



Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together



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RESET aims to address the challenge of Gender Equality in Research Institutions in a diversity perspective, with the objective to design and implement a user-centered, impact-driven and inclusive vision of scientific excellence.

Consortium partners





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Diversity in gatekeeping positions: lessons learnt and guidelines

Document Information

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| ACT | Act on Gender |
| AUTH | Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (GR) |
| EIGE | European Institute for Gender Equality |
| EOO | Equal Opportunity Officer |
| ERA | European Research Area |
| EU | European Union |
| FESTA | Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia |
| GE | Gender Equality |
| GEAR | Gender Equality in Academia and Research |
| GEP | Gender Equality Plan |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| RESET | Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together |
| R&I | Research and Innovation |
| RUB | Ruhr University Bochum (DE) |
| ScPo | Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (Sciences Po, FR) |
| SUPERA | Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia |
| UBx | Bordeaux University (FR) |
| UOULU | Oulu University (FIN) |
| UL | University of Łódź (PL) |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNIC | European University of Post-Industrial Cities |
| VR | Vice Rectors |
| WP | Work Package |

Executive Summary

This report “Diversity in gatekeeping positions: lessons learnt and guidelines (D. 6.2) is submitted by RUB as part of Work Package 6 – Act upon governance and upgrade existing excellence policy towards greater inclusiveness. The purpose of WP6 is to foster institutional change in the RESET project. Following this purpose, the tasks in WP6 address the constitutional level of policy-making, the operational level of implementation and the personal level of decision making. Hereby, the project relies on the methodology of co-designing measures with stakeholders in the project and the RESET universities.

This report is the output of Task 6.2 – Co-designing incentives and regulations to ensure equality and diversity in decision-making positions, middle, and top management. Task 6.2 focuses on various strategic roles and domains of gatekeeping in HEIs. Its aim is to promote and facilitate the involvement and selection of women, and diversity in leadership positions.

D6.2 embarks on an exploration of gender dynamics within gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making realms, with a focus on higher education institutions (HEIs). It sets out to provide valuable insights into these domains. Chapter 2 serves as the foundational framework, elucidating core theoretical concepts and the methodological approach adopted. Here, an intersectional perspective and an inclusive understanding of diversity are introduced. The concepts of gatekeeping and micro-politics within HEIs are explored, setting the thematic stage for the report. Chapter 3 delves deeper into the necessities and institutional initiatives for advancing gender equality within gatekeeping positions. The report builds on the examination and analysis of RESET’s GEPs 1.0 goals and measures, and of the results of Co-Designing workshops engaging women in decision-making positions. These analyses are embedded in the review of RESET deliverables that encompass the dimension of gender in relation to leadership and decision-making (D1.2, “GE Survey Data Reports”; D6.1, “Joint roadmap on establishing institutional standards and frameworks for recruitment and career promotion towards equality, diversity and scientific excellence”; D5.3 “Report on RESET’s laboratory-scale incentives towards their communities”). Drawing from the insights gleaned in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 expounds upon key lessons learned. These lessons emphasise the “fix the institutions” approach by highlighting the significance of implementing quotas, illustrated through the cascade model, and advocating for gender competency in the selection and performance of leadership roles. The culmination of this report is found in Chapter 5, where comprehensive guidelines are presented. These guidelines encompass eight areas of intervention designed to fortify diversity within gatekeeping positions, offering practical strategies to foster gender equity and diversity in gatekeeping positions.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 5 |
| Context of the deliverable | 5 |
| „Fix the institution, don't fix the women!" | 10 |
| Structure of the report | 10 |
| 2. Theoretical perspectives & methodological approach | 14 |
| 2.1 Intersectional Perspective | 16 |
| 2.2 Diversity | 16 |
| 2.3 Methodological Approach | 17 |
| 3. Analysis of Gatekeeping, Leadership and Decision Making in RESET Institutions | 18 |
| 3.1 Gender Proportions in RESET's GEP-implementing Institutions | 19 |
| 3.2. Measures in RESET GEPs 1.0 | 21 |
| Communication and Information | 22 |
| Monitoring of recruitment procedures and their outcomes | 22 |
| Fostering equal representation | 23 |
| 3.3. Key-findings from co-designing sessions | 23 |
| 3.3.1 Design of the Workshop | 23 |
| 3.3.1 Design of the Workshop | 23 |
| 3.2.3. Results of the Workshops | 26 |
| 3.4 Takeaway | 32 |
| 4. Lessons learnt: "Fix the institution, don't fix the women!" | 33 |
| 4.1 Quota and cascade model | 35 |
| 4.2 The need for gender and diversity competence | 38 |
| 5. Guidelines | 42 |
| 5.1. Institutionalise gender and diversity competence | 43 |
| 5.2. Act upon institutional resistance and dismantle power in micropolitical practices | 45 |
| 5.3. Include elements of gender competency into recruitment procedures | 46 |
| 5.4. Implement Quota and Cascade Models | 48 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 5.5. Rethink and reform leadership positions | 49 |
| 5.6. More flexibility towards out of the box career paths and progression | 50 |
| 5.7. Fight against the gender pay gap | 51 |
| 5.8. Claim the support for structural change | 52 |
| 6. Conclusions and Outlook | 54 |
| References | 56 |

List of figures

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Figure 1: Definitions of decision-making (EIGE, 2023) | 6 |
| Figure 2: Proportion (%) of women and men among leaders of boards of research organisations, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022)..... | 7 |
| Figure 3: Heads of institutions in Higher Education Sectors; distribution (%) by sex, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022)..... | 7 |
| Figure 4: Proportion (%) of women and men among the members and leaders of the boards of research organisations, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022) | 8 |
| Figure 5: Gender Proportion among Rectors in RESET institutions (2023) | 9 |
| Figure 6: Gender Proportion among Vice Rectors in RESET institutions (2023) | 9 |
| Figure 7: Overview on thematic spotlights of the guidelines on diversity in Gatekeeping Positions..... | 13 |
| Figure 8: Comparison of Measures in RESET'S GEPs 1.0 concerning gender equity in leadership and decision-making | 22 |
| Figure 9: Sailboat retrospective method | 25 |
| Figure 10: Starfish retrospective method..... | 25 |
| Figure 11: Key categories of the Co-designing workshops, conducted in 4 RESET universities (2023)..... | 27 |
| Figure 12: Gender-Based Barriers (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, p. 187)..... | 34 |
| Figure 13: Cascade Model; proportion of women in typical academic careers (She Figures, 2021) | 36 |
| Figure 14: "Diversity wheel" (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003) | 39 |
| Figure 15: Overview on the Guidelines | 42 |
| Figure 16: Example of training modules for gender and diversity competence (RESET, 2022 D4.2)..... | 44 |
| Figure 17: Examples for questions targeting gender competence in leadership in recruitment | 47 |

1. Introduction

For more than twenty years, achieving gender equity has been the focus of European research funding. However, the goal of gender equality in academia and the various status groups has not yet been achieved. With the Horizon 2020 research funding line (2014-2020), the European Commission has set an incentive to develop gender equality plans (GEP) in the European Research Area (ERA) as a steering instrument for gender-equitable structures. In the subsequent research framework programme - Horizon Europe (2021-2027), GEPs have become a mandatory criterion for the eligibility of funding. The project RESET (Redesigning Equality and Scientific Excellence Together)¹ responds to the requirements of the ERA and contributes to the promotion of gender equality at universities by establishing and expanding gender equality structures in the institutions of the consortium. During the four-year project period (2021-2024), the 4 GEP-implementing universities AUTH, UBx, UL and UPorto develop gender equality plans, strategies and measures to improve gender equality and diversity at their universities and among their scientific communities. This is being achieved with the support of the universities OULU and RUB as mentors that further develop their established gender equality structures through exchanges in the project. Beyond this, the project refines the concept of scientific excellence in an inclusive way. SciencePo partner evaluates and monitors project development and provides guidance. Project's task 6.2 focuses on the promotion of gender equality in relation to gatekeeping, leadership, and decision making - an essential field of action in the design of gender equality plans and institutional policy making.

Therefore, GEPs should include a thematic area focusing on "how women are represented in decision-making at the top of the organisation, across academic/research departments and administrative functions; what types of barriers exist to ensuring women are represented in decision-making and leadership positions, including structural, institutional and individual barriers; what targets could be set to promote gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles across the organisation; which steps can be taken, and by whom, to achieve these targets" (EIGE, 2023, GEAR Action Toolbox²).

Context of the deliverable

According to EIGE (2023), there are two dimensions of decision-making, which are also relevant for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): they have influence on the organisational and on the hierarchical levels.

¹ <http://wereset.eu>

² <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/gender-balance-leadership-and-decision-making>

| Decision-making within a domain | Decision-making within an organisation |
|---|--|
| “at organisational level. This restricts coverage to organisations having a major influence in the domain at the territorial level of interest, which is usually national but can also be international, European, regional, or local.” | “at hierarchical level. This restricts coverage to bodies and positions within the hierarchy that have a major input to decision-making and a regulatory and/or strategic role within the organisation.” |

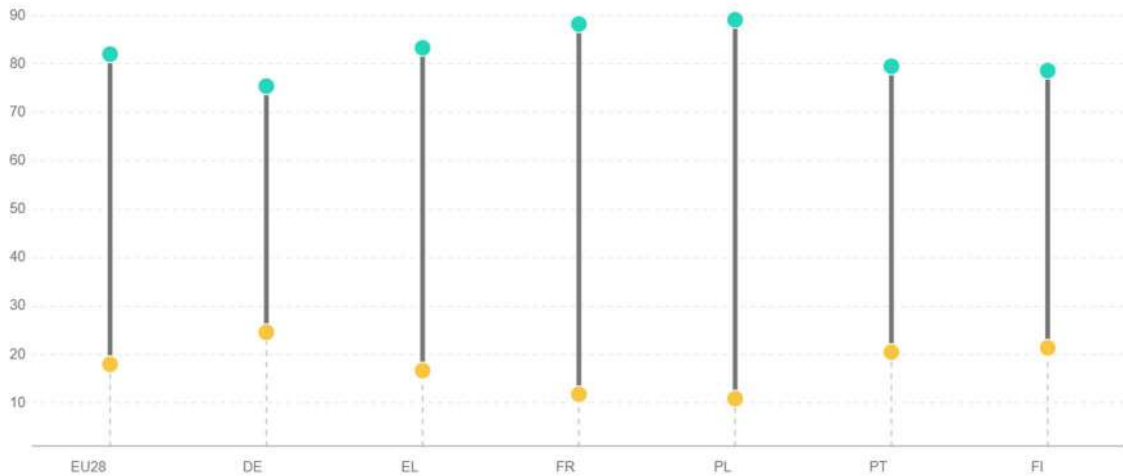
Figure 1: Definitions of decision-making (EIGE, 2023)

The lack of diversity in gatekeeping positions and the under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in Research and Innovation (R&I) raises several issues, as it bears witness to a ‘glass ceiling’ (Laufer & Fouquet, 2001; Paultz & Wagner, 2020; Wagner et al., 2021) that marks the barriers to equal participation of qualified individuals. Better representation of women in positions of power is also supposed to encourage the involvement of women at all levels, including higher education institutions. The idea that better representation of women in decision-making bodies would improve the status of women in general, has been supported by feminist researchers, such as the American academic - Ellen Boneparth (1984) since the 1980s.

Diversity in decision-making bodies, in turn, contributes significantly to the quality of decisions. Striving for gender parity in representation within decision-making bodies aligns with the fundamental principles of democracy. This is linked to the right to representation of persons of all genders in decision-making positions. Moreover, it is essential to recognise that decision-making positions held significant influence over the implementation of actions and the shaping of future agendas. This perspective aligns with the concept of institutional change, wherein decision-making is explicitly acknowledged as an exercise of power (ACT, 2021):

“The power to allocate resources, in terms of positions and funding is an exercise of power, potentially favouring the interests of some individuals or units over others...It is predominantly men who dominate the upper echelons of society and also indeed of higher education and research organisations and these are the controllers of resources” (O’Hagan et al., 2015, p. 9).

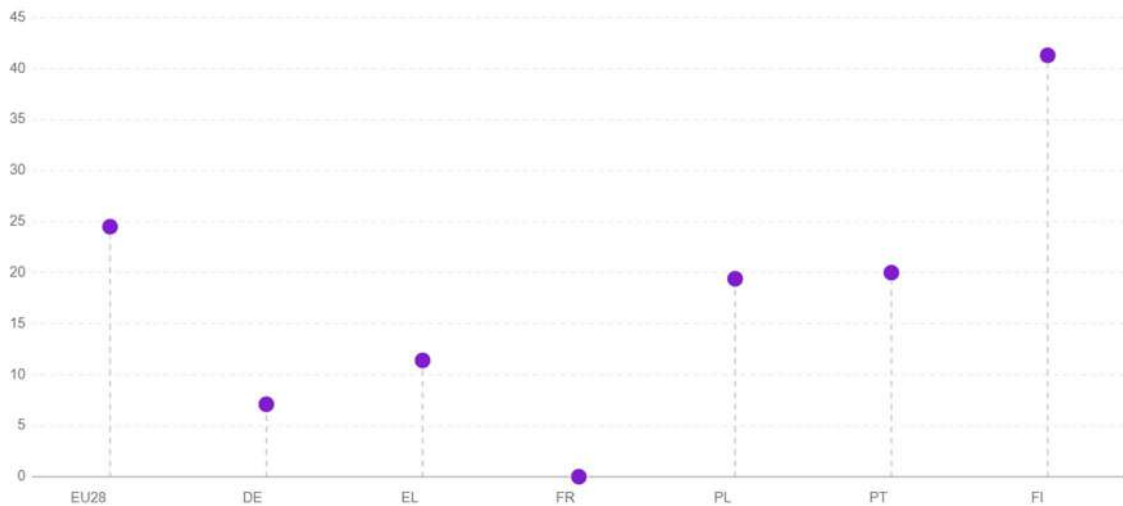
A cross-European comparison clearly shows that the proportion of women in top management at universities is below 20% on average, thus HEIs are strongly male-dominated. Likewise, the countries represented in the RESET project have a share of women of 10-20% among the heads of institutions as Figure 2 shows. This derives from the Gender Statistics Database (EIGE) and provides information on the distribution of Heads of HEIs distributed between men (turquoise dot) and women (yellow dot).



EIGE's Gender Statistics Database - Indicator: Heads of institutions in the Higher Education Sector (HES): number and distribution (%) by sex
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality.
LAST UPLOAD ON: 21.12.2022

Figure 2: Proportion (%) of women and men among leaders of boards of research organisations, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022)

In terms of the proportion of women among heads of boards of research organisations, there is a great variance in the European comparison. If we look only at the leadership of research organisations, the European average is around 25% of women. With regard to the countries represented in the RESET project (Figure 3, 2022), the distribution deviates strongly from this average. France has a share of women of 0%, followed by Germany with 7%. Greece has 11% and Poland and Portugal about 20%. In contrast, Finland has a share of women among heads of boards of over 40%.

