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Report on the activities in the established grass-root networks

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Report on the activities in the established grass-root networks

1 Background

1.1 Why grass-root networks?

Networks are important arenas for increasing one's visibility in the scientific community and for finding new collaborators for upcoming projects. In the formal structures in academia, such as departments, faculties and scientific organizations, access to and engagement in networks could be important for career development. Networking behaviour, such as volunteering to serve on committees and through accepting visible work assignments, helps an individual to develop connections with others and also creates awareness of potential opportunities (Forret & Dougherty, 2004¹). This can enhance one's feeling of a successful career. Research has however shown that men and women do not benefit equally from investments in their careers and that networking is more beneficiary for men than for women (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). One of their findings was a positive correlation between men's engagement in professional activities in the workplace and their total compensation, while this correlation was negative for women. Visibility in the organization was also positively correlated to total compensation for men, while there was no such relationship for women. They speculate that the work assignments, task forces and committees women were involved in were less prestigious than those men participated in and that women's networking behaviour therefore was not as beneficial as men's (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). A grass-root network can however contribute with a sense of belonging and provide role models in the workplace. These two parameters could increase the retention of women in the organization. Engagement can give energy, but also drain energy if the resources are too sparse. From the experience in an existing grass-root network, WINGS at Lund University, the members of the network feel that they develop their careers from participating in the organized activities. They further emphasize that they value the networking possibilities with potential collaborators, the advice on how to work the system and on what skills are required for promotion – all things that other members of the network can contribute with just by engaging with their respective knowledge and experience.

1.2 Aim of this task

This task aimed at the **establishment and development of grass-root networks at all partner institutions**. The groups should be inclusive and open to both men and women and serve to raise the awareness of gender equality at the entire institutions. The idea was to create networks that contribute to scientists' careers through organized seminars and potentially trainings that also give possibilities for networking and mentoring. The overall aims were to increase the number of women at higher positions (retaining women within the organizations) and to raise the awareness of unconscious bias and upfront discrimination.

In this report we present the process of establishing new grass-root networks or identifying existing ones within the eight partners of the Baltic Gender project. We describe the activities

¹ Forret, M.L. & Dougherty, T.W. 2004. Networking behaviors and career outcomes: Differences for men and women? *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 25(3): 419-437.



in the respective networks during the project time and the reflections made within this task. We also present the activities that we have identified as successful as a brief guideline if one wants to establish a network in another organization.

2 Identifying or establishing new grass-root networks in the partner organizations – the process within Baltic Gender

The task leader (LU) had online conversations with all the other seven partners in month 6 (February 2017) on how a network could be set up (e.g., identifying existing networks, decide on the aim of the network and the target groups, identify core people and how to inform about the network) and shared experiences gained from the existing network WINGS at Lund University. A supporting material was sent to all partners containing a short manual with tips on how to practically arrange a first seminar, potential first topics and some instructions to the speaker of a “role model/visibility” seminar (i.e., to focus on three things – research, own career and then some personal experiences gained/tips to the younger academic generation).

The task leader organized online meetings with all partners one at a time to discuss the progress and possible difficulties. During the annual meetings in Helsinki 2017, Tallinn 2018 and Klaipeda 2019 the task leader (LU) organized individual meetings with all partner institutions, and the task has been discussed in virtual meetings with all partners present and through individual email contacts between the task leader and the responsible person in the respective partner organizations. During the second and third reporting periods (2018-2020) information about the events in the different partner organizations were further communicated between partners. This was done by an email including a short summary of the topic, the number of participants and the perceived impressions that was sent to all partners after the event.

The structure of the Baltic Gender partners’ networks are briefly described in Table 1 and the activities in the respective networks are described in more detail in section 3.



Table 1. Information about the grass-root networks at the different partner institutions.

Institution	Target group	New/Existing, <i>Name of grass-root network</i>	Members in the core group
GEOMAR	Non-permanent scientists	Existing, <i>WEB</i> (Women's Executive Board)	Currently 8 Executive Committee Members and 4 postdocs
UT-EMI	All staff	New, <i>FEMI</i>	2-4
CAU	Postdocs	Existing, <i>IMAP</i> and <i>Women researchers network</i>	4-5 and 15
Kiel UAS	Female students in STEM	New, <i>Talenting</i>	5
KU	Staff and students of Marine Research Institute (main audience) and other KU units	New, <i>Thursday Seminars</i>	ca 6
LU	All staff in the Faculties of Science, Engineering and Medicine	Existing, <i>WINGS</i>	ca 8
SYKE	All staff	New, <i>Equal opportunities in SYKE</i>	28 (in Yammer group)
IOW	PhD-students and Postdocs	Existing	4-5

3 Activities in the grass-root networks

3.1 GEOMAR

At GEOMAR the WEB (Women's Executive Board, <https://www.geomar.de/en/centre/structure/committees/web/>) is an existing network, which is identified as the grass-root network in this project. The WEB was founded by women in leadership positions at GEOMAR in 2013. The WEB supports the careers of female scientists with several activities. All women in leadership positions are automatically WEB members, the WEB board is elected and the postdoc representatives serve as guests in the board meetings. Only permanent staff members can be elected, to protect non-permanent staff of being involved in conflicts that might have a negative effect on their career.



