GenPORT

PB9 - Integrating the gender dimension into research content for research performing organisations: Where to start?
March 2017

For those countries identified as having no measures and below EU average levels of implementation.[1]

This policy brief provides evidence-based, concrete recommendations for national level policy makers on how to integrate the gender dimension into research content for research performing organisations (RPOs).[2]

Why is this important?

Integrating the gender dimension into the research process and content means integrating sex and gender analysis into research in all its phases.[3] It improves the quality, validity and relevance of research and its outcomes that take into account the realities of men and women equally.[4] For example in the field of health, both men and women need to be included in clinical trials for drug development. Integrating sex and gender analysis into the research process saves human lives and prevents the waste of economic resources. It also helps to ensure that research reflects the needs of a diverse population thereby increasing the relevance of its outcomes.[5] It may also contribute to opening up more market opportunities by diversifying the experiences and expertise in the innovation process.[6]

The European Commission's major research funding programme Horizon 2020 (2014 -2020) prioritises the integration of gender/sex analysis in research and innovation (R&I) content as one of its main objectives to improve greater gender equality in science.[7] Member states have been invited to create a legal and policy environment and provide incentives to strengthen the gender dimension in research programmes.[8] Various national initiatives have been already undertaken to encourage greater sensitivity and the integration of sex and gender analysis in science knowledge and practice.

These include developing and providing support for:

- policies and strategies promoting the integration and analysis of sex/gender as research variables and determinant of outcomes
- research funding programmes aimed at advancing cross-cutting impact of sex/gender aware and responsive research
- guidelines and training materials for researchers and research managers
- guidelines/training for assessment and evaluation of gender as component of excellence and impact in research proposals and projects
- recommendations and/or models for university STEM curricular

development and researcher training in relevant fields.[9]

The results of the ERA survey 2014 indicate that on average 44%[10] of RPOs which are ERA compliant[11] include the promotion of gender dimension in research content.[12]

What is the extent of the problem?

This policy brief addresses specifically those countries that have no national measures to promote the gender dimension in research content. At the same time less than 44% (EU average)[13] of their research performing organisations include such a gender dimension in research content. In concrete terms, this "Where to Start"- brief targets specifically Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus Hungary, Poland, Finland and the UK.[14]

In general progress made to date has been slow and difficult to measure.[15] The ERA Facts and Figures 2014 reports that whilst more countries are including the gender dimension in research content and programmes – the level of implementation is 'insufficiently supported'.[16] The share of institutions doing so also varies significantly amongst Member States. Of those countries identified as having below average levels of implementation without measures – the percentage of RPOs that include the gender dimension in research content ranges from 2% in Cyprus to almost 44% in the Czech Republic. [17]

What are the options?

National level policymakers have real leverage to encourage the integration of the gender dimension into research content and higher education curricular as they can set research and funding priorities.[18]

Some countries have developed legislation- either domain specific or pushing forward a gender mainstreaming approach throughout public bodies.[19] In France, the 2013 Act on Higher Education and Research includes Article 53 which supports gender research in priority areas of research programming.[20]

In some cases ministries and national level agencies carry out the role of approving and undertaking the quality control of curriculum – this can offer real leverage for introducing the gender dimension into curriculum.

Another approach has been taken by the NAS in the U.S – which has developed recommendations for integrating the gender dimension into university curricular development in scientific and technological fields.[21]

The GenPORT e-discussion confirmed that it is often researchers themselves that are unaware of the fact how important it is to take gender analysis in research

into account. Gender training and awareness raising remain important tools to improve the situation. Facilitating the sharing of best practices developed at the institutional level has been an approach taken by some national level agencies. DFG in Germany has developed a 'good practice' toolbox – that covers institutional examples of integrating 'gender in research and academia' – with sub-levels 'core research areas' and 'knowledge transfer'.[22]

Recommendations

- Ensure that sex/gender in research content is taken into account and encouraged in national research programmes, from programme design, throughout implementation and evaluation.
- Encourage the inclusion of the sex/gender dimension into different research topics at the outset and ensure it is dealt with systematically. This is an important part of the research process which will determine whether or not sex/gender is a relevant factor.[23]
- Consider the possible sex/gendered effects of allocating resources to specific areas or topics by for example examining the sex/gender composition of potential beneficiaries.
- Develop a systematic method of assessing the sex/gender dimension in study design and project impact.[24]
- Encourage the integration of the sex/gender dimension in graduate schools and post- doc programmes.
- Take into account who is responsible for quality control of graduate school curricula, and the role of the science education ministry in the formulation of graduate schools curricula in order to best target efforts to include the sex/gender dimension.
- Allocate resources to raise awareness and carry out training for researchers, evaluators and management (top and middle) to promote a gender sensitive research- including integrating it in PhD training curricular and the development of guidelines.[25]

