Gender equality and women empowerment in science and higher education

Summary of study results

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2022
FEBRUARY

INTRODUCTION

Statistics show that women's careers in the Lithuanian science and study system are still growing more slowly than those of men. Compared to countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the share of women in academic staff in Lithuania is one of the largest. During 2020/2021, women in Lithuanian universities accounted for 54% of the total academic staff. In terms of the number of doctoral graduates, Lithuania is among the leaders in Europe - women make up 58% of all doctoral graduates. Nevertheless, women hold less senior academic and scientific positions than men. In 2021, 31% of the rectors of Lithuanian universities were women; women also accounted for 34% of the board members of Lithuanian research and study institutions (RSI) and 40% of the professors. In some RSI, women earn on average less than men. As per STRATA data (2020), a woman with a doctorate earned on average a quarter less than a man with the same education. This difference is explained by the fact that a higher proportion of women in RSI hold lower-skilled positions than men: women are more likely to be in positions of an assistant, lecturer or junior researcher, and men are more likely to be in positions of associate professors, researchers, or senior researchers. The situation of women in RSI was also significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a need to find ways to reduce the impact of the pandemic on women's career prospects, to identify best practices and to share them.

In response to these needs, the Women Leaders Association (liet. Asociacija "Lyderė"), in partnership with Visionary Analytics, conducted a survey of Lithuanian RSI employees from April of 2021 through February of 2022 and prepared this study. The study is part of a project initiated by the Women Leaders Association, an organization that unites top female Lithuanian leaders to create a society without gender stereotypes and seeks to empower women to lead. The main goal of the project is to propose measures to improve women's career opportunities at Lithuanian RSI, to improve their working conditions and to achieve gender balance at the highest decision-making levels.

The aims of this study are:
1. To identify key problem areas directly related to the empowerment of women in Lithuanian RSI by highlighting them on a "map" of challenges and stereotypes faced by women pursuing careers in Lithuanian RSI.
2. To study the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's careers in the Lithuanian RSI and to systematize examples of best practice on how authorities addressed the challenges and constraints of the pandemic.
3. Make suggestions to RSI leaders and national policy makers on how to address the identified challenges and empower women for leadership.

Our empirical data collection tool was based on the methodology of the Horizon 2020 ACT Gender Equality Audit and Monitoring (GEAM) tool and other thematically relevant information. Based on publicly available data, a contact list of a total of 8,082 women working at RSI in Lithuania was generated. The survey was conducted by Visionary Analytics based on current BDAR requirements. The survey was conducted utilizing the Alchemer tool from June through September of 2021. A total of 891 respondents responded to the call and answered at least part of the questions.

First, this study is aimed at the Lithuanian research community – both research and administration employees, regardless of their career stage, and the heads and managers of RSI and their departments that make decisions on the implementation of institutional measures. The data and suggestions presented in the study should be useful for those who formulate and implement the Lithuanian science policy. We hope that this study, which sheds light on stereotypes relevant to various professions and contains suggestions on how to better realize the potential of women, will also be of interest to Lithuanian society in general.

This study was published in February of 2022. The entire study and its addenda are available on the Women Leaders Association website: www.lydere.lt.

GENDER EQUALITY AND GOVERNANCE OF WOMEN IN LITHUANIAN SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Stereotypes and an environment conducive to gender equality

The data of the survey show that **stereotypical attitudes, situations and beliefs are quite widespread in Lithuanian research and science institutions.** 9 out of 10 Lithuanian RSI employees who participated in the survey had encountered some stereotypical attitudes or beliefs at least once or several times in their lives. Only 52 (5.8%) of the 891 respondents indicated that they had never encountered any of the 10 stereotypical attitudes or situations presented in the assessment. Responses to open-ended survey questions suggest that RSI have a relatively high tolerance for stereotypical attitudes toward women (and men). It is particularly regretful that the women themselves (especially older ones) support these attitudes, ignoring the needs of other women and limiting their aspirations.

