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The development of a cross-national approach to gender equality in higher education institutions: observations from a European project

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The development of a cross-national approach to gender equality in higher education institutions: Observations from a European Project

Sarah Barnard, Andy Dainty & Tarek Hassan,
Loughborough University, UK

Overview

- Context of gender inequalities in HEIs across Europe
- Gender Equality Plans
- National and institutional contexts



About the GenderTime project

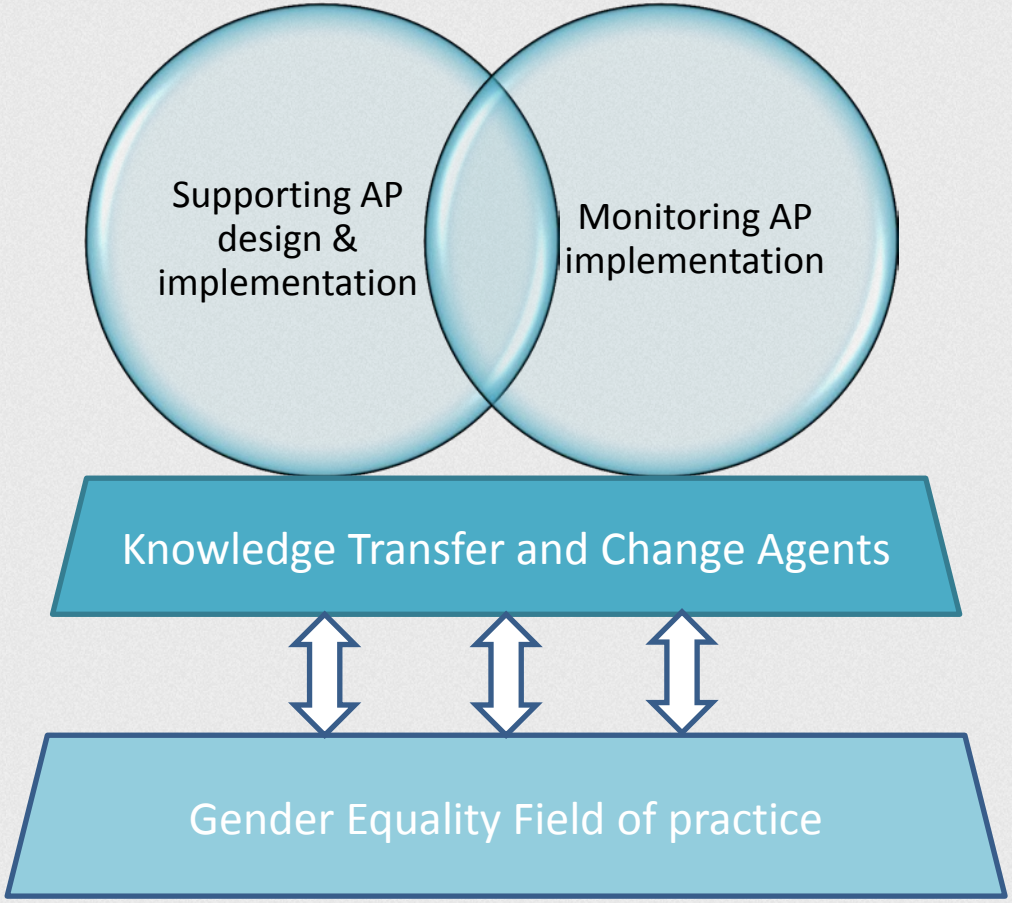
- Partners in France, Austria, Italy, Sweden, France, Serbia, Germany, United Kingdom, and Spain



Work Packages

1. Coordination
2. **Implementation**
3. **Monitoring**
4. **Knowledge transfer**
5. Independent evaluation
6. Methodology for structural change
7. Dissemination

The project approach to AP process management



Introducing 'Transfer Agent' concept (Thaler, Karner & Wicher)

Idea: to implement gender equality knowledge in a strategic and sustainable manner

- to involve individuals in **powerful and relevant positions, who are committed** to the idea of gender equality in science and research, and support the implementation of the gender equality plans

= Transfer Agents - relevant institutional stakeholders. E.g.

- heads of institutions,
- human resources managers or
- equal opportunity officers

- their involvement is activated and supported by GenderTime but goes on afterwards → institutionalise gender equality in science and research

Meet some of the TAs



Jürgen Suschek-Berger is Director of the IFZ, Austria

Marina de Rossi is Delegate of the Rector for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities





Sanja Vranes is Director General of IMP, Serbia



Colette Guillopé is Gender Equality Officer at UPEC, France

Adam Crawford is the Operations Manager



Supporting and Monitoring AP design and implementation

- Methodology adopted broadly revolved around CoP: **exploring and reflecting on experience** and **enhancing competence**.