The idea of grass-root networks and WINGS (at Lund University) was presented to the WEB in March 2017. In 2018, the WEB, together with the Baltic Gender project, organized a gender-awareness training (“success factor gender awareness”) at the yearly leadership retreat of GEOMAR. As a preparation, the participants were asked to go through the Harvard Implicit Association online test about unconscious bias. This organized training was a two-hour interactive session on gender awareness for all scientific and administrative leadership personnel (about 70 people, both women and men) and was embedded in a group discussion of a more gender equal and more international GEOMAR in the future at the end. The starting point was the leaky pipeline at GEOMAR and how to fix the numbers with the goals of the gender equality plan (GEP) and it ended in a lively discussion about GEOMAR successes, 5-10 year goals, and potential for changes all under the umbrella of gender and diversity aspects. This session triggered, among other things, an online survey to GEOMAR employees from the WEB together with the equal opportunity officer and the staff council with the aim to determine the current state and future needs of all staff regarding training and career development as well as work-life balance. This survey (GEOMAR Employee Online survey – GEOS) took place in spring 2019. The final report with core results of the GEOS 2019 has been given to the Board of Directors at GEOMAR and potential options for actions are in discussion. In addition, the WEB has been working on the application and approval of financial support for female scientists to participate in the extended mentoring program of Kiel University (*via: mento international*).

The WEB is also reaching out to the postdoc and junior professor/young investigator group community at GEOMAR to ensure the link to the target group of young female scientists. Therefore, one representative of the postdocs from each Research Division as well as one representative from the junior professor/young investigator group is involved in organising the WEB trainings and events. Since 2017, the WEB postdoc representatives have organised group-mentoring events (September 2017; January and March 2018) and other activities such as a “female postdoc lunch” (8th of February 2019).

In addition, the WEB has organized different trainings for postdocs at GEOMAR. On the 9th of June 2017, the workshop “Speech & Self-presentation” took place. In this full-day workshop, led by the rhetoric coach Jane Bormeister, the participants learned important techniques on oral presentation by training their voice and body language. On the 30th of November 2017 Jane Bormeister held another workshop for postdocs about “negotiation”. Furthermore, the professional coach Monika Claussen held a workshop about “Active networking – a success factor in science” on the 10th of October 2018. These WEB events further support women, and give possibilities to exchange experiences in a women-only setting, at the critical postdoc stage. GEOMAR has also other support structures that are available for both women and men, namely a new postdoc Career center PACT (Postdoc Academic Career Center) financed by the Helmholtz Association, which started in January 2020.

Besides these activities, the WEB carries out evaluations of staff proposals for the Marie Tharp Lecture Series (MTLS) and creates its program. The MTLS aims at presenting and honouring high-profile female scientists in Marine Sciences as role models for young scientists. In combination with the public lecture, there is a get-together for women and men, which gives younger researchers the opportunity to ask questions and to discuss career paths and exchange experiences. The postdoc representatives in WEB organize these get-togethers. Between autumn 2016 and the beginning of 2020, there was a large number of prominent female scientists from various countries and different fields of marine science who gave an MTLS lecture. A chronological list of all MTLS for Ocean Research can be found here: <https://www.geomar.de/en/centre/structure/committees/web/mtls/>.



3.2 UT-EMI

The UT-EMI is a relatively small research institution – about 60 people work in the main building in Tallinn and around 40 people (mostly from Fisheries Department) work in Tartu. Fieldwork season lasts almost all year round where groups from 4-5 people to more than 20 (depending on the complexity of the study) stay together from a period of a few days to a week or two. Consequently, close interactions between the staff take place on a regular basis. However, gender equality issues were not among the topics people discussed in these groups. Baltic Gender initiated these discussions in the institute and formed the grass-root network. The main discussions about the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) did not take place at the grass-root level. Instead, the grass-root network organised larger seminars where all staff was able to attend. The final version of the GEP was also sent to all institute's employees for their comments. The grass-root network meetings (below) attracted relative wide (compared to the staff numbers) attention and there is a general interest to continue after the Baltic Gender project is finished. The participants of the network meetings have decided on the name (FEMI), which refers to F (female) and EMI (Estonian Marine Institute).

The first meeting took place the 27th of March 2017 with three presentations about Baltic Gender, about the idea of grass-root network and one female professor gave an inspirational presentation about her career. Thirty persons attended, which is a large proportion of this workplace.

On the 5th of April 2018 a 2-hours a seminar was held. At the seminar the upcoming Gender Equality Plan of UT-EMI and its measures were discussed (15 participants). A grass-root network meeting took place as a 3-hours seminar on the 20th of December 2018, with 14 participants (5 male and 9 female), including the director of the institute. The latest activities of Baltic Gender and the GEP were presented and then Dr. Kariina Laas (Head of Psychology Institute of University of Tartu; President of the Estonian Psychological Association) gave a seminar about “How to recognize workplace stress and avoid burnout?”.

Tiiu Tarkpea from Tartu University Library gave a training on open data access on the 12th of September 2019. The training included an overview of the relevant terminology, access to scientific publications in University of Tartu, The Plan S, open science data, creating data management plans (including the DPonline tool), as well as publishing data in different data depositories. There were 16 participants in the training.

An outstanding Estonian scientist has also agreed to come and present her work and career during 2020.

3.3 CAU

At CAU the established network consists of existing structures and their combination.