FIGURE 1. STEREOTYPIC ATTITUDES, SITUATIONS AND BIAS FACED BY WOMEN WORKING IN SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (percent)
How often do you personally encounter the attitudes, beliefs, or situations described below in the environment of the institution in which you work? N = 889
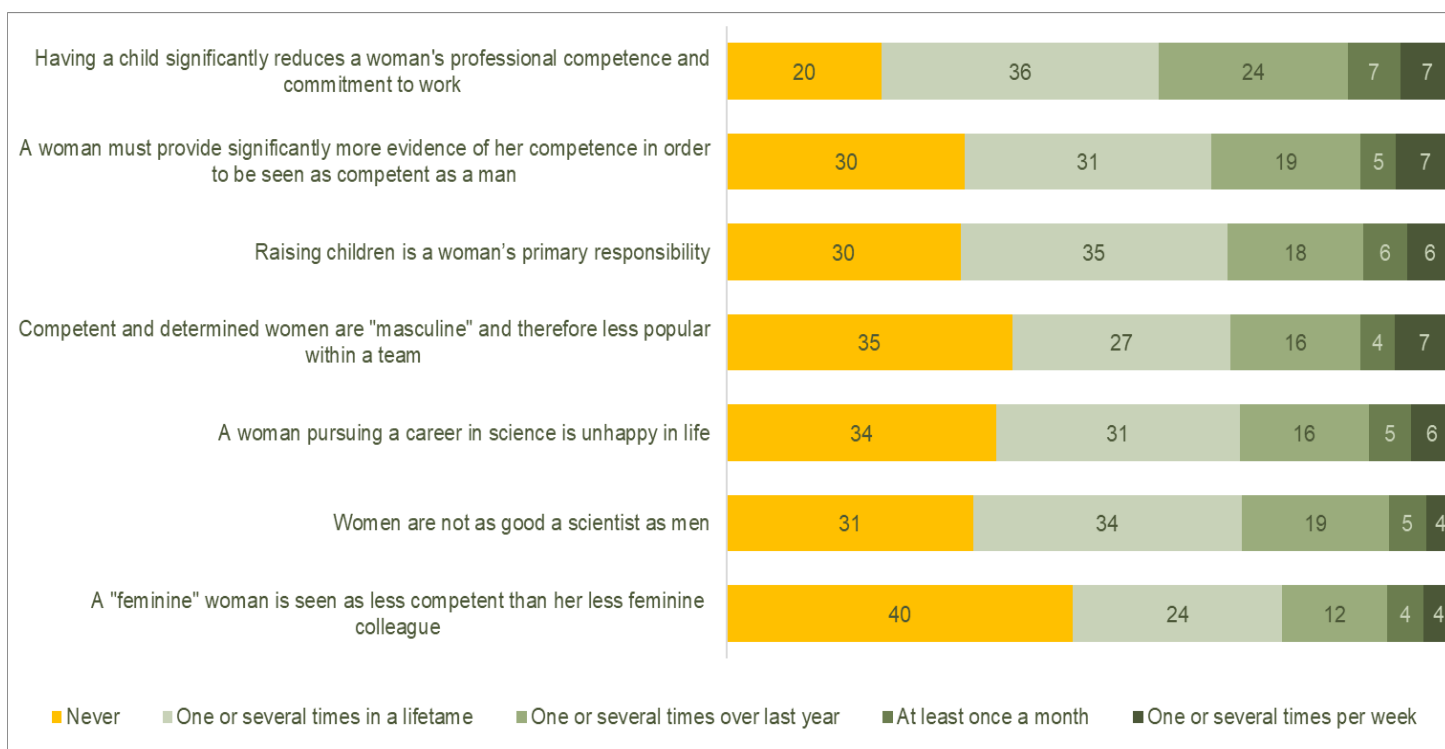
The most common stereotype is the "motherhood wall". Survey participants are most often confronted with the stereotype that having a child significantly reduces a woman's professional competence and commitment to work. Less than 20% of the survey participants had never encountered this bias. 40% of the respondents had encountered this stereotypical attitude at least once or several times in recent years. About a third of the respondents periodically (i.e. at least once or several times in the last year), and 11-12 percent have been constantly (at least once a month or more often) exposed to four other stereotypes: situations in which a woman has to provide significantly more evidence of her competence in order to be assessed as being as competent as a man; the notion that raising a child is the main responsibility of a woman; the view that competent and determined women are perceived as 'masculine' and are therefore less liked in the group; and the notion that a woman pursuing a career in science must be unhappy with her life.

The positive news is that, according to the survey participants, **gender-friendly practices in science and research institutions are slightly more common (or more noticeable) than those that lack gender equality.** For example, as

many as 58% of respondents believe that most of the staff in their institutions would feel the same if they were chaired by a man or a woman. However:

- Almost half (46%) of the respondents would not know whom to contact at their institution if they had questions about gender (in)equality or discrimination, and 28% do not agree that their institution has an effective gender equality policy.
- The situation of women and men in some of the MSIs differed – women were worse off than their male counterparts. One third of the women surveyed confirmed that the statement "In this institution, men are promoted faster and / or more easily than women (completely accurate, accurate or more accurate) aptly describes the situation at their MSI.

