

# Gender Equality Plan: A tool to act upon work-life articulation in Higher Education Institutions

Carolina Garraio[1], Jorge Peixoto-Freitas\*[2], Sara Isabel Magalhães[1], & Marisa Matias[1]

[1] Center for Psychology at University of Porto, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto  
 [2] Rectory of the University of Porto  
 \*developed in first-author sharing

## Introduction

- RESET project aimed to put gender equality and diversity at the center of political decisions in Higher Education Institutions. Within this framework, the University of Porto (U.Porto) has designed its first Gender Equality Plan (GEP) - UP Equality.
- UP Equality focused on identifying and addressing gender-based disparities. A multi-method approach, incorporating surveys, focus groups (Garraio et al., 2022), and secondary data analysis (Peixoto-Freitas et al., 2024), was employed.
- This poster presents data concerning the work-life articulation of U.Porto workers and the corresponding action measures developed during UP-Equality (the first GEP) and during the second GEP aimed at minimizing the impact of family care on career progression.

## Method

### Multi-method approach for data collection:

- surveys,
- focus groups,
- secondary data analysis.

### Co-design methodologies for GEP development:

- facilitated the creation of targeted actions aimed at fostering a supportive work environment for parenthood and work-life balance.
- systemic enrollment in the measures implementation

## Discussion

Surveys and focus-group data reveal different perceptions regarding the impact of parenthood on men's and women's careers, namely **women perceive a more negative impact of becoming mothers** and this impacts translates to career progression and to the appointment to management positions. Moreover, workers at U.Porto described **lack of support received** from the University during parental leave and their **difficulties in returning to work after taking a leave**.

Secondary data highlighted **inequalities in the use of parental leave** by men and women (36 vs 152 days) and also that **women have more absences than men due to family support** (5.6% vs 3.6%).

The implementation survey conducted in 2024 indicated that work-family articulation issues were among the most significant areas of inequality. Respondents provided valuable suggestions and reflections, which guided the development of new measures for the forthcoming GEP.

GEPs are a strategy for advancing gender equality and improving work-family articulation in HEIs. By continuously assessing and refining these plans, **U.Porto aims to create a more inclusive and equitable academic environment**.

## Conclusions

U.Porto's experience underscores the importance of ongoing evaluation and stakeholder engagement in achieving gender equality.

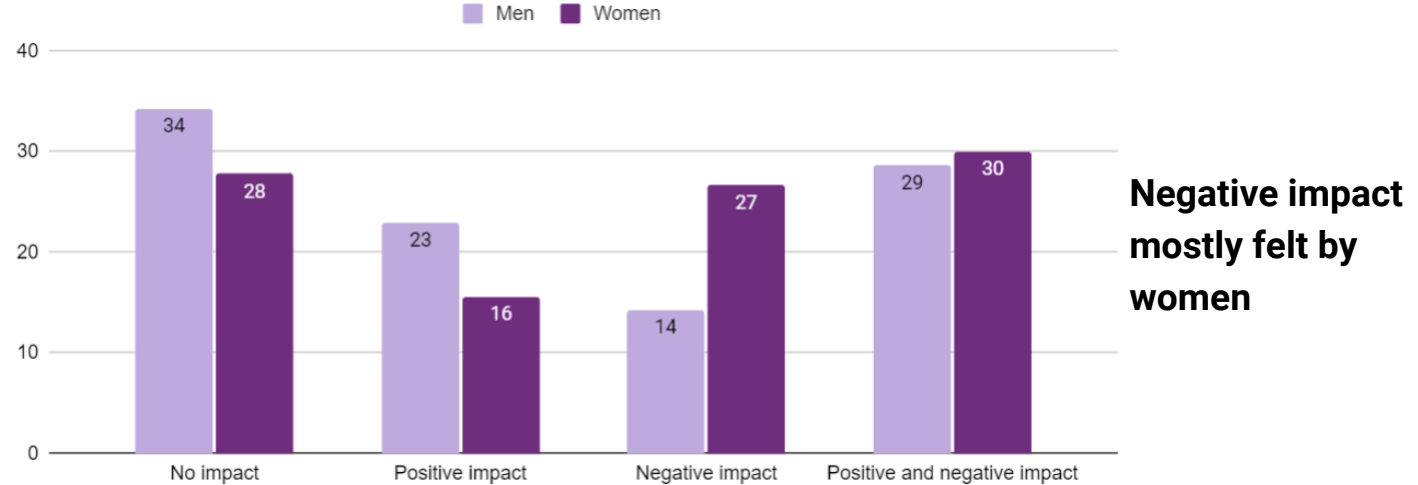
The insights gained from this process inform the development of effective measures that support both career progression and family responsibilities, thereby fostering a balanced and equitable work environment in higher education.