CAU decided to use the already existing Integrated Marine Postdoc Network (IMAP) as grass-root network. IMAP was built up in 2012 by Dr. Gesche Braker. During the existence of the Cluster of Excellence ‘The Future Ocean’ until 2019 IMAP was an established, vibrant network of scientists on non-permanent positions whose expertise ranges from early career scientists to experienced researchers. The mission of IMAP was to provide postdoctoral researchers working in marine sciences in Kiel with an inspiring and empowering environment for interdisciplinary research. Thereby it aimed at increasing the awareness and attractiveness of Kiel as a hub in marine research, nationally and internationally by maintaining an active network of postdoctoral researchers in marine sciences in Kiel including alumni, by communicating and addressing the needs of postdoctoral researchers



as well as supporting the career development of young researchers and helping to establish a performance-based career advancement pathway at Kiel University and nationwide.

The first meeting took place the 1st of November 2017. About 40 persons participated in this meeting: new and older postdocs, mentors, members of the executive board, and members of the management office of the Cluster of Excellence Future Ocean. On this occasion a presentation on gender equality in science was held and one presentation on the project Baltic Gender, and what it offers in particular to postdoctoral researchers (e.g., mentoring, trial evaluation, blog series, trainings).

On the 6th of November 2018 a meeting for all members of IMAP and for all participants of the mentoring programme via:mento_ocean, a programme for female postdoc members of the Cluster of Excellence “The Future Ocean”, was organized. Around 20 people (most of them female, most of them postdocs in non-permanent positions) participated in the networking event. Next to short reports and feedback given by the actual participants of the mentoring programme, Baltic Gender was introduced with an emphasis on past activities. IMAP members who had participated in the offered workshops (leadership training in Lund, gender-sensitive teaching at Kiel UAS, gendered innovations in Kiel) talked about their gains from participating in these activities. Furthermore, the two Baltic Gender blogs were advertised and interested persons for the second teaching workshop were invited. This led to a broader discussion on gender issues in marine sciences.

Since the Cluster of Excellence ran out, the official structure and financial budget of IMAP don't exist anymore. However, an informal network and most of the scientific collaboration is on-going but dropping. In order to sustain the IMAP structure and expand it to all disciplines at CAU, the Postdoc Centre was founded in 2018. The Postdoc Centre is the continuation of IMAP, both in terms of personnel and content because it offers a central contact point for concerns, questions and suggestions, information and individual career advice as well as a bundling of offers for career advancement. Against this background on the 19th of February 2020 a third grass-root network meeting took place for which the Baltic Gender Team of Kiel University decided to bring together the Postdoc Centre and the exclusive female postdoc network Women Scientists Network. The members of the latter network, which was founded in 2001, meet in varying compositions 5-6 times a year. Their meetings take place at different institutes of Kiel University and give the opportunity to get to know the scientific works of the inviting woman scientist. Furthermore, the meetings provide an opportunity to exchange information, to extend inter- and transdisciplinary experience, to network, cooperate, to get insights into higher education policy and to engage in academic self-government, as the Women Scientists Network also prepares the election lists for the Senate and the faculty convents. The meeting of the Women Scientist Network in February 2020 was somehow special since not the scientific work of the inviting woman scientist was presented, but support structures at CAU were introduced to the participants: Baltic Gender shortly introduced the project and then the former leader of IMAP and the new director of the Postdoc Centre, Dr. Gesche Braker, took the opportunity to present her work to the 12 female scientists attending. The February meeting of the Women Scientists Network can be seen as the sustainable handover of the former grass-root network to this association of women scientists. The IMAP, which has been permanently established as Postdoc Centre, is always available to answer questions and suggestions and looks forward to a continuous exchange.

3.4 Kiel UAS

Before the Baltic Gender project there was no grass-root network at Kiel UAS on gender issues for career advancement. After a comprehensive inventory and a stakeholder analysis the first idea was to found a network for female master students and early female career



scientists from the faculties of Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering.

The first meeting took place on the 10 November 2017. After introducing Baltic Gender, Dr. Gabi Kratochwil (German expert on intercultural awareness) held a workshop on "Intercultural Awareness & Management" for master students of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science. During and after the workshop there was time for networking and discussion about further meetings.

The second meeting was planned for May 2018. In cooperation with two female master students from Mechanical Engineering and Ship Building a workshop on "Blue Engineering" (a concept for engineers to take sustainability and social responsibility more into account) was planned, which also included a session about Baltic Gender and its impact on the faculty of Mechanical Engineering. Due to insufficient demand the whole workshop had to be cancelled and given the insufficient interest in the network a new target was set up. Now the network should be a platform for all professors and scientific staff from the STEM faculties to discuss gender equality in teaching.

On 2 November 2018 a network meeting with a core group of five persons (two female professors and three female teaching staff) took place. In addition to a discussion on gender equality in teaching, the focus was on the promotion of female scientists at Kiel UAS. Since there were many things to discuss the group decided to meet on a regular basis. The network called "TalentIng" (**Talent + Engineering**) also aims to improve links with the Equal Opportunities Office and the two faculties of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science. Summer schools will be established in STEM for female pupils.

On 14 December 2018, the core group of TalentIng met to discuss further events and structures of the network. The idea of the WINGS network at Lund University was presented to the participants and an attempt was made to transfer it to the needs of Kiel UAS.

