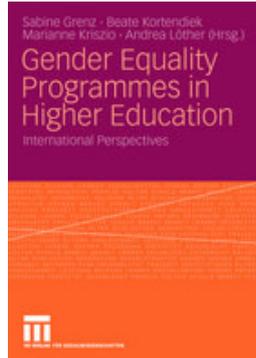


Anina Mischau

Sabine Grenz/Beate Kortendiek/Marianne Kriszio/Andrea Löther (Hrsg.): Gender Equality Programmes in Higher Education. International Perspectives, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag 2008.

The anthology brings together thirteen selected papers from the 5th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education that took place in 2007 in Berlin (Germany).



Since 1998, the European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education is held every two years in another European country. Inter alia all the conferences have been an facility for researchers, experts and practitioners to discuss national and international policies of gender equality in science and higher education; furthermore to share experiences of progress and stagnation, to analyse the conditions and frameworks of success and perhaps also the failure of affirmative actions, to reflect new research findings and political strategies and last but not least: to learn from one another. In the previous conferences, many case studies on gender equality programmes at institutions of higher education in Europe (and elsewhere) as

well as reports about national policies were presented. In contrast the Berlin conference also focused on questions about evaluation and the analyses of conditions and frameworks for success of different national (and international) intervention programmes. The main threads were: Which strategies and instruments are used in gender equality programmes in different countries? What are the relations between financial incentives, procedural rules, awareness rising, mentoring and other forms of empowerment of women and programmes to change institutional cultures? How has the focus of gender equality programmes changed in the last decades and how are these programmes influenced by the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies? What is the relation between general changes in university management (e.g. more autonomy and more power for university leadership, increasing significance of economic factors) and changes in gender equality policies? Have there been independent or official evaluation procedures for gender equality programmes? How did they work, what were the results, and what have been the political effects of these evaluations? The different articles in the present anthology will give some answers to the questions asked.

In the first article “Options of Knowledge – Opportunities in Science” Susanne Baer (Humboldt-University, Berlin, Germany) gives a short overview on the condition of gender equality in higher education (in Germany), while emphasizing the link between gender studies and equality in science. The author also discusses the definitions of and the relationship between quality (of science) and equality (of gender), exposing that traditional as well as new quality standards are biased in several ways. According to the author, a focus for further discussions of quality standards must be “that quality should govern according to the norm of equality; the issue is excellence under condition of fairness. Since we live in a world of diverse options of knowledge, in a world beyond one truth, we need to take opportunity to revisit quality and reframe it, beyond bias.” (p. 25) The further challenge is to develop and to apply new quality standards for scientific research and knowledge that also sees equality as an integrative factor on quality.

Successful funding applications for research and personnel support are an important part of the academic career trajectory. In recent years numerous studies have focused on the uneven gender distribution in the academic competition for research funds. Two

articles in the anthology attend to a critical discussion about the role of national funding agencies within gender equality policies. Maya Widmer (Swiss National Science Foundation, Switzerland), Regula Julia Leemann (Pedagogical University of Zurich, Switzerland), Heidi Stutz (Centre for Labour and Social Policy Studies, Bern, Switzerland) and Kathrin Schönfisch (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Switzerland) present in their paper “Cooling out? Gender and Research in Switzerland” first results from a study concerning possible reasons for the low proportion of women among applicants for research grants at the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), which is the largest institution promoting research in Switzerland. One of their main questions is, whether the small pool of female applicants reflects existing university structures or whether it is due to the particular mechanisms and politics of research advancement. Their results suggest that 1. women are already underrepresented among the applicants of research funding, 2. if women submit applications, they are just as successful as men and 3. for both genders, there is a clear effect of children on the first funding application to the SNSF. Wanda Ward (National Science Foundation NSF, US) describes in her paper “The Success of Female Scientists in the 21st Century” the gender equality policies of NSF, especially in science and engineering, and introduces the Foundation’s ADVANCE programme. ADVANCE subsidizes new programmes aimed not on individual promotion but on institutional transformation of universities instead.