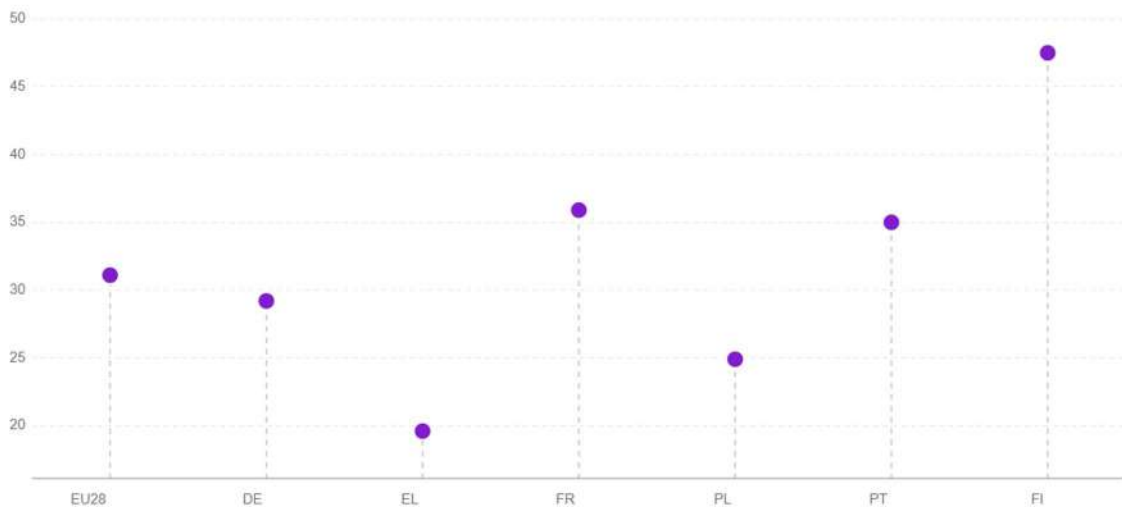


EIGE's Gender Statistics Database - Indicator: Proportion (%) of women and men among the members and leaders of the boards of research organisations
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality.
LAST UPLOAD ON: 21.12.2022

Figure 3: Heads of institutions in Higher Education Sectors; distribution (%) by sex, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022)



This picture changes when not only the heads, but also the members of the boards of the research organisations, are considered. Here, an overall European average rises to 31%. The lowest proportion of women on boards among all RESET countries is found in Greece with almost 20%, followed by Poland with around 25% and Germany with 30%. France and Portugal are slightly above the average with 35% each. Finland has a proportion of women of over 47% - Figure 4.



EIGE's Gender Statistics Database - Indicator: Proportion (%) of women and men among the members and leaders of the boards of research organisations
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality.
LAST UPLOAD ON: 21.12.2022

Figure 4: Proportion (%) of women and men among the members and leaders of the boards of research organisations, comparing EU28, Germany, Greece, France, Poland, Portugal and Finland (EIGE Gender Statistics Database, 2022)

The universities of the RESET consortium are no exception in this respect. Here, too, the proportion of women among university Top Management is low. The position of Rector/President is held by a woman only at the University of Lodz. At other six partner universities, the position is held by men (Figure 4). The proportion of women among Vice Rectors (VR) varies greatly among the GEP-implementing universities (AUPh, UBx, UL, UPorto) and mentors (OULU, RUB) of the RESET project (Figure 5). Overall, 41% of VRs are female and 59% are male. At UPorto and RUB, there are more women than men among VRs. In AUPh, no woman is currently a VR. On the one hand, these differences

show the extent to which these proportions vary. In addition, the comparison also highlights the variance in the design of university leadership in the sheer differences in quantity between the VRs (e.g. UBx:17 vice presidents vs. OULU: 3 vice rectors).

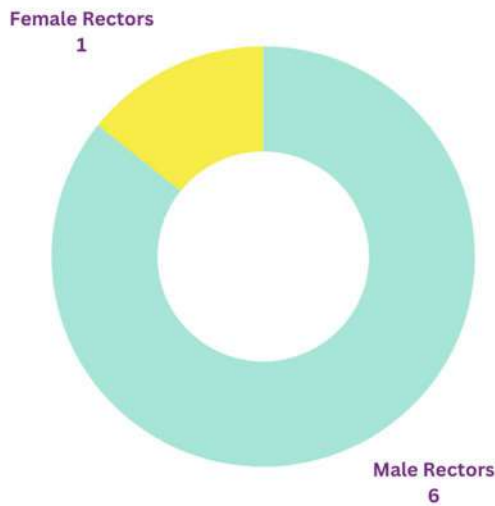


Figure 5: Gender Proportion among Rectors in RESET institutions (2023)

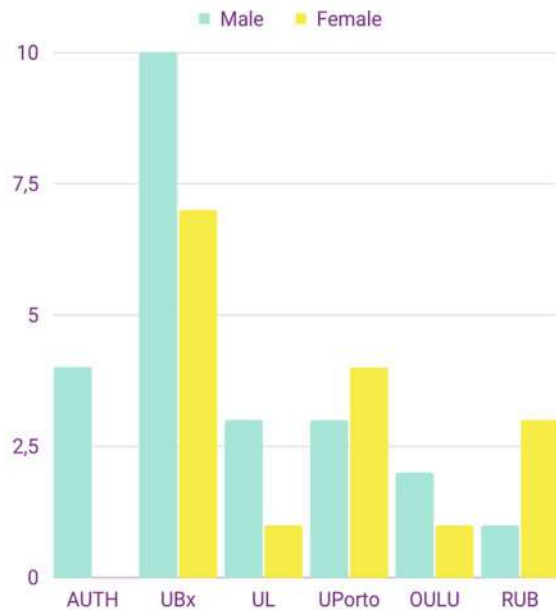


Figure 6: Gender Proportion among Vice Rectors in RESET institutions (2023)

These examples explicitly demonstrate the need to continue to intensify and diversify measures to increase the proportion of women in decision-making positions. They show that the 'glass ceiling' is not simply crossed by holding a professorship, but continues to have an impact (Paulitz & Wagner, 2020; Wagner et al., 2021). This applies to the scientific and academic sector, both in terms of increasing the proportion of female scientists, especially among professors, as well as in the exercise of dedicated management functions and participation in decision-making bodies. In RESET, this need has been documented in project reports and recommendations (RESET 2021, D1.2: "GE Survey Data Reports"; RESET, 2022a, D6.1: "Joint roadmap on establishing institutional standards and frameworks for recruitment and career promotion towards equality, diversity and scientific excellence"; RESET, 2023: D5.3 "Report on RESET's laboratory-scale incentives towards their communities"). These represent foundational sources for this elaboration. In section 3.1 we will go into the distribution of gender in leadership-positions among the RESET institutions.

„Fix the institution, don't fix the women!“

„Fix the women“ encourages women to assimilate, adopt masculine behaviours, and get training in assertive leadership and decision-making.

These strategies are seen in mentorship efforts designed to help women learn to fit workplace norms; they are also seen in training designed to teach women how to negotiate and boost their confidence (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, p.198).

Effort to promote women have often pursued individualistic approaches to developing women's talent. Through targeted mentoring, training formats, and other measures, they should be empowered with regard to their career development and for exercising leadership roles. Critics of this approach emphasise that instead of changing practices of exclusion, it requires women to adapt to male patterns of behaviour and actions in the system. Furthermore, the mentoring approach is criticised for fostering an 'elitist equality', following exclusion criteria that can themselves create a bias that disadvantages persons belonging to minorities while favouring more privileged ones, and making it needed to adapt mentoring practices, and their accessibility (Davies et al., 2021). These forms of individual promotion can be beneficial for the career development of individuals. However, they do not show any substantial development at the structural level of institutions (Hodgins, O'Connor et al., 2022). As a result, the gendered structures, modes of action, and barriers of the scientific system would neither be recognised as such, nor changed, nor dismantled. Instead, norms that are considered objective are perpetuated, and coaching or counselling is provided for women to make them fit (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, pp.198f; Hodgins & O'Connor et al., 2022).

RESET builds on this challenge. In this report, we focus on the perspective of "fixing the institutions" and thus on the question of how leadership and decision-making can be designed at the structural level of an organisation in order to reduce the informal dimensions of barriers and obstacles for women and people who belong to minorities in the scientific system. In doing so, we follow the premise that promoting diversity in gatekeeping positions requires institutional measures and policies that start with changing structures and decision-making processes.

This deliverable reflects on the lessons that have led to this conclusion. In doing so, we build on the findings of research in feminist institutionalism (Acker, 1990; 2006; Mackay, 2011; O'Connor, 2020), as well as other research projects that have examined gender equality in HEIs (such as ACT; FESTA; SUPERA).

Structure of the report

Following this introduction to gender and participation in gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making and the general goal of the report, we discuss the underlying theoretical

core concepts and methodology in chapter 2. Here we present our framework conception of an intersectional approach and understanding of diversity. We will then explain what can be understood by gatekeeping and micro-politics in HEIs, and how these concepts shape the focus of this report. We then present the methods on which the development of the report is based.

Chapter 3 further delves into the needs and institutional measures outlined at this point in relation to the promotion of gender equality in gatekeeping positions. GEP-implementing universities in RESET adopted their GEP 1.0 in June 2022, marking a major milestone in the project. In this document, we analyse objectives and actions documented in the GEPs 1.0 (section 3.2) in their relation to gatekeeping positions. The aim of this deliverable is to develop meaningful guidelines that can be adapted to local needs and thus contribute to the implementation of the objectives defined in GEP 1.0 as well as support the development of GEP 2.0.

The key element of chapter 3 is the analysis of co-designing sessions conducted with twenty women in leadership and decision-making positions at four RESET universities (UBx, UPorto, OULU, RUB) between April and July 2023. In these sessions, participants collectively discussed gatekeeping and leadership issues in the context of gender equity under the guidance of local RESET teams. The analysis and results of the sessions (section 3.3) highlight the need for institutional measures for diversity in gatekeeping positions, and guided the further development of this deliverable.

Based on the analyses in chapter 3, chapter 4 presents lessons learnt focussing on two aspects that underline the "fix the institutions" approach: 1) importance of implementing quotas using the cascade model as an example; 2) need to include gender competency in the selection of leaders and decision-makers, as well as in the performance of leadership roles.

These elaborations of the deliverable culminate in the guidelines (section 5), which include 8 areas of intervention to strengthen diversity in gatekeeping positions (Figure 6):

1. **Institutionalize Gender- and Diversity Competence:** The first spotlight highlights the importance of embedding gender and diversity competences within the institution. We aim at raising awareness for gender and diversity barriers and biases, and enable scientific communities to mitigate them.
2. **Act upon Institutional Resistance and Dismantle Power in Micropolitical Practices:** Addressing institutional resistance and challenging the subtle power dynamics in micropolitical practices is the second focus of the guidelines.
3. **Include Elements of Gender Competency into Recruitment Procedures:** The third focal point emphasizes the need to incorporate gender competency as a

central component of recruitment procedures. This ensures that the selection process is fair, unbiased, and attuned to gender equality principles.

4. **Implement Quota and Cascade Models:** Here, we advocate the adoption of **quota and cascade models:** These models promote gender balance at all organizational levels, from entry positions to leadership roles, fostering a more diverse and representative academic community.
5. **Rethink and Reform Leadership Positions:** The fifth spotlight sheds light to the necessity to reevaluate and reform leadership positions by challenging traditional leadership structures and fostering a more inclusive leadership culture.
6. **More Flexibility Towards Out-of-the-Box Career Paths and Progression:** Focus six encourages HEIs to embrace flexibility in career paths and advancement. This approach accommodates diverse trajectories and allows individuals to excel in academia, regardless of traditional career norms.
7. **Fight Against the Gender Pay Gap:** The seventh spotlight focuses on combating the gender pay gap. HEIs are urged to take proactive measures to ensure that pay disparities based on gender are eliminated, promoting equal compensation for equal work.
8. **Claim Support for Structural Change:** Here, we highlight the importance of claiming support for structural change. HEIs must rally stakeholders to endorse and actively participate in the transformation towards greater gender equality, driving long-term institutional change.

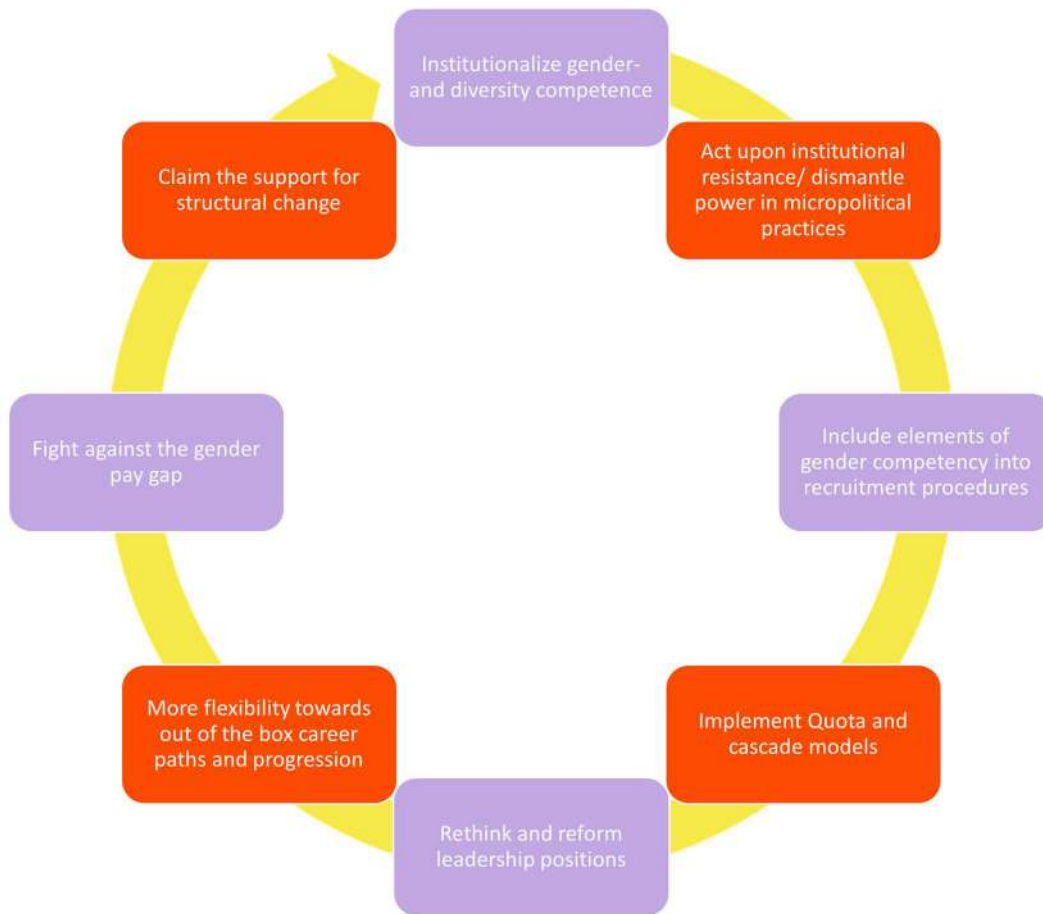


Figure 7: Overview on thematic spotlights of the guidelines on diversity in Gatekeeping Positions

Central purposes of this document are to:

- ➔ Reflect on common strategies of diversity in gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making based on the experiences of RESET universities, and literature reviews.
- ➔ Provide information and inspiration for the development and implementation of strategies to change institutional structures linked to leadership and decision-making.
- ➔ Create guidance for the realisation of the “fix the institution” approach at the RESET network and beyond.
- ➔ Assess a potential impact of the measures that aim to foster diversity in gatekeeping positions.