28 May 2019 there was a further meeting with TalentIng. Each year the so-called "Schoolgirls-technology-days" take place at Kiel UAS. During a 2-day event female pupils aged between 15 and 18 can come to the campus and explore the STEM-faculties. Moreover, there are special activities and students who explain their own experiences. The aim of this event is to get more female students in the faculties of STEM. During the meeting organizational patterns were discussed and planned. Apart from this the project RUNA (a female student group) introduced themselves and presented their project results. The project creates a driving simulator with VR-glasses and a video game.

5 September 2019: Network meeting discussing the outcomes of Baltic Gender and the relevance for the faculties of Mechanical Engineering and Computer Sciences. Finally, the discussion led to the question of how to attract more women scientists, especially in the STEM field. The network is also a platform for organizing projects for female students in STEM.

4 - 5 November 2019 the "Schoolgirls-technology-days" were held in STEM. Interested schoolgirls from schools near the Kiel UAS (aged 15 to 18) were able to take part. The Faculties of Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science and Media participated with a special workshop for the schoolgirls, and female graduates were invited to talk about their careers and their experiences as women in STEM.

13 December 2019: The evaluation of the "Schoolgirls-technology-days" in STEM was discussed. In order to improve the number of participants, some strategies e.g. that pilot schools must be found and merged, were talked about.

05 March 2020: Networking meeting for future events in 2020: Dates agreed on: 26 March 2020: Girls Day / 6-7 November 2020: Schoolgirls' Technology Days.



Since January 2020, the Equal Opportunities Office of Kiel UAS has had a new project: “WACS” (Women Career Service) to promote the careers of female scientists at Kiel UAS. One goal is the establishment of a network. After the end of Baltic gender, the network will be maintained by the new project.

3.5 Klaipeda University (KU)

The first meeting with a potential network at KU was held on 25 April 2017. There was no existing network at KU so this is a new network. In the first meeting Baltic Gender’s activities, including the mentoring programme was introduced. 14 persons attended.

The next meeting was organized on the 8th of March 2018 and moderated by three female researchers Dr. Marija Kataržytė, Dr. Tatjana Paulauskienė and Dr. Loreta Kešaitė-Rimkienė. These researchers shared their experiences from the recently attended Leadership training “Gender bias and leadership in marine science” organized by Lund University. 20 persons (staff and students) from the Marine Research Institute and the Faculty of Marine Technologies and Natural Sciences attended (7 male, 13 female).

During the first networking meeting some women scientists expressed their willingness to gain leadership competencies. It is obvious that (1) communication is a core leadership skill and (2) communication styles of women and men are different. Therefore it was decided to dedicate the next seminar-discussion to the communication competences building with special focus on gender equality. The seminar “Communication between men and women: similarities and differences” was held on the 22nd of November 2018 for two academic hours by the Doctor of Social Science Giedre Straksiene, researcher at Klaipeda University Centre for Studies of Social Changes. Nineteen persons attended, 14 females and 5 males. The seminar contained an introduction to how women and men communicate in general in order to understand the characteristics of men and women, their personal abilities, the subtlety of leadership and communicative skills. The distinction between sex and gender was highlighted, gender stereotypes in the organization was discussed in order to recognize them and to improve the effectiveness of communication between men and women.

On the 20th of February 2020 the leadership workshop for all staff took place at the Marine Research Institute of Klaipeda University (2 hours, 14 persons, 5 men, 9 women). During the meeting participants watched the DVD talk “The Ideal Team Player” by the American speaker and writer Patrick Lencioni from Global Leadership Summit, as well as evaluated themselves with the self-assessment tool, based on Patrick Lencioni’s book, The Ideal Team Player, to see how well they embody the three essential virtues (humble, smart, hungry) that make some people better team players than others. The workshop was moderated by Dr. Donalda Karnauskaite, who recently received her PhD thesis and was invited to join Baltic Gender to actively promote grass-root networking as an opportunity for junior staff and students to communicate in a more informal way.

Already during the second meeting it was decided that the grass-root networking should use a specific time slot – Thursday afternoons. This particular time slot is called “The Thursday Seminars” and is already since approx. 10 years being used for PhD students to present their main research results to the broader audience. This time slot is also already widely used for various local seminars, trainings and presentations by all the staff of Marine Research Institute and its visitors/guests. The idea to use “The Thursday Seminars” time slot and the title for grass-root networking events came up for two reasons: 1) trying to adopt an existing practice, i.e. local staff is already used to schedule this time slot on Thursday afternoons for formal and informal seminars; 2) trying to attract students and junior staff who are identified as one of the main target groups for grass-root networking.



3.6 Lund University (LU)

At LU the grass-root network is called WINGS. WINGS activities during the Baltic Gender project time have focussed on role modelling and workshops on tools to further the careers of the participants with the aim to increase the number of women at higher positions in academia. WINGS is funded by the faculties of Science, Engineering and Medicine. A steering group is elected every second year. Evaluations of the activities and the perceived outcome from the network have shown that the network and its activities are appreciated. In 2016 WINGS received an award for the work on promoting gender balance in academia. More information is available on www.wings.lu.se.

List of WINGS' events during the time of the Baltic Gender project.

