wise to use sister projects as opportunities to start novel collaborations on national and international level.

h) Identify the needs and tailor the activities accordingly, do not use general activities

What was very successful at NIB was the fact that the training on unconscious bias first provided a biological overview of the brain. This was the turning point for many biologists as for the first time they felt that the topic of gender and diversity in general is a biological one as well (excluding gender as a statistical variable, which is inherently present in biology). Such a biological perspective might not be so impactful, for example, in case of an auditorium of managers, hence knowing the audience enables to better tailor the activities and achieve higher impact.

Topics for future trainings. Trainings of four out of eight listed topics were already conducted: unconscious bias, communication, burnout and research integrity.

Work-life balance topic was covered by set of recommendations as well as in preparing an educational video.

Topics of introduction to gender equality, teamwork and gender in research content will be covered by organizing trainings in the future. Future training will be funded by NIB based on the obligations established by GEP – to organize at least one training per year concerning gender related topics.

In general, it is hard to choose the best topic for training that would be useful and will be attended by high number of staff members. Additionally, topics should rotate every couple of years to refresh the knowledge and provide knowledge for recent team members. Such rotation of topics would also be adapted to this fast changing research environment as well as gain new knowledge and insights.

5.2 PERSONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. All listed positive personal impacts were observed during implementation of CHANGE project.

a) Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues.

The increase of self-awareness allowed to realize that there indeed is a problem. The identification of the problems is followed by the next step – identification of potential solutions.

b) Increased knowledge on soft skills.

Working in diverse (especially by scientific field) teams with people coming from different scientific fields increases soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, problem-solution etc.) and respect for other disciplines and other work areas (e.g., administration).

c) Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities.

In the framework of CHANGE project, NIB joined two Communities of Practice – one national and one international. This was an opportunity to enlarge personal and institutional collaboration circles. As a consequence, established connections can be used for future provision of information, knowledge exchange or networking.

d) Increased publications.

A lot of discussion, activities and reporting have been done during the lifetime of CHANGE project. With additional efforts, these can be summarized and prepared as scientific articles or policy papers. This way the involved staff members have a long-term legacy after the project and can position themselves in the national and international communities as in future they will have proof of knowledge and collaboration.

e) Increased visibility among peers and the management board.

The visibility of staff members working with gender-related topics increased a lot after European Commission announced that in Horizon Europe GEP will be one of the eligibility criteria. Visibility can be reached and maintained by using soft and interesting tone of communication, being proactive, responsive for various inquiries and finding a time for meetings, events and networking.

f) Inclusion in informal mentoring activities, creation of support groups.

This activity is time consuming and most of the times also unpaid and performed out of working hours. However, the benefits are long-term and will help to empower a younger generation who will in turn continue empowering future generation using the same measures.

g) Promotes reflection on personal careers.

Seeing the sides of inequality will eventually spark the self-reflection of the individual careers. In future, the NIB team plans to prepare career self-assessment sheets. These can be game changers and allow stepping out of comfort zones for a future success.

h) Empower women to be more ambitious scientifically/regarding advancing the career.

Self-support groups and informal activities are of extreme relevance to make (especially young and female) scientists to be ambitious, proactive, propose themselves as leaders (of publications, project proposals, to answer to job offers) and increase their self-esteem. Unfortunately, such mechanisms rarely exist in science, but they would be needed.

i) Empower women to voice loudly any signs of inequalities.

Women were trained to be quiet, to accept that “things are this way and you have to accept them or leave”. Fortunately, platforms of empowerment provide support to voice the opinions, signs of inequality or scientific misconduct. Formally, they can be endorsed as organizational committees of equality (or similar) – on the organizational level or in legislation – on national level. Such a window of opportunity was seen in Slovenia. During the CHANGE project a big legislation change was made in the Act of research and innovation, where ethics and equal opportunities are now its integral part.

Negative impact. During the implementation of CHANGE project, negative personal impact was observed only at the very beginning of the project. Non-aggressive language, confident way of handling the obstacles, taking time to make changes and being passionate about gender topic and the project itself allowed to mitigate resistance and to transform opposing staff members to allies/supporters.

5.3 ROADMAP OF GEP

NIB adopted its GEP in the end of 2021. The GEP (in Slovene) is available [here](#).

