

Synthesis on the Case Study Work
(Work Package 4)

Authors: Rachel Palmén & Jörg Müller

Date: 15th May, 2019

Main Objectives

The main objective of WP4 was to consolidate and validate the EFFORTI evaluation framework developed in WP3.

The specific objectives were to:

- Carry out concept and implementation analysis as well as impact assessments for the selected case studies
- Develop and verify a theory of change for the selected case studies (log-frame/ theory of change)
- Validate the indicators used in the EFFORTI framework – particularly those included in the EFFORTI Impact Stories
- Identify good practices of promoting gender equality in R&I.

Methodological Approach

- Development of case study guidelines including research questions, reporting templates (schematic and narrative) and semi-structured interview guidelines
- Carrying out of 19 case studies of gender equality in R&I interventions in 6 countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany Hungary, Spain, Sweden)
- Each case study used documentary analysis and between 4 and 12 semi-structured interviews with policymakers, programme managers, practitioners and beneficiaries.
- A log-frame and theory of change was developed for each case study based on analysis of the design, implementation and impact assessment of each case study
- Feedback of the case study work into the first draft of impact stories (version 1) developed in WP to feed into 'good practices' per type of intervention
- Comparative case study analysis was carried out using N-Vivo coding programme
- Validation of the indicators included in the EFFORTI Toolbox 1.0
- Validation of our approach by getting feedback from policymakers, programme managers and evaluators

Strengths

We carried out 19 case studies throughout Europe and a comparative analysis of the design (strengths and weaknesses), implementation (hindering and facilitating factors) which affect outcomes and impact (GE & R&I). The ToC approach meant that we were able to develop an approach that was relevant for each specific intervention but at the same time facilitated a cross-case comparative analysis. Providing a useful ToC methodology, template, tool and guidance for others to be able to apply the ToC to their own interventions for a better evaluation.

Weaknesses

Each case study was more time/resource intensive than initially envisaged. Each case study generated much more material than was initially foreseen – impacting on the comparative work. The wide range of types of interventions meant that the comparative analysis was challenging. A well-structured methodology including very well structured templates however facilitated the comparative analysis. We now have a great deal of in-depth information about the 19 GE intervention in R&I. A challenge is having the time and resources to carry out further analyses of the case study work.

Main Results

The 19 Case Studies demonstrated various strengths and weaknesses in the **design of the intervention** which could be linked to the types of interventions and their sub-fields of action. Strengths included: **data-driven and evidence-based intervention design**; **mainstreaming of gender equality** throughout every step of assessment procedures; tailoring a mix of measures, i.e. combining those interventions aiming for a greater gender balance higher up the career ladder with more structural change interventions. **Innovative intervention designs** for example ‘future potential analysis’ – where a candidate for a leadership position is assessed for her/his ‘future potential’ as oppose to past achievement was seen as a huge step forward really challenging those often gender biased assessment procedures. How **monitoring and transparency were embedded into intervention design** was also deemed a critical factor influencing impact. It was in those **interventions integrating the gender dimension into research content and tertiary education where the confluence between both gender equality and R&I outcomes and impacts** could be most easily detected. How the **gender equality concept is conceived**, i.e. as equal participation of women and men in R&I or as organisational and cultural change affected outcomes and impact

Various **facilitating and hindering factors were identified as impacting on implementation** throughout the case study work and unlike the analysis of design – these tended to be cross-cutting across all types of interventions and sub-fields of action. The **governance framework** was identified as a key driver contributing to impact – for example where legislation had not only been passed but was being acted on by an accreditation agency -integrating the gender dimension into tertiary education was being effectively implemented. Whilst **top-level commitment** is identified by the majority of our case studies as a key factor – **bottom-up buy-in** was also seen as an essential factor in interventions targeting both the HES and BES sectors. Another factor that seemed to effect the implementation of the intervention was **whether or not it was promoted as positive action measure**. In some instances – funding targeted specifically at women was perceived negatively, yet in other instances it provided a more concrete objective for the programme – which led to a higher demand. **Developing synergies with other initiatives** was deemed important and legitimizing for interventions in this field, so for example DFG standards in Germany and the Excellence initiative – were highlighted as trend setters, paving the way for the acceptance of gender equality interventions in R&I. **Resources** were deemed crucial in almost every case study for creating an effective and long-term impact. **Gender competence, experience and knowledge**, was highlighted as key – and in those case studies where implementation was not optimal – it could be linked to a lack of gender competence and experience. In one case study – external gender expertise could be brought into project design and this level of support greatly facilitated implementation. It was also highlighted how including the gender dimension or the participation in gender equality actions as positively evaluated in research curriculum might provide an incentive to boost competence. **Formulating targets and standards** followed up by **monitoring** were deemed necessary for successful

implementation and conversely a lack of accessible data and information were deemed to have a negative impact on the smooth implementation of interventions. **Positive attitudes, interest and motivation** to participate were identified as crucial to successful implementation and on the contrary **resistance** was identified as stymying an optimal implementation. Specifically **strategies dealing with resistance have proven effective**, for example integrating gender equality issues into meetings with directors and managers can underline gender equality as a relevant issue for the institution.