## References

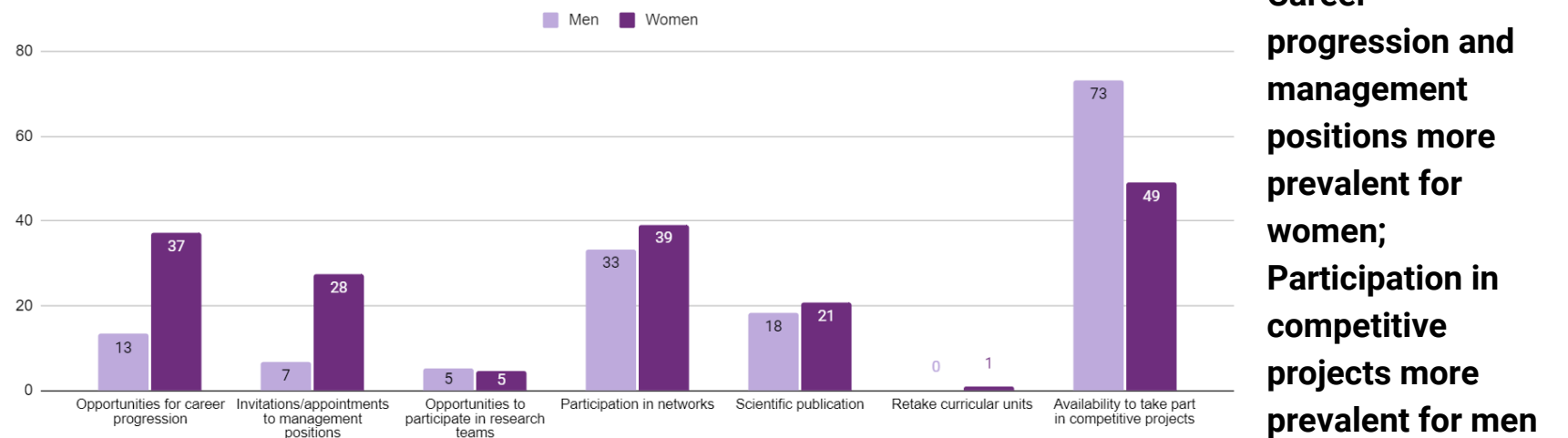
- Garraio, C., Peixoto-Freitas, J., Magalhães, S. I., & Matias, M. (2022). Work-Life Conflict Among Higher Education Institution Workers' During COVID-19: A Demands-Resources Approach. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 7. <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fsoc.2022.856613>
- Peixoto-Freitas, J., Magalhães, S. I., & Matias, M. (2024). RESET: Infografia U.Porto 2023. Universidade do Porto. <https://repositorio-aberto.up.pt/handle/10216/159913>

## Selected Findings

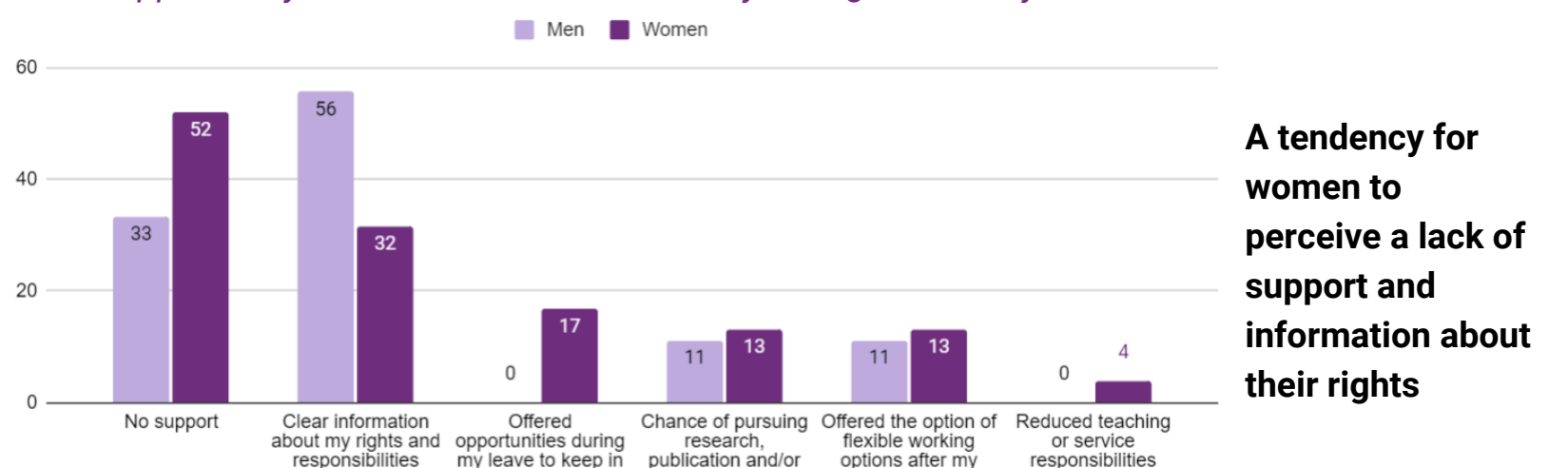
To what extent do you think becoming a mother/father has impacted your career?



In which areas did you perceive a negative impact?



What support did you receive from the University during and after your leave?



Topics of intervention that are a priority to tackle in future GEP