FIGURE 2. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT INDICATE AN UNFAIR ENVIRONMENT (PERCENT)
How accurately do the following statements describe the institution of science and research where you work? N = 886
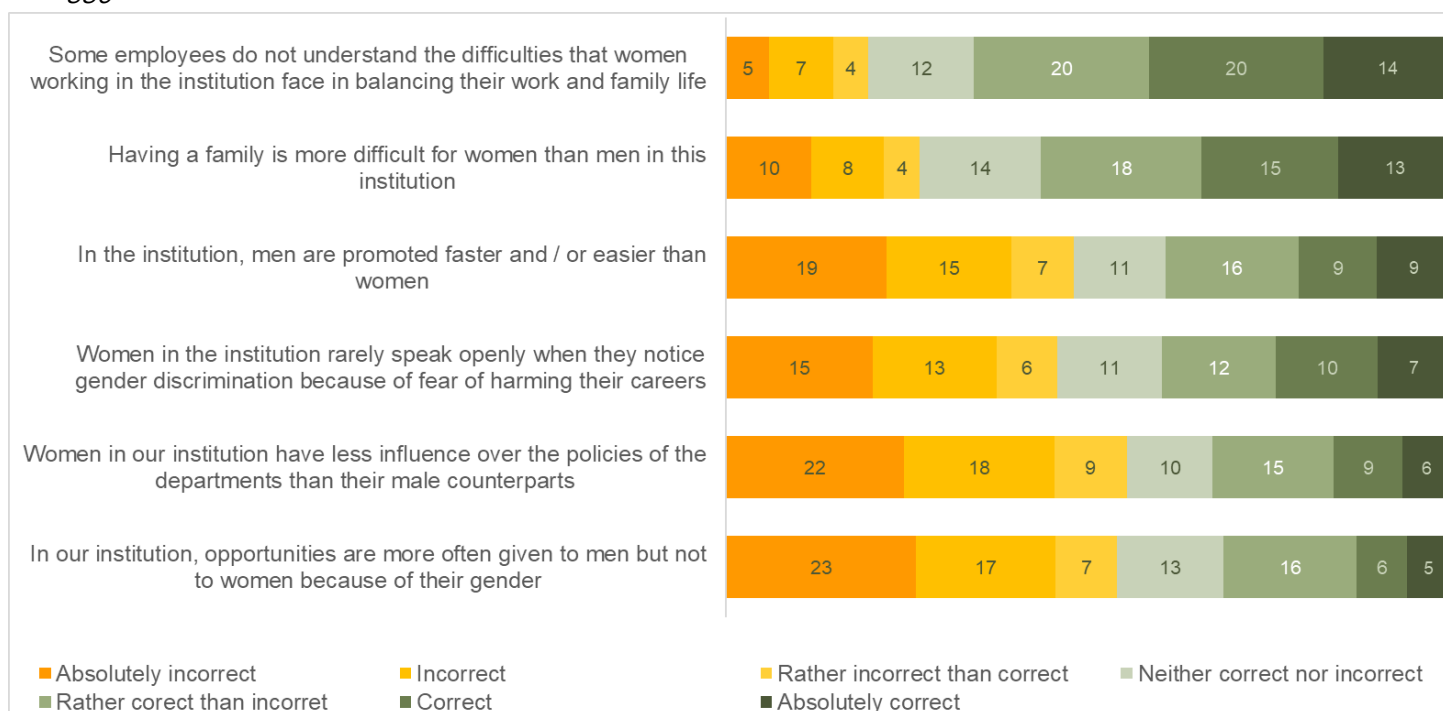
In addition, the working environment is least favorable for women raising children: as many as 54%. 46% of respondents agree, in whole or in part, that "some staff members do not understand the difficulties faced by women working in the institution in balancing their work and family life". - that "women in the institution face more obstacles than men in having a family."

According to the answers to the open-ended questions, women of different ages face different constraints in their work environments. For young women starting their careers, the situation is exacerbated not only by stereotypical attitudes, but also by legal reasons: a) unresolved status of doctoral and post-doctoral students, b) fixed-term contracts that do not provide guarantees in the case of maternity. In addition, MSI lacks transparency in workload distribution, accounting and pay, which often affects women. With age, women experience more discrimination in promotion.

Women's leadership and actions that determine their careers

Not only are the **results achieved in the field of science important for women's careers in science and research, but also whether these results are noticed and whether women receive support and encouragement.** The following factors have an exceptionally positive effect on the success of a scientist's career (in order of priority):

1. Results of independent research activities (e.g projects, publications, conference presentations)
2. Successful applications for research funding

3. Involvement in international scientific networks
4. Opportunity for receiving positive recommendations from foreign colleagues who work in research and study institutions.
5. Assistance and encouragement from colleagues, senior colleagues, and supervisors
6. Support of family and / or partner.

Two factors have a particularly negative effect on career success:

1. **A heavy teaching load**, which, although not necessarily limited to women, has a particularly negative effect on women's careers in the social sciences (as many as 42% of respondents in the field identified this factor)
2. **"Maternity Punishment"** for women who are / were on maternity, parental, adoption, or any other type of maternity leave. This is especially true among those who work in the natural sciences (as many as 38%). "Maternity Punishment" is strengthened or reduced by the level of support provided by family members and / or the ability to hire external assistance in caring for children or wards.

A woman's desire to be a leader in her daily work is enhanced by whether she feels comfortable using the power at her disposal. Although the majority of women surveyed have leadership qualities, **most do not feel comfortable exercising their power** (only 11% agree that this statement fully describes them). Since women in Lithuanian RSI hold fewer leadership positions, a limited interest in leadership positions and a lower self-confidence equate to a waste of women's leadership potential. This is likely due to (and beyond) the stereotypes that undermine women's self-confidence in science and research, such as a competent and determined woman being perceived as 'masculine' and therefore less liked in the team, or that a woman pursuing a career in science must be unhappy in her life. Stereotypes and beliefs fostered in childhood also contribute to this.