Seminars and workshops

2016, 23 November: A seminar with the Lund University winner of the three minutes thesis competition! Giana Lorenzini (13 participants)

2017, 24 March: Senior lecturer Charlotte Sjödelld gave a seminar on "Being a woman in a workplace dominated by men" (26 participants), 18 April: Dr. Emma Hammarlund – Geobiologist "Why are we here?" (24 participants), 19 May: PhD student and consultant Roshni Pramanik – So what is it to be a woman in diverse cultures and workplaces across countries, sectors and organizations? What are the challenges and opportunities? (23 participants), 30 August: WINGS annual conference 2017 *YEAR of FEAR?* (63 participants), 3 October: Consultant Lotta Green held a workshop called "Lead to succeed - Tools to deal with your future". (20 participants), 19 October: Ass. Prof. Kimberly Nicholas – "Linking personal and global change" (10 participants), 16 November: "From negative to positive stress & from efficiency to effectiveness", Full-day workshop 20 persons (4 men, 16 women)

2018, 16 February: WINGS organized the workshop "A toolbox for academic productivity and stress management" (20 participants), 28 March: a lunch seminar "Reflection on a journey of a female researcher in Jordan: personal perspective" by Professor Nihad Almasri. (15 participants), 18 September: 2-hour seminar "Why EU wants you to include gender in grant applications? Learn how to address the topic" by Professor Ineke Klinge, Chair of the Horizon 2020 Advisory Group for Gender at the European Commission. (32 participants), 3 October: Professor Annika Olsson was invited to a lunch seminar and talked about her academic experience; "How it is to be a professor, the head of division (Packaging Logistics) and the rector in Helsingborg in this male-dominated world". (15 participants), 25 October: WINGS annual meeting 2018, "What happens in Lund, in Sweden and abroad when it comes to gender equality in academia?" (30 participants), 14 November: a lunch seminar with examples from a municipality on how they work to create gender equality in their activities. "What could we in academia learn from other organizations?" (12 participants), 16 November: a one-day course for PhD supervisors to discuss tools to minimize stress, academic productivity tools, and the relation between supervisors and PhD students (10 participants).

2019, 11 February: Seminar "A brief report from two international gender equality conferences" (1 man, 13 women), 12 March: Half-day event "Breaking the Glass Ceiling: A Gender and Ethnicity Perspective on Acquisition of Academic Merits" (organized together with Careers Centre and Future Faculty (Faculty of Medicine)) (40 persons signed up, approximately one fourth men and three fourth women), 10 April: Seminar "Gender dynamics in academic recruitment and selection", in collaboration with Baltic Gender by Mathias W. Nielsen, Assistant Professor at Aarhus University, Denmark, Mathias W. Nielsen is a sociologist by training and his research focuses on several aspects of gender in science including how gender diversity is linked to research outcomes, scientific performance assessments through a gender lens and reasons why younger female researchers are



leaving academia. (8 men and 18 women), 20 May: From negative to positive stress & from efficiency to effectiveness Full-day workshop 20 persons (7 men, 13 women), 8 November: From negative to positive stress & from efficiency to effectiveness for doctoral student supervisors Full-day workshop 20 persons (7 men, 13 women), 18 November: How to become a better speaker (half-day workshop) 30 persons (10 men, 20 women), 28 November: WINGS annual meeting and inauguration of a Marie Curie exhibition, Full room (100 participants). At WINGS annual meeting an exhibition about Marie Curie, her work, and her life as a woman scientist was inaugurated in the foyer of the Faculty of Science. The exhibition was produced by Rocaviva Eventos (<http://www.rocaviva.eu/>). In addition to the actual exhibition "Maria Sklodowska-Curie - A Polish in Paris", on display from 28th November 2019 to the 19th of December 2019, Professor Curie's grandson Professor Pierre Joliot-Curie, Associate Professor Darcy Wagner, and Professor Emeritus Kirsti Niskanen gave lectures.

2020, 11 February: How to become a better speaker (half-day workshop) 30 persons (8 men, 22 women), From March 2020 WINGS has organized online weekly network meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Anxiety in times of crisis, challenges when working from home and with teaching online are topics that have been addressed.

Other activities

The core group have met approximately once per month during the semesters to plan activities. Members of the core group have also attended the gender equality boards and activities of three of the faculties at LU (Science, Medicine and Engineering), informed leadership at the university about an on-going debate in one of the major Swedish newspaper (and the vice chancellor wrote a response to the published article). A strategic meeting with the deans of the three faculties to secure funding the three coming years (2019-2021) was held in June 2018. In 2018 WINGS presented a poster at two international conferences ("10th European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education", Ireland, and "STEMM Equality Congress", The Netherlands). During 2019 WINGS updated its logotype and printed information pamphlets that were distributed to all employees within the three faculties.

WINGS has also been highlighted on a blog from a project on sexual harassment funded by Lund University <https://tellus.blogg.lu.se/tellus-artikelserie/natverk-ger-forskare-luft-undervingarna/>

and members of the steering group wrote a debate article in the daily newspaper Sydsvenskan (<https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2019-06-16/forskningen-ar-tydlig--en-jamstalld-akademi-kommer-inte-att-uppsta-av-sig-sjalv>) (in Swedish).

WINGS is using social media to spread information about events and gender-related issues.

3.7 SYKE

At SYKE there was no existing network and a first meeting with the newly formed network was held on the 30th of March 2017, with a panel discussion entitled "Why do we need equality work at SYKE?". The Baltic Gender project was also presented. The event brought together 30 SYKE employees, both men and women, to discuss e.g. the scissors diagram and the differentiation of career paths in SYKE.