Gender equality and R&I outputs, outcomes and impacts were tracked throughout our 19 case studies and could be seen to be linked to type intervention and field of action. In some case studies where the main objectives were linked to gender equality - it was more difficult to discern R&I impacts and vice versa. In those programmes or interventions promoting scientific excellence or innovation – if they did not include an explicit gender equality objective – gender equality impacts were more difficult to track. If the case study included both objectives – both types of outcomes and impacts could be identified – but these might not be related. It was in the field of **integrating the gender dimension in research content and tertiary education – where impacts could really be classified under gender equality and R&I**. Unintended outcomes and impacts must also be taken into consideration.

Regarding the evaluations of the selected case studies we can see that the intensity and quality of programme evaluations is highly dependent on the national evaluation cultures. Some interventions were not monitored and had no data gathering mechanisms built into the intervention. Others were monitored but no evaluation or impact assessment had been carried out. In a few case studies, comprehensive monitoring had been carried out accompanied by evaluation which may or may not include impact assessment. **Thus, in cases where a strong evaluation cultures exists (like Austria, Germany and Sweden), the programs are more comprehensively evaluated than for example in Spain and / or Hungary.**

The validation work revolved around (a) Theory of change approach, (b) Key Indicators, and (c) Impact Stories.

In some case studies the **theories of change we developed were verified by programme managers but in other case studies these were refuted**. In the majority of cases we were not able to substantiate with empirical evidence the links between a greater gender equality and higher R&I impacts although we were able to identify potential areas for future research. Regarding the indicators – in the majority of case studies – all useful indicators were included in the EFFORTI framework – we managed to **validate 251 out of a possible 692 indicators**. Case study work also fed back into the **EFFORTI impact stories** that form part of D4.4.

The ethical and methodological reflections highlighted the difficult and problematic nature of ascribing outcomes and impacts as direct effects of the interventions. A whole range of **contributory factors** must be taken into consideration.

Main Lessons Learned

- The log-frame/ theory of change approach has proved to be a valuable tool to think about how different factors may 'contribute' to the impact of interventions
- The log-frame/ theory of change approach useful to begin identify possible R&I outcomes and impacts of gender equality interventions (majority of cases no empirical data on R&I outcomes and impact)
- The I-O-O-I approach is useful to structure thinking in the evaluation logic, but it is important to emphasise the non-linearity of inputs from an intervention over processes to actual and measurable types of R&I effects.
- Various case studies cited that a lack of information and indicators regarding the intervention hindered effective monitoring and evaluation. In some cases project reports and monitoring data were inaccessible due to data protection regulations
- The intervention logic model supports and guides choices of relevant indicators, e.g. identified through the EFFORTI toolbox, to be included in the actual GE evaluation
- In the majority of case studies relevant indicators could be easily found within the toolbox (251 out of the existing 692 were used)
- In relation to the very slow pace of structural change, the most ill-placed assumption regarding the intervention is that its' impacts can and should be observed in a short period of time and its success is directly measurable
- Given the time-frame of the intervention it is impossible to carry out a thorough impact assessment detailing outcomes and impacts
- The intensity and quality of programme evaluations is highly dependent on the national evaluation cultures.
- A general consensus arising from the case study work is that interventions 'contributed' to the outcomes and impact of the intervention in combination with a complex array of contextual contributory factors
- Both gender equality and R&I outputs, outcomes and impact were more readily detected in those types of interventions aiming to integrate the gender dimension into research content and tertiary education
- Unintended outcomes and impacts must be taken into consideration in any thorough evaluation of a gender equality intervention in R&I

References

- Kalpazidou Schmidt, Evanthia, Susanne Bühler, Martina Schraudner, Sybille Reidl, Jörg Müller, Rachel Palmén, Sanne Haase, Ebbe Krogh Graversen, Florian Holzinger, Clemens Striebing, Dora Groó, Saskia Klein, Dorottya Rigler and Ea Høg Utof (2017). "A Conceptual Evaluation Framework for Promoting Gender Equality in Research and Innovation: Toolbox I – A synthesis report."
<https://www.efforti.eu/sites/default/files/201803/EFFORTI%20D3.3%20FINAL%20report%2027032018.pdf>.
- Palmén, Rachel, Sybille Reidl, Susanne Bühler, Evanthia, Kalpazidou Schmidt, Florian Holzinger, Dora Groó, Dorottya Rigler, Clemens Striebing, Lidia Arroyo, Maria José Romano, Ebbe Krogh Graversen, Ea Høg Utoft, Mathilde Cecchini, Sarah Beranek, Jürgen Streicher, Maximilian Unger and Annika Koch. 2018. "Synthesis Report: EFFORTI – Deliverable 4.2 (Public Report)."
- Palmén, R., Arroyo, L., Müller, J., Reidl, S., Caprile, M., Unger, M. (2019). Integrating the Gender Dimension in Teaching, Research Content & Knowledge and Technology Transfer: Validating the EFFORTI Evaluation Framework through three Case Studies in Europe, *Special Issue Evaluation & Program Planning*.