2. Theoretical perspectives & methodological approach

Gatekeeping and micropolitics

In this deliverable, we elaborate leadership, decision-making, and gatekeeping, which are three central, interrelated and highly significant aspects and roles in the structures of universities as organisations, as well as in the career development of individuals in HEIs and R&I. According to the findings of Feminist Institutionalism and Institutional Research, the perception and accessibility of these key roles are, on the one hand, gendered, and, on the other hand, linked to mechanisms of exclusion (Acker, 1990; 2006; Husu, 2001; 2004). The perception of these mechanisms of exclusion is linked to power. In institutional settings, power is expressed through roles, tasks, and responsibilities that are defined in official guidelines. According to the principle of meritocracy, recruitment into gatekeeping and decision-making positions is based on the selection of the person best suited and qualified to hold them, based on the excellent performance they have achieved in the past. At the same time, mechanisms of exclusion manifest themselves in this presumably merit-based selection of people in gatekeeping positions, as the gender gap shows in this regard. Moreover, they operate in the form of micropolitical practices that bypass official guidelines. Micropolitical practices therefore testify to the informal dimension of power in organisations.

Accordingly, two essential questions arise and guide work in RESET:

- ➔ *How is it possible, then, that 'hidden discrimination' (Husu, 2001) in institutions produces a lack of diversity and gender parity in their key positions and at the decision-making level?*
- ➔ *And why are women and other people with minority identities or backgrounds (e.g., socioeconomic status; disabilities; sexual orientation) confronted with the "glass ceiling"?*

The concept of the gatekeeper thus takes on a dual role: on the one hand, as a position that makes decisions at key points and thus has a significant impact on the shaping of the institution or one's own department, sometimes also on the understanding and development of science and scientific excellence itself (Husu, 2004). This is a role that can be aspired to, and should in principle be open to qualified individuals, following the principle of merit. On the other hand, the power that comes with this role has the potential to produce exclusion: "[...] gate-keeping processes can aim to control or influence the entry or access to a particular arena, allocation of resources and information flows, the setting of standards, development of the field and the agenda, or the external image of that arena" (Husu, 2004, p.69).

The power of gatekeepers in scientific institutions is thus directed at issues of resource allocation, personnel matters and the legitimacy of knowledge, as well as the understanding of science itself. Accordingly, Liisa Husu formulates the dimension of gatekeeping in science as follows:

“Academic gate-keeping can be understood to take place, for example, in relation to policy decisions, agenda setting, appointments and creation of academic posts, funding decisions, award decisions, and publishing, and at all levels: research group, departmental, institutional, faculty, university, research council and national level, as well as in informal scientific networks.” (Husu, 2004, p. 70)

In RESET, we address all these different and interwoven aspects by designing and enforcing institutional policies that promote diversity in terms of opportunities to hold and shape gatekeeping positions.

One dimension of gatekeeping is a creative influence on institutional decision-making processes and the perception of leadership and management tasks. In a hierarchically structured system such as the scientific enterprise, gatekeeping also manifests itself through social hierarchies and divisions. In this respect, social differences, inclusions and exclusions are produced and reproduced as well as questioned and changed (Husu, 2004, p. 73; O'Connor, 2020, p.38).

This is particularly evident in the recruitment of professors, as Van den Brink & Benschop (2014) point out: gatekeeping involves actively seeking suitable candidates through formal or informal networks. Consequently, the process of initial selection of candidates often begins before an official announcement of job opening. By this, gatekeepers shape the pool of potential candidates as well as the stages of the appointment process, including decisions regarding who makes it to the shortlist, who is interviewed, and who ultimately receives the appointment. Thus, gatekeeping reflects the authority of elites to bestow privileges and provide access to some individuals while withholding it from others (ibid., p. 464). Furthermore, it is necessary to point out that the legal framework, which includes measures for the prevention of discrimination in the EU-member states, differs from each other.

It is important to note here that gatekeeping itself can also occur apart from a managerial task or leadership function, namely as a manifestation of informal power in micropolitical processes. This can be understood as strategies and tactics that individuals and groups in organisations use to assert their interests (Van den Brink, 2010, 25). "Micropolitical activity is engaged throughout the organisational hierarchy both to promote and to impede change" (Morlay, 2015).

In every institution there are organising structures, official channels and procedures that enable transparent and comprehensible processes to be controlled. However, these regulatory structures, processes and procedures cannot be separated from the people who work in organisations, hold certain positions and represent interests. As Pat O'Connor

puts it, "micropolitical practices reflect the operation of informal power. They arise in a context where constructions of excellence, which are part of the legitimating apparatus, are neither as universal nor as objective as they are depicted by managerialism" (O'Connor, 2020, p.41).

2.1 Intersectional Perspective

"Intersectionality has a place in recognising and celebrating differing interwoven identities in teaching and research, in how academic institutions are designed and managed, how safe they are for those who inhabit them, how they are funded, who gets admitted to them, who the teachers and researchers are, what is taught and how, the ways in which research is framed and conducted, how and what language is used, who is in charge and how they got there" (Rosa & Clavero, 2021, p. 19).

As it has been pointed out in other documents (e.g. Niebel, 2022), RESET follows an intersectional approach towards gender. We understand intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as a perspective and an analytic tool that helps to grasp the ways in which "axes of difference" (Jacobs & Fincher, 1998) are intertwined as relations between different social and cultural categories. These "axes of difference" manifest themselves in gender, race/ethnicity, age, class, disability, religion, and sexual orientation. These are the categories in which social inequality and individual differences unfold. Intersectionality manifests itself at the junctures between these demographic and structural markers, on the one hand, and personal experience and people's social identities, on the other (Mirza, 2018).

Following an intersectional approach means to analyse how intersecting power relations influence both social relations in heterogeneous societies, as well as individual experiences in people's daily lives (Collins & Bilge, 2020). Thereby, we focus on leadership and decision making in universities both from an institutional and a person-centred perspective. Hereby, RESET follows an idea of an "ethical view of higher education's purpose as serving the formation of equitable societies and this requiring that inequities be actively challenged" (Nichols & Stahl, 2019, p.2). Thus, RESET aims to reveal the overlapping of inequalities, especially in HEIs, and counteract it with measures, acknowledging intersectionality as "the intellectual core of diversity work" (Dill, 2009, p. 229).

2.2 Diversity

Since the foundation of discourses of diversity in the US-American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, they bear witness to increased social difference in pluralistic societies. They found their way into institutions especially in Western societies, as HEIs,

NGOs, governmental agencies, the European Union or private companies. Diversity hereby is linked to the success of organisational goals and the consideration of differing social and demographic factors and anti-discrimination (ibid.; Klein, 2018).

HEIs are influenced by the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, politics, and policies, shaped by their society's culture and history. They form their own mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in educational systems, making it more likely or unlikely for some to succeed. These mechanisms are in conflict with the meritocratic principle of equal opportunities (Alon, 2009). This concerns both the category of gender in general, and other factors, such as the chances of people from low-income and/or migrant backgrounds to enter, succeed, and make career progress in universities, as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities.

“Processes of exclusion in higher education are difficult to unpack as they are underscored by the complex dynamics of class, gender and race. Experiences are complex and relational and are located at the intersection of structure, culture and agency.” (Mirza, 2018, p 6 f.)

It is an overall democratic challenge, as well as the responsibility of universities and education systems to study, expose, reflect on, educate and work to overcome the systemic and structural hurdles, obstacles, and often implicit and unconscious biases.

With Vertovec (2012), we emphasise the dimensions of redistribution, recognition, and representation to be central for the nexus between equal opportunities and diversity in HEIs. Redistribution means to “redress historical discrimination against groups, especially ‘economic harm’.” Diversity policies attempt to help minorities to gain access to jobs, equitable income and positions. Recognition seeks “to foster dignity and esteem among minorities, promote positive images, and facilitate their fuller participation in social interaction and political processes through renegotiating their ‘terms of incorporation into the state’” (ibid.). The goal of recognition is to create an institution – a company workforce, teaching faculty, student body, health service, civil service, military, police, or chamber of political representatives that looks like the population it serves” (ibid.).

2.3 Methodological Approach

In this report, methodological approaches of participatory design (Iivari et al., 2023) in the form of the co-designing approach, institutional research and qualitative social research are intertwined. The preparation of this deliverable was preceded by the implementation and analysis of co-designing workshops on the focal points of decision-making and leadership at four RESET universities (UBx, UPorto, RUB and OULU). The 2-hour long sessions took place between April and July 2023. Their aim was to work out experiences, needs for action and possible solutions together with twenty women in leadership and top management positions as experts in the field.

The collaborative design of instruments, measures and documentation is a central methodological component of the RESET project. The approach of co-designing is based on innovative methods of design thinking. It takes into account the need to proactively involve users or stakeholders in the development of solutions (Durall et al; 2023; livari, 2018; livari et al., 2023). In WP6 of the RESET project, we implement this approach in two steps: first, by actively involving local teams of the RESET project in the design of measures and developing co-designing sessions together. As a next step, the local communities are involved.

The co-designing sessions were guided by the teams of RUB, UBx, and OULU, which developed together a template for the conduction of the sessions. They were conducted on site at UBx, UPorto, RUB and OULU by members of the local project teams and minuted by them. These results were analysed by the team of RUB, following the principles of qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2018) and Grounded Theory Methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This methodological approach aimed at identifying meaningful categories based on the material through comparison between the results of the conducted sessions. We explored patterns, relationships, and concepts within the data without imposing predefined categories or assumptions. As elements of institutional research (Posselt, et al. 2020) these results were further processed into the lessons learnt and guidelines of this report.

Another source of information for this report is the analysis of results of the surveys and focus group discussions held in the scope of WP1 (GEP Design and Implementation), and elaboration of GEPs 1.0. This has provided us with a basis and an overview of the status quo at RESET universities.

3. Analysis of Gatekeeping, Leadership and Decision Making in RESET Institutions

This chapter will build on the status quo in RESET universities and provide an overview of the measures that address issues of gatekeeping, leadership, and decision making in the GEP 1.0 of RESET universities. Based on co-designing sessions conducted in the RESET project in 2023 with women in leadership and decision-making positions, we will then highlight gaps, hurdles, and barriers that need to be addressed in terms of lessons learnt. We will link the results of the co-designing sessions with relevant literature on these topics to promote a "fix the institutions, don't fix the women" approach.

In addressing diversity in gatekeeping positions, we look at gendered perspectives in institutions. On the one hand, this perspective is based on the understanding that institutions are gendered. This understanding means not only looking at the relationship be-

tween genders in the different career paths, but also comprehension of gendered structures and hierarchies (Acker, 1990; 2006). As we argued in section 1.2, this means, recognising that institutionalised practices and processes have a gendered influence on members of the organisations and affect entry and access to high level positions. With regard to other dimensions of diversity, questions of access to positions and career paths and exclusion also arise in the intersection of gender and other dimensions, such as ethnicity, age, or disability.

In the course of the RESET project so far, questions about diversity in gatekeeping positions and the relationship to leadership and decision-making have been elaborated and interpreted in various project documentations. Leadership can be understood as the deliberate, targeted influence, motivation, and empowerment of others to contribute to achieving collective objectives within organizations. It encompasses all interactive processes in which individuals intentionally exert social influence on others to accomplish shared tasks within a structured work environment (Özbek-Potthoff, 2014). Decision-making positions can be defined by the ability of a player (often determined by his or her institutional position) to influence the behaviour of other players and, above all, to influence the content of the policies implemented. In the following chapter, we will discuss the findings from RESET's GE Survey Data Reports (D1.2, 2021) and RESET's Report on RESET's laboratory-scale incentives towards their communities (D5.3, 2023).

3.1 Gender Proportions in RESET's GEP-implementing Institutions

The data-analysis conducted in RESET's D1.2 (2021) has been reevaluated in D5.3 (2023 p. 9). It shows that women are underrepresented in leadership roles within research units, departments, and laboratories at the GEP-implementing universities. At UBx, nearly half of the laboratories, specifically 49%, are exclusively managed by men. It is highlighted that the figure rises to 74% when deputy directors are not considered. Similarly, at UŁ, despite having a female Rector, women remain underrepresented in a majority of managerial roles. Within the university, there is a notable majority of women among employees with lower academic qualifications, standing at 59%. However, this number decreases to 31.5% among individuals holding PhDs with habilitation and professorship titles. At AUTH, more women are represented among teachers and researchers in the Faculty of Education (60.42%) and the Faculty of Philosophy (62.87%), both traditionally associated with fields considered more feminine. The same pattern occurs at U.Porto where as one moves up the ladder of career progression, gender imbalance increases, reaching a maximum in the full professor rank, where 72.9% are men and only 27.1% are women and positions of leadership and decision making are still mainly occupied by men (68.5%), while women occupy 31.5% of the positions.

D.1.2.(2021) informs about the representation of women in top management at RESET's GEP-implementing universities. The document shows that while women are generally underrepresented at the top level of the university, some institutions indeed have women at the top of the hierarchical structure. For instance, this is the case in UBx. Here the

distribution of women and men in the senate and top-level management boards is balanced. This might be an effect of recent legal initiatives aimed at fostering greater diversity in senior managerial roles. Although the university typically adheres to legal quotas ensuring gender parity in decision-making roles at the highest level, other decision-making bodies are not subject to these quotas. That means that parity is often not achieved in management of labs or research departments, and other decision-making roles and bodies.

The report also shows that at UŁ, despite the fact that the Rector's position is taken by a woman, the proportion of women within the UŁ's workforce does not proportionately translate into their representation in the managerial structure, as women remain underrepresented in a majority of managerial functions. Broadly, it is more common to encounter women in top management roles within scientific domains where they are overrepresented. Consequently, women are more inclined to hold leadership positions in fields where they are predominant, whereas men tend to assume such roles regardless of the gender ratio.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to explore how both men and women perceive their potential journey to leadership roles. Based on focus group discussions, in D1.2. It is also highlighted that for many women, leadership positions appear unattainable or they view themselves as insufficiently experienced, often attributing these feelings to age and gender-related disadvantages. Additionally, a larger number of women find these positions challenging due to the preexisting difficulty of balancing work and family commitments. Hence, it is clear that caregiving responsibilities, such as parenting and other roles, significantly influence women's career decisions (more so than men's). It becomes evident that women in the scientific fields often perceive leadership positions as unattainable or they consider themselves not senior enough, reflecting the perception of being disadvantaged due to their age and gender. Additionally, women tend to view these positions as challenging in terms of balancing personal and professional life.

These findings also indicate that the reluctance of women to seek leadership roles is not primarily due to a perceived lack of competence. Instead, these reasons are rooted in structural aspects ingrained within academic and organisational frameworks. These observations align with current guidelines addressing gender equality concerns, emphasising the shift from a deficit-focused approach ("fixing women") to an approach centred on reforming institutions and emphasising the role of institutional measures to foster gender equity and diversity in gatekeeping, leadership and decision-making ("fix the institutions"; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, pp.198f; Hodgins & O'Connor et al., 2022).

The outcomes of D1.2 (GE Surveys, 2021) and D5.3 ("Report on RESET's laboratory-scale incentives towards their communities"; 2023) underscore the need for organisational-level changes and suggest a potential overlap between gender and age-related discrimination matters.

