



PLOTINA

Promoting gender balance and inclusion
in research, innovation and training

Unanticipated Consequences of Gender Equality Actions/Programmes

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Background

- Careers of natural scientists and engineers
- Structural considerations – agency (interactions)
- Research projects: ESRC, H2020 PLOTINA
- Informed by gender studies
- Working with natural scientists, practitioners
- How operationalisation and evaluation works and how we can develop better actions (transformative)



Gender equality programmes/actions

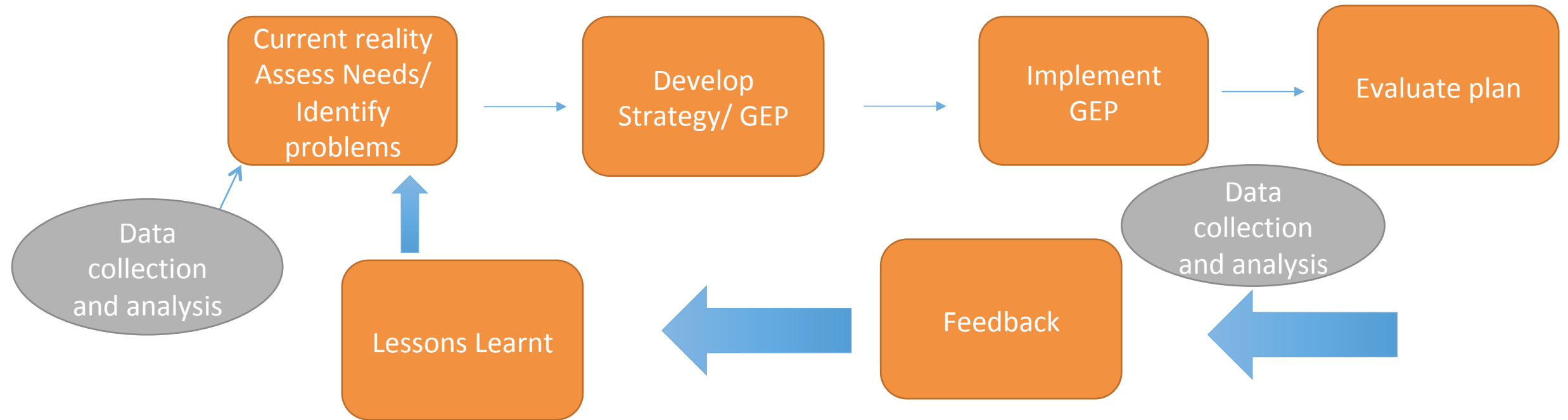
- In HE and research – Gender Equality efforts: 2011-16: 113 RPOs had adopted GEPs
- Gender equality efforts (ERA, 2014)
 - a) 'Specific laws/acts regulating gender in public research'; (AT, BE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, PL)
 - b) Acts/incentives stimulating or obliging RPOs to explicitly set up GEPs;'- (for laws on GE in ES, AT, NO, performance agreements in AT, AS in the UK, the Finnish Equality Act covering educational institutions such as universities;
 - c) Strategies (i.e. guidelines, charters/codes, awards, etc) at national, regional level (DE, NL, SI, UK)



How to achieve gender equality?

- Adopting GEPs is complex
- Sometimes we are losing the forest for the tree
 - Award, H2020 review, funding gains
- GEP becoming the aim rather than the process/mechanism
- Starting fresh to create an equal workplace: What is the problem? (Bacchi, 2009) in terms of
 - Organisational structures and processes
 - Work life balance issues (caring, maternity, parental)
 - Attitudes, behaviors, values
 - Knowledge production
- How do we use the GEP?





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- “Promoting gender balance and inclusion in research, innovation and training’
- Leading a WP on academic careers and culture change
- Horizon 2020 European project (4y duration)
- 10 partners, 6 RPOs: diversity
- Self-assessment, design, implementation and evaluation of gender actions
- Online library of actions – tools for evaluation
- Quantitative (data analysis/surveys) +Qualitative (Interviews and focus groups)
- But also wider context: AS: how many of you know about AS?

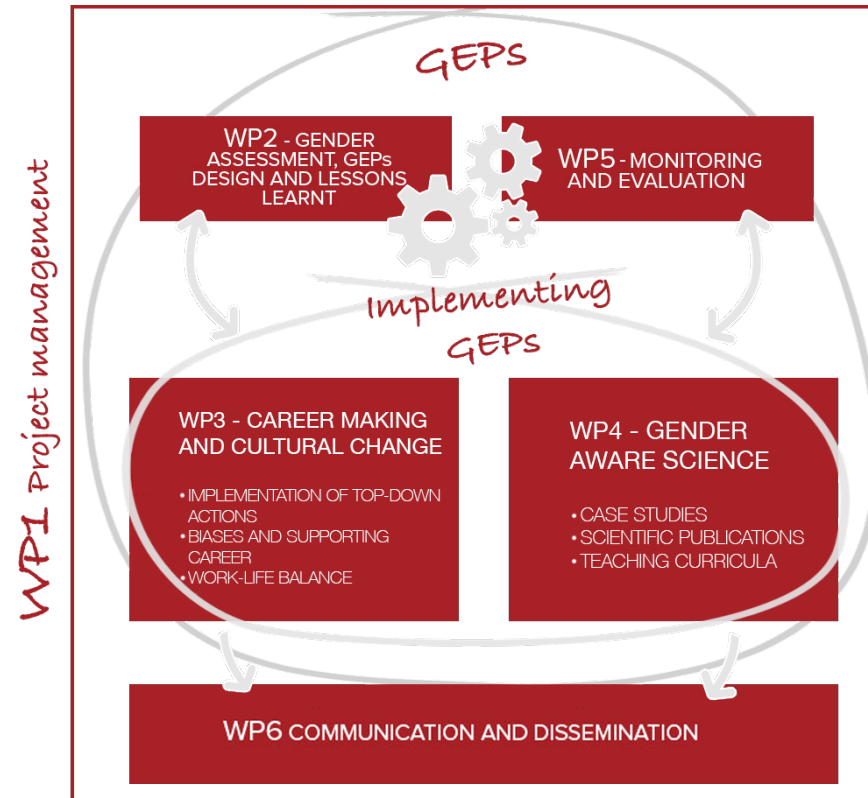


Three overall objectives

- Removing barriers to recruitment, retention and career progression
- Improving decision making by addressing gender imbalances
- Integrating the sex/gender dimension in research/teaching