Gender equality and sociodemographic characteristics

Respondents working in the arts, social sciences and humanities are less likely to encounter stereotypical attitudes, situations and beliefs (or they might just be less noticeable). Meanwhile, respondents working in the fields of technology, agriculture, medicine and health, and natural sciences face stereotypes more often. Also, practices that lack gender equality are more common or more noticeable in survey participants who work in the natural, technological, medical, and health sciences than in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Perceptions of gender (in)equality practices are related to the age of the survey participants. **There is a tendency for younger survey participants to more ably notice stereotypical situations and attitudes** as compared to older survey participants. That is, the older the respondent, the more gender equality practices she notices in RSI; conversely, the younger she is, the less of them she notices.

Stereotypical situations, attitudes, and bias **are more often encountered by those working in academic positions** than in those working in administrative (or academic and administrative) positions. The more time a respondent spends at work, the more manifestations of gender inequality in RSI she notices; the more time a respondent spends on herself, the less gender inequality she notices in her environment.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic reduced opportunities for some women's careers and / or employment. The strongest negative effects of about half of the women surveyed during the pandemic were:

a. **Reduced research time**. Respondents were most likely to agree that women had (and probably still have) less time to do their research during the pandemic (average 5 points out of a possible 7; 52% of the 731 respondents agreed more than disagreed or strongly agreed that there were restrictions placed on their careers during the pandemic). Only 20% of the survey participants disagreed with this statement (completely) or disagreed more than agreed.

b. **The physical and psychological well-being of the survey participants deteriorated**. Half (50%) of the respondents agreed more than disagreed or (completely) agreed that their physical and psychological well-being had

deteriorated during the pandemic. 33-34% of the participants disagreed more than agreed or disagreed (completely).

c. Negative impacts were exacerbated by the fact that about half of the women **did not receive more help from their loved ones to reduce their increased burdens due to the pandemic.** An increased commitment to family and loved ones (e.g., school-age children with remote learning challenges) is also likely to have had an impact on the other negative effects mentioned above.

On the other hand, **the pandemic also had a positive impact on the careers and / or work activities of some wome**n. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents (fully) agreed that they had more opportunities to participate in international research activities (e.g conferences, training, networking), and about an additional third (31%) agreed or (completely) agreed that they had more time to write scientific articles.

During the pandemic, a woman's situation directly depended on the ability of research and education institutions to provide their staff with the tools they needed for their work and, in principle, on their attitudes towards their staff. **Some RSIs took great care of their staff, but experiences varied greatly from one RSI to another.** More than half (52%) of the respondents were more likely to agree that the RSI in which they worked *provided sufficient information and support to adapt to teleworking requirements* (eg training, counseling, etc.) (an average of 5 points out of 7 possible). 17% of all survey participants (completely) disagreed with this statement. However, half (50%) of the respondents were reluctant to agree that their RSI *provided sufficient care at home to accommodate their direct line of work* (eg provided access to a work computer at home, other supplies). More than a third (38%) were not inclined to agree that their RSI *provided adequate psychological support* (eg support, psychological counseling, etc.) - only one-fifth (20%) / one-tenth (12%) of the respondents agreed (completely) with these statements.

The survey did not find that any Lithuanian RSI paid any exceptional attention to the complexity of a woman's situation during the pandemic. However, the research document provides many examples of best practices taken by different RSI in response to the challenges created by the pandemic for all employees.

Institutional measures to promote gender equality

The survey provided a list of 35 institutional gender equality measures to respond to the key challenges facing women working in RSI. The following measures were ranked as being the most relevant (in order of priority):

1. **Measures to achieve a work-family balance and to facilitate childcare and other caretaking responsibilities.**
2. **Measures to ensure equal opportunities in the working environment.**
3. **Procedures for recruitment, selection and evaluation that ensure gender equality.**

The relevance of formal institutional plans (Gender Equality Plan and Gender Equality Coordinator) as well as educational measures came in relatively lower (although an assessment of the relevance of different measures differs). RSI employees do not believe that such measures are sufficient and do not believe that these measures alone can solve their specific problems. Therefore, an important message for RSI executives is that **formal measures to address current challenges will certainly not be enough.** On the other hand, as examples from some other countries show (eg Steinthorsdottir et al. 2016), educational measures and formal institutional plans can be relevant both in eliminating (often unconscious) stereotypes and in ensuring equal opportunities for women and men.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEADS OF RESEARCH AND STUDY INSTITUTIONS

In order to ensure gender equality and empower women in science and studies, structural changes need to be implemented that are not formal, but rather have a practical impact and address the challenges facing women discussed above. The aim of structural change is to adapt and clarify the internal processes of institutions, to eliminate stereotypical attitudes and situations, and to create a favorable work culture that meets the needs of both sexes and empowers women.

The following general principles should be taken into account when formulating and implementing gender equality policies in a specific RSI:

- Measures must be implemented systematically and consistently, taking into account their interrelationships and ensuring clear communication.
- Measures must be effective, address real challenges and must not create excessive bureaucracy. It is better to start with fewer but more targeted measures.
- A gender equality plan must take into account the context of that particular institution.

Below are key recommendations for RSI executives.