3.2. Measures in RESET GEPs 1.0

The development of the GEPs 1.0 (2022) within the RESET project has explicitly taken up measures that relate to the factors of gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making. Here, results and findings from the first co-designing sessions in work package 6 (Acting Upon Governance), which were carried out in 2021 and 2022 with members of the RESET teams and female scientists as well as human resources, were incorporated. The following figure (8) provides an overview of the measures and goals in the respective GEP 1.0 that address the topic of diversity and gender equality in gatekeeping, leadership, and decision making. These are categorised according to the respective GEP-implementing universities.

Overview on diversity and gender equity in gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making measures and targets in RESET's GEP 1.0s:

| Task | AUTH | Lodz | Bordeaux | U.Porto |
|------|---|--|---|---|
| T6.2 | Host an informative/awareness-raising campaign; feature and showcase the work of women in positions of responsibility in AUTH's public communications and social media. | Development and implementation of a tool for monitoring election-based promotions; | Action no. 6: To continue striving to put professional equality at the heart of management guidelines, particularly by identifying the gender balance of employees eligible for promotion, and those listed in the career advancement table who are due to be promoted. | Develop communication strategies which make female leadership visible |
| | Publish a brochure and poster encouraging women to apply for institutional positions and ranks. | Development and implementation of a tool for monitoring promotions based on the supervisors' decisions; | Action no. 7: To organise an annual presentation on career progression and the key steps in academic careers, aimed at teaching and research staff | Promote an equal representation of gender in the establishment of lists for decision-making positions |
| | Establish an annual distinction for a woman in a position of responsibility at AUTH. | Development and implementation of a tool for monitoring of employees' needs for, and interests in, being promoted. | Action no. 9: Consolidating the parity of selection committees, as required by French law, by promoting equal access to chairperson positions for women and men. | |
| | Host an awareness meeting for the mem- | A gender-sensitive review of the available | Action no. 11: Making use of new promotion and recruitment | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>bers of the main administrative and decision-making bodies in AUTH, in order to promote balanced gender representation in leadership and decision-making positions.</p> | <p>opportunities for being promoted (such as eligibility criteria), which takes into account other social categories intersecting with gender.</p> | <p>methods to achieve a more equal gender balance among professors, depending on available talent</p> |
|--|--|---|

Figure 8: Comparison of Measures in RESET'S GEPs 1.0 concerning gender equity in leadership and decision-making

Based on the description of measures in the respective GEPs 1.0 (Figure 8), three focal points can be identified, on which RESET universities have placed a focus in the promotion of diversity in gatekeeping positions:

Communication and Information

Among these are measures to increase the visibility of women in positions of responsibility and leadership at universities (AUTH; UPorto). Accordingly, in RESET's digital photo exhibition "Behind the Scenes"³ of the media campaign "Faces of Campus" (2022)⁴, AUTH has portrayed 5 women in leadership positions at the university and interviewed them about the contributions of their work to science.

At UL, the development and implementation of a tool to monitor election-based promotions is targeted, and at UBx, the actions of presentation of career development at the university with reference to the further development of steps to increase these results is foreseen as a measure.

Monitoring of recruitment procedures and their outcomes

The universities have been also implementing measures in GEP 1.0 that address gender parity and women's participation in decision-making boards and positions. Accordingly, tools are to be developed that benefit the promotion of women in decision-making functions and career development (UL). Also in UL, the pathways and processes that affect the chances of getting into decision-making positions will be reviewed. Similarly, at UBx, the promotion of gender equality in relation to processes of promotion is related to gender monitoring. Furthermore, at UBx, the use of new promotion and recruitment methods aims to achieve a more balanced gender ratio among professors, and the GEP 1.0 also contains a measure that explores potential rotation of pedagogical and administrative, as well as research responsibilities.

³ <https://wereset.eu/behind-the-scenes-faces-of-campus-campaign/>

⁴ <https://wereset.eu/resources/campaigns/media-campaign-faces-of-campus/>

Fostering equal representation

Especially with regard to the perception of leadership roles and participation in decision-making boards, the question of representation and participation in decision-making is at stake. Accordingly, barriers to women's access to the leadership of selection committees should be reduced in UBx. Awareness meetings in AUTh are also intended to sensitise participants on this issue. In UPorto, the access lists for decision-making boards are to be designed in such a way that they allow equal representation of gender.

All these measures point out the importance attached to communication about leadership from a diversity and gender perspective. Through these measures, visibility can indeed be created and improved, as well as transparency of requirements. In addition, they will provide a platform for exchange within the scientific communities and promote dialogue on the challenges of diversity-responsive gatekeeping.

3.3. Key-findings from co-designing sessions

At 4 universities of the RESET consortium (UBx, UPorto, RUB, OULU), co-designing workshops were conducted between May and July of 2023 with twenty women in leadership and decision-making positions, from Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the fields of STEM and Medicine, and covering C-Grade to A-Grade positions in Science, or top management positions in administration/research. They aimed at finding solutions on how the number of women in leading positions/committees could be increased. In designing the workshop, the local teams of RUB, UBx and OULU followed the “fix the institution” approach: the aim was not to identify how to make women fit for leadership, but rather to find out what contribution the institutions and departments can make to shape leadership tasks, fields and positions in a more inclusive way, based on their experiences and perspectives.

3.3.1 Design of the Workshop

3.3.1 Design of the Workshop

The workshop design was based on the principles outlined in D9.2 Co-Design Starter-kit, specifically drawing upon "TOOL 12: FUTURE WORKSHOP FOR SENSITIVE TOPICS AND SILENCED EXPERIENCES" (Ivari et al., 2022, p.48ff.). This methodology, derived from the works of Alminde and Warming (2020), leveraged future workshops as a means to collaboratively generate innovative ideas and solutions to complex challenges. It offered an inclusive, democratic and ethical approach that resonated strongly with the goals of RESET's gender equality work.

By adopting this methodology, the workshop was designed to create a safe and supportive environment for the participants to explore sensitive topics, share silenced experiences, and collaboratively envision practical solutions to drive positive change. The workshop's structure aligned with the principles of inclusivity, creativity, and collaboration, fostering an atmosphere conducive to impactful discussions and tangible outcomes.

The structure of the workshop was designed by RUB, UBx and OULU, in order to cover the expertise on co-designing methodologies provided by the experts from OULU, and the coordination between the

task leaders (RUB and UBx). The draft of the structure was shared with the consortium to get feedback and suggestions on how to modify the workshop or adapt it to local practices.

Facilitators:

The workshop was facilitated by two members of the local RESET teams. One facilitator guided the workshop's progression, ensuring the smooth flow of activities. The other one was responsible for taking comprehensive notes. These roles were interchanged during different phases of the workshop to enhance engagement and facilitation.

Target Group:

The workshop was tailored for a small group of 3 to 6 participants who were currently holding leadership and decision-making positions in research and administration. By this, we encouraged the RESET teams to invite participants overseeing departments, research units, research groups, principal investigators (PIs), Vice-Rectors, Deans, management in research centres and support services.

To gather various experiences, we aimed to keep the circle of participants as wide as possible. Furthermore, we also left it up to the teams to decide whether Vice-Rectors (or other Top Management representatives) would participate in the sessions depending on the local context. The participants were aware that the contributions to the session were going to be anonymized by the facilitators, in order to create an open and safe space for articulation.

Workshop Flow

The session was designed for a period of 120 minutes. At the beginning, participants were provided with an overview of the RESET initiative and a concise introduction to the workshop's objectives. Here, partners were also encouraged to provide findings linked to the GEP 1.0 data collection or other numbers related to the workshop.

Initial Phase

During an *initial phase*, a time frame of 30 minutes was dedicated to engaging in brainstorming and discussions closely tied to the current situation and experiences. In this phase, participants engaged in an open discussion about the existing state of leadership roles for women in research and administration. They collectively explored challenges, opportunities, and experiences.

The session then commenced by introducing the focal subject and establishing a connection with the attendees. This was followed by elaborating on the insights gleaned from the survey, shedding light on the representation of women in leadership positions within both the institution and/or the RESET consortium.

Subsequently, participants were encouraged to actively share their individual experiences. To facilitate this phase, the "SAILBOAT EXERCISE" (Figure 9) or the "STARFISH RETROSPECTIVE" (Figure 10) was implemented. These exercises effectively enabled participants to retrospectively examine their

experiences, offering them a platform to express critiques, address obstacles and risks, identify supportive factors, and articulate their aspirations.

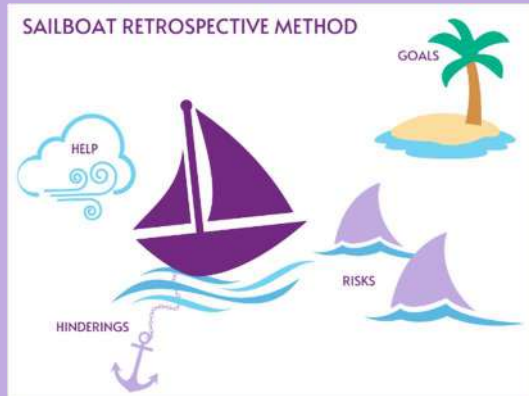


Figure 9: Sailboat retrospective method

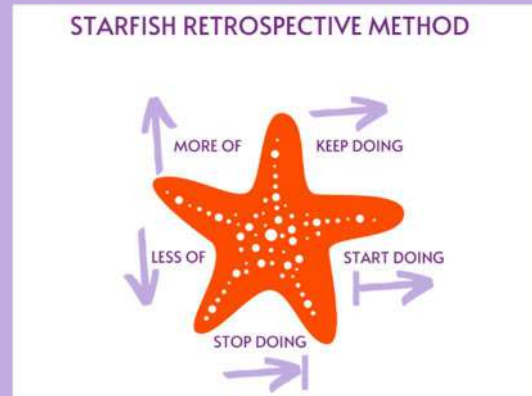


Figure 10: Starfish retrospective method

2nd Phase: "Fantasy Phase" – Brainstorming a 'Perfect Future' (30 Minutes):

Transitioning into a "fantasy phase," participants embarked on a creative exercise to envision and co-design an ideal future scenario where women's leadership in research and administration would be maximally supported and integrated. Collaboratively, they explored innovative ideas and possibilities.

During this stage, participants were encouraged to engage in the exploration of utopian concepts – envisioning optimal solutions for challenges identified during the earlier critical phase, following the framework of the "sailboat exercise." The focus was on generating ideas without being restricted by real-world limitations.

Additionally, an option to foster creativity through smaller group collaborations was provided. To facilitate this phase effectively, careful consideration and selection of suitable methods were undertaken prior to the workshop.

As a concluding step, participants were given the opportunity to share their conceived ideas with one another, allowing a joint exchange of their visionary proposals.

3rd Phase: Implementation Phase (30 Minutes):

In this phase, the workshop shifted to the implementation phase: to identify practical steps and strategies to bridge the gap between the current state and the envisioned future. Participants collectively brainstormed action plans and initiatives.

During the implementation stage, participants were guided to delve into the process of translating their visionary ideas into actionable plans. It was acknowledged that not all ideas could be viably brought to fruition, yet this phase presented a valuable opportunity to dissect the preferences of participants regarding the ideas that resonated the most. The process included considering the prioritisation of ideas and the rationale behind their choices.

This step could be customised to harmonise more effectively with the overarching design objectives.

Final Discussion and Conclusion (15 Minutes):

In the closing moments of the workshop, participants united for a final discussion. They shared key insights, suggested action items and reflections from each phase. This session concluded with a summary of the workshop's outcomes.

The session was brought to an end by inviting participants to reflect on the outcomes of the workshop and share their thoughts on what resonated with them the most. Local RESET Team members provided a brief feedback on their perspective on the outcomes of the workshop. In this concluding phase, participants were also informed about the upcoming steps: the insights gained from the session would be integral to shaping RESET guidelines and future GEPs (2.0) that aimed to enhance women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions. The discussion also extended to ongoing institutional developments related to decision-making matters, where applicable.

3.2.3. Results of the Workshops

To ensure the integration of the workshop outcomes into the development of D6.2, the T6.2 Task Leader provided the facilitators of the workshop with a questionnaire in order to carefully reflect on the conclusions drawn from the sessions. A comprehensive assessment was solicited regarding the alignment of the session's outcomes with the "fix the institution" approach. Any recommendations stemming from the session outcomes that could contribute to the development of RESET guidelines pertaining to decision-making and gatekeeping were explored.

The summary of their feedback provides a base for the findings presented in the following chapters. To protect the anonymity of participants, we will refer to the universities where the workshops were held as U1-U4. Following the Grounded Theory methodological approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), we aimed to discover patterns, relationships, and concepts within the data, and clustered the findings of the analysis into central categories. 6 main areas of intervention were identified by comparing the outcomes of all local co-designing sessions.

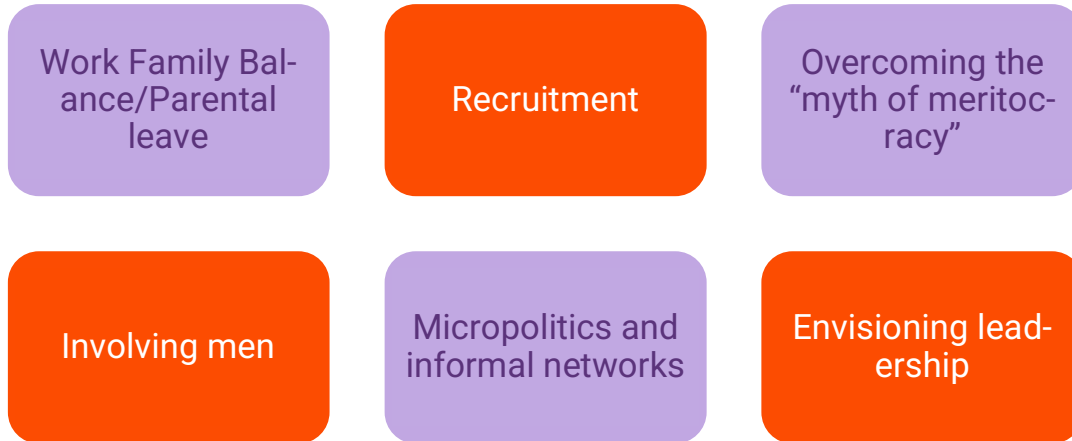


Figure 11: Key categories of the Co-designing workshops, conducted in 4 RESET universities (2023)

Work Family Balance/Parental leave

While discussing issues of leadership and women’s representation in decision-making, the workshops’ participants expressed their concerns regarding the compatibility of science, administration and family life.

At the first university (U1), female participants shared their reflections on the challenges faced in managing maternity and motherhood within their academic careers. They all recounted experiencing of institutional pressures to undertake academic responsibilities during parental leave and highlighted the adverse impact that motherhood could exert on career progression. At U2, participants shared the opinion that parental leaves were not aligned with the demands of a scientific career and leadership tasks. At U2, women also admitted some other aspects of challenges related to WLB and leadership, as taking care of relatives.

To address these challenges, participants at U1 recommended, for instance, that performance evaluation criteria should recognize parental leave as equivalent to a sabbatical year. Additionally, gender stereotypes were identified as a significant barrier to gender equality, particularly when women internalise these stereotypes. In response, they suggested to develop visual materials, organize informative sessions, and create tools aimed at promoting gender awareness.