Overview of PLOTINA and Workpackages



Outcomes:

An online library of actions

Good practice guide

Case studies

Monitoring system

Developing the library of actions

- Action name:
- Organisation name:
- Organisation type: (Higher education institution/Faculty/ Department/ Research centre/institute)
- Organisation size (number of workers):
- Number of people participating in the action:
- Type of action:

Library of actions - template

- **What is its aim/objective? What are the anticipated outcomes/impact?****
- **Description of the action and Implementation**
 - Target group
 - Describe the Implementation Process (What, how, who)
 - Resources/skills/incentives required
 - Challenges/Resistance
 - Communication (what channels of communication were used? How was it framed?)
- **Achievement of the results of the action –output/outcomes***
 - Describe the outputs (e.g. numbers of people participating in the action etc) and outcomes (what did the action do?)
 - Has it contributed to the expected result/output?
 - How do you rate the results compared to the objective: fully achieved, partially achieved, not achieved (and explain why)
- **Evaluation - impact(individual/collective, short/medium/long)***
 - What are the short term and medium to long term changes (impact) achieved as part of the action(s) implemented?
 - Please provide any tools used for the evaluation (E.g. feedback forms, questionnaires, interview guides etc)
- **What we learnt and how this information can be transferred to other RPOs?**
 - Tips/strategies/guides /checklists (operating standards)
 - Reflection – what would you do differently? What could you improve in light of the evaluation of the action? What would you do next time?



Why Unanticipated Consequences

- Evaluation of interventions and best practices – What works?
- Less on what doesn't work or what might have worked differently – nobody talks about this: no incentive
- But how can we learn from each other? Collaboration, not competition
- Merton (1936) sources
 - Ignorance, lack of knowledge (knowledge gap, harness the expertise inside the organisation)
 - Errors in designing/implementing (resources and expertise, challenge assumptions)
 - Hidden interests and agendas (explicitness of goals and processes)
- Some examples: Overall level of GEP, specific gender actions



Unanticipated consequences of GE efforts

Common characteristics of GE efforts	Unanticipated consequences
Focus on statistics, hard data(representation)	Reinforcing the binary, simplistic, ignoring intersectional identities (gender as central form of inequality), descriptive rather than substantive representation (malestreaming)
Business case, reputation, benchmark, funding	Individuals feeling complicit to contributing to institutional success definitions (Rankings, new metrics etc) – losing the aim
Women bearing the cost of those efforts	Overburden esp in STEM, it is their responsibility, less time for work that is recognised for career advancement, emotional cost (resistance), becoming the problem
Sustainability : monitoring/incentive	Accountability and legitimacy



Unconscious bias training

Objective: are designed to support the understanding and counteraction of such biases

Evaluation: looking at numbers- completing the training

- Limited effectiveness of training (Kalev et al. 2006)
- Quick fix vs a starting point of a more systematic process of reflection discussion and awareness raising (Noon, 2018;)
- The institution is seen as 'performing diversity' (Ahmed, 2012)
- Can contribute to blame free narrative
- Emphasis on fixing the individuals rather than structural constraints attributing thus failure to individual action rather than collective responsibility

Recommendations

- Part of a wider programme (Equality Human Rights Commission, 2018)
- Emphasis on the context: time pressure, mental fatigue and being accountable influence individuals' ability to deliberate (Lai and Banaji, 2018) and implicit bias more likely to influence behavior
- Clarity on aims of UBT and use before/after measures to assess changes (awareness raising/attitude change)- using control and intervention group
- Observation of processes for UBT

How to identify UC?

- Continuous monitoring, feedback and redefining of the action
- Social science expertise and mixed methods can help (qualitative research is key)
- Feedback not only at the time of change but after the change from individuals who implement it and those targeted
- What was the motivation behind the action? What was the objective of the action? What was the outcome in the short term/medium/long term? How did it contribute to structural/cultural change? How did it contribute to changing attitudes, norms, everyday practices?



Leaving with a positive note..

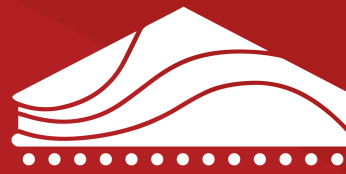
- Great momentum, many steps have been taken, acknowledgement of gender equality (even if in rhetoric)
- Need to invest resources and find ways to identify unanticipated consequences (continuous data collection and reflection and redefining)
- Need to share information and reflect about them – build a community
- We need to think strategically on how to use GEPs to move towards more transformative approaches
 - Constructive complicity (Sara de Jong, 2009)
 - Bifocal approaches (De Vries and Van den Brink, 2016) where fix the women ->> organisational approach

Begin within the existing frame and continually re-design and refine the intervention [...] focus on creating movement towards the transformative.



If you are willing to talk about Unanticipated consequences (negative and positive)

- Please send me an email: charikleia.tzanakou@warwick.ac.uk
- Approach me after the session and talk to me or give me your business card
- I would like to collect information and gather the responses where these would be shared anonymously and confidentially



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Thank you
for your attention



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