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
Institutional measures to mitigate the "Maternity Penalty", to achieve a work-family balance and to facilitate childcare and other caretaking responsibilities.	**Recommendation 1.** Formalize practices that ensure a flexible work schedule and / or a comfortable schedule for lectures, taking into account the limitations of employees who have child-rearing or other caretaking responsibilities. Best practice example: From 2012 one of the measures taken by the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) to promote gender equality is work-life balance. As part of its internal guidelines for parental leave, the SDU has initiated two specific measures: 1) to provide researchers with regular information on academic news during their parental leave, and 2) to offer researchers a period of time off after parental leave (if they are on leave). were six months or more). Internal guidelines have helped to create a favorable work-life balance in the organization and to shape more flexible career paths, especially for young researchers. More information: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear **Recommendation 2.** Establish a mechanism for the provision of affordable and high-quality childcare services (eg a children's playroom, kindergarten, etc. for staff children). *An example of best practice: The U.S. Department of Education's website has more than 1,500 colleges, universities, and technical schools listed that offer childcare services on campus. Most of them serve students, faculty, and staff in various proportions. The diversity of university childcare approaches and services is huge: individual centers, joint centers, orphanages, special needs programs, childcare resources and referral services, scholarships - to name just a few. Many universities provide comprehensive services that use a combination of these approaches. Services vary depending on the age of the child being served and the number of hours, days and months of service.* More at: https://www.campuschildren.org/assets/docs/advocacy/varieties%20of%20campus%20child%20care.pdf *Best practice example: Childcare facilities at the University of Bremen / campus:* *- Nursery (Entdecker-Kids and Entdeckerhaus). Offers care for children from 6 months up to school age. Places are reserved for the children of university staff, and Entdecker-Kids also offers a bilingual group. The Entdeckerturm is another establishment in Fallturme that provides childcare for children aged 1 and over.* *- Uni-Kindertagesstätte e.V. Full day childcare. Places at this institution are reserved for 1-3 year olds who are the children of university students and employees. In total, they provide care for 48 children in 6 groups.*

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
	- *Unikrümel, Wuselhöhle and Kinderland also offer childcare services exclusively to PhD students registered at the University of Bremen.* More: https://www.uni-bremen.de/en/research-alliance/welcome-center/stay-with-family **Recommendation 3.** Implement programs to promote women's careers in science e.g. - Enabling women on parental leave to pursue scientific and professional activities, including providing opportunities for laboratory work - Implementing measures (e.g scholarships, integration programs) that help women return to work after a career break, maternity leave, etc. *Best practice example: The Maternity Insurance Fund at the University of Queens in Belfast was set up following a recommendation from the Women's Forum Report on Gender Imbalance in Queens in 2000. The foundation was first integrated into the schools of science, engineering, and technology at the University of Queens in Belfast. The Foundation now operates in all schools and departments of the University. This measure also applies to contract / post-doctoral researchers, even if their grants do not take maternity leave into account. The fund allows all women working at the university to take maternity leave without having to worry about work and allows the manager / division to apply for funding for a temporary replacement.* More information: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/non-eu-countries/maternity-cover-fund
Institutional measures to ensure equal opportunities in the work environment and to create a socially just environment for full self-realization, including careers.	**Recommendation 4.** Implement transparent and fair pay criteria, job accounting (i.e., all academic activities, including publicity, external collaboration, etc.) and, as appropriate, payment procedures. *Best practice example: In order to reduce the gender pay gap, Loughborough University works with staff in separate departments to fully understand the available gender data; works with the trade union to identify additional measures for reducing the gender pay gap; training in unconscious bias has become mandatory for selection board members and senior management teams; the first Loughborough women's network, Maia, was set up.* More: https://www.lboro.ac.uk/gender-pay-gap/addressing-the-gap/ **Recommendation 5.** Implement internal procedures to ensure an equitable distribution of resources for research funding, laboratories, equipment, etc. *Best practice example: The Gender Budgeting in Academia toolkit is designed to help integrate a gender perspective into MSI's financial processes and procedures. The publication is based on reviews of the management methods and decision-making practices used by GARCIA project partners. The publication consists of 3 parts: information on gender budgeting and insights into why such a budget is important to MSI; recommendations on how to apply and implement gender budgeting in MSI activities; the third part provides examples of 7 gender budget implementation MSIs. The publication serves to promote gender equality through the development of new approaches to policy-making and decision-making in the accumulation and allocation of resources.* More: https://www.hi.is/sites/default/files/arnarg/gender-budgeting-in-academia-toolkit.pdf **Recommendation 6.** Ensure the visibility of women leaders and researchers in institutional communication (eg publicity for achievements and other initiatives),

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
	implement women's mentoring programs, thus empowering women for leadership.