At U3, the strategic deployment of Work-Life Balance (WLB) policies, with a particular emphasis on initiatives directed at men, such as parental and paternity leave were

claimed to be drivers of change within the organisational framework. Additionally, a “right to disconnect” was emphasised as a crucial factor of Work-Life Balance.

For the workshop participants at U4, the issue of reconciling career advancement with family obligations also emerged as a central concern. Consequently, the Gender Care Gap was discussed, along with the importance of coordinating family planning and career development within partnerships. It was underscored that leadership responsibilities encompass aligning and fostering family-friendly practices within one's work unit.

These outputs of the co-designing sessions show that addressing the challenges of achieving a work-family balance, particularly for women in leadership roles, is of paramount importance. Institutional pressures during parental leave and the adverse impact on career progression due to motherhood were common concerns among the participants at all 4 universities. Based on their discussions, it is recommended that performance evaluations consider parental leave. Questions of work-life balance policies were also addressed. At U3, deploying Work-Life Balance (WLB) policies, particularly with a focus on initiatives directed at men, was recognized as a driver of positive change. Emphasising the “right to disconnect” within the framework of WLB was highlighted. For participants at U4, the challenge of reconciling career advancement with family responsibilities, resulting in the Gender Care Gap, was acknowledged. It was stressed that leadership roles should encompass the promotion of family-friendly practices within respective work units.

Recruitment and promotion

At U1, participants discussed recruitment and promotion procedures, highlighting concerns about their lack of transparency. This lack of transparency went beyond gender stereotypes and also included conflicts of interest where informal networks had an influence on recruitment procedures and nominations for certain functions. It is important to mention that some participants expressed uncertainty about the ground behind their selection for leadership positions, despite their noteworthy achievements and career successes. To address this issue, participants emphasised the importance of ensuring gender-balanced representation in evaluation panels, scientific communications, and during events. Some critical measures to counteract this prevailing trend were stressed as the need for appointing to leadership people more attuned to gender equality.

Also at U4, it was recommended to include questions in interviews to potential leaders aimed at revealing whether applicants have an awareness of challenges in relation to gender equity. Accordingly, questions and elements of these interviews would serve the purpose of assessing applicants' comprehension and attitude towards these issues and the associated challenges.

The ways in which recruitment into leadership positions was addressed during the co-designing sessions point to suggestions for institutional measures, aligned with the “fix

the institutions” motto: Participants emphasise the notion of transparency of selection criteria and processes associated with the appointment of leaders and individuals in gatekeeping positions. Furthermore, criteria for candidates for leadership and gatekeeping positions are discussed. Both aspects underscore the need for gender and diversity competence in these positions and committees. In relation to these aspects, concerns about the role of informal networks in decision-making follow. We will revisit this topic in the section titled "Micropolitics and informal networks."

Overcoming the “Myth of Meritocracy”

Another aspect concerning gatekeeping and diversity in leadership positions is the criterion of merit, which was questioned by participants of the co-designing sessions. On one hand, participants at U1 highlighted that the criteria for their appointment to leadership positions were not transparent, even though they had performed well. On the other hand, they stated that, especially in vulnerable phases of their careers and personal lives, such as early motherhood, other factors than their individual performance and merit took precedence and had a detrimental impact on them. Participants from U1 also highlighted that obtaining a new professional and higher position is connected to additional obstacles and barriers. During these stages of transition, the challenges include standing one's ground, connecting with peers and new teams, and filling a (new) leadership role. Here, newcomers can be left on their own, and even excluded by their peers, or experience support. Participants in the session identified these as gender-related and subtle forms of discrimination.

At U2, the participants in the session highlighted the aspect of competition and rivalry as a negative, sometimes disruptive factor, which is also persistent and can be seen as one of the hurdles that interacts with the "Myth of Meritocracy" (name attributed by the participants of U1). Linked to this is also, the phenomenon of the 'glass ceiling' which refers the myth of meritocracy, in that fewer and fewer women reach higher academic positions, and also encounter new hurdles and barriers at higher career levels (Paulitz & Wagner, 2020; Wagner et al., 2021).

Merit is connected to the belief that individual qualifications and the demonstrated ability of scientists built the base for selection decisions (Van den Brink, 2015, p. 193): "In this system talent will prove itself, and excellence will surface automatically" (ibid). Correspondingly, the participants at U1 argue that it is necessary to overcome the concept of meritocracy.

As studies point out, academic environment tends to favour those who have followed a traditional masculine career trajectory, i.e. without breaks, interruptions, including international mobility offering limited space for alternative paths or career interruptions (Van den Brink, 2015, p. 194). In conclusion, gender-based mechanisms influence the evaluation of candidates' accomplishments, leading to the systematic perception that men's

achievements are more legitimate and generate more "excellence points" than women's achievements (Van den Brink, 2015, p. 196).

Involving men

All co-designing sessions were focused on the experiences of female experts. In several of these sessions, female participants emphasised the need to actively address and involve men in the processes of change for gender equality. At U1, there was a discussion about actively promoting and encouraging the participation of men in gender equality matters. The necessity of involving men was also evident in an expert conversation at U4: attention was directed on fathers and their role in supporting their partners in gatekeeping and decision-making positions, as well as in their career development. It was emphasised that leaders should not assume traditional caregiving roles and should consider the time and availability of male colleagues who are fathers as well. There is still a lack of awareness in this regard, and practices of making active fatherhood invisible continue to exist.

At U3, there was a critical discussion about a growing backlash from male gatekeepers and individuals in decision-making positions, or those aspiring to such positions. They questioned gender equality measures and initiatives related to affirmative actions. It was also noted that women are not universally supportive of such initiatives.

These discussions highlight that there are various entry points and experiences related to resistance at universities. Furthermore, it underscores the crucial importance of active engagement and recruitment of male allies. This underlines the fact that advocating for gender equality and diversity is not the sole responsibility of women and those directly affected. It also requires the attention and understanding of individuals, who have awareness of these issues and who can use their positions to highlight shortcomings and open doors for change.

Micropolitics and informal networks

Another key aspect in various co-designing sessions is the issue of micropolitics and informal networks. As noted in relation to 'recruitment', participants at U1 pointed out that informal and self-contained networks can become a doorway to certain positions and, accordingly, other people may not be considered, not receive important information or can be put at a disadvantage. These networks are often structured along gender lines. Accordingly, there is a heightened difficulty for women to find their way into structures that are male-oriented as it was also emphasised by participants at U2.

Micropolitics was also highlighted by participants at U4 as a central factor in the organisational structure of the research departments. These are often characterised by male, homosocial co-optation, meaning the favourisation of candidates with whom established

group members have more social features in common (e.g. gender, but also class, habitus; Kurchenko, 2022; Riegraf & Weber, 2017). Through homosocial co-optation decision-making and alliances arise outside the formal structures, which can be powerful and exert an influence on committees. Promotion of women in certain positions alone cannot counter this factor.

Correspondingly, Van den Brink & Benschop (2014) emphasise that male-structured networks are liminal, meaning that the exclusivity of these networks is often not explicit and intentional, as men build their connections without realising that their actions are perceived as a form of male bonding. "They use arguments of quality to legitimate their preferences and are not aware that they practise gender this way" (ibid., p. 484). Instead, it is primarily women, who notice these affiliations based on trust and perceived similarities among men. Similar to the findings of Van den Brink & Benschop (2014), participants in the RESET co-designing sessions also highlight informal networking opportunities available to men within the academic sphere. Consequently, women often encounter exclusionary effects of these informal networking practices.

Envisioning leadership

In the course of the co-designing sessions, questions of visioning the future and desirable developments were also addressed. These questions were particularly explored at U2.

U2 participants highlighted a vision, in which leadership was characterised differently, namely by transparency and visibility. For the participants, this went hand in hand with an awareness of the demands of employees' daily lives, especially with regard to issues of reconciliation of work and family. In contrast to a centralised top-down leadership model, the aspect of sharing was also emphasised, which meant opening up to other definitions of leadership taking also the positions of top management into consideration for new definitions of leadership. Accordingly, the following characteristics of leadership were emphasised: an open problem-solving culture, empathy, care, and support of employees.

In U2 and U4, questions of leadership design and the importance of supposedly "female" characteristics were also addressed in this regard. When it comes to women in leadership positions, ideas and expectations of femininity and leadership play a role, concepts that can conflict in the way they are culturally and socially normed (Acker, 1990). This can lead to stereotyping that women in leadership positions have certain characteristics (e.g. being team-oriented, people-oriented). It is important, to counteract these stereotypes and, on the other hand, not to "gender" the qualities that can be found in a cooperative, team- and people-oriented leadership style, but to promote them overall.

3.4 Takeaway

The GEPs 1.0 set out goals and measures that aim to foster equity in gatekeeping, leadership and decision-making. As was pointed out, these can be summarised in three focal areas presenting measures addressing communication and information, monitoring of recruitment procedures and their outcomes as well as fostering equal representation.

The analysis of the co-designing sessions with female scientists and managers in leadership positions has highlighted several key aspects that are important to consider when promoting diversity and gender equality in gatekeeping positions. In this section, we presented six areas that will shape the two following chapters with lessons learnt and guidelines.

As it has been stated by the participants of the co-designing sessions, it is recommended to institutionalise comprehensive WLB policies that address both parental and paternity leave, along with creating awareness campaigns targeting gender stereotypes. Here, institutional guidelines and measures will be of central importance. In the RESET frame, we focus on these demands in T.6.4.

The analysis of the co-designing workshops also reveals the influence of micropolitics and the subtle mechanisms that shape the barriers linked to career progression and gender inequality among gatekeeping and leadership positions. This underscores the significance of the "fix the institution" approach, emphasising practical actions to drive sustainable change in HEIs. Therefore, fostering diversity in gatekeeping needs to combine institutional measures (e.g. guidelines for transparent recruitment/appointment procedures) with approaches that raise the awareness for the needs among staff and (top) management (e.g. gender and diversity competence).

Related to the dimension of micropolitics, a crucial step is linked to actively involving men in the pursuit of gender equality. Recognizing that gender equality is a collective endeavour, is the common ground for a more inclusive and supportive environment. Accordingly, men as colleagues, leaders and gatekeepers play a pivotal role in acting correspondingly to foster equity within institutions. In this regard, awareness is key to dismantling these powerful mechanisms. The co-designing sessions also point towards the need to strengthen institutional awareness of gender (in) equality in order to establish corresponding measures. Communities have to recognise that structural issues of equal participation and opportunities must be a goal of institutions to formalise the promotion of equal opportunities, and promote and demand corresponding gender and diversity competences. This aspect also pertains to the recruitment of individuals in gatekeeping positions and the assessment of candidates for leadership positions and personnel management tasks. In order to overcome established patterns, it's imperative to diversify committee compositions. A more inclusive representation of gender, backgrounds, and perspectives can contribute to fairer decisions. Moreover, transparent appointment and nomination procedures ensure accountability and reduce the potential for hidden biases to influence outcomes.

4. Lessons learnt: “Fix the institution, don’t fix the women!”

In the previous section, we analysed the actions taken to promote diversity in gatekeeping positions at RESET universities in GEP 1.0, as well as the results of co-designing sessions with women in leadership positions. It becomes clear that the implementation of the measures in the GEP 1.0 can be promoted through the reflection and provision of concrete methods and approaches, as well as the insights into practice and experience of women in gatekeeping positions.

We follow the "fix the institutions, don't fix the women!" approach here, as in other areas of the RESET project (RESET, 2021, D.1.2). This means to revise working cultures (ACT, 2021). By this, we address on the one hand structural measures, and on the other hand cultural aspects that affect ways we work together at university. Accordingly, in RESET, we provide support for promotion of institutional change on a cultural, structural and operational basis, rather than presenting measures that advise women individually and on specific systemic requirements (RESET, 2022a, D6.1). By following the "fix the institutions" approach, we recognise the opportunity to make a sustainable and systemic change impact on institutions.

In this chapter, we will articulate the lessons learnt that emerged both from the analyses in Chapter 3, and from the examination of preceding RESET reports as well as other literature. The lessons learnt frame the guidelines that are elaborated in Chapter 5.

Focusing on the cascade model as a variant of gender quota, and gender and diversity competence training, we elaborate here two key concepts that target both quantitative objectives and qualitative measures to promote diversity in gatekeeping positions. Linked to this, we present recent developments in the RESET project related to the development of gender and diversity competence.

With regard to the chances of getting into gatekeeping positions, Diehl & Dzubinski (2016) point out institutional barriers can be identified on three levels. The authors refer to the disadvantage of women, a phenomenon that can also be applied to other markers of diversity, such as disability or migration background or membership of ethnic minorities. Stereotypes (e.g. gender stereotypes) and fixed and gendered ideas of leadership are located at the macro-level. The possibility of speaking out and being heard is also linked to this. Here, institutional and socio-cultural requirements, practices, ideas and prejudices intertwine.

On the meso-level, informal networks and their membership and exclusion mechanisms are located. This is where the glass ceiling operates and where discrimination takes place. Economic aspects, such as gender pay gap can also be found here. At this point, Diehl & Dzubinski (2016) also mentioned other aspects, such as individual promotion, or

lack or denial of it, which have consequences of the medium scope and take place within the organisational and academic setting.

The micro-level refers to the immediate effects in the immediate living environment, such as work-life conflicts, unequal treatment in direct communication and the immediate work environment and psychological barriers as personal consequences of dealing with these challenges.

The levels mentioned in this model mesh with each other. From an intersectional perspective, it also becomes clear how complex and at how many different points' conflicts can arise and turn career development into a hurdle race, thus making it increasingly difficult to maintain a gatekeeping position. Taking this factor into account it is necessary to meet the demand for diversity in gatekeeping positions.

This model illustrates why the approach of promoting gender equality and diversity has to start at the institutional level in order to break down barriers in a sustainable and effective way.

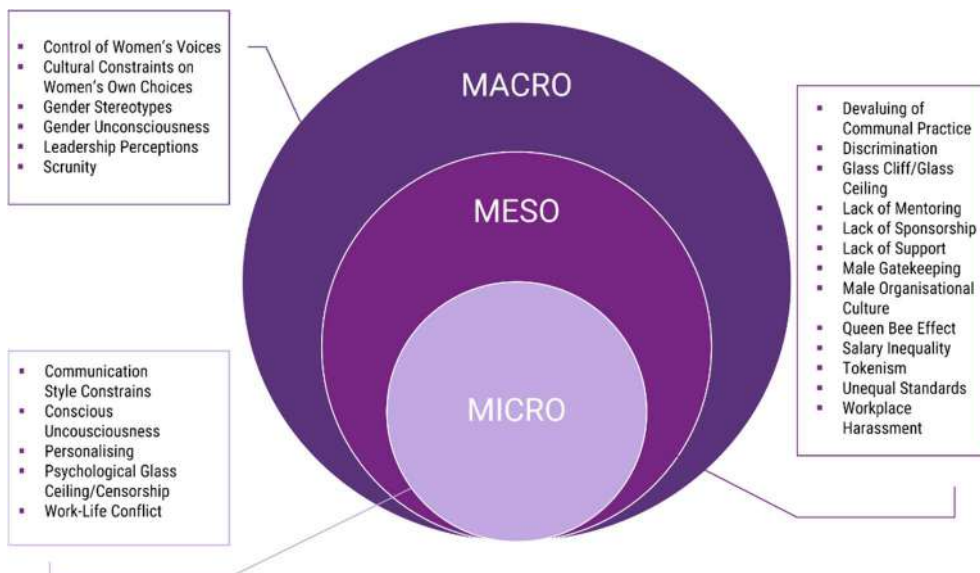


Figure 12: Gender-Based Barriers (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, p. 187)

By showing many different institutional and micro-political processes and interactions that can present barriers to diversity in gatekeeping positions, this model also illustrates why the "fix the women" approach is not suitable for achieving structural change (Hodgins, O'Connor et al., 2022, p.2). As a practical approach, based on the previous chapter, we will present a method of quotas, according to the cascade model as applied in HEIs in Germany. We will also present the promotion of gender competence as a component of the institutionalisation of gender equality.