Milestones. The first milestone for a positive acceptance of gender-related topics by NIB's employees was the indication that from 2022 all potential Horizon Europe consortia partners will have to have formally adopted GEP.

Other two milestones were the introduction of an institutional Committee for ethics and equal opportunities that will handle the content of the GEP, while one staff member with the extensive experience in gender related topics will be in charge (fixed percentage of employment) for reporting and planning of trainings and education.

CHANGE involvement. CHANGE team was personally involved in composing and drafting the GEP at NIB. Without the involvement within CHANGE, the adoption of GEP would not be as smooth and these bodies and functions would not have been formalized and adopted as they are now. The two most active CHANGE team members within NIB will remain actively involved in GEP implementation - one as the Committee for ethics and equal opportunities member, the other in charge of data collection, reporting and trainings.

GEP context. There were several steps of negotiations with the administration and a lot of awareness raising on the content. Importantly, the aim was to define the GEP not only "on paper" but with the possibility to make a real difference. In order to ensure that GEP will be a "living document", GEP implementation, monitoring and control mechanism were established through data collection, education and yearly reporting.

CHANGE team proposed all activities and GEP content and they mirror what we had in the project itself. Two exceptions are gender-based violence, where an internal document already existed and recruiting, where some documentation was already provided by the institution's external collaborators. In future, these documents will be simplified and revised, with additional material produced, when possible (e.g., video content).

GEP adoption procedure. After the initial draft of the GEP, its content was revised by the administration. In the next phase, the Scientific Council reviewed its content and purpose and finally, it was approved by the organizational Steering committee, with members from the ministry.

Sustainability. NIB team believes that sustainability of CHANGE project and maintained can be ensured by:

- Good communication with the highest management.
- Financial resources (at least for training and data collection). Lack of financial resources will force to perform monitoring of the implementation of GEP on voluntary basis, which is not a guarantee for success and good quality outcome.
- Open discussion with employees with continuous awareness raising through formal trainings, events and informal opportunities to network and exchange of opinions.
- Additional projects (either at national or international level) would be useful with sister projects and institutions to develop a sustainable community.

Finally, all members of Committee for ethics and equal opportunities have to maintain their proactivity, otherwise in near future employees or administration will think that such a body is irrelevant. Most importantly, any members of Committee for ethics and equal opportunities that are nominated in such positions should be nominated due to their personal capabilities and expertise. This nomination cannot be based on their position (e.g., HR is automatically included regardless of

their time availability and willingness) or their time availability (e.g., an individual is a member of such committee because they have more free time).

Roadway to sustainability. NIB team agrees with proposed roadway to sustainability. Nevertheless, it was suggested to add legislation on the national level or formalization (of documents) and allocation of resources (personnel and small financial resources by the organization to maintain the activities).

6 IFAM – FRAUNHOFER INSTITUTE, GERMANY

Founded in 1968 and integrated into the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in 1974, Fraunhofer IFAM is one of Europe's most important independent research institutes in the fields of adhesive bonding technology, surfaces, shaping and functional materials. Currently, around 700 employees from 20 departments and numerous working groups bundle their broad technological and scientific know-how in seven core competencies. Fraunhofer IFAM covers the entire value chain from material development and product design to integration into industrial production - including pilot production, quality assurance procedures, and targeted measures for personnel qualification in new technologies. The institute has many years of experience in professional training⁴.

6.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. IFAM team agrees with all the positive organizational impact statements, but at the same time highlights that not all points are equally important to the organization.

IFAM did not manage to increase women representation in senior management and other leadership positions.

a) The topic of gender is placed in the institutional agenda.

Diversity is part of IFAM strategic management plan and the dialogue with organisational administration. As a result, the IFAM team had the possibility to join an institutional diversity group. In the framework of this group, activities to promote equal opportunities and raise gender awareness are developed.

b) Improved dialogue with the organizational administration.

The HR manager and a department head are part of the diversity group, thus improving the dialogue between the IFAM team and the organizational administration.

c) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities.

Gender-related topics are an additional and rather new field of research for IFAM. Thus, through further education in this field, funding can also be acquired especially in topics such as "Consideration of diversity in technical developments".

d) Use of gender sensitive language.

