

Press release, Thursday, October 22, 2020

How is gender diversity achieved in working life?

A new European research project led by the University of Bern is investigating the factors influencing the educational and professional careers of women and men, including members of gender and sexual minorities. "G-VERSITY" will receive EUR 4.1 million from the EU "Horizon 2020" funding program. The project is being coordinated by Prof. Sabine Sczesny from the Institute of Psychology.

The aim of the international "G-VERSITY - Achieving Gender Diversity" research project is not just to investigate the factors that depend on biological and social gender in education and career paths. The large-scale project will also develop scientifically sound measures to promote gender diversity in working life. "Because," says Sabine Sczesny, Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Bern and coordinator of G-VERSITY, "many private and public employers want to achieve gender diversity on their staff. On the one hand, they want to be able to respond better to their customer base's needs, and on the other hand they need to meet legal requirements. Unfortunately, there is a lack of evidence-based interventions to support them in achieving these goals". The measures developed by G-VERSITY will consist of workshops, guidelines and training materials, for example.

Interdisciplinary cooperation between European research groups

"G-VERSITY" is also an innovative training network for young researchers in Europe. Within the framework of the "Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network (ITN)", 15 PhD students hosted by nine European universities will work on research questions and help develop interventions for employers as part of their dissertation. European research groups from the fields of psychology, education, management and economics as well as media and communications science cooperate in the network.

Sabine Sczesny, an internationally renowned expert in research on stereotypes and prejudice, initiated the network and coordinates it. The other Principal Investigators come from the Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), University of Helsinki (Finland), Radboud University (Netherlands), University of Trieste (Italy), University of Surrey (UK), University of Stockholm (Sweden), Czech Academy of Sciences (Czech Republic), The Open University (UK), and the EDGE Certified Foundation, based in Switzerland, and the leading international organization for the certification of gender equality in working life. "G-VERSITY" is also supported by the public television station

ZDF, the media education research institute JFF and the charitable organizations PORTIA, LGBT Consortium and Raspberry Pi Foundation (Great Britain).

Research that should have an impact on practice

"At the heart of our joint research on gender diversity is the exchange across scientific disciplines and between research and practice," explains Sczesny. "Concrete research questions include, for example, how gender stereotypes can influence discussions between parents and children about the choice of studies and profession, how a sexist organizational climate in typically male occupational fields can prevent gender and sexual minority individuals and all women from working in these fields, or what experiences men have when they are interested in professions traditionally practiced by women."

Other projects deal with the development and evaluation of various measures to promote gender diversity, such as the improvement of organizational communication, the implementation of evidence-based gender diversity training and analyses of representation in traditional media and self-representation in digital media.

"G-VERSITY" began its research work in October 2020. In addition to the targeted promotion of young researchers, the research network will organize workshops and summer schools as well as an international conference to raise the profile and dissemination of its research results in science and society. The first "Fundamentals of Gender Diversity Research" workshop will take place with the participation of international experts in April 2021. For more information go to:

www.gversity-2020.eu

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks (ITN)

With the "Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Networks (ITN)" format, the EU is funding networks for doctoral training within the framework of "Horizon 2020", consisting of European institutions from science, industry and civil society. ITN finance a structured training of young researchers in Europe and promote training and networking activities. They exclusively fund scientists who have not yet received a doctorate in the first four years of their careers.

Secondments to academic and non-academic institutions and numerous training courses aim to improve their career prospects in the long term. ITN are also expected to be continued from 2021 onwards under the new name "Doctoral Networks" in "Horizon Europe", the upcoming EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation.

More information:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/actions/research-networks_en

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