4.1 Quota and cascade model

Promotion of diversity in gatekeeping positions requires concrete measures and objectives, as well as a timetable in which these can be achieved. "For this, gender equality plans are an important steering document in which measures and goals are documented. Gender quotas can be a tool to actively increase the proportion of women. Gender quotas are an established tool to increase the share of women in areas where they are underrepresented. This also applies to leadership and decision-making positions (Lipinsky & Wroblewski, 2021). Related to this, there are different types of quotas, some of which are already laid down in higher education laws or national regulations, such as in the gender composition of decision-making boards. In addition, quota systems can also be used as a voluntary tool in organisations to set benchmarks for gender equality and to document progress.

We will present the cascade model here, as it can be well adapted to the requirements and individual characteristics of different subject areas at HEIs. Here we draw on our experience with the cascade model at RUB, as it is one of the central steering instruments for institutionalised gender equality work.

The cascade model is a dynamic and adaptable gender quota: "The implementation of the flexible cascade model for all recruitment and promotional activities and dedicated resources at the highest level to drive change can also indicate a structural commitment" (O'Connor & Irvine, 2020). In Germany, the cascade model was introduced in 2009 as a voluntary steering instrument of gender equality to increase the proportion of women in the context of vertical segregation at the academic levels.

Figure 13 illustrates the cascade model using the example of the proportion of women in typical academic careers in the EU-27 average in 2018 (She Figures, 2021). For simplicity, we focus here on the average vertical proportion of women and do not differentiate horizontally, by subject group.

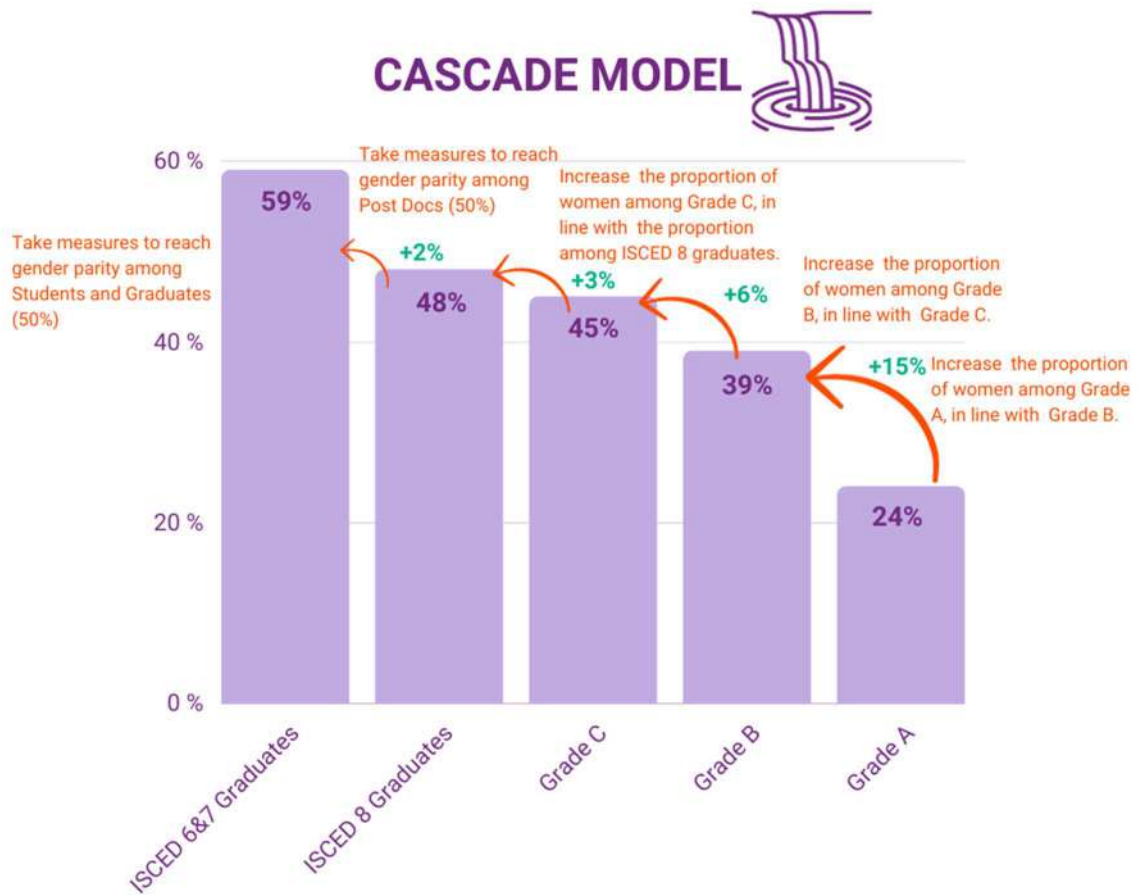


Figure 13: Cascade Model; proportion of women in typical academic careers (She Figures, 2021)

The figures illustrate how the proportion of women decreases with increasing academic degrees, as represented by the image of the cascade. Among undergraduates (ISCED 6&7), the proportion of women is 54%, rising to 59% among graduates (ISCED 6&7). In terms of parity, the aim here should be to increase the proportion of successful male students (and these proportions must be differentiated by subject group). In contrast to the above-average figures for female students and graduates, the proportion of women among doctoral and postgraduate students drops to 48%, which is slightly below average. As the career progresses (Grade C - Grade A), the proportion of women decreases steadily in all EU countries until it reaches an average of 24% below Grade As, which is the highest position in "which research is normally conducted within the institutional or corporate system" (She Figures, 2021, p.179).

While the goal of representation and equal participation is to achieve gender parity, this goal also requires proceeding step by step and climbing back up the cascade to provide achievable intermediate steps. The cascade model, which can be dynamically adapted to the respective proportions in the discipline groups and developments over time, helps here. In our example, we take as a target the increase of the share of women in Grade A

positions according to the difference to the share of women below Grade B, which is 15%. Grade B are "all researchers working in positions that are not as senior as the top position (A) but definitely more senior than the newly qualified PhD holders (C) (i.e. below A and above C)" (She Figures, 2021, p.179). The cascade model requires that the proportion of female professors corresponds to that of the pool of potential applicants, i.e. women at the next lower career level (Grade B, e.g. assistant professors) in the same discipline (Lipinsky & Wroblewski, 2021).

The increase in the proportion of women in Grade B is accordingly based on Grade C and in our example is 6%. Grade C is defined as "the first grade/post into which a newly qualified PhD (ISCED 8) graduate would normally be recruited within the institutional or corporate system" (ibid). Accordingly, targets are defined up to the point where parity is achieved.

On the one hand, this example illustrates how high the variance of gender shares in different phased academic careers is on average in Europe. It also points to the need in HEIs to differentiate the cascade model horizontally, i.e., to adjust it in terms of gender distributions within faculties and subject groups and to align it with the national average in the discipline group.

Gender quotas often trigger resistance and reservations and are suspected of violating the principle of meritocracy. The accusation is that it is not a merit for which a candidate is hired, but the quota that must be met (Hodgins, O'Connor, et al., 2022, p.11; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014, p.485). On the one hand, these reservations express the "myth of meritocracy", which refers to the belief that individuals rise to positions of power, influence, and success primarily based on their merit or individual abilities and qualifications. On the other hand, the criticism expressed on the instrument is directed as a suspicion at the individual female applicant or job holder and thus expresses an implicit bias.

The orientation towards the cascade model removes these concerns by orienting itself towards concrete and department-specific or horizontal variables. This makes it easily adaptable to the conditions in different subject areas and the reference value of the proportion of women in the underlying career level becomes tangible for the subject areas. Accordingly, it removes the ground for reservations about quota regulations.

At the same time, the implementation of quota regulations is a strongly quantity-oriented equality procedure. This promotes the increase in the proportion of women as such and makes it possible to define clear targets. It therefore is an important approach that must be flanked by qualitative measures, fostering awareness for gender and diversity, as we elaborate in the next section.

4.2 The need for gender and diversity competence

As we explained in the previous section, common objections to gender quotas are a good example of why it is meaningful and necessary to develop gender and diversity competence within the institutional framework. The implementation of awareness-raising trainings has been emphasised as an effective measure to act upon inequity in leadership and decision making in RESET's "Joint roadmap on establishing institutional standards and frameworks for recruitment and career promotion towards equality, diversity and scientific excellence" (RESET, 2022a, D6.1).

The concept of competence includes a dimension of knowledge as well as of action, which is guided by this knowledge. "Competence" bundles the requirements that a person must fulfil in order to be able to perform certain tasks adequately and efficiently. A competent person knows and can do something particularly well (Straub & Niebel, 2021).

Accordingly, gender competence means that, in general, members of institutions become aware that organisations are not genderless, and that their structures and the relationships in which staff, students and knowledge workers are interwoven are gendered (Acker, 1990; 2006). In particular, those in gatekeeping positions need to be aware of common mechanisms that create barriers for women and people belonging to minorities in society. They need to be able to recognise that barriers play out in different areas of the organisational fabric, such as recruitment, especially in areas and at career levels where women are underrepresented (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Lipinski & Wroblewski, 2021; Van den Brink, 2015).

Diversity competence needs to be linked to the acknowledgement of differences (of any kind) based in the plurality of lived experience (Arnold, 2018). It can be defined with Hoffmann & Verdooren (2018) as:

"the ability to turn experienced strangeness that occurs as a result of a difference of any kind into an experience of familiarity that enables the participants of the interaction to continue their pursuit of interactional goals. This competence is not a 'magic bullet' quaranteeing successful interaction, but it is and important precondition for eventual success"
(Hoffmann & Verdooren, 2018, p. 21).

Dimensions of diversity are illustrated in Figure 14 (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003). They show how various factors serve as facets of diversity in different life situations and experiences. These factors are linked to cultural and historical developments and are subject to norms and values (Straub & Niebel, 2021).

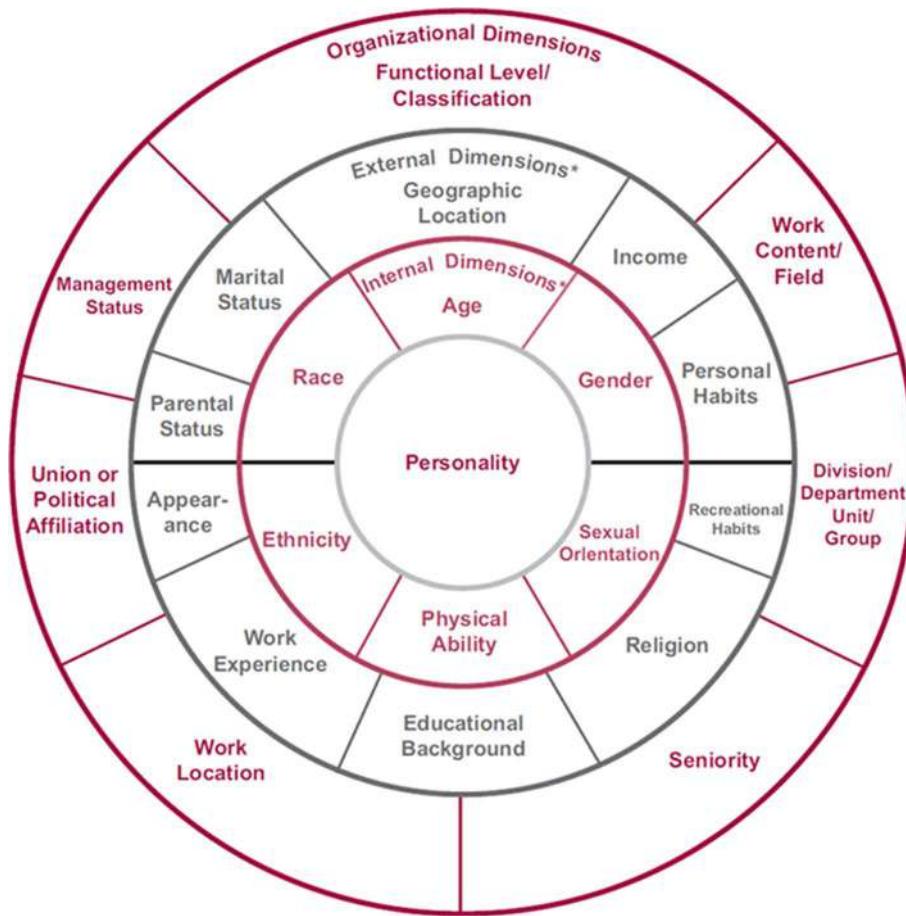


Figure 14: "Diversity wheel" (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 2003)

Institutionalising gender and diversity competence also means not placing the burden of equal participation issues solely on those, who are intrinsically motivated to promote it, and actively concerned by it (Ahmed, 2009). Instead, elements of gender and diversity, in line with the concept of competence, become significant, guiding frames for knowledge and action in various institutional practices, such as recruiting new talent and top researchers, managing teams and staff, or supporting students.

"Knowledge of stereotyping and unintentional gender mechanisms is essential for good selection processes. Assessors and gatekeepers could be trained to be more aware of these potential differences, to reflect on them, and be more aware of how they influence their assessments (Fine et al., 2014). [...]"

In other words, the existing rules of the game need to be questioned and transformed. Reflecting on cultural stereotypical images can be an important strategy in optimizing selection and evaluation outcomes. It

is, therefore, advisable to have a critical reflection on the socially constructed nature of "excellence" (Van den Brink, 2015, pp. 198f.).

Similarly, institutionalising gender competence means recognising that increasing the proportion of women in gatekeeping positions alone does not lead to a cultural change towards a diversity-promoting culture: "the extent to which the participation of women in higher education management also leads to the structural and cultural changes is essentially a matter of chance. It depends on whether these women have prior gender or gender equality expertise or at least recognise and are open to gender equality issues" (Wroblewski, 2019, p. 181).