In 2021 gender-sensitive language was introduced to staff members. Since then, gender-sensitive language has been increasingly used in working life.

e) Gathering and use of data.

IFAM gathers data since 2013. Data was used to evaluate situation at the very beginning of the CHANGE project and is used regularly to monitor the implementation of the project and its impact to the organization.

Negative impact. During the implementation of CHANGE project some negative institutional impacts were observed. It is a common prejudice in IFAM that gender equality is not relevant in technical research topics and that equality has long been achieved not only in the institution, but also in the country. Many people do not even realize that this is not the case and that gender

⁴ <https://www.ifam.fraunhofer.de/en/Aboutus.html>

equality has not yet been achieved in IFAM either. This underlines the importance of raising awareness among all staff members.

Good practice examples. IFAM team commented five out of eight listed good practice examples:

a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities and Soft communication tone.

Many IFAM staff members are not aware that inequality still exists in many fields of life. The IFAM team used a creative approach to show existing inequalities to staff members by approaching them individually and pointing out examples from real life. This activity was very efficient, and the IFAM team is trying to find the way to communicate the same information to higher number of staff members.

b) Use of diversity instead of equality – adapt the terminology

It was beneficial to use "diversity" instead of the word "gender". In addition, when the workshop was organized, the terminology was adopted and technical topics were combined with diversity so that more staff members would find the topic interesting and join the workshop.

Recently the IFAM team was positively surprised because the topic of gender equality became important to many people and that it is now possible to talk directly about gender equality without "hiding" it under other topics or adapting terminology.

c) Build a network of supporters.

IFAM formed an internal diversity group that includes people who have a close relationship with the heads of the institute and are responsible for human resources. Through collaboration with this group, actions can be enforced and implemented quickly and very efficiently, and the perspective of the institute's management is always present.

d) Exchange of good practices (organizationally, nationally, with sister projects, networks)

The exchange of good practice examples and experiences with other institutes and sister organizations from our CoP is an important catalyst for impact. Exchange of experience can give ideas for future activities or exclude activities that are time consuming, but do not bring positive effect or where the effect is very low.

Topics for future trainings. The IFAM team indicated that four out of eight topics for future trainings would be benefit staff members:

a) Unconscious bias.

Unconscious bias training is an important step towards equality and equity. Many staff members and senior managers are not even aware of the fact that they do not act equally and fairly or (even worse) can unconsciously act very unfairly. It is important to be aware of these unconscious processes and sometime to act against one's inner opinion, especially in leadership positions, in order to remain fair.

b) Work-life balance, personal growth and burnout

As more and more demands are placed on individuals, the topic of burnout/work-life balance can certainly be very enriching for many employees. The concept of New Work⁵ will be increasingly addressed at IFAM in the future. The IFAM team will try to use synergies between equal opportunities and New Work.

c) Gender in research content (e.g., in biomedicine, autonomous driving, etc.).

As mentioned earlier, it is important that the research field of "gender equality in technical research" is given more attention in IFAM. Especially when it comes to application-oriented research, which often takes place shortly before an idea is turned into a product, this aspect is very important and any kind of user and their gender-specific behaviours should be taken into account in product development.

⁵ <https://www.workpath.com/magazine/new-work-definition>

6.2 PERSONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. IFAM team recognized five out of nine positive personal impacts:

a) Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues.

Participation in CHANGE opened eyes in many ways. Before CHANGE project the IFAM team was not aware of the current situation of gender equality in the institution.

b) Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities

Through the various activities and networking, IFAM team has met many people. Some of them became close contacts willing to push forward common ideas and even projects.

c) Increased publications

The IFAM team prepared a publication related to the gender topic. At the beginning of CHANGE project, publications were not even in the plan of activities to be performed.

d) Increased visibility among peers and the management board

The IFAM team has gained more visibility through the work performed in the framework of CHANGE project. The project initiated cooperation with central office, office in Brussels, different colleagues of the whole organization who work on gender equality and of course with committed people in IFAM. Importantly, IFAM team members are now considered as experts on the topic of gender.

e) Promotes reflection on personal careers

The realization that institutional inequalities exist and contacts needed to be made with other headquarters, institutes and administrative staff members to implement CHANGE activities gave an opportunity to learn about various institutional measures and offers directed to the development of staff members' careers.

