



CALIPER
Gender Equality in STEM Research

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY DESIGN AND DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE GEP

The UNILE Experience



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“ EU CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Horizon Europe sets gender equality as a crosscutting principle and aims to eliminate gender inequality and intersecting socioeconomic inequalities throughout research and innovation systems. In particular, European Research Area Priority 4 focuses on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research and innovation[1]. The objective is to foster scientific excellence and breadth of research approaches by fully utilising gender diversity and equality.

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) have been recognised as an effective gender mainstreaming tool for Research and Innovation (R&I) and Higher Education (HE) institutions to tackle the objectives of the European Research Area (ERA) via a set of actions implemented along with clear timelines and monitored through specific indicators[2]. This is evident as well, since a GEP is an eligibility criterion for acceding Horizon Europe funding for the R&I Institutions. Lastly, the Ljubljana Declaration[3] adopted in 2021 highlights the importance of GEPs as a tool “to achieve long-term and sustainable advancement towards Gender equality in R&I”.

Even though the institutional change strategy implemented through GEPs has had very positive impacts in many research organisations and has been a catalyser at national and EU level, there is still a need for a renewed approach[2] which will enable Institutions to go beyond the minimum requirements for a GEP as defined in Horizon Europe eligibility criteria for effectively addressing the persisting structural barriers in R&I institutions.

For this reason, the recent ERA policies on gender equality in R&I have expanded their scope to cover innovation at large aiming at connecting academic research with society and the economy. This is evident from the European Commission’s (EC) most recent policy directions on Gender Equality in R&I and institutional change that seek for ‘inclusive’ Gender Equality Plans referring to “intersectoriality” as one of the dimensions along with intersectionality and geographic inclusiveness.

The **H2020 CALIPER project** was designed and is now being implemented, (since 2020) addressing these three dimensions and in particular having intersectoriality as its key specific feature embedded in all steps of the institutional change process, from the internal assessment to the GEPs design and implementation phase, as well as in monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, drawing upon the experience of the CALIPER project which aims at addressing gender inequality in STEM in 9 RPOs and RFOs across the EU and which has been built based on the GEAR tool but offering an additional inclusive approach, this policy briefing highlights the main takeaways on the design & development, of an inclusive Gender Equality Plan. This particular policy briefing is the first version of three policy briefings to be developed focusing on the inclusive GEP process.

Elaborating on the different dimensions of inclusiveness addressed by the CALIPER project, this policy brief aims at guiding national stakeholders in Italy to effectively contribute to tailoring GEPs to specific domestic needs and developing quality assurance for GEPs.

“ THE ITALIAN CONTEXT: EXISTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

In Italy, gender equality is established within the Constitution and a set of ordinary laws which promote equal opportunities and contrast gender discrimination. A dedicated Committee was established for implementing the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunities of workers; however, members of such Committee do not receive any kind of remuneration for the work carried out and this inevitably affects the work of the Committee itself. No mechanisms at National/Regional levels are in place for promoting the under-represented gender in Higher Education, but public Universities (as all other Public Administration bodies) are requested to set up dedicated bodies (CUG-Comitato Unico di Garanzia) in charge of designing and implementing triannual Positive Action Plans, to eliminate discrimination and favour equal opportunities. One of the most relevant provisions in the law n. 125/1991[4], in which the Italian legislator introduced “positive actions” as tools to achieve equal opportunities and the distinction between “Direct discrimination” and “Indirect discrimination”. Some measures are in place for supporting maternity and paternity leave, but the more recent law introduced parental leave. Regarding childcare facilities, there is a structural lack in the availability of educational services for early childhood compared to the potential needs. STEM researchers as a whole are relatively balanced (44% women), but differences can be observed in the specific disciplines. The percentages of patent applications by women (11,63%) and of female founders in innovative start-ups (13.55%) are very low.

EVIDENCE ON YU GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES”

UNILE applies the national regulations on gender equality, which includes criteria for human resources. It also adopts the Triennial plan of positive action (PAP 2020-2002) to tackle issues that minimise disparity. The successful applicants for job positions are gender-balanced. However, on the majority it is men who have academic contracts on Grade A, B and C. The University does not train the members of evaluation/selection committee in gender sensitive research evaluation/recruitment. Also, most females seem to drop out due to the difficulty of coping with their work-life balance. UNILE offers both males and females a job with equal payment criteria that follow the national law. A great asset is that the institution has the Unique Guarantee Committee (CUG) that monitors gender equality all over the institution and writes an annual action plan called PAP (Positive Actions Plan). The institution has not established particular policies yet about the gender-neutral content of the communication material, but the CUG organises an annual training course on the non-sexual oriented use of language, with great resonance. The CUG is providing counselling for gender-based offences and harassment, and the Trusted Advisor is planned to be appointed to enhance its impact. In terms of intersectionality, it seems that the institution members are not fully aware of its meaning. UNILE does not apply any measures on the integration of gender into research content. As for the researchers, the share of females who lead a project is low across most departments, but the number of female scientists who are patenting research results

in STEM is progressively becoming equal to males over the years. UNILE organises an annual presentation of study courses to high-school students to help them navigate them through the curriculum. The institution has not yet taken any activities towards gender sensitive teaching. The institution is active in transferring results to the market. However, there are no particular actions for female researchers to transfer their research results into the market.