Best practice example: Women's Researchers' Day at Iasi Alexandru Ioan Cuza University (Romania) 2013 was organized as an initiative of the EU-funded project STAGES. It is an annual initiative that aims to increase the visibility, voice, and recognition of women by presenting their professional profiles and rewarding the most relevant scientific results. It is a public event consisting of several different activities, such as the production and presentation of films entitled "UAIC Women's Profiles in Science", awarding prizes to prominent senior researchers and promising young researchers, as well as lectures, conferences, and training on gender equality for target groups (leaders / staff and young researchers) in the presence of recognized external gender experts. The main objectives of the event are to present examples of successful researchers, to create an international forum for the exchange of best practices and to contribute to the professional development of female researchers. The event takes place on the same day as European Women Researchers' Day, as a form of cross-border and inter-institutional cooperation promoting the common goals of gender equality in science, organizing mutually beneficial joint activities and disseminating them through international networks (eg EPWS, GenPort, CNRS, STAGES, UAIC). |
| Institutional measures for recruitment, selection and evaluation

 | **Recommendation 7.** Ensure equal employment and career opportunities: issuing gender-neutral calls for competition, using gender - neutral selection criteria, and transparent and gender-neutral certification / assessment procedures.

Example of best practice: In 2010, the Coordination Center for Gender Studies / Research and Equal Opportunities at the University of Graz organized a seminar on gender bias in staff selection procedures through awareness-raising and gender equality training activities. This workshop was later integrated into the general curriculum for academic management in 2013 as an optional module. This change has substantially increased participation in training. A bias seminar is not understood to be a specific gender equality activity; the workshop is conceptualized as a tool for staff selection procedures and therefore attracts academic staff who would not normally be involved in gender equality and diversity issues.

More information: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/austria/workshop-bias-sensitising-quality-assurance-personnel-selection

Example of best practice: The University of York, after an analysis of the gender pay gap, provided for publicizing in all job advertisements the fact that a professor's position may be held on a part-time or job-sharing basis; all candidates for professor positions are offered an interview with a recruitment adviser on work-life balance policies, available services and flexible working arrangements; assurances are made that selection committees are gender balanced in order to avoid unintentional bias.

More: https://www.york.ac.uk/media/abouttheuniversity/governanceandmanagement/documents/Gender%20Pay%20Gap%202020%20-%20FINAL.pdf; https://www.york.ac.uk/about/gender-pay-gap-report/ |
| Institutional arrangements to ensure gender mainstreaming at the highest levels of | **Recommendation 8.** Establish gender balance in the governance and decision-making structures of institutions (senates, rectorates, councils, directorates, committees, editorial boards of scientific journals, study project evaluation commissions, study program committees, etc.) both through awareness-raising |

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
institutional decision-making and, at the same time, equal access to senior positions in the institutions and equal participation in decision-making processes.	measures and, where appropriate, special temporary measures to encourage under-represented genders to participate in the governance of the institution. *Example of best practice: Since the establishment of the University of Ghent, the Board of Governors (Raad van Bestuur) has traditionally been male dominated. This board is the highest decision-making body of the university. In order to ensure gender balance on the Board of Governors, the University of Ghent in 2014 changed the procedure for electing the members of this board. Current electoral procedures require that its members be 40-60% gender balanced. Faculties must have at least one male and one female candidate. If the minimum of a 40/60 gender balance is not observed in the election, the candidate with the lowest number of votes from the over-represented sex (as compared to other faculties) needs to be replaced by the candidate with the highest number of votes of the other sex in the faculty. In 2014, for the first time in the university's history, in an instant, this new rule changed the male-dominated university board and gender balance was achieved.* *More information:* https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/belgium/new-election-procedure-board-ghent-university **Recommendation 9.** Ensure openness and transparency of the institution's operational procedures governing the responsibility of those responsible for gender-neutral decisions and the implementation of gender equality. *Best practice example: The Goethe University in Frankfurt is committed to promoting gender equality in its organization. Recognizing that the level of commitment to developing and implementing gender equality measures varies greatly across decentralized departments, and recognizing the need to centralize information on gender equality initiatives across faculties, the university introduced gender and diversity controls in 2010. The aim of gender and diversity control is to monitor changes in gender (in)equality in the entire university, as well as to provide guidance and support, and to monitor the efforts for gender equality in all 16 faculties of the Goethe University in Frankfurt. Since 2010, each of the 16 faculties has been required to draw up an Action Plan on Gender Equality and Diversity (GEDAP) every two years and comply with reporting requirements. The action plans are linked to specific agreements (Zielvereinbarungen) between university management and faculty management. A Gender Equality and Diversity Coordinator of Control heads up the process of drawing up equality and diversity action plans.* *More information:* https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/germany/gender-diversity-controlling-goethe-university-frankfurt
Institutional measures aimed at educating employees about gender equality, gender differences, sensitivity to gender differences and awareness of gender equality education and monitoring of gender equality.	**Recommendation 10.** Conduct periodic employee surveys on the environment within a department and across the entire organization to respond to identified issues in a timely manner. This tool can be reinforced through interfacing with other human resources processes at MSI (e.g standardized interviews with staff leaving the institution, for whom the human resources department would be responsible). *Example of best practice: A questionnaire on Gender Equality and Quality of Life was developed through collaboration between the universities of Jagelonia and Oslo. The focus on gender equality in this project was more thorough and precise than in the past, as it took into account a cultural and institutional context.* *More:* https://eeagrants.org/archive/2009-2014/projects/PL12-0066; http://www.geq.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/documents/32447484/35425674/GEQ_opis_projektu.pdf; http://www.geq.socjologia.uj.edu.pl/documents/32447484/136473799/GEQ_Blueprint.pdf/ce00cac3-3852-407e-aded-842d24a99fae