Negative impact. IFAM team observed one negative personal impact:

a) Become labelled as an activist for unimportant/unattractive topics.

For many, gender equality work continues to be seen as an unimportant/unattractive issue, but this perception has been minimized in recent years. Promotion of gender-related topics and mitigation of resistance requires a lot of effort and energy.

6.3 ROADMAP OF GEP

The IFAM GEP is not published online, but only on the intranet and are accessible only to staff members. Information about gender equality policy in IFAM can be found [here](#).

Milestones. At the beginning of the CHANGE project, the IFAM team was considering measures promoting gender equality only in IFAM (IFAM is part of the Fraunhofer organization, composed of many different independent institutes).

The IFAM team consulted with other institutes of Fraunhofer organization and looked at what other research organizations were doing in the area of gender equality to gather best practice examples that could be implemented in IFAM.

In conclusion, the IFAM team had two milestones – to perform gender equality promoting activities in IFAM and to ensure that activities would be useful and having an impact.

As the rest of CHANGE teams, IFAM emphasised that the implementation of the commitment to GEPs at the EU level brought a key turning point.

CHANGE involvement. The IFAM team directly contacted the main office in Brussels and pointed out that they are working on a project, which deals with the creation of GEPs. This increased the visibility of the IFAM team, able to support and advice in the preparation of the GEPs for the entire Fraunhofer organization.

Sustainability. The established institutional diversity group will maintain sustainability of CHANGE project and GEP. Furthermore, the IFAM team plans to include new activities aimed to improve the gender equality at the institutional level.

In general, it is very important that the senior management is committed to the implementation of GEP and promotion of gender-related topics in the institution. Another essential factor to sustain achieved results is a gender competent team that is in charge for the implementation of GEP. This team should have resources needed to perform assigned functions (e.g. time, funding for measures, monitoring tools etc.).

Roadway to sustainability. IFAM team agreed with the suggested roadway to sustainability.

Soft communication can result in changes of conscious perception and facilitation of implementation in measures or even in regulations.

Additionally, it was highlighted that there must be a clear commitment to gender equality from the management level so that all measures are sustainable.

To conclude, soft communication can be effective measure that can make some positive changes, but national or international obligations to ensure gender equality is much more effective and can bring more positive changes comparing with changes brought by soft communication.

7 BBC – BEIT BERL ACADEMIC COLLEGE, ISRAEL

Beit Berl Academic College is a multidisciplinary college focused on training educators while spearheading new developments in education, society and the arts. It was founded in 1949 and with 10,000 students and 700 staff members it is one of the largest colleges in Israel. It was the first college of education to be recognized for academic excellence and gained the same academic independence as Israel's universities, while maintaining a high level of community engagement⁶.

7.1 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. The BBC team noticed five out of seven listed positive organizational impacts:

- a) The topic of gender is placed in institutional agendas.
- b) Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity
- c) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities
- d) Use of gender-sensitive language
- e) Gathering and use of data

Moreover, BBC identified one additional positive institutional impact:

- a) Increased flexibility for alternative promotion tracks and academic assessment – e.g. professional practices, arts interdisciplinary research etc.

The engagement in gender-related topics is beneficial mainly in the aspect of awareness raising of both staff members and managers, and the placement of the gender issue on the institutional agenda. However, it is quite challenging to place the gender issue at the top priority of the management because of two main reasons:

- The gender issue in a multicultural and diverse environment as BBC is never isolated from other identity parameters – such as minorities, special groups in society, people with special needs etc. People often argue that gender is merely circumstantial, and not the sole reason for inequality.
- There are always other urgent matters on the agenda, especially uncertainties and challenges of academia (before and after COVID), the crisis of Humanities and Social Sciences worldwide, domestic political issues etc.