The second meeting took place on 20th June 2017. This small gathering brought together six women to hear about the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) female leadership workshop. The presentation was given by Johanna Korhonen (Head of Unit, hydrologist). In addition, the example of the WINGS network at Lund University was presented and



discussed.

In the third network meeting on 25th October 2017 there were 18 participants present. Ms. Heidi Koivuluoma (BSc, behavioural economics, human resources (HR) coordinator) told the network about a study where she had analysed interviews made amongst SYKE's scientists. She divided the results of the interviews into three groups: 1) gender equality in the context of the whole of Finland; 2) leadership and career ladder in SYKE; and 3) interaction and organisational culture in SYKE. The interesting presentation, pointing to the ways gender bias is acted out in mundane every-day routines and practices, resulted in an active discussion. The event was recorded and was used as additional research data by Heidi Koivuluoma.

After the third meeting also an online Yammer-group on gender equality and environmental research was initiated.

On the 16th of March 2018 a network meeting entitled "Does Gender matter in Marine Research?" was held. Ph.D. Kaisa Kononen gave a presentation focusing on her 20 years in marine research. Kaisa told about her career in the Academy of Finland and as the first Executive Director of BONUS (<https://www.bonusportal.org/>). In the event, there were 11 participants.

On the 26th of March 2018 the three participants from SYKE on the Baltic Gender leadership course in Lund presented their experience from the course. There were good discussions dealing e.g. with gender bias; the importance of constructive feedback and acknowledgement of personal differences in the management of research and expert work. There were about 10 participants, out of which most to some extent were involved in the Baltic Gender project.

On the 10th of December 2018 the network met on the topic "How to improve equality at SYKE? Come and share your ideas for renewing the GEP!" Senior researcher Ph.D. Helena Valve and HR coordinator Heidi Koivuluoma opened the meeting by introducing the Baltic Gender project and showing SYKE statistics concerning gender equality. Three persons were asked to comment the subject: Kirsi Norros (Communications director), Laura Uusitalo (Leading researcher) and Johanna Korhonen (Head of Unit). There was a possibility to ask questions and participate in the final discussion. The invitation was sent to the whole institute and 15 persons participated. The meeting was successful as it gave many good ideas for improving the GEP. Some points that came up during the meeting were:

- Existing rules, structures, indicators and accepted procedures are important in order to trust that equity and equality comes true at the institute. Besides those we need knowledge based on experiences: the power of examples is very strong. The benefits coming through equality are best shown by positive examples.
- It is important to engage a large group of people to the planning of the GEP, by doing so the content of it becomes better "alive" in everyday practices.
- It is useful to integrate equality issues and related education into other processes and larger contexts.
- We should communicate that equality issues concern us all.
- There is a risk of "preaching to the choir"-phenomenon, meaning that the same people always participate in the meetings. Even so, people find these events important and empowering as they show that they are not struggling alone, and it makes it easier to interfere inequality situations they face in everyday life.

Finally, on 6th March 2020 a discussion event was organised under the title "SYKE equality work in the face of the new decade". This event sought to generate discussion about the worth of the Baltic Gender measures (such as the mentoring programme, portfolio sparring



and leadership training) for SYKE and for the development of its Gender Equality Plan. The event was opened by the Director General Lea Kauppi, who provided a summary of the “state of art” of (gender) equality promotion in SYKE. After that a group of SYKE employees told about their experiences about Baltic Gender activities. The feedback was very positive, and there was a general understanding that many of the measures should be integrated to SYKE’s GEP. Most of the 22 participants engaged actively in the discussion. The ending of the Baltic Gender project was seen as regrettable, but the joint vision was that many of the activities could be continued.

The network and discussion go on in SYKE's joint Yammer platform: ‘Equal opportunities in SYKE’. It is open to all SYKE employees, and 30 people have been registered in it.

3.8 IOW

IOW is a small institute with 200 employees in total, about 100 of whom are actively involved in science. Therefore, IOW decided to use the already existing networks (groups of PhD and postdocs) as well as seminar series and an annual “Skills Week” (organized since 2013) as the platform for this task and arranged seminars as previous years as well as the regular, monthly meetings of PhD’s and postdocs.

The IOW “Skills Week” is organized once a year to support young scientists with knowledge and skills beyond scientific qualification that are useful for career planning. All Bachelor and Master students, PhD candidates and postdocs as well as all interested employees at the IOW are invited. The “Skills Week” 2016 was held on 4-7 October 2016. In 2017, there was a break due to absence of organizers, and the date for 2018 was shifted to the beginning of 2019 due to competing schedules. The week from 20-24 January 2020 the 7th “Skills Week” invited all Bachelor and Master students, PhD candidates and postdocs at the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research Warnemünde to gain insights into the handling of press inquiries and social media, in strategies for a successful, professional career in science or beyond science and in developing competencies in scientific writing. Moreover, information about the science employment contract law was provided as well as a panel discussion where former IOW staff shared their experiences of working outside science.

In 2011, well prior to the Baltic Gender project, IOW established an internal equal opportunity commission (IEOC) dedicated to support the Equal Opportunity Officer (EOO) and develop measures and tools to promote gender balance among the employees of IOW. The members of the IEOC are from across the entire institute representing all staff groups. The outcomes of the quarterly meetings led by the director are communicated internally to the entire IOW staff. Once a year, the Equal Opportunity Officer has informed all staff about recent developments regarding various gender aspects including statistics of partitioning of female/male IOW employees on the general staff assembly. Additionally, IOW participates in “Girls Day” for pupils and organizes this event since 2012.