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
	Recommendation 11. Collect administrative data on the gender gap in an institution and publish the results of an analysis of this data (e.g. gender distribution in the management of the institution, gender ratio of candidates and elected officials, number and duration of fixed-term contracts, etc.), monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming measures in accordance with a fixed set of indicators and assess progress. *Best practice example: Beira Interior University (UBI) was the first university in Portugal to develop a gender equality plan in 2011. Prior to the preparation of the Gender Equality Plan, a comprehensive initial assessment of the university's gender equality situation (2010-2011) was carried out. Since 2012, annual Gender Equality Reports are produced to monitor progress towards gender equality at the university. These reports are publicly available and are based on an initial assessment made at the beginning of the drawing up of a UBI Gender Equality Plan. The analysis provided in the reports examines gender balance in the various disciplines as well as the areas of decision-making and management, the pay gap between men and women, the use of work-life balance measures (e.g. flexible working hours), the gender breakdown of students and faculties. The purpose of an annual report is to inform the academic community about the current state of the university in the area of gender equality. A comparative analysis of recent data and the results of previous tasks (including the initial assessment and other gender equality reports) provides an insight into progress and / or retrocession in the field of gender equality. In addition, this analysis provides recommendations for improving the institutionalization process of gender equality in the UBI.* *More information:* [*https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/portugal/gender-equality-report*](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/portugal/gender-equality-report) **Recommendation 12.** Systematically conduct education / training of management and staff on equal opportunity, information on anti-discrimination measures and general implementation of an equal opportunity policy in the institution. *Best practice example: In order to broaden its knowledge on gender issues, the Department of Physics, Earth Sciences and Energy Sciences at the Lund University in Sweden initiated a three-phase project in in 2007. First, the Department of Physics conducted: 1) Education (e.g. a symposium with experts on 'What Does Gender Have to do With Physics?') 2) Realization of ideas, e.g. a Gender Coach helped to implement activities and analyzed the department's budget from a gender perspective; a reform on maternity / paternity leave was instituted for doctoral and post-doctoral students after which it became possible to obtain a double-term extension); 3) Evaluation. In the course of the project as working group was formed which shared information with departments and initiated and implemented various activities. This project helped the departments to understand the implications of gender in science and research and changed the environment in the departments involved.* *EIGE. 2010. Gender certification. Gender mainstreaming - Country specific information - Sweden. More information:* [*https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/sweden/gender-certification*](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/sweden/gender-certification) *Example of best practice: Since 2010, the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC) has been holding annual gender perspective awards. The award aims to recognize and make visible existing research projects and teaching practices that stand out in gender integration. Six prizes are awarded each year: three for teaching achievements (excluding gender-related courses) and three for research projects in any field (which integrate a gender perspective into hypothesis*

Group of measures	Recommendations and good practices
	formulation, research design, methodology, research processes or the dissemination and publication of results). *More information: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/spain/gender-perspective-research-and-teaching-award* *Best practice example: In 2004, a leadership program that integrated a gender aspect (AKKA) was launched at Lund University. During 2004-2014, five AKKA programs were offered to 150 senior researchers. Only women were invited to the first two programs, later on men were also invited. One program was also supported by the Swedish government, the remaining four were funded by Lund University. The program maintained the same structure - seminars, workshops and work on projects. The AKKA program believes that gender-sensitive leadership is leadership that also changes other discriminatory structures such as class, ethnicity, and sexuality. The AKKA program has increased the number of women in management positions, improved the visibility of women as potential leaders, increased the willingness of not only women but also men to take up management positions, increased gender awareness among women and men, and encouraged networking and collaboration within the university. The level of knowledge about university policies and activities has risen, tools relevant to managing change have been developed, discrimination has become more clearly articulated, and specific projects for change were developed.* *More information: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/good-practices/sweden/akka-leadership-programme*

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PANDEMIC CHALLENGES MANAGEMENT