Evaluations of gender equality programmes are becoming an increasingly important topic: on the one hand to ensure quality in gender equality policies and on the other hand to support the actors of gender equality policies in political processes and political decisions within universities. Nevertheless in Germany but also in other German-speaking countries there are very few independent evaluations of gender equality programmes or of institutions for the advancement of women. In their paper “Evaluation of Gender Equality Policies” Andrea Löther (CEWS, Bonn, Germany) and Elisabeth Maurer (University of Zurich, Switzerland) use their experiences as evaluators and evaluatees to provide an analysis of the context and the preconditions of evaluations in the area of gender equality policies in higher education. The authors show that “the process of evaluating gender policies in higher education is embedded in a contradictory context of interests and conflicts, of ensuring quality and allocating resources” (p. 54). At the end of their paper the authors consider conditions based on their critical reflections and their own experiences. These relate to gender sensitive evaluations as well as important standards and frameworks for evaluations of gender equality programmes in scientific fields and institutions aimed at the advancement of women. Terry Morehead Dworkin (Indiana University, US), Angel Kwolek-Folland (University of Florida, US), Virginia Maurer (University of Florida, US) and Cindy A. Schipani (University of Michigan, US) introduce in their paper “Pathways to Success for Women Scientists in Higher Education in the US” successful programmes for the increase of the percentage of women in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. First of all the authors describe – based on comparative data from the US – the actuality of the well known “leaky pipeline” for women in STEM. Subsequently they outline general recommendations and examples of best practices initialized by the NAS (National Academy of Sciences, US) and the NSF (National Science Foundation, US) to overcome gender disparity in STEM. Finally the authors report on their experiences and the conditions of implementations of successful promotion programmes for women in STEM at their universities, programmes which could be supportive at any institutions or universities.

Two articles focus on the relation between general organisational changes in universities and changes in gender equality policies. Mary Ann Danowitz Sagaria (Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria/University of Denver, USA) compares in her paper "Gender Equality as Organizational Change. Frames, Challenges, and Strategies in the European Union and the United States" various gender equality policies in US and EU countries. First of all she provides a brief overview of the differing conceptions of equality in the EU and US and shows: Universities on both sides of the North Atlantic share very similar patterns of gender representation among academic staff with neo-liberalism reshaping the purposes and workings of their institutions. However, the EU and the US differ significantly in their underlying principles of gender equality and policy contexts. In the EU countries the orientation have been more and more on gender mainstreaming, while in the US, gender equality is rather linked to diversity. Based on the author's analysis of various case studies from EU und US, she presents five influential factors to explain changes in gender equality as a part of organization innovation and provides detailed examples of them. The highlighted factors are: the external environment, positive action from university leaders, supportive structures and incentives, funding measures, and auditing. The author concludes, that these five factors collectively explain the success and failure of institutional efforts towards gender equality progress. Jane Wilkinson (School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia), explores in her paper "Keeping your Eye on the Prize: Gender Equality Programs in Enterprise Universities" the relationship between more general changes in Australian university management and their implications for gender equality programmes in Australian higher education. In Australia an enterprise model of management for Australian university leadership has opened up new possibilities for some women academics while simultaneously reasserting old gender hierarchies. The author examines the material impact of such changes through a series of interviews with senior women leaders from a diversity of class and ethnic origins, located in a variety of Australian universities. One important finding of her study is: A key strategy in both the implementation and evaluation of the ongoing effectiveness of gender equality programmes, is a greater understanding of the significant ways in which differences between groups of women based upon their ethnic and class origins are played out in a variety of institutional contexts in higher education. At the end of her paper the author points out potential policy implications of ethically and socioeconomically diverse academic women leaders which could be fruitful for similar institutions.

Since the 1990s many countries and universities have adapted their gender equality policies or programmes to gender mainstreaming policies or programmes. Two articles of the anthology give a critical view on the impacts of this change and reflect factors contributing to the success or failure of gender mainstreaming measures. In her paper "Political Will is Not Enough: Results from the Evaluation of a Pilot Scheme for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming" Angelika Paseka (College of Teacher Education, Vienna, Austria) reported on a gender-mainstreaming project scheme (2001-2003) conducted at all Austrian teacher training colleges. This project was ordered by the Federal Ministry of Education, and involved 25 colleges. First of all the author describes the conditions and assumptions under which the pilot scheme took place. After this she presents selected results from the documentation of the implementation process of gender mainstreaming in this selected target group, gives a critical analysis about the organisations and their structure as a framework for this implementation process, and finally summarizes important

results from the external evaluation. Her findings show that implementations (processes) of gender mainstreaming require preparation in advance, especially in terms of creating a supportive structure within the organisation. This allows negotiation, dealing with resistance, establishing objectives and carrying them out in a collaborative process, finally also learning from the results. In the case of the pilot scheme, such a supporting structure was not created. Hence, although lots of activities took place and the knowledge about gender mainstreaming increased, nearly no rethinking processes among teacher trainers and organisational actors as well as no structural changes took place. In their paper "Balancing and Optimising Gender Mainstreaming at German Universities" Quirin J. Bauer and Susanne Gruber (University of Augsburg, Germany) present first results of an evaluation study on the implementation (process) of gender mainstreaming, goals of various gender mainstreaming measures, and the relationships of this measures to previous gender equality programmes at 15 German universities. The authors also point out to factors leading to success or failure of gender mainstreaming measures or programmes, which they could identify in their study. One of their important findings is that "gender mainstreaming measures can work very well if several strategic steps are taken and if they are not reduced to just one goal" (p. 134).