⁶ https://www.beitberl.ac.il/english/about_us/pages/whoware.aspx

Negative impact. BBC team pointed out that negative impact was observed as well. There was faced a resistance to gender-related topics, since women have "reached equality already" or the "topic is not relevant for us"

Good practice examples. BBC team supported all listed good practice examples and added two additional:

- a) Exploitation of 'Windows of Opportunity' on institutional or national levels. For example – submitting a proposal to the Israeli 'Equator Index' program, in accordance with the Horizon Europe GEP requirements.
- b) Implementation of activities, which comply with the organizational culture. For example, since BBC is a teachers' training college, much effort has been put in developing gender training for novice teachers and Early Childhood Educators. Since education for tolerance is a consensus, through these activities it was easier to assimilate gender-sensitive language to other spheres in the organization.

Topics for future trainings. Five out of 8 listed topics have been mentioned as useful for future trainings (not necessarily conducted in the frame of the CHANGE project) in BBC:

- a) Introduction to gender equality, setting the scene, gender awareness training.
- b) Unconscious bias
- c) Work-life balance
- d) Personal growth, burnout
- e) Gender in research content.

One additional training was developed in BBC - Gender in teaching and research content.

BBC team would like to continue conducting gender-related trainings in the future. Some possible topics:

- a) Developing professional identity and portfolio: self-acknowledgment, validation of unique professional identity.
- b) Career management and soft skills: networking, public relation, media.
- c) Mentoring.
- d) Academic career in post-corona era.
- e) Multicultural environment and intersectionality of identities in academia.

7.2 PERSONAL IMPACT

Positive impact. BBC team agreed with all listed positive personal impacts. The promotion of reflection on personal careers is considered as a particularly important positive personal impact.

In the opinion of BBC team, reflection on personal careers (and life in general) is one of the most powerful impacts of CHANGE project. Women and men were provided the opportunity to reflect on their careers paths, making them more aware about possible choices and in likely increasing their level of satisfaction regarding their career possibilities.

Additional positive impacts observed by BBC team:

- a) Increased knowledge on organizational politics, national politics and the knowledge of politics in general.
- b) Increased awareness and compassion towards minorities, unprivileged or people facing all sorts of challenges in their lives.

Negative impact. Both listed negative personal impacts were noticed during the implementation of CHANGE project.

Additionally, BBC team identified three additional negative personal impacts:

- a) The engagement in gender-related activities take a lot of time, which should otherwise be dedicated to research. In the current national research assessment system, the CHANGE

project is not treated as research project. This results in lower scores when staff members' achievements are evaluated for academic promotion purposes.

- b) The gender topic is sometimes overwhelming and leads to resistances and emotional overload. It sometimes brings tensions to the work environment.
- c) Analysis of data and other information related to the institutional gender equality reveals that system is sometimes unfair and biased. That might be a bit discouraging, as the realization comes that systemic changes take a lot of time.

7.3 ROADMAP OF GEP

The creation of the GEP was initially enabled by the CHANGE project. The GEP was designed and managed by BBC team, with one of its team members acting as the institutional Gender Equality Officer and Commissioner for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment. The initial version of GEP included mainly the institutional benchmarking, data collection and various activities such as interviews, surveys, workshops, awareness events and training development in four major content areas:

- a) Work-Life balance.
- b) Institutional barriers and job security.
- c) Women of minority groups in academia.
- d) Gender in early Childhood Education.

In addition, routine activities related to the prevention of sexual harassment were continued as usual.

GEP was updated according to Horizon Europe requirements.

CHANGE involvement. BBC team was highly involved in the process of designing and adopting institutional GEP.

GEP context. The updated GEP will includes six "building blocks" and is adjusted to national and institutional environment:

- a) Work-life balance and organizational culture.
- b) Gender balance in leadership and decision-making.
- c) Gender equality, job security in recruitment and career progression.
- d) Gender sensitivity in a multi-cultural environment.
- e) Integration of gender dimension into research, teaching and education contents.
- f) Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

The updated GEP is pending to the Council for Higher Education (CHE) budget of the new five-year-plan "The Equator Index". If the budget will be received, a new Gender Equality Unit will be established.

Sustainability. BBC team pointed out that sustainability of CHANGE project and GEP will be ensured by:

- a) Institutional budget. It is a crucial resource to enable the promotion of pre-defined objectives, and the only proof of management commitment to the issue.
- b) National legal framework – more specifically regulation in Higher Education Institutions (administered by the Council for Higher Education). Obligations established by the CHE must be followed by all HEIs. Moreover, it is also the source for institutional budget for the implementation of a GEP.
- c) EC policy. Decision of European Commission to include GEPs as eligibility criterion for applying for EU funding fostered adoption of GEPs in RPOs based in Europe and other countries that are included in Horizon funding Europe programme.