Priemonės	Rekomendacijos
Internal institutional communication	**Recommendation 1** Conduct periodic employee surveys seeking to determine: 1) (changed) opportunities for employees to work remotely (for health or other consequences due to COVID-19, e.g. closed educational institutions); 2) the state of the physical and psychological health of employees; 3) related needs of employees (supplies for working remotely, training, psychological assistance, etc.). **Recommendation 2.** Provide staff with timely information on how the organization is responding to the COVID-19 situation in the country - possible scenarios for MSI's activities in the event of a change in the situation, how work with students will be organized, evaluation of activities, support provided, changes in work organization and procedures in effect (safe online work, MSI representation, etc.). **Recommendation 3.** Organize trainings, meetings with responsible representatives of MSI, prepare guidelines, recommendations on work in the event of changes in work organization procedures as well as global organizational processes.
Work organisation	**Recommendation 4.** Ensure flexibility of the work schedule - allow staff to adjust their schedules to suit their own needs bearing in mind the needs and possibilities of their own colleagues and students, especially with regard to staff. **Recommendation 5.** Provide an opportunity to adjust study plans (e.g., forms of assessment) during the semester. **Recommendation 6.** Ensure efficient and transparent regulation of the flow of employees in the workplace (e.g. by forming employee teams, scheduling use of the MSI infrastructure whereby employees can register for use of a work station at a specific time, etc.). **Recommendation 7.** Provide workers with rapid COVID-19 tests promptly when there is a suspicion of infection, fund COVID-19 antibody testing as needed, provide vaccinations and in-house testing.
Providing the workplace with the necessary facilities and reimbursing additional costs	**Recommendation 8.** Help employees working remotely set up ergonomic workplaces by providing necessary technical equipment as well as computer equipment (computer, headphones, microphone, camera, printer, etc.) and office supplies. **Recommendation 9.** Supply licensed software (e.g. Microsoft, Zoom, etc.) for home-based employees, training them, and providing advice on how to use them. **Recommendation 10.** Provide access to necessary electronic resources and databases, archives, and libraries for those working from home. **Recommendation 11.** Appoint people (a team) responsible for consulting and providing ongoing support on IT (use of equipment and software) issues.
Psychological help and health support	**Recommendation 12.** Ensure the well-being of the psychological health of employees by providing psychological counseling, organizing lectures, remote exercises, meditation, awareness classes, etc. **Recommendation 13.** Take a proactive interest in the psychological state of employees by organizing informal team meetings (e.g., morning coffee on a video call platform), employee discussions. Managers at all levels and human resource specialists should be regularly interested (by e-mail, message or call) in their colleagues' situations, psychological conditions and need for help from their colleagues.
Job accounting and payroll	**Recommendation 14.** In light of the changed nature and workload during the pandemic, a recommendation is to ensure a transparent accounting of employees' working hours and overtime compensation if it has been objectively justified.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DECISION MAKERS

First, although EC requirements and national legislation apply to RSIs operating in Lithuania, some RSIs do not implement them. For example, even though from 2017 July 1 Art. 26 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Lithuania entered into force with the requirement that "An employer with an average number of 50 or more employees must adopt and publish in a way that is usual in their workplace, measures for implementing the policy of equal opportunity and the oversight measures for its implementation", this policy was only announced in a few Lithuanian universities and research institutes during the course of the study (2021); about half of the survey participants in this study did not know who to turn to at their institution if they had questions about gender (in)equality. Second, stereotypical attitudes are introduced in childhood. Therefore, comprehensive measures need to be taken to ensure the proper monitoring and control of the implementation of national policies and to prevent stereotypes in the education system.

Recommendation 1. National policies to ensure gender equality in the science and research sectors. When implementing provisions of the EU's science policy related to gender equality, there needs to be cooperation with the institutions forming and implementing the national R & D & I policy - Parliament, the government, the Ministry of Education and Science and other ministries (SW&W, EIM, FM) and institutions (RCL, ASIT), should:
   a. Embed the principle of gender equality in the Law on Science and Research of the Republic of Lithuania
   b. Create a national mechanism for the promotion of gender equality in RSI.

Recommendation 2. Monitoring and analysis of national gender equality in the R & D & I sector. The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with STRATA, the Statistics Dept, LSR and the Innovation Agency, and utilizing existing expertise, should:
   a. Establish a mechanism for monitoring and analyzing gender equality in the R & D & I sector, including a nationally updated database, data analysis and an impact assessment scheme for the implementation of such measures.
   b. Establish a national network of RSI gender equality officers, national policy makers, researchers and practitioners exploring this topic, and enable them to provide high-level advice and guidance on the implementation of gender equality in the R & D & I sector.

Recommendation 3. Measures at the national level to address practical challenges related to gender equality in the R & D & I sector. The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the SW&WM and FM, should:
   a. Find a solution for doctoral students going on maternity / paternity leave. A temporary suspension of the study process results in a loss of social welfare guarantees and minimal employment does not resolve this issue.
   b. Develop national financial / social plans to support young, talented women in the early stages of their careers (especially those with young children).
   c. Create incentives for affordable and high-quality childcare services for RSI staff and a mechanism for providing them (e.g., a children's playroom, nursery, etc. service for children of staff).

Recommendation 4. Ensuring preconditions for gender equality by reducing stereotypes in education. The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the NEA, RCL and RSI, who are responsible for training teachers, should:
   a. Ensure that gender equality is responsibly integrated into curricula, starting with pre-school and general education, as well as further education. Also, that the viewpoint of non-discriminatory treatment of women and men be included in textbooks and other educational materials.
   b. Pedagogical training programs that qualify specialists who foster awareness of gender specifics and the recognition of stereotypes and who would be ready to pass on this knowledge to the younger generation.
   c. Develop communication programs that encourage a choice of "gender-appropriate" fields of study and professions (e.g., girl pilot, boy nursery teacher, etc.)
   d. Allocate funds for research and continuing education initiatives (at national, municipal levels) to reduce gender segregation and its causes and consequences.