RESET develops different measures to promote gender competence:

- RESET's project team at the university of Lodz developed a training program for the RESET consortium within the framework of Work Package 4 (WP 4) – "*Train communities towards equality and settle new standards.*" The deliverable 4.2 – "*Comprehensive gender equality/gender mainstreaming training toolbox useful for different trainee groups or national contexts*" (RESET, 2022c) provides tools that can be adapted to various national, institutional, and socio-cultural contexts, while also meeting the diverse needs of the RESET partners. It is based on the intersectionality and co-design approaches, and intends to facilitate both project-wide and context-specific applications. The overarching aim of the training is to actively involve the entire university community in fostering an academic culture of equality, transcending the boundaries of affected groups and adopting an inclusive approach. By this, it covers many different aspects of gender and diversity competence, such as enhancing diversity and inclusivity culture, preventing discrimination and unconscious bias, as well as gender dimension in research and building positive relationships and enhancing positive attitudes toward diversity at work.
- RESET's training approach follows the principle that training should build upon existing resources at both the European and national levels. The toolbox is based in the identified needs of RESET universities and on a report elaborated by UL (D.4.1, "*Comprehensive gender equality/gender mainstreaming training toolbox useful for different trainee groups or national contexts*"; RESET, 2022), which examined training activities from previous and ongoing EU-funded sister projects, as well as the existing training opportunities at each GEP-implementing university (U.Porto, UBx, AUTH, and UL).
- RESET's Toolbox on gender-neutral and diversity oriented institutional communication (Niebel, 2022), developed by RUB, aims to contribute to the further development of gender- and diversity-responsive communication at universities. The toolbox focuses on spoken, written language as well as on visual representation of gender and diversity. All tools are designed to question

established forms of communication in universities and to transfer impulses for more inclusive communication into practice. It was updated in 2023 and contains new elements and tools, based on the further developments of practices and measures that foster inclusive communication at RESET universities. The update includes a new chapter on diversity in communication, with a focus on non-discriminatory communication in relation to anti-racism, dealing with disability and LGBTQIA+ identities.

- RESET's "Joint roadmap on establishing institutional standards and frameworks for recruitment and career promotion towards equality, diversity and scientific excellence" (RESET, 2022a, D6.1) entails recommendations for the implementation of institutional standards and frameworks on occupational gender equality and diversity. At a structural level, it encourages institutional change of practices, and the development of concrete procedures and frameworks for application and selection criteria in a perspective of diversity, gender equality and excellence, an important field of intervention in regard to gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making positions. Hereby, it provides concrete tools and guidelines to impulse equality in recruitment and career advancement. Furthermore, it draws awareness towards the needs for training of decision-makers and employees regarding inclusive human resources practices.
- In our „ Joint statement on our engagement for equality, diversity and excellence in research “ (RESET, 2022b, D6.5) the top management of RESET's institutions declare their engagement for an inclusive understanding of scientific excellence. They commit to RESET's objective to eliminate any discrimination or barriers in the research community. Fostering diversity and equal representation in decision-making bodies and processes is a central goal of the statement. As key processes for achieving these goals, the statement highlights “the regulation of the composition of boards and committees, training and communication activities tackling the issue of underrepresentation of women and other representatives of marginalized groups in decision-making bodies” (RESET, 2022b, D6.5, p.3).

5. Guidelines

What processes, measures and steps are needed to promote diversity in gatekeeping? Based on the analyses and lessons learnt that precede this section, RESET develops 8 focus areas that form the basis of these guidelines. They are designed to guide and support change processes that affect the promotion of diversity and gender equality in universities. In doing so, they can support actions and goals set out in GEPs, as well as provide an opportunity to develop them further.

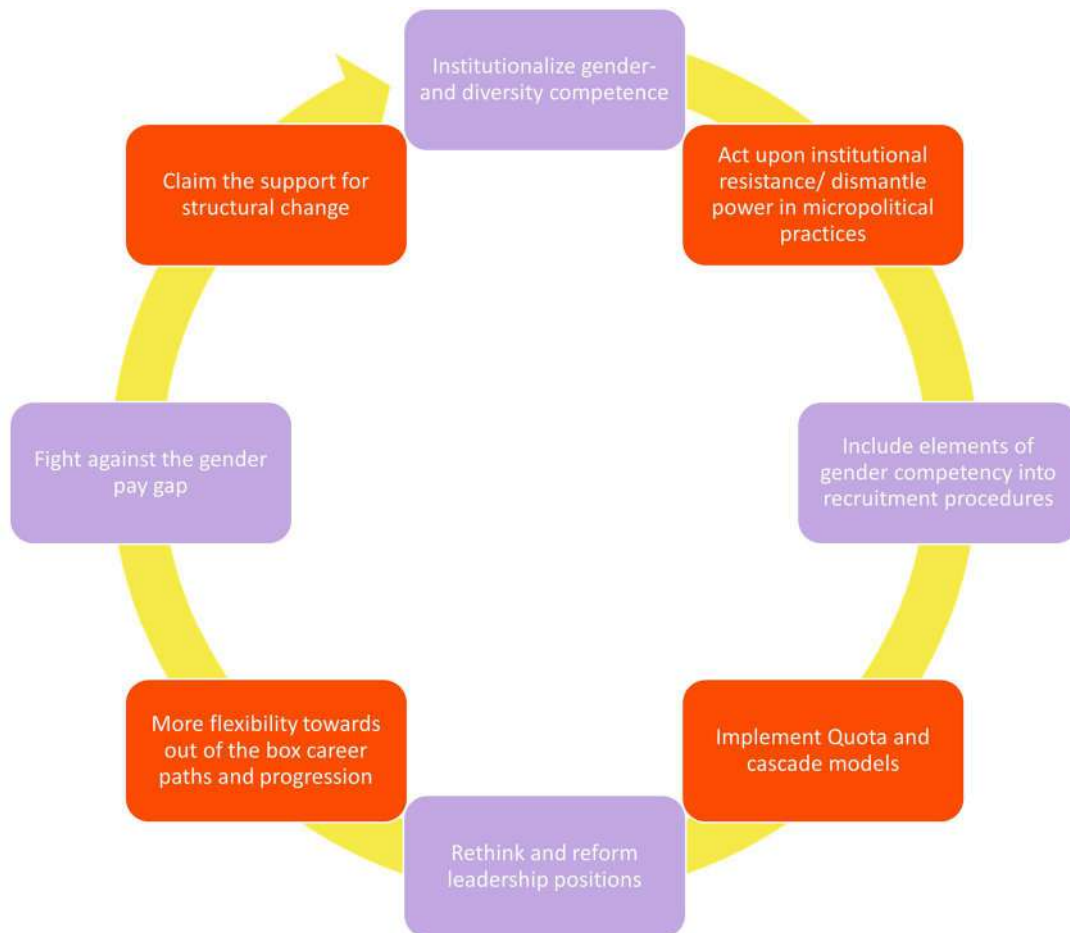


Figure 15: Overview on the Guidelines

5.1. Institutionalise gender and diversity competence

What are gender and diversity competences?

As we highlighted in section 4.2, gender competence refers to members of institutions understanding that organisations are not gender neutral, but that gender dynamics are present in their structures and relationships. Diversity competence involves recognizing and acknowledging differences based on different life experiences and situations. In particular, people in key positions should be aware of barriers to access and progress in the institution, especially for women and people with minority identities or backgrounds (e.g., socioeconomic status; disabilities; sexual orientation), and contribute to the structural dismantling of these barriers within their sphere of influence in order to improve equity in HEIs. This concerns areas such as recruitment, especially in positions that do not reflect the diversity of qualified individuals for these positions.

Institutionalising gender and diversity competences means that this actionable knowledge is encouraged by top management, taught within the institution, and integrated into institutional practices such as hiring new talent, managing teams, promoting staff and supporting students. This approach includes an intersectional perspective towards hierarchical, cultural and relational dimensions.

How can it be institutionalised?

- *Development of Trainings*

To cultivate a more inclusive academic culture, universities need to develop and implement tailored training programs that address central aspects of gender and diversity competence. These trainings can raise awareness, dispel biases, and provide the knowledge and practical strategies needed to drive change and address people in gatekeeping positions as well as other members of the university.

Within the RESET project, in the dedicated WP 4 a training program has been developed that is based on the identified needs in RESET universities, and by examining developments in other EU-funded sister projects addressing training for gender and diversity competences. The program follows the “train-the-trainers approach”. The goal is to enhance the competencies and capabilities of prospective trainers and instructors, enabling them to effectively plan and deliver training sessions across the eight modules, whether at their own university or in other HEIs.

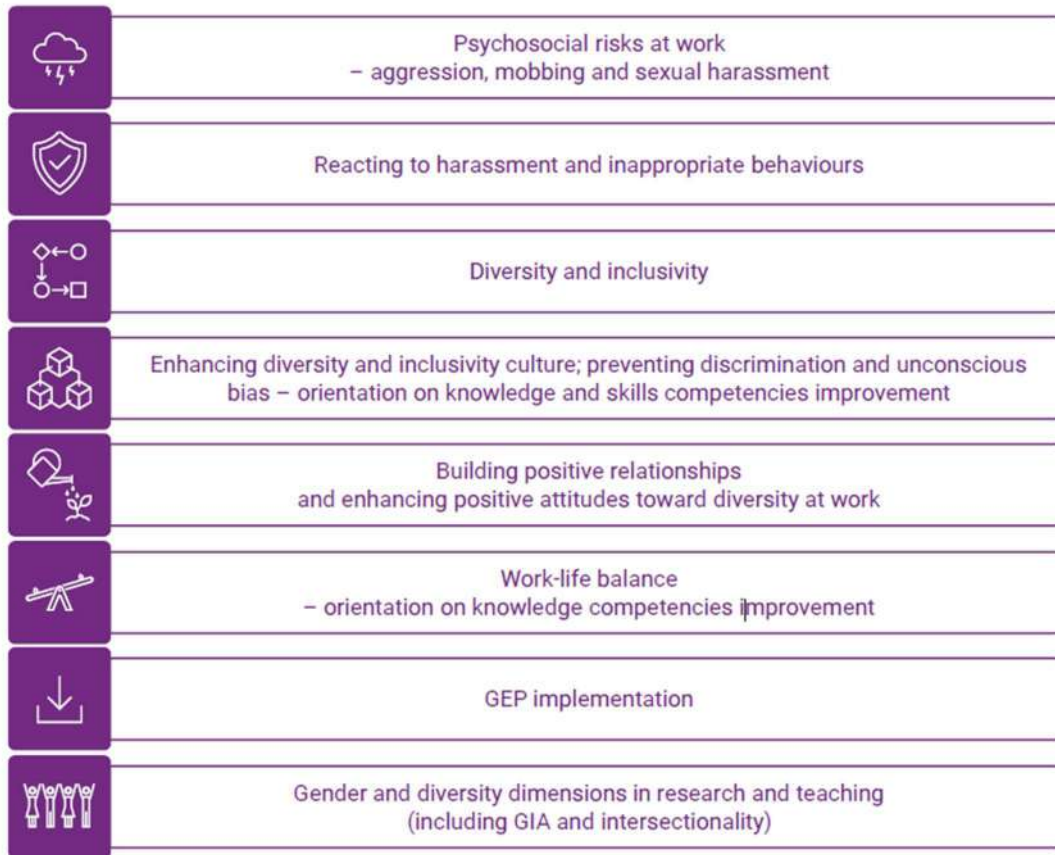


Figure 16: Example of training modules for gender and diversity competence (RESET, 2022 D4.2)

- **Institutionalise gender mainstreaming measures**

Gender competence is based on practical knowledge that guides action and should also be mirrored in organisational measures. Gender Equality Plans play a central role here as a strategic document that bundles measures for gender mainstreaming. GEPs should specify concrete measures aimed at promoting diversity in gatekeeping positions. These can concern selection processes and the composition of committees, transparency and information management with regard to career development and corresponding processes, or quota regulations in areas in which women are underrepresented (see also point 5.3).

In addition, specific instructions for action with regard to gender-sensitive leadership are to be incorporated into the training of (new) executives.

Introduce Gender Equality Officers: Beyond the development of training and the adaptation of gender competence into processes of recruiting and the requirements of leader-

ship positions, the instance of Gender/Equal Opportunities Officer(s) is important to accompany and critically evaluate the progress of the efforts. At universities where the office of the EOO does not yet exist, the implementation of elected EOOs promises to provide a central structure that allows for the further development of equal opportunity developments and practices and, in case of doubt, intervenes in favor of the progress of equal opportunity measures. Making this office permanent ensures the sustainability of equality measures. With regard to micro-political processes in important strategic decision-making situations, such as the appointment of new professors, EOOs perform a crucial function by representing the principle of the best possible selection with special attention to equal treatment and fair evaluation of suitable candidates.

What kind of institutional impact is expected?

Shaping Institutional Culture: Implementing gender and diversity competence into processes and structures, such as recruitment procedures, composition of decision-making bodies and increasing sensitivity to the effects of inequality contributes to stimulating cultural change in institutions. The office of EOOs bundles the structuring of these efforts into a designated body that does not relieve the institution itself of its efforts, but rather ensures that the advancement of gender equality and anti-discrimination is made permanent.

Getting Gender and Diversity Knowledge into the Institution: Another essential aspect is the integration of knowledge about factors of diversity and gender throughout the institution. This involves making sure that all members of the organisation, from leadership to staff, possess a solid understanding of gender and diversity dynamics, biases, and the importance of promoting equity. It ensures that decision-making, policies, and practices are informed by this knowledge and become more inclusive.

Addressing Questions of Gender Equity and Diversity Sustainably: Institutionalising gender and diversity competence also implies a commitment to addressing questions of equity in a sustainable manner. This goes beyond short-term initiatives and involves creating strategies and practices that promote diversity and gender balance and fairness across all aspects of the organisation in a structural way. It entails regularly assessing progress, adapting policies, consulting the target groups, and the continuous development of equity efforts.

5.2. Act upon institutional resistance and dismantle power in micropolitical practices

Resistance is part of institutional change processes of any kind. Forms of resistance are particularly directed at practices of advancing gender equality and diversity (Benschop & Verloo, 2011; FESTA, 2016; SUPERA, 2021). They aim to maintain the status quo and avert change processes.

Micropolitical processes are relevant in terms of diversity in gatekeeping positions at the points where informal networks can significantly influence formal decision-making processes through the status and informativeness of the people working in them or have more chances to get into decision-making positions or jobs through interconnectedness. As institutional gender research shows, these networks are primarily male-structured and reinforcing the gender-biased system (Hodgins, O'Connor et al., 2022; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

Measures to overcome the impact of micropolitical influences:

- Clearly defined processes in procedures for selecting individuals into gatekeeping and leadership positions can reduce micropolitical influences.
- Transparency and traceability in processes increases the chances of getting more diversity in gatekeeping positions. Disclosure of candidate expectations creates better opportunities for individuals who are less likely to benefit from network effects and leads to better candidate evaluability.
- Involving EOs in conducting these processes increases equal opportunity for all candidates.

5.3. Include elements of gender competency into recruitment procedures

RESET's "Joint roadmap on establishing institutional standards and frameworks for recruitment and career promotion towards equality, diversity, and scientific excellence" (RESET 2022a, D6.1) promotes the development of specific procedures and frameworks for application and selection criteria. It highlights, that it is particularly important to establish standards and frameworks for promoting equality and diversity in gatekeeping, leadership, and decision-making roles to drive institutional change.

Why recruitment procedures?

- People in gatekeeping positions need to know and act based on gender competence. To ensure this, it is necessary to check the gender competence of applicants (e.g. training certificates; questions or tasks related to gender equality and diversity in leadership responsibilities).
- This applies equally to members of selection committees. They also need gender competence in order to make adequate decisions.

How can it be institutionalised?

- Develop a set of questions and tasks to ask applicants in recruitment processes in order to get to know more about their perspective on these questions.