Roadway to sustainability. BBC team agreed with suggested roadmap to sustainability. Although chosen type of figure received one comment:

D3.3. Women's career progression report

- Milestones are less linear and more spiral and intertwined. Everything is happening in parallel, only in each milestone the relative weight of each component is different.

8 CONCLUSION

The motivation behind this Deliverable was to obtain feedback from CHANGE GEP implementing partners. While acknowledging that individual partners tailored their GEPs based on the national and organizational context, needs and opportunities, the aim was to obtain a generalized answer on the potential impact of engaging in gender equality projects. We highlight that all five partners (UAVR, UNIZA, NIB, IFAM and BBC) were newcomers to such gender-related projects. Either they have substantial theoretical background on gender or general inclusion and equality topics (such as UAVR and BBC and to some extent NIB) but no concrete results from a practitioners' point of view or the topic of gender equality was for the first time concretely introduced through the CHANGE project (UNIZA and IFAM).

Based on the feedback received from all five GEP-implementing CHANGE organizations, we developed a dashboard, presenting the impact of collaborating in projects such as CHANGE (Figure 2). This project was an important milestone for GEP implementing project partners, as we were newcomers, either to the topic of equality itself or to the practical aspect – implementing the existing theoretical knowledge on gender, equality, diversity and inclusiveness. Figure 2 presents an overall impact on the organization and personal career progression when engaging in such projects.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN ENGAGING IN GENDER EQUALITY?



Figure 2: The CHANGE dashboard - illustrating the overall impact (personal and organizational) of involvement in projects such as CHANGE and expectations of CHANGE GEP-implementing partners (UAVR, UNIZA, NIB, IFAM and BBC from Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Germany and Israel, respectively)

PERSONAL IMPACT - POSITIVE. The involvement in projects such as CHANGE, that assess and challenge the existing structure in public organizations has multiple impacts. Important positive impacts on the personal level that were mostly observed by CHANGE partners are the increase of level of baseline knowledge on the topic. In this sense, the project enabled a platform for knowledge co-creation and exchange. Partners who might have been newcomers to the topic at the beginning of the project, are now locally (either in the organization itself or nationally) considered as experts in the field, with proven track of practical experience. Moreover, the project enabled the creation of various networking opportunities, through its meetings, where typically experts (advisory board members and local experts) were invited to join the physical meetings. Through various

opportunities (e.g., conferences such as STS – Science, Technology and Society Unit in Graz⁷, International Conference on Gender Research in Aveiro⁸, online workshops and conferences, participation in various CoPs by sister projects such as ACT on Gender⁹), CHANGE project members had the opportunity to present their work and interact with other peers. Such networking opportunities enable the construction of future collaborative networks (Rotter et al., 2021) that are in science often materialized in form of project collaborations that are financially supported and thus benefit the individuals (by gaining experience and enabling a faster career progression) and the organization (by showcasing its involvement in various types of collaborations, not necessarily related only to the organization's primary research focus). Finally, the project enabled the individuals to gain more visibility from their higher administration and their organizational, national and international peers. A higher visibility established new level of knowledge and new collaborative networks, which can then, in turn, act as catalysts for new publications, participation in project consortia and increased personal motivation and satisfaction. That is why we believe that participation in such projects has a significant positive impact on the employment status and career progression of participating individuals. However in the current meritocratic research and academic system, applied projects like CHANGE are still assessed as inferior compared to basic-research grants (as ERC and other research frameworks). Therefore, a proactive approach, soft communication and organization of activities are sometimes needed for the staff members to understand the benefits of participation in such projects and their potential contribution to one's career progression.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT – POSITIVE. CHANGE project partners highlighted three impacts of collaboration within the project that are important for the participating organizations. Such projects enable topics such as gender and equal opportunities to be placed in organizational agendas. In the past, gender or inequality issues were seldom raised or even maintained on the organizational agendas (Heiskanen et al., 2015). However, gender mainstreaming in individual organizations placed them in a pioneer position in relation to other organizations that are lagging behind with the implementation of practices, rules and actions that can lead to structural change. In addition, by data collection that started during the CHANGE implementation and is now required by the GEPs, individual organizations (highest management, experts within the organizations and individual employees) can now monitor the status and any potential time course changes. This will enable also to monitor the effects of GEPs. Finally, CHANGE organizations have been impacted by the implementation of gender-sensitive language in some of their documentation, which was in most cases done for the first time.