CALIPER **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE GEP**

Setting up the scene for the GEP design and development: Perform an analysis of external and internal conditions for the GEP development and acceptance. Identify potential gender biases and inequalities along with scenarios towards change using the proposed actions below:

Set up a GEP Working Group:

Suggested members of the GEP working group include staff members at different managerial levels including stakeholders from middle and high management.

Perform a qualitative and quantitative gender analysis:

Suggested areas for data collection include human resources, institutional governance, research, teaching, student services, transfer to the market, institutional communication, intersectionality, and sexual harassment.

Tools: set up intersectional indicators and targets to be achieved and collect sex-disaggregated data via desk research and interviews.

Set up Research & Innovation (R&I) Hub:

Adopting the quadruple helix approach gather information through desk research, network analysis and interviews with key stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations and identify the regional/national innovation ecosystems in which they operate adopting and engage them in the GEP design and development process.

Suggested members of the R&I Hub:

Stakeholders from academia and universities, industry, ministries/government, public sector, civil society organisations.

Develop strategic change scenarios to better understand and reflect key factors, the potential measures and the strategic collaborations with internal and external stakeholders that need to be leveraged with regards to the implementation of the GEP.

Suggested methodology: Develop three scenarios focusing on the identification of the maximum resistances, the maximum opportunities, and a mix of both in the areas mentioned in the gender analysis.

- For UNILE the most realistic was the third scenario, which was the only one developed.

Suggested main components of the scenarios:

Situation; Main problems; Objective(s); Possible solutions; Resistances (including strategies to overcome them); Opportunities.

Organise Multi Stakeholder dialogues

involving the R&I Hubs and assess the above-mentioned scenarios and investigate opportunities and barriers for collaboration with the regional and national stakeholders.

GEP design and development: Develop an inclusive GEP based on the knowledge and experience gained and the target set.

Recommended areas to focus when designing and developing a GEP in Italy, on the basis of UNILE's GEP design and development process:

Human Resources: The subtopics are recruitment and selection, working conditions and work/life balance and career support and development strategies. In order to improve the related policies, the proposed measures include: **Organisation of an analysis and evaluation study**, to highlight any critical issues in the current selection and enhancement practices. Internal assessment of the analysis should follow, to update the selection processes. **Elaboration and implementation of an "offer and request" online desk** for the identification and support of work life balance measures, to map the needs of the staff, regardless of gender. **Organisation of seminars for students and staff on prejudice and stereotypes**, and interventions to promote the visibility of female scientific excellence. Mentoring by selected professors is recommended. **Promotional material of role model interviews and women's success stories in academia and business.**

Institutional governance: To address the low representation of women in high level positions and decision-making bodies, the measurements include: **Annual review of Gender Budget** by the respective body through gender budget dedicated meetings. **Create a coordination group and build a dedicated team for the update and improvement of strategic actions in the GEP.** Relevant contact persons can be identified.

Institutional Communication: There is a need for gender neutral language in the internal and external communication content. Proposed activities include: **Creation of a web page in the institutional website**, dedicated to gender related activities, to be updated with documents, regulations, news on initiatives and actions in progress related to gender policies. **Organisation of a series of seminars on language and stereotypes** in the media and social media, targeting both the internal academic community and local external stakeholders (professional bodies, institutions, etc.) **Definition of the University Guidelines for the use of gender sensitive language** through recognition and modification of existing practices (administrative forms, University website, regulations, other forms of communication).

- **Staff training on the implementation of the Guidelines**, and internal dissemination, through the communication channels.
- **Implementation of the Guidelines** in institutional documents, templates, the website and other forms of official communication.

Research teaching and third mission: In order to adopt gender sensitive policies in research, teaching, and market transfer proposed measures include: **Support to transgender students** through information campaigns, training of the students and training of the academic and administrative staff on gender sensitivity in order to avoid discrimination and biases. **Interdisciplinary seminars on gender issues and feasibility study** regarding the introduction of a gender course. **Promotion and organisation of national and international workshops and conferences on gender topics. Training on implicit gender**

bias. The training methods and contents can be adapted to the audience (students, academic and administrative staff). Communication campaigns to advertise the initiative can complement. **Participation in shared projects** with institutions, panels, centres, professional associations dedicated to gender equality in academia and research.

Sexual and Gender Harassment:

Measurements to improve the methods of combating sexual harassment include: **Setting up a committee for detecting harassment cases**, bullying and discrimination. The committee can have informative meetings and dedicated contact channels to communicate its role to the staff and the students. **Drafting and approval of the Regulation on combating sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination** in the workplace and in education. **Publication of annual reports by the respective committee** and subsequent preparation of a document analysing the situation and planning interventions. **Dissemination of detailed rules on combating sexual harassment** through a cycle of meetings dedicated to the topic of mobbing and sexual harassment (definitions, consequences, reporting processes, awareness raising).

Intersectionality: To strengthen the culture of intersectionality in the institution, proposed measures include: **Implementing initiatives to raise awareness of the phenomenon of discrimination** among students in relation to gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, language, political opinions, sexual orientation. Activities can be implemented in conjunction with cultural events and open days dedicated to students and their relatives.

CONCLUSION

The present policy briefing describes the European and Italian national context as well as the institutional context regarding gender equality policies and practices as they have been depicted in the extensive external and internal analysis conducted within the context of the CALIPER project. Based on the abovementioned context, UNILE's GEP has been designed and described here for giving the example to other Research Performing Organisations operating in Italy for setting up their inclusive GEP.

“**REFERENCES**

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Learn more about CALIPER project and the Gender Equality Plans:



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