Recommendations for AP design

Mapping



Reflection



Pairing Exercises

On-site visits



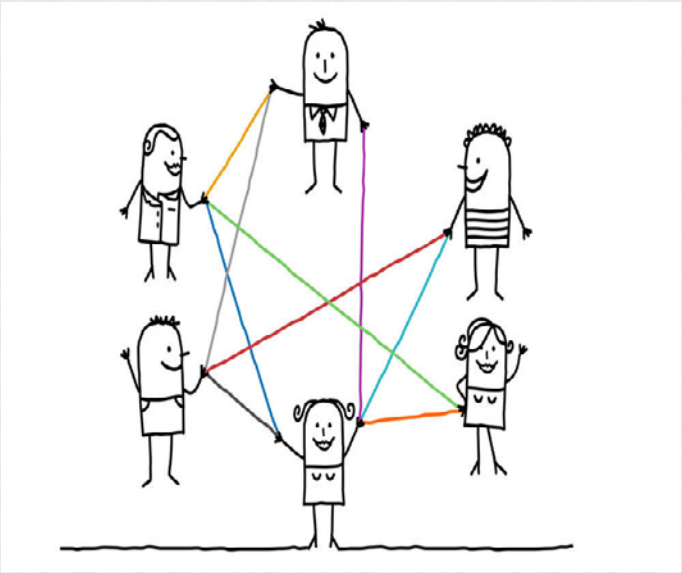
Collaborative Workshops

Monitoring Tools: examples (Peterson & Dahmen)

Monitoring tool	Approach	Performance indicators	Target group	Content	Significant results
Operational Process Monitoring Tool	Qualitative	Report template	GT members and TA	Implementation progress - objectives	Supporting factors and hindering factors
Self-Assessment of Change Agent Role	Qualitative	Qualitative questionnaire template for individual use	GT members and TA	Change drivers	Resources for Change Agents
Incremental Transformation Process Monitoring Tool	Qualitative/ Quantitative	Workshop	GT members, TAs	Indicators, goals and impact	Step by step achievements
Peer Consultation Reflection Session	Qualitative	Workshop	GT members, TAs	Implementation process	How to overcome challenges and use supporting factors

Learning from each other through institutional pairings

Pairing of institutions to build greater mutual support and more in-depth information sharing



Examples of activities focused on:

- system for collecting gender disaggregated data
- conducting focus groups
- homeworking policies and practices
- academic career models and how careers develop in the institutional context

Sharing challenges and success through World Cafe workshops



- Openly discuss challenges and successes in a **confidential and supportive format**

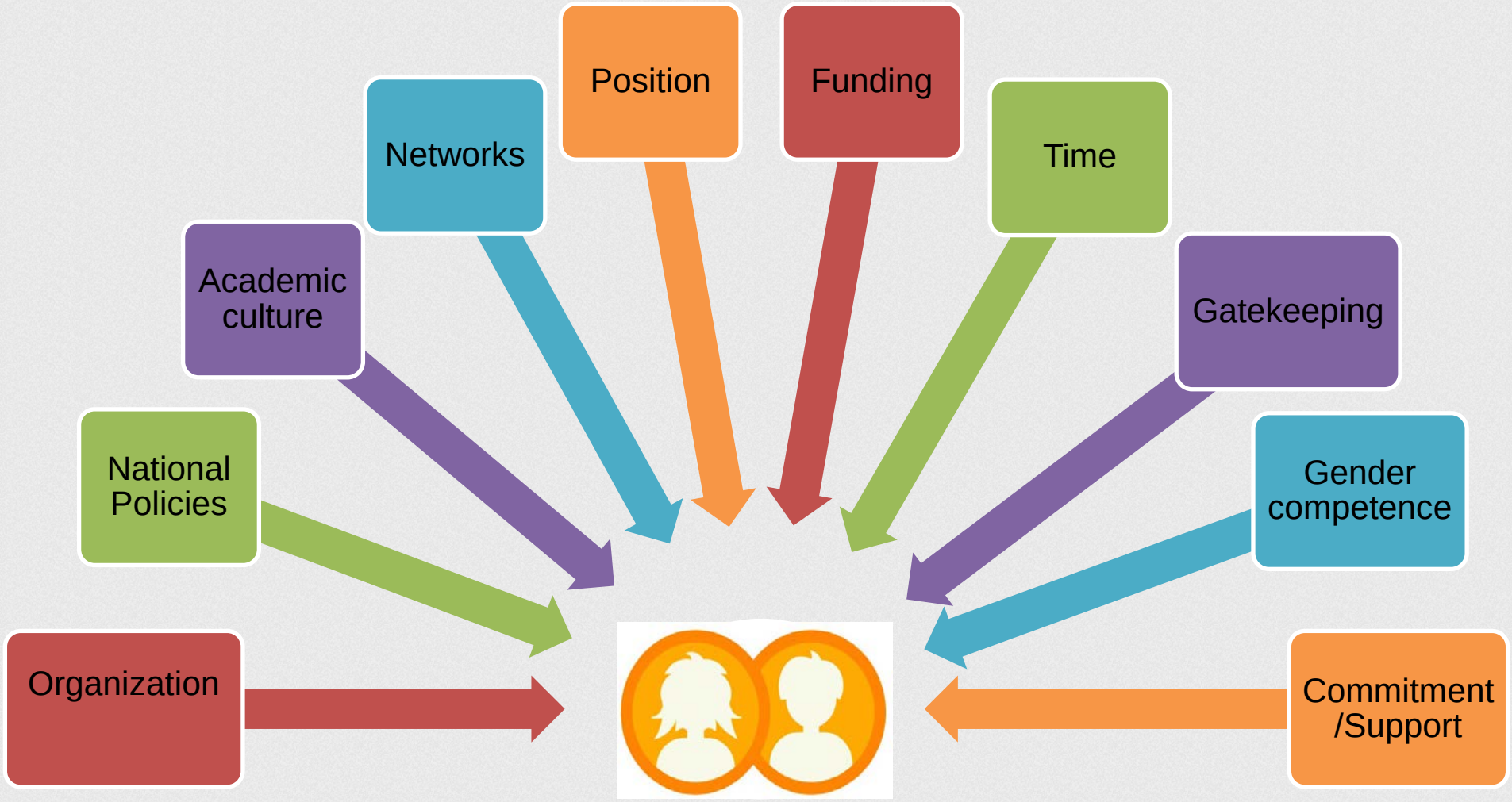
- Development of a **culture of reflection** at institutional level
- **Identified challenges** that require additional support.
- A space to create a **common vocabulary** across the different institutions (and nations),
- Specify **methods** for evaluation and ways to consolidate commitment from decision makers.