IMPACT – NEGATIVE. The one negative impact of involvement in CHANGE that partners observed was the resistances to gender-related topics, either as there was no awareness on the existing documented differences or the topic is seen as not scientific enough.

To prevent negative impacts and strengthen the positive ones, partners identified possible **ENABLERS FOR CHANGE.** The most effective enablers were the organization of informal activities. These allow the creation of informal collaborative networks, that in turn facilitate the creation of future collaborations (Rotter et al., 2021) which might lead to individual career progression. Additionally, they allow to raise awareness, create circles of trust and establish informal mentorships. These are very important when career advice, perspective or morale boost are sought and may even be preferred to formal ones (James et al., 2015). Since 3 from 5 CHANGE GEP implementing organizations are of STEM nature (UNIZA, NIB and IFAM), one enabling factor to

⁷ <https://www.tugraz.at/arbeitsgruppen/sts/sts-conference-graz/>

⁸ https://www.change-h2020.eu/news.php?id=change_201

⁹ <https://act-on-gender.eu/communities-practice>

promote the project and its activities as well as the benefits of gender mainstreaming was the slight modification of terminology where instead of gender, diversity or equality was the preferred terminology. This allowed all employees to identify with the content of trainings and informal activities which, in turn, increased the network of CHANGE supporters in individual organizations. Indeed, the establishment of support networks was seen as an important enabler for organizational or personal impact, that leads to career progression.

Out of formal activities which include **TRAININGS**, project members identified topics such as unconscious bias, personal growth, burnout and work-life balance as those who had the largest impact and are advised to be implemented in other organizations as well. These trainings are a good starting point to raise awareness and build a network of supporters.

An important **MILESTONE** in the project was the launch of Horizon Europe Framework Programme and the endorsement of GEPs as its admissibility condition to participate in Horizon Europe¹⁰. This was a major turning point for all CHANGE partners where suddenly the existing involvement in the project was acknowledged as beneficial by the individual organizations' highest management levels. This gained visibility and importance for all CHANGE participants that all had an important, even decisive involvement in tailoring the individual GEPs.

However, although the project itself allowed to make important impact, on the organizational and personal level, allowing CHANGE organizations to become national pioneers and participating individuals to expand their collaborative networks and in turn establish fairer career progressions, the next important aspect to consider is the **SUSTAINABILITY** of the actions. CHANGE partners agreed that the most important activities to guarantee sustainability are the creation/formalization of structures in the organization (e.g., establishment of equality committees, gender equity and equal opportunity units), inclusion of experts in these panels and financial resources. These should be obtained either inside the organizations (e.g., yearly trainings, video content, paid equality officers' positions, data collection) or outside (e.g., participation in new project consortia). While the first ones are harder to negotiate, they are more likely to be maintained in the long run. On the other hand, the participation in future consortia, albeit with a low likelihood of getting funded and with a limited time duration, can allow to obtain new knowledge, employ new personnel and design future activities that are now constrained with time/budget obstacles.

Finally, we propose the improved CHANGE road to sustainability, replacing Figure 1, which was designed in Deliverable 3.2. The road to sustainability of CHANGE (Figure 3) or any other gender-related project activities should, in parallel, consider the maintenance of a soft communication tone (to increase the network of supporters), activities and trainings to raise awareness and increase visibility, monitoring and reporting on the activities, searching for windows of opportunities to influence the legislation change and securing financial resources to continue with activities.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en



Figure 3: Final version of the road to sustainability that will allow the maintenance of CHANGE activities beyond the project's lifetime.