Since decades promoting women for leadership and increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions is a central request of gender equality programmes. Also in this field evaluations are necessary to identify the most effective examples from all over the world. Also in Australian universities women are in the majority as both staff and students. Still they remain underrepresented at the senior and management levels. Since the 1990s several leadership development programs for women were launched at Australian universities. In her paper "Leading women: The Positive Impact of Women and Leadership Programs" Lyn Browning (University of South Australia, Australia) presents the findings of the evaluation of the Women and Leadership program at the University of South Australia, which was implemented in 1996 and the Women in Leadership Program at Griffith University (Australia), which commenced in 2004. The evaluation results of both programmes show clear impacts and effects: 1. women reported a number of positive changes in their working lives which they attribute to their involvement in these programmes; 2. the participation rate of women staff (also in senior and decision-making positions) has increased at both universities. Therefor the author summarizes: "The evidence supports leadership development programmes for women as a contributing factor to the promotion, retention, and positive changes to the working lives of women staff, and in turn, to the culture of universities." (p. 190). Based on the experiences from these two successful examples, the author phrases a list of general recommendations for leadership development programmes for women, which could be helpful for other scientific institutions and universities.

In recent years multiple studies have highlighted the importance of professional assistance for a successful academic career, and have identified mentoring as a strong instrument for promoting young scientists, especially for women in higher education, academia or research. These have led to initialization and installation of various national and international mentoring programmes for women (or both genders). Two articles of the anthology refer to concepts of and experiences with such mentoring programmes as well as to questions concerning important factors for their acceptance and success. In their paper "Promoting Women Researchers through Mentoring Eument-Net as a Basis for a European Network of Mentoring Programmes for Women in Academia and

Research” Helene Fügler (University of Fribourg, Switzerland), Nikolina Sretenova (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria), Christine Brunn (University of Stuttgart, Germany), Dagmar Höppel (University of Stuttgart, Germany), Evi Genetti (University of Vienna, Austria) and Sabine Lask (University of Bern, Switzerland) introduce the EU-funded project Eument-Net, a cooperation between university mentoring projects in different European countries. “Eument-Net initiative is designed to facilitate the exchange of experiences, the transfer of knowledge and the cooperation among mentoring programmes and stakeholders in gender equality in higher education and research, across Europe” (p. 162), and aims to promote the advancement of women’s career by developing a European network of mentoring programmes. Carmen Leicht Scholten (RWTH Aachen, Germany) presents in her paper “Where is the Key to Success? A Comparative Evaluation of Mentoring Programmes for Outstanding Female Scientists in Natural Science, Engineering, Social Science and Medicine” results of an evaluation based on a survey of eight mentoring programmes at different universities and in different disciplines in North-Rhine Westphalia (Germany). One of her findings is that different disciplinary cultures obviously also have an influence on different needs, kinds of programmes and on various preferences in kinds of mentoring relationships.

Inken Lind (Center of Excellence Women and Science, Bonn, Germany) starts her paper “Balancing Career and Family in Higher Education — New Trends and Results” with an overview of current empirical studies as well as theoretical discourses on parenthood and academia. This overview shows inter alia that 1. “(...) there are vast differences in childlessness and number of children among academics in various European countries” (p. 12), 2. “there is currently no evidence for a monocausal relationship between children and low career options for female scientists” (p. 195) as sometimes mentioned, 3. results of newer studies in Germany state beside a continuing high proportion of childless female scientists a clear increase of childlessness among young male scientists, 4. balancing career and family is still a continuous problem, especially in the German science system. At the end the author introduces a new CEWS research project called “Balancierung von Wissenschaft und Elternschaft” (BAWIE) focusing on the process of balancing science and parenthood and the reciprocal effects between individual decision making and organizational structures (in Germany). One of the goals of this project is to get more information about adequate conditions for women and men to balance a scientific career with parenting and to find new starting points for targeted measures in a “work-life-balance-oriented” university policy.

Conclusion: From the reviewer’s point of view, international perspectives on gender equality programmes in higher education, as collected in this anthology, are highly important. They create chances to share experiences of different countries, to broaden knowledge about forms and patterns of resistance against gender equality policies as well as successful strategies and implementation processes of gender equality measures within different or similar institutional settings. For researchers and practitioners international perspectives are at least helpful for a critical reflection of their own gender equality discussions and measures in their own countries or universities. The anthology ends with general recommendations for gender equality programmes, based on the findings of the 5th Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education 2007 in Berlin. These could be supportive for further university and equal opportunity policies. Altogether, the reviewer recommends the anthology to all people who are interested in gender equality policy and

who are willing to expand their (national) horizons.

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