Self-assessment of Change Agent Role (Peterson & Dahmen)

- Purpose: Identify success and support factors and resistance and challenges
- Qualitative questionnaire template
- Six questions:

Which factors have strengthened/supported you as a change agent?	Which factors have hindered/challenged you as a change agent?	What motivates you as a change agent for gender equality?
What makes a change agent for gender equality efficient and successful?	What could further strengthen you in your change agent role?	What are your recommendations for efficient change agency?

Environmental and Individual Resources for Change Agents(Peterson & Dahmen)



What we found useful

- Exploring and reflecting on experiences and enhancing competence in AP implementation in a cross-national context based on socially situated learning and knowledge exchange

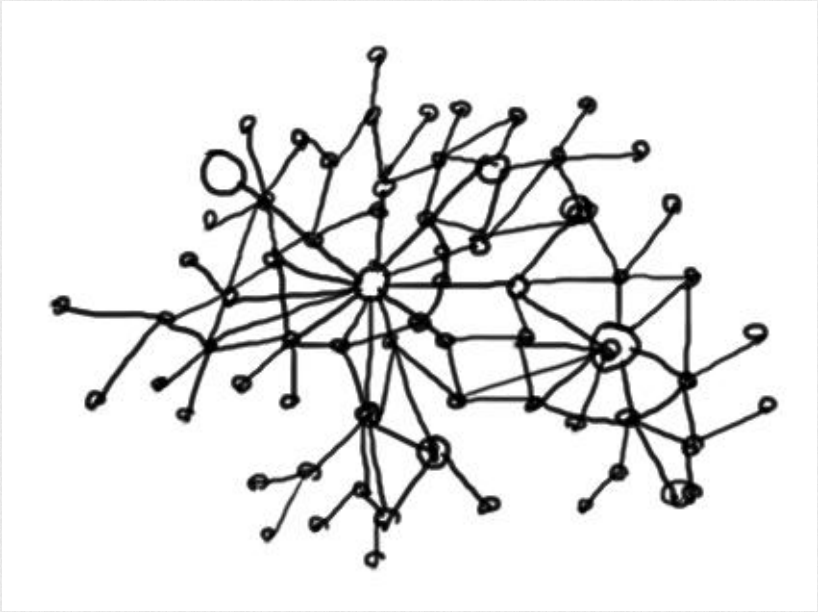


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Communities of Practice Theory

CoP has been defined as

‘groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis’

(Wenger et al., 2002; Wenger, 2011)

CoP strengths and limitations

- Strengths
  - Recognition of how knowledge is socially and culturally situated
  - Movement from apprentice to expert through participation
- Limitations
  - Language, definitions and categorisations
  - Power relations
  - Geographical distance

Knowledge Exchange: your experiences

https://padlet.com/sarahhelenbarnard/ECU



- What techniques have you used to facilitate AP implementation?
- What kinds of activities are better suited to building communities around gender equality work? (both intra and inter institutions?)

Key observations



- Importance of understanding policy context
- Supporting communication key to implementation and monitoring of APs
- Transfer and Change Agents' role crucial in knowledge transfer
- A strong sense of community benefits AP implementation

Forthcoming papers in GenderTime International Conference proceedings

Knowledge transfer agents as catalysts for changing gender policies and practices in research. Anita Thaler, Sandra Karner & Magdalena Wicher, (IFZ, Austria)

Trying to do the impossible: Monitoring gender equality action plans in seven European institutions. Jennifer Dahmen (Univerisity of Wuppertal, Germany) & Helen Peterson (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Using communities of practice to support the implementation of gender equality plans: lessons from a cross-national action research project. Sarah Barnard, Tarek Hassan, Andrew Dainty (Loughborough University), Lucia Polo, & Ezekiela Arrizabalaga (Tecnalia, Spain)

Thank you for your attention!

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Further information: www.gendertime.org

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Gender Time

Loughborough University