

GenderInSITE

Gender in science, innovation, technology and engineering
Southern Africa

Transforming policy to support gender equality in science: The role of funding agencies

Gender Summit 7 Europe 2015

7 November 2015

Berlin, Germany

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Science of South Africa



OWSD



GenderInSITE Southern Africa

- ❖ Hosted by the OWSD SA national chapter based at ASSAf
- ❖ Activities focused on:
 - Applying the gender lens in STI policymaking and implementation
 - Human capital development
 - Promotion and raising awareness
 - Engagement with key stakeholders
- ❖ Support for African science academies and the SADC secretariat

Participation at first **Gender Summit** in Africa- April 2015



The Role of Funding agencies

- ❖ Disbursement of research grants (various categories)
- ❖ Disbursements of scholarships and loans (Masters and doctoral students)
- ❖ Funding support for infrastructure development
- ❖ Dissemination and uptake of research reports and findings
- ❖ Supporting scientific publishing/scientific journals
- ❖ Advocacy to the STI
- ❖ Collect data and statistics on S&T and R&D
- ❖ Capacity-building/training of researchers
- ❖ Policy advice
- ❖ Setting research agenda/research priorities
- ❖ Management of scientific collaborations and agreements
- ❖ Coordination of the National System of Innovation

Mouton, Gaillard and Van Lill (2014)

Why gender is so Important

- ❖ Do women and men have access to the same opportunities for grants?
- ❖ Does grant disbursement and its procedures take into consideration the different needs for men and women?
- ❖ Who serves on the selection committees of funding agencies to support many of the functions abovementioned?
- ❖ Are gender sensitive policies adopted by funding agencies?
- ❖ What role can funding agencies play in advocating/ shaping gender mainstreaming/ applying the gender lens in research prioritisation, science funding, output dissemination?

The state of funding agencies: Southern Africa

- ❖ Embedded in growing science systems
- ❖ Often function at the margin of the science system
- ❖ Limited public funding support
- ❖ Technical support and capacity challenges (e.g. grant management)
- ❖ Lack of strong partnerships (nationally, regionally, internationally)

Multiplicity of challenges render gender on the margins of funding agencies' considerations

Mouton, Gaillard and Van Lill (2014)

The South African National Research Foundation: Stats

- ❖ Bursary and scholarship funding includes gender targets-redressing historical imbalances
- ❖ In the last five years the number of female NRF-rated researchers has increased by 52%.
- ❖ The percentage of female postgraduate students supported by the NRF stands at 53%.
- ❖ The NRF, in 2014 alone, has contributed more than R340 million to the research projects of female scientists.
- ❖ Since 2002 more than 18 000 women have obtained their postgraduate qualifications through the support of the DST/NRF funding.

Some concerns

- ❖ Just over 30% of the total number of NRF-rated researchers is female
- ❖ Number even lower in areas of natural sciences and engineering
- ❖ One out of 10 Centres of Excellence is headed by a woman
- ❖ Limited number of black women in the professoriate and senior leadership positions within higher education

The South African National Research Foundation: Key Interventions

- ❖ Under the NRF Postdoctoral Fellowships Programme the gender targets for each of its four fellowships vary from 50% to 60% representation of women and 80% Black
- ❖ Development of a gender-sensitive policy for female researchers in funding instruments targeting emerging researchers underway

The South African National Research Foundation: Key Interventions

- ❖ Launch of the DST/NRF Chairs for Women: 42 new chairs announced in September 2015



‘Today, we make history. Today, we have 42 new female research professors. From now, nearly half of our 201 research professors are women,’ Minister Pandor

What Should funding agencies consider

- ❖ Parental leave and family responsibility leave with granting policies
- ❖ Require gender representation at conferences, workshops and on committees
- ❖ Provide technical support for women who are having children to ensure project progression during maternity leave – such as funding for a post-doc or technical support.
- ❖ Introduce a 5-year fellowship to support a woman in a senior position to spend according to her needs – such as hiring a senior postdoc, supporting PhD students, travel or administration support.

Suggestions to Minister Pandor by Thomson and Weltman 2015

What Should funding agencies consider

- ❖ Pay for women scientists to take children and a carer with them to academic conferences, both locally and abroad as these meetings are of utmost importance for career development.
- ❖ Advocate for the establishment gender equity/diversity committees at all institutions to monitor and inform on best practice

Suggestions to Minister Pandor by Thomson and Weltman 2015

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their attitudes, then the possibility won't exist ..." Mae Jemison



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Sign the petition here:
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24 Feb



Global Fund for Women
@GlobalFundWomen
Women & girls have the power & ingenuity to ignite change - but not

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