Examples:

1. Can you share specific examples of initiatives you've undertaken in your previous leadership roles to support the professional growth and advancement of female staff members?
2. How have you addressed gender-related challenges or biases within your team or within your institution in the past? Can you provide an example of a successful outcome resulting from your efforts?
3. In your previous leadership positions, how did you promote work-life balance among your team members, especially for employees with caregiving responsibilities? Can you share any strategies you implemented?
4. How do you plan to continue supporting work-life balance and female staff in this leadership role, building upon your previous experiences?
5. What do you believe are the key challenges employees face in achieving work-life balance in today's academic/scientific landscape, and how would you address these challenges in your leadership role?
6. Can you share any personal experiences or values that have influenced your commitment to supporting female staff in leadership positions?

Figure 17: Examples for questions targeting gender competence in leadership in recruitment

- ➔ Also train members in decision-making bodies on what to look for, what are the do's and don'ts in the search process.
- ➔ Provide guidance on what to look for in decision-making processes to promote diversity.

What are the expectations?

- ➔ Raising the gender competence improves the professionalisation of the committee members. By this, it helps mitigate resistance to gender and diversity-oriented measures.

- Training committee members, especially the chair, can lead to a higher level of transparency in the recruitment and selection procedures. This increased transparency does not only ensure fairness but also helps in identifying and addressing unintended effects on women in the process (Van den Brink, 2015).
- By developing and adapting transparent gender- and diversity oriented policies in recruitment procedures, universities can set an example for others by fostering inclusive practices and redefining the concept of quality to be more inclusive and diverse. This impact could extend beyond individual institutions, influencing broader changes in academic recruitment practices (Van den Brink, 2015).

5.4. Implement Quota and Cascade Models

In some institutional contexts, quota systems are required by law. Furthermore, they can be an appropriate organisational governance tool to increase the proportion of women in gatekeeping and leadership positions (Lipinsky & Wroblewski, 2021; O'Connor & Irvine, 2020).

Because quota implementation is a framework for gender equality with a strong quantitative orientation, it is an effective way to monitor the evolution and success of the increase in women's representation. At the same time, increasing women's shares is not sufficient on its own as an equality measure, as we have highlighted in relation to gender competence factors. It is, therefore, important to treat this approach as a building block alongside qualitative measures (e.g. fostering gender and diversity competence, see sections 4.2; 5.3; explore new models of leadership, section 5.5).

What is the cascade model?

The cascade model is a form of quota that can be well adapted to the needs and circumstances in different departments at universities, as we elaborate in section 4.1. It is not based on a target quota, but on a pool, from which qualified female candidates can be selected. Thus, it is a flexible gender quota that can affect vertical segregation in the academic levels. Consequently, the proportions of post-docs or assistant professors are decisive for the percentage of female professors. As well as the proportion of female students for the doctoral students, and so forth.

How can it be institutionalised?

- GEPs are the governance documents, in which quota regulations become a measure to foster and monitor gender equality in decision-making positions as well as other groups in the university.
- Institutions can introduce the cascade model at the level of faculties and departments and therefore develop target agreements with these organisational units.

- By interlocking measures that span the whole university and are used and implemented locally, all organisational units are entrusted with the development and review of these measures.

What are the expectations?

- The scheme of the cascade model is readily adaptable to circumstances and needs of different disciplines. Since the reference parameter is the proportion of women in the underlying career level, this becomes tangible for departments.
- Departments are also required to monitor the proportion of women at the various career levels and compare them with the benchmarks of the corresponding discipline at a national level. This encourages the role of departments to strengthen women's percentages.
- By basing this form of quota regulation on the pool of potential female applicants at the career level in question, the typical resistance to quota regulations is undetermined.

5.5. Rethink and reform leadership positions

With regard to the attractiveness of leadership tasks and positions, there is a need for flexibility, in life and career phases, in which the compatibility of work and family plays a role, as we learned in the co-designing sessions in RESET.

One model that meets this need is **topsharing**. This refers to the sharing of leadership functions in a leadership tandem (Watton & Stables, 2016). This makes it possible to perform management functions on a part-time basis, by sharing the leadership tasks among two leaders. There are various models for dividing up working time and reducing working hours according to needs, as well as dividing working time between different days of the week. This creates different types of part-time leadership: (1) almost full-time part-time leadership models, (2) job sharing or job splitting models, and (3) cadre models (Karlshaus, 2016; Karlshaus & Kaehler, 2017a). Thus, the part-time is based on the needs of the individuals working in topsharing. In many cases, their combined work contingent adds up to more than 100% of a full-time position, increasing the overall amount of time available to perform leadership duties.

An advantage for the institution is that knowledge is secured even if one of the leaders is absent due to illness or other personal reasons. In addition, there is a higher peak-time capacity. Furthermore, creativity, motivation and productivity can be increased in this model by the exchange within the team (Karlshaus, 2020). In addition, newcomers can gain experience with leadership functions, reflecting on their role and the requirements in the team and supporting each other.

Hereby, topsharing can be seen "as a way of growing and developing leadership capability within organisations and helping to address some of the challenges of retaining and increasing the number of women in senior positions." (Watton & Stables, 2016, p.67)

What are the expectations?

- "A 'monitoring' of the implementation of flexible models could not only keep an eye on and measure the development of the implementation itself, but also the longer-term work-related effects, but also effects with regard to career developments, equal opportunities, or even the family commitment of male managers, for example." (Gärtner et al., 2016).
- The topsharing model can make the requirements of management and leadership tasks in academic operations more flexible and thereby positively influence the conciliation of family and career development. Due to the cooperative and temporally flexible character of the model, it can be well suited to enable career advancement opportunities for persons with care responsibilities. Therefore, it can be a tool that contributes to diversity in gatekeeping positions.
- Beyond the opportunities it offers, the model carries the risk of disadvantaging individuals in the top sharing in a 'presence culture'. Also, gendering the model could have the adverse effect of locking women into topsharing even if they do not aspire to this model, or informally introducing a hierarchization of leadership models. These effects must be prevented through educational work, critical monitoring of the models, and tailored adaptation (Karlshaus, 2020; Troger, 2022).

5.6. More flexibility towards out of the box career paths and progression

What is the pool from which gatekeeping positions are recruited? In order to sustainably anchor diversity here, the quantitative increase of persons belonging to minorities or of women in leadership positions alone is not sufficient. Focusing solely on the characteristic of being female, or focusing on other diversity characteristics, runs the risk of selecting candidates who confirm to the "myth of merit".

Instead, institutions must work to break down barriers at the earlier career stages to increase diversity in the pool of potential candidates and strengthen the diversity of the institution itself. This must also be measured in the selection of individuals for leadership and management positions.

What do we mean by this?

- The measurement of performance, aptitude, and suitability is often done along established and standardized parameters, which perpetuate notions of merits and accomplishments in ways that contribute to systemic exclusion.

- Accordingly, new parameters must be created in light of gender and diversity competencies that favour diversity.
- This includes the consideration and appreciation of upward educational mobility and more diverse career paths. This also means not making the age of candidates as an indicator of performance.

How can it be institutionalized?

- The procedures for recruiting people to higher career levels should be reviewed for their diversity sensitivity. This should include consideration of whether practices in the process encourage systemic exclusion or represent supposedly objective criteria.
- Standardization of procedures can include a greater openness to questions that allow applicants to openly reflect on hurdles they have faced in their careers.
- The steps of the process and what is expected from them should be communicated to applicants as openly and transparently as possible.

What are the expectations?

- Reflecting on common practices in recruiting staff and measuring suitability can reveal the risk of a systemic exclusion.
- A revision and adaptation of criteria and parameters is not to be equated with arbitrariness in the procedures; on the contrary, it allows concealed expectations to be revealed. This allows to reflect and overcome the ways in which supposedly neutral and objective requirements act as barriers.
- In addition, institutions increase the chances of applicants to participate in gatekeeping positions. As a result, they tap into new potential and talent.

5.7. Fight against the gender pay gap

What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap refers to the discrepancy between an average income of men and women within the same occupation. As such, it is an expression of gender inequality in the workplace. The absence of women in decision-making positions in academia contributes to the effect of the gender pay gap (Rosa et al., 2021). At the institutional level, transparency needs to be outlined in terms of salaries and any discrepancies. For this purpose, it is necessary to monitor salary structures and career advancement practices in order to be able to intervene if necessary. Impacting the gender pay gap is a key indicator of change (O'Connor & Irvine, 2020).

How can it be institutionalized?

As highlighted by Galligan et al. (2021), developing and conducting gender pay audits at the institutional level can reveal and track potential inequities in salaries and salary progression related to career stages:

- An internal, institutional gender pay audit (Galligan et al., 2021) can reveal gender differences in hourly rates and annual earnings among academics in the corresponding senior levels.
- It makes sense to extend the monitoring to examine pay progression, i.e., to make it comprehensible how salaries change as a result of promotions or appointments to a higher scale - and whether there are gender differences in this respect.
- The length of time spent at career levels can also be a gendered factor contributing to the gender pay gap.
- Provisions for special retention or increment arrangements in addition to the usual promotion or salary increment arrangements pose particular risks for equal pay decision-making and should be assessed as part of the gender pay audit process.

What are the expectations?

- By making visible gender differences in pay at different career stages, the need for readjustment becomes transparent and lends weight to measures to prevent and eliminate the gender pay gap.
- The process itself may present obstacles in sorting out data by gender (Galligan et al., 2021). This may indicate that procedures should be developed and applied to identify earnings by gender.
- Accordingly, initiating the transparency of incomes and the gender pay gap can help improve gender monitoring.
- Salary transparency can also improve the negotiating basis of salary for persons who are less familiar with salary negotiations. This can have a positive impact from an intersectional perspective, as both first generation academics and women tend to negotiate less salary.

5.8. Claim support for structural change

Institutionalising practices and policies to promote equal opportunities in terms of diversity and gender also requires support from the community, especially from those who are themselves involved in decision-making processes or hold gatekeeping positions.

In particular, an active support of male members of the institution also plays a role here. Research on the functioning of male-structured networks and micropolitical practices



shows that forms of homosocial structures and relationships in universities play an essential role in decision-making (Kurchenko, 2022; Riegraf & Weber, 2017; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

How can it be institutionalised?

- Effects such as "mobilising masculinities", that is, the way in which male-structured networks can exert micropolitical influence on decisions, should be prevented by transparent and clearly structured processes (e.g. in hiring procedures for professors, filling leadership positions or nominations for list positions in committees).
- Institutional requirements shape the profile of requirements for filling and holding positions and offices, especially those with leadership tasks. The formulation of requirements should refer to the promotion of equal opportunities in the sphere of action.
- Applicants for positions with leadership functions or gatekeeping positions should be examined with regard to their consciousness and awareness of the influencing factors that can be an obstacle to equal participation for all within a work team or in their own area of activity.
- Providing training content that educates about these and other effects of homosociability creates visibility for the issue and makes it more tangible.

What are the expectations?

- Gender and diversity competency training raises participants' awareness of factors that contribute to inequality of opportunity. This awareness can increase the willingness to act in a supportive way and to stand up for equal opportunities. Linked to this, members of committees and decision-making boards are sensitised to the ways they have an impact.
- The institutionalisation of requirement profiles for people in gatekeeping positions creates a comprehensible and verifiable framework for holding these positions. In this way, they become binding and can be demanded.
- The verification of attitudes and knowledge with regard to awareness of issues related to diversity and gender can contribute to the personal fit of applicants for leadership and gatekeeping functions.
- Both transparency for procedures and the design of requirement profiles with regard to equal opportunities promote the sustainability of diversity orientation at all levels.

6. Conclusions and Outlook

The lessons learnt and guidelines that have been elaborated in this report of the RESET project are based, on the one side, on the measures that RESET's GEPs 1.0 have established in relation to the promotion of gender equality in gatekeeping and decision-making positions. On the other side, they have emerged from the co-designing sessions that have been conducted in different RESET institutions on the topics of leadership, gatekeeping and decision making.

In the measures and fields of action outlined, we have followed the premise of "fix the institutions, don't fix the women" in order to initiate the sustainable change processes that have a long-lasting impact on promoting diversity in gatekeeping positions. Accordingly, this document aims to guide and specify the further development of measures that are implemented in GEPs.

Based on the results of the co-designing sessions and the review of research on inequality in gatekeeping positions, it is evident that measures to be developed have to be applied on different levels and have to be interlinked. They refer both to economic factors, such as the reduction or prevention of the gender pay gap and to increasing the proportion of women in gatekeeping positions. Both goals are in line with the principle of equal opportunity in terms of participation and representation at the decision-making level of organisations. This field of action requires the monitoring of gender proportions and gendered wages in the various career functions, as well as the development of measures aimed at recruiting women and fighting against the gender pay gap. In this regard, we have presented the cascade model as a variant of gender quotas, a quantitative instrument for increasing the number of women in areas in which they are underrepresented, in line with their professional groups. Furthermore, with the method of the gender pay audit we provided an approach to foster wage transparency and equality.

Increasing the proportion of women alone is not yet a sufficient measure to anchor equal opportunities, especially considering that it falls short from an intersectional perspective. Accordingly, there is a need for qualitative measures that promote and demand gender and diversity competence from members of the organization - especially at the level of people in leadership positions and with decision-making power. We suggest the development and implementation of training that enable participants to recognize barriers and their causes and to contribute to their mitigation.

Furthermore, we refer to the necessity of making the recruitment of persons in management and gatekeeping positions transparent for all applicants, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, designing job profiles in such a way that they include elements of diversity and gender competence. Particularly with regard to measures that target diversity beyond the gender component, it is necessary to develop policies and measures "that



counter multiple disadvantages, rather than providing add-on policy measures that are typical of many diversity perspectives” (Rosa & Clavero, 2021, p. 19).

Linked to this is also the design of leadership positions themselves, together with the explicit and implicit requirements that are attached to them. Especially in connection with a high workload in the scientific field and the demand for constant presence, leadership positions are often not compatible with personal needs and requirements. Both the performance of leadership tasks in the light of these requirements and the exercise of gatekeeping positions in terms of responsibility for employees require the adaptation and testing of models that reduce the burden on scientists and other employees and include a higher fit in terms of work-life balance and the performance of care tasks.

Here, institutions are called upon to test best practices in family-friendliness and flexibility, and other models. In our guidelines, we presented the model of top-sharing as a variant of the development and reorganisation of management positions, which takes into account the need for flexible working hours and career development. Accordingly, it is also necessary to develop measures to "humanise" the criteria in recruiting or promotion processes and to adequately consider factors of parental leave, care or illness in evaluation processes and to separate them from professional performance and competence.

In RESET's WP6, we will continue to focus on the issue of career progress in academia as well as on family-friendly institutional practices and policies, which also played a central role in the co-designing sessions on leadership and gatekeeping. It is apparent that the issue of balancing career and family consistently plays a central role for respondents in relation to all topics of career development, recruitment, and perceptions of gatekeeping positions.

With this report, we support HEIs in their development and implementation of gender equality strategies based on our analyses, reflections and guidelines. We emphasize the critical role of the "fix the institutions" approach to overcome existing barriers on the institutional and structural dimensions of HEIs. This approach is essential to facilitate sustainable and long-term institutional and cultural change that enables the principle of equal participation, recognition, and representation of all members of our societies in the scientific system.

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