Apart from these regular events, further activities have been career talks (invited female scientists tell about their career path after a regular scientific talk; twice a year, organized by PhD students/postdocs) and information events on various topics around working in the public service and marine science (once a year, organized by EOO). In general there have been 15-20 participants per event.

On the 16th of January 2019 a 3-hours workshop “Concepts on gender and diversity - equal opportunities in research institutions” was given by Katrien Van der Heyden (sociologist, psychotherapist and expert in gender, equal opportunities, development and diversity at NESMA Consulting bvba, Belgium). For the 20 participants (16 women and 4 men) this



workshop gave an introduction into the basic concepts of gender. A closer look was taken at gender stereotypes and unconscious biases. Finally, the links between gender and research were explored.

4 Reflections from the partners of Baltic Gender

4.1 On establishing a new network

The four partners that did not have a network prior to Baltic Gender (UT-EMI, Kiel UAS, KU, SYKE) thought that this task had been difficult, at least to some extent. The partners with least experience of gender equality work (UT-EMI and KU) mentioned that the topic, which at the start of the project wasn't on the agenda in the discussions in their organizations, was difficult to address immediately. KU found their attempt to adopt an existing practise of the Marine Research Institute by using the same specific time (i.e., Thursday afternoons, which is used to use for various local events) for grass-root networking quite successful as all the organized meetings attracted both women and men from the Institute. UT-EMI has formed a core group and initiated seminars based on the suggestions from participants. UT-EMI is the smallest partner institute and therefore the meetings have been organized so a large proportion of the employees can attend. Kiel UAS found it difficult to initiate the network they thought would be appreciated, and had to cancel the first meetings due to too low number of participants signing up. SYKE was already from the start successful in attracting active members to the network.

The postdoc-part of the WEB (GEOMAR) developed during the project period and does now have four of its members in the WEB board. At CAU the IMAP and Women Scientist Network were existing networks and identified as similar to the network aimed at in this task. Since the Excellence of Cluster ran out, the Postdoc Centre of Kiel University is the continuation of IMAP. IOW's seminars, monthly meetings of PhD's and postdocs and the annual "Skills Weeks" were also existing structures. WINGS, from where the idea to this task originated, has developed during the project and secured funding for a three-year period at a time instead of the earlier annual funding. From the partners with existing networks at the start of the project it was mentioned that it would have been difficult to start something new, since there were already other networks focussing on the same target groups.

All partners also mentioned that the people targeted with the networks are busy and that the purpose of the network or its activities must be clearly presented to attract participants.

4.2 Participants

The type of activity is of importance when the network members decide if they have time to prioritize the activity. Usually the core/steering group and members that have a specific interest in the topic of the event attend. If highly acknowledged speakers are giving presentations or participate in panel discussions the attendance rate is usually high. Competing initiatives, with the same target groups or that cover the same topics, can also influence the number of participants on a given occasion.

How the network has been advertised has been important for the number of participants showing up at the activities. More women than men have attended most activities and that could be due to how the networks' aims have been communicated.

The networks have different target groups and since Baltic Gender in most institutions have focussed on the marine science staff the number of participants vary from the smaller entities



to the larger ones. There is no registration needed for participation in most² of the networks and specific numbers of members are therefore not possible to collect. The idea is that all should feel welcome to attend but the time constraints most staff experience put the limits for the individual engagement.

4.3 Popular activities

In the grass-root networks at the partner institutes we have identified the following activities as successful:

- Concrete offers like workshops in teaching, leadership, gendered innovation, preparing for job interviews (for postdocs), media presentations, and self-presentation.
- Activities that have been planned together at one meeting, targeted for the group.
- Panel discussions on institute specific topics. People are interested in what is going on in their own organization with facts and figures.
- Seminars with high-level researchers (role models) have also attracted participants.

4.4 Sustainability now and post Baltic Gender

To create a sustainable network three things have been identified as of particular importance 1) that all targeted employees know about the network, 2) that a critical number of people engage in the network and 3) that there is an acceptance from high-level management and preferably also resources made available for the network.

4.4.1 Knowledge about the network and information spread

There are different approaches between partners on how to keep people informed about the grass-root network in the workplace. **Email** to a list of people that have shown interest in the network or to the entire target group, **newsletters** at the departments or faculties, within network **Yammer- or Facebook** groups, **webpage** info, information physically posted at the equal opportunity office or on **billboards** and **one-to-one talks**.

4.4.2 Engagement in the networks

As shown in Table 1 a number of core persons are identified in all the networks. These people can initiate or organize different events such as seminars or workshops. By online groups on platforms as Facebook or Yammer all members can share information, thoughts, newly published papers or reports and these groups can create a sense of belonging to the network also for those that cannot attend all seminars due to leaves or other duties.