Further Reading

Further, in-depth reading concerning the integration of the gender dimension into research content for research performing organisations is available through the following three publications: the Gender-Net *Compendium of national initiatives on the integration of the gender dimensions in research contents*[26], the report by the League of European Research Universities (LERU) *Gendered Research and Innovation: Integrating Sex and Gender Analysis into the Research Process* (see footnote 15) and the *Gendered Innovations* project (see footnote 3)

The GenPORT Gender Dimension in Research Content Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) Online Discussion

[1] Please see 'Gender and Science Policy Briefs: From "Where to start" to "How to innovate": An Introduction', for a description of the methodology used. Available at: http://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/pb_introduction_.pdf

[2] According to the ERA, a research performing organisation (RPO) encompasses any organisation conducting public research – specifically research with a 'public mission' (DG Research and Innovation, 2013).

[3] Schiebinger, L., Klinge, I., Sánchez de Madariaga, I., Paik, H. Y., Schraudner, M., and Stefanick, M. (Eds.) (2011-2015). Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering and Environment. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/research/gendered-innovations/.

[4] European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p34.

[5] European Commission, (2012b). Structural change in research institutions: Enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p.13.

[6] For an overview of gendered innovations please see http://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/what-is-gendered-innovations.html

[7] European Commission, (2014d). Guidance on Gender Equality in Horizon 2020, V1, February 2014.

[8] European Commission, (2012a). A Reinforced European Research Area: Partnership for Excellence and Growth, COM (2012) 392, p12.

[9] These categories are taken from the classification of national initiatives on the integration of the gender dimension in research contents developed by the Gender-Net Project.

[10] It should be noted that these figures concern RPOs which answered the ERA survey in 2014, which employ 515 000 researchers (around 20% of total EU researchers).

[11] ERA Compliant is defined as organisations which are implementing some or all of the ERA actions with high intensity. European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p10.

[12] European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p33.

[13] It should be noted that these figures concern RPOs which answered the ERA survey in 2014, which employ 515 000 researchers (around 20% of total EU researchers).

[14] European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. We recalculated the groups presented on p34- taking into consideration the percentage of RPOs that answered 'yes' as a percentage of all applicable organizations – and whether or not measures were identified. Please note that the sample for the ERA Survey was not randomly selected and the results have not been weighted due to a lack of substantiated information about the sample frame and the whole population of RPOs. "This means it is not possible to produce inferential statistics about the wider population". She Figures, 2015, Handbook p111.

[15] League of European Research Universities, (LERU), (2015). Gendered Research and Innovation: Integrating Sex and Gender Analysis into the Research Process, p13.

[16] European Commission, (2015a). ERA Facts and Figures 2014, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p28.

[17] It should be noted that these figures concern RPOs who answered the ERA survey in 2014, which employs 515, 000 researchers (around 20% of total EU researchers).

[18] League of European Research Universities, (LERU), (2015). Gendered Research and Innovation: Integrating Sex and Gender Analysis into the Research Process.

[19] Legislation has been passed ranging from domain specific legislation- in health (U.S., Italy), science (Spain), higher education and research (France) to taking a much broader gender mainstreaming approach (Sweden).

[20] Please see: http://cache.media.education.gouv.fr/file/Espace_Europeen_de_la_Recherche_-_E.E.R./13/3/Fiche-pays-France_2013_273133.pdf

[21] The Gender-Net survey of 40 of the most innovative national level and regional organisations – across Europe, and in the United States and Canada – demonstrates how only one of the national level organisations surveyed has developed recommendations/ models of how to integrate the gender dimension into curriculum. 30 out of the 38 organisations that answered "No" to this question actually specify that they do not have any responsibility for for university level curricula and few respondents knew of any universities developing such gendered curricular in the STEM field.

[22] Please see: http://www.instrumentenkasten.dfg.de/search?locale-attribute=en&filtertype=dimension&filter_relational_operator=equals&filter=science

[23] League of European Research Universities, (LERU), (2015). Gendered Research and Innovation: Integrating Sex and Gender Analysis into the Research Process, p18.

[24] Gender Summit 4 Europe 2014 GS7- See: http://gender-summit.com/images/GS7_Speakers/GS7_ppts/GS7EU_Programme_Public_SML.pdf

[25] European Commission, (2013b). Recommendations on the Implementation of the ERA Communication: Report of the Expert Group 2013, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, p43.

[26] Gender-Net, (2015a). Compendium of national initiatives on the integration of the gender dimension in research contents. Available at: http://bit.ly/29yqOTY