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10 APPENDIX 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM



SELF-ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S CAREER PROGRESSION TO PREPARE FOR THE FINAL WP3 DELIVERABLE

February 2022

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<http://www.change-h2020.eu>



Dear CHANGErs,

Your input is needed for the preparation of the final Deliverable D3.3 in the framework of WP3 'Boosting Women's Careers in Science and Research'.

The aim of this self-assessment is to obtain feedback based on the mid-term report on women's career progression and the activities performed in light of the requirement to formalize GEP institutionally to allow organizations to apply for Horizon Europe calls. This self-assessment form builds on the results from the self-assessment exercise, conducted in July 2020.

Please discuss with your national CHANGE team members, transfer agents, ambassadors or other colleagues who were/are actively involved in the implementation of CHANGE project and reply to the questions provided in this document. If necessary, more than one person from the same organization can fill in this self-assessment.

Additionally, please provide detailed and reasoned answers to every question. Only 'yes' or 'no' are not appropriate answers. Detailed answers and comprehensive information will allow us to prepare deliverables of high quality. This exercise can provide guidelines for a successful implementation of diversity in general in research performing organizations.

Please send completed document to Ana Rotter, ana.rotter@nib.si until Monday, **21 February 2022**.

Thank you for your time and cooperation!



1. ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1.1. How can the involvement in gender-related topics benefit the organization? These are the combined answers from the previous self-assessment. Which ones do you agree with and why? You can add additional answers, if you feel something is missing.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- a) Women get higher representation in institutional decision-making bodies, various committees, panels, etc.
- b) The topic of gender is placed in institutional agendas
- c) Increased gender awareness and gender sensitivity
- d) Improved dialogue with organizational administration
- e) Increased flexibility for collaboration and involvement in transdisciplinary activities
- f) Use of gender-sensitive language
- g) Gathering and use of data

NEGATIVE

- a) Observed resistance to gender-related topics, since women have "reached equality already" or the "topic is not relevant for us"
- b) Appointment of uninterested/unqualified personnel to cover diversity topics

1.2. What activities/measures in your opinion are good practice examples? You can explain on any activities described below (from last exercise's combined answers) or add your own.

- a) Creative, non-binding, informal activities
- b) Use of surveys, creation of researcher databases
- c) Organization of workshops, round tables, trainings
- d) Soft communication tone
- e) Use of diversity instead of gender – adapt the terminology
- f) Build a network of supporters
- g) Exchange of good practices (organizationally, nationally, with sister projects, networks)
- h) Identify the needs and tailor the activities accordingly, do not use general activities

1.2.1. What topics do you feel your colleagues would benefit from learning in future trainings?

- a) Introduction to gender equality, setting the scene, gender awareness training
- b) Unconscious bias
- c) Communication
- d) Work-life balance
- e) Personal growth, burnout
- f) Teamwork
- g) Research integrity
- h) Gender in research content (e.g., in biomedicine, autonomous driving, etc.)

2. PERSONAL IMPACT

1.3. How can the involvement in gender-related topics benefit the careers of individuals? These are the combined answers from the previous self-assessment. Which ones do you agree with and why? You can add additional answers, if you feel something is missing.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- a) Increased knowledge and awareness on gender-related issues
- b) Increased knowledge on soft skills (e.g., legislation, administration)
- c) Increased collaboration circles and networking opportunities
- d) Increased publications
- e) Increased visibility among peers and the management board
- f) Inclusion in informal mentoring activities, creation of support groups
- g) Promotes reflection on personal careers
- h) Empower women to be more ambitious scientifically/regarding advancing the career
- i) Empower women to voice loudly any signs of inequalities

NEGATIVE

- a) Become labelled as an activist for unimportant/unattractive topics
- b) Traditionalistic beliefs on gendered roles in society contrast to projects like CHANGE

3. ROADMAP OF GEP IMPLEMENTATION AT YOUR ORGANIZATION

1.4. Please describe the roadmap of GEP implementation at your organization. What were the milestones? Were you involved personally? Did your involvement in CHANGE help define the GEP? Did you have your say in tailoring the GEP? Please give the link to the publicly available GEP at your organizational website.

1.5. In your opinion, what is needed to guarantee the sustainability of CHANGE actions that eventually lead to fairer career progression and maintenance of organizational GEPs?

3.3 Do you agree with the proposed roadway to sustainability or would you modify anything?

