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## "Changing the Culture of Research - Gender-Sensitive Leadership. Some Norwegian Examples"

GenSET Workshop  
on  
Gender Stereotypes and Gender Attitudes in the Assessment of Women's Work  
Athens, 3-4 March 2011

# Norwegian Committee for Gender Balance in Research

- Appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research for a third period (2010-2013).
- Members from higher education institutions (4), research institutes (2), students' organization (1), and the Research Council of Norway (1).
- Mandate: provide support to and recommendations for measures that promote the integration of gender equality efforts at the higher education institutions and research institutes.
- Annual budget is 3 mill NOK (375 000 €)
- The secretariat is placed at the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions.

# Mainstreaming gender equality

- Initiating dialogue between leaders, equality officers and other actors.
- Discussing gender action plans and strategies with the leadership at the institutions.
- Meetings with e.g. the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombuds(wo)man.
- Established network for gender equality officers.
- Call for network for women scientists – financed activities of 15 networks.
- On behalf of the Ministry announces and nominates the annual Equality Award (250 000 €). Awarded for the fourth time in January this year.
- Meets twice a year with the Minister of Research and Higher Education.



# Equality – a matter of leadership

- The Committee visits the top leaders/administration at the institutions and discusses specific challenges facing them.
- Several institutions are committed to act, but need methods – how does one do it?
- We were asked to collect good examples of practices that might be useful to the institutions.
- We took the challenge and put together a handbook, intended to be a practical toolkit as well as a source of inspiration:



## The handbook – *Talent at stake. Changing the Culture of Research. Gender Sensitive Leadership*

- All the Norwegian research institutions were invited to come up with good examples/practices of leaders (men and women) who had made an effort to improve the gender balance at their institution.
- The interviewees emphasized the need to have **both men and women** as role models.
- We collected examples that were concrete and could be proved to have had good results.
- We collected relevant and revealing statistics.

## Talent at stake.

### Changing the Culture of Research - gender-sensitive leadership

"Just get started!"

"Change from the top - down is a must"

"Changing the discipline will attract women"

"Equality enhances research quality"

"Equality is more than numbers"



# Good examples of gender-sensitive leadership?

## Some examples: Recruitment and retention

- When advertising vacant positions:
  - Set up search committees to find and encourage women to apply
  - Design a job description that is wide enough to attract several/a group of applicants, men and women
  - If only men apply, or very few applicants: tell the department they have to try again (!)
  - No to cloning: The tendency to look only for copies/replicas of the incumbent chair/leader/professor must be resisted!
- When the position has been filled:
  - Active career planning is necessary
  - Start-up packets (equipment, lab time, assistants etc)
  - A good, supportive work environment is essential for both women and men!



## Good examples of gender-sensitive leadership? Gender action plans are needed

- Gender action plans do not solve all the problems, but they are needed for getting started!
  - The plans must include statistics, figures past and present, and they must look ahead: set concrete goals
  - An example: How my own university, the University of Tromsø, went from 12% women full professors in 2004 to 24.6% in 2010. Now the plan is to reach 30% by 2013, and the UofTromsø is using the GenSET recommendations as inspiration and guideline in doing so.
- Gender action plans must be initiated, supported and followed up wholeheartedly by the institution's leaders.



genSET press release October 18, 2010:

”The University of Tromsø leads European science institutions in adopting genSET Recommendations for Mainstreaming Gender in Science as the guiding principles for development of new gender action plan.”

For more information – see [www.genderinscience.org](http://www.genderinscience.org)



## Gender-sensitive leadership is crucial in order to change the culture of research

The quality/excellence argument:

Gender-sensitive leaders know that a varied and balanced work environment and research group (in terms of not only gender, but race and ethnicity as well as age, too) tends to be more active, more creative – more productive.

Changing the culture of research means taking a fresh look at concepts like “quality” and “excellence”.



## Leaders need knowledge and training

- *Talent at stake/Talenter på spill* has been distributed to all the higher education and research institutions in Norway, and several are now using the handbook in courses for leaders.
- The feedback is very positive – it legitimates the work that needs to be done, and motivates leaders to take better care of their talented employees.
- **Talent at stake** is available on our website:
- <http://eng.kifinfo.no/>