At physical meetings (seminars, workshops etc.) there could be opportunities to decide on coming events. Several networks reported that activities had turned out well when the participants had discussed what they wanted to do next time they met. The networks at IOW have a structure with presentations of on-going projects by PhD students or postdocs. Additional meetings of those groups are dedicated to address specific work-related topics among the participants and communicate those to the institute leaders, the equal opportunity

² GEOMAR: All women in leadership positions are automatically WEB members, the WEB board is elected and the postdoc representatives serve as guest in the board meetings. Only permanent staff members can be elected, to protect non-permanent staff of being involved in conflicts that might have a negative effect on their career.



officer and/or the internal equal opportunity commission. Participants at these meetings know what to expect since the format is already set. Through recurring events such as the Skills Week at IOW the participants can also join workshops on topics of their choice (PhD students are actively involved in selection of topics). The newly created networks (KU, UT-EMI, SYKE, Kiel UAS) and the existing ones at LU, CAU and GEOMAR have used the participants in the networks when shaping the upcoming events. For example at LU this is done through discussions during the coffee breaks in the workshops and also in the online evaluations after the events, where new topics or speakers can be suggested. When a network structure is in place there are a number of possibilities to make adjustments to both the structure and the activities.

To attract both women and men to the networks, and thereby increase the potential for improved gender equality in the workplace, the names of the networks might have to be considered. During 2019 WINGS (Women in Great Sciences) at LU changed the logotype and kept the name WINGS, but without the Women in Great Sciences explanation. This was done since a number of men interested in WINGS' activities had expressed that they did not know that they were welcome to attend. There were also women that did not attend since they did not want to engage in a women-only network, since they thought that would not be the most efficient way to reach the structural changes needed to obtain gender balance in academia. A majority of the participants at the meetings are still women.

At SYKE the network has been involved in the discussions on updating the Gender Equality Plan. At the partners UT-EMI and KU there have also been intensive work with the newly established GEPs but those meetings have not been categorized as network meetings, although several of the employees involved were the same as the ones attending the network activities. At UT-EMI and KU new GEPs were constructed and the involvement of high-level management critical. At SYKE the grass-root network could substantially contribute to the updated plan, and the discussions could involve grass roots with a mandate to inform high-level management.

4.4.3 Acceptance and resources

At all partner institutes there is an acceptance for the grass-root networks and rooms are available for meetings. WEB at GEOMAR has some resources that the postdoc part of the network can apply for if they want to arrange an event. WINGS at LU has now secured funding for a three-year period (since 2007 funding has been decided on an annual basis). This reflects the high acceptance and appreciation from the three faculties that support the network. At CAU the funding of the IMAP postdoc network ended in 2019. The concept of IMAP has been transformed into a permanent structure and its tasks were expanded. At IOW the presentation series with networking opportunities are in the structure and do not require further funding to be sustainable. The "Skills Week" is a regular annual event at IOW since 2013 and it will continue. Limited funding is available from the institute to support the selection of courses/events. The means for the "Skills Week" is decided by the board of leaders upon request from organizers and the equal opportunity officer after consultation with the representatives of the PhD students and postdocs. At KU an existing long-lasting practise of networking has been adopted and will be kept as before with only a minimal need for local financial resources (i.e. for coffee and tea) or on projects' basis. At UT-EMI the core group foresee that meetings can be organized with financial support from the HR department if the events are costly. At SYKE the Yammer-group is a networking tool that the core group of the network thinks can be kept without financial means. Through the discussions in the network meetings and by involving several employees in the gender equality discussions, and thereby raising the awareness about gender equality issues, during the course of the Baltic Gender project a good basis for continued networking has been founded.



5 Lessons learned

In this task several successful practices have been identified and lessons learned. Grass-root networks have turned out to be important institutional measures to foster gender equality and career advancement of female scientists.

To set up a structure and engage a critical number of people **time is needed**. It is important to first focus on the **aim of the network and the target groups**. The overall aim could be to reach gender balance at all levels in the partner organization. This could be addressed by specific aims such as to broadly raise awareness about gender equality, to engage people in specific tasks, such as work on gender equality plans, or to improve teaching/student relations. The aim could also be to facilitate networking, in particular for female scientists, by providing possibilities for interaction between employees from different departments and career levels. In this first step the **identification of already existing structures and networks** is valuable. It is also important to consider the **size and proportions of different staff levels among the employees**. Who could be engaged? What persons are supportive? Do we have high-level management commitment/funding/support? How could the network best support women careers? When you have decided where to start you can develop your scope continuously. Thoughts on how gender and/or gender perspectives should be addressed in the network have also contributed to the kind of activities that have been organized.

When the target groups and aims have been identified the questions on **how to spread information and engage people** in the network need to be addressed. In our institutions digital channels (email, website, Facebook, Yammer etc.) as well as word-of-the-mouth have been utilized and the first seminars or round-table discussions have ended with the reflections on what to do next. How the activities are announced is crucial for attracting different groups, e.g. genders, to the activities.

Before you advertise you have to decide on what activities the network would like to organize. In this project most partners started with arranging **seminars with female role models**. This activity is inexpensive (compared to workshops with external partners) and presents successful women in academia to the network participants. Other activities have been related to the aims of Baltic Gender (e.g. how to improve the gender quality plans) or other on-going work at the institutions that are of interest for the network participants.

Within Baltic Gender some partners (Kiel UAS, SYKE, UT-EMI, KU) started new grass-root networks, whereas others (GEOMAR, CAU, LU, IOW) included this task into already existing networks, and strengthened the focus on long-lasting sustainability of the networks. All partners currently have networks that support women career advancements. Networking possibilities are important in academic careers and the sense of belonging in academia can be strengthened when women role models are made visible.

