

Designing, Implementing and Monitoring a Gender Equality Plan - Practical Insights for Change Agents

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Who we are ...



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The CHANGE project in a nutshell



“CHAlleNging Gender (In)Equality in
science and research”

Duration: 2018-2021

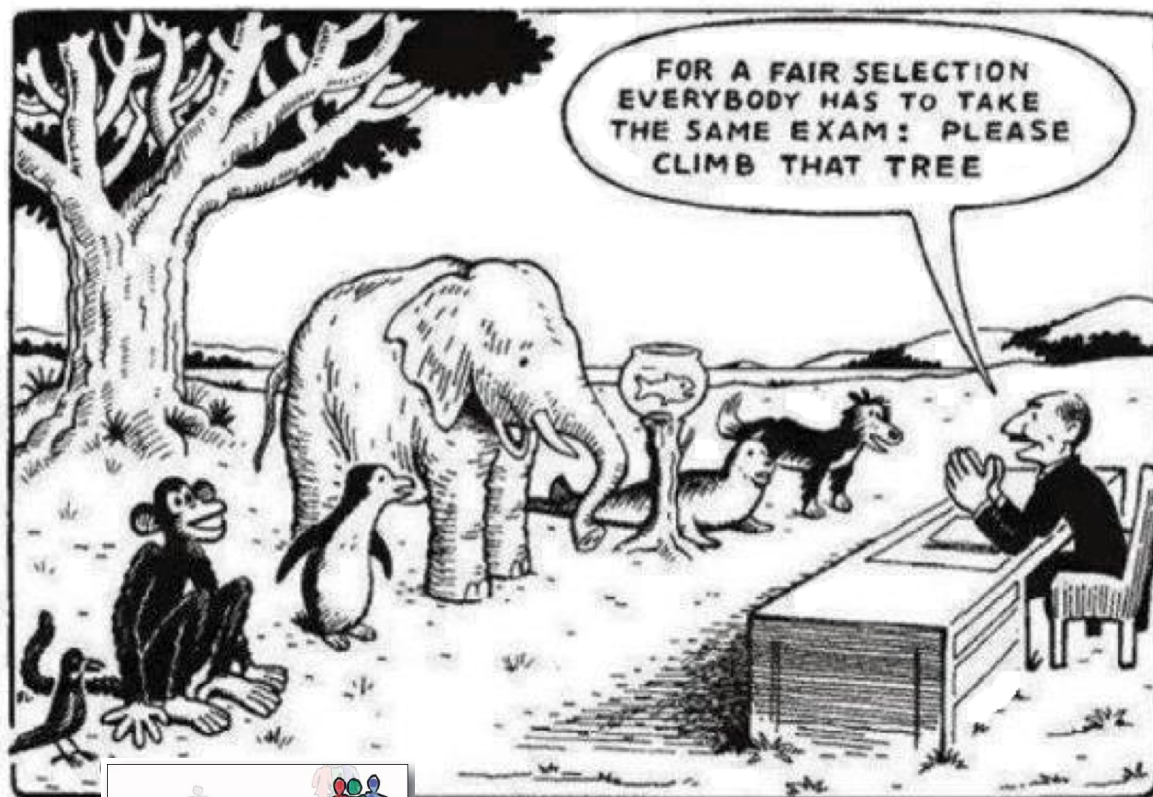
www.change-h2020.eu



Interdisziplinäres Forschungszentrum für Technik, Arbeit und Kultur (IFZ) – coordination, Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen (RWTH Aachen), Universidade de Aveiro (UAVR), Zilinska Univerzita v Ziline (UNIZA), Nacionalni Institut za Biologijo (NIB), Fraunhofer Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V. (IFAM) and Beit Berl College (BBC).



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Social gender justice =

„social justice“ + „gender equity“

(Dahmen & Thaler 2017)



Systematic consideration of structural disadvantages of social groups in science and research (cf. Berger & Hofstätter 2014), on the premise that not only the category gender can be regarded as the cause of injustice or can explain it.

CHANGE!



Structural Change – a complex process



Steps 1-3: Creating a climate for change

Steps 4-6: Inclusion and empowerment of the organisation

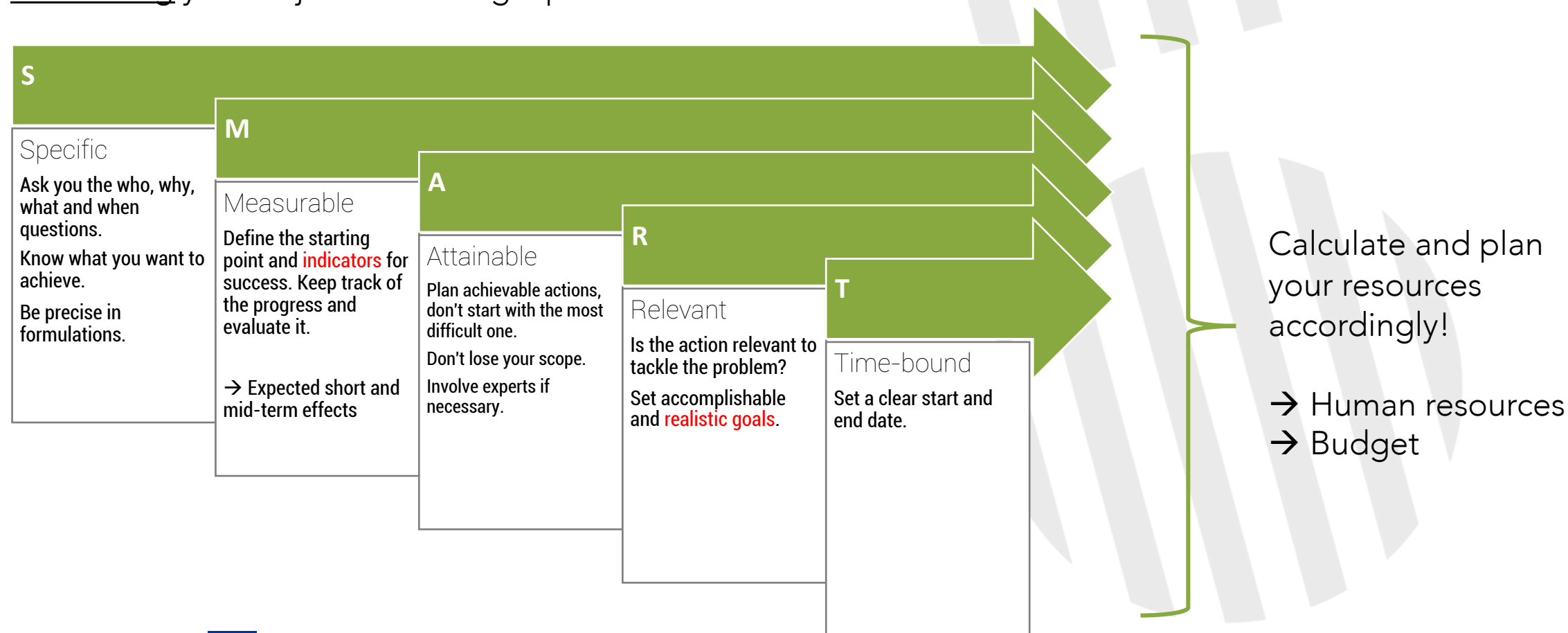
Steps 7-8: Sustainable change

Fig: Kotter, J. (1995) Why transformation efforts fail. Harvard Business Review 72(2): 59-67.



Designing and monitoring change

For designing actions, it is helpful to design them in a SMART way. This should support an effective implementation by setting realistic goals and monitoring your objectives during a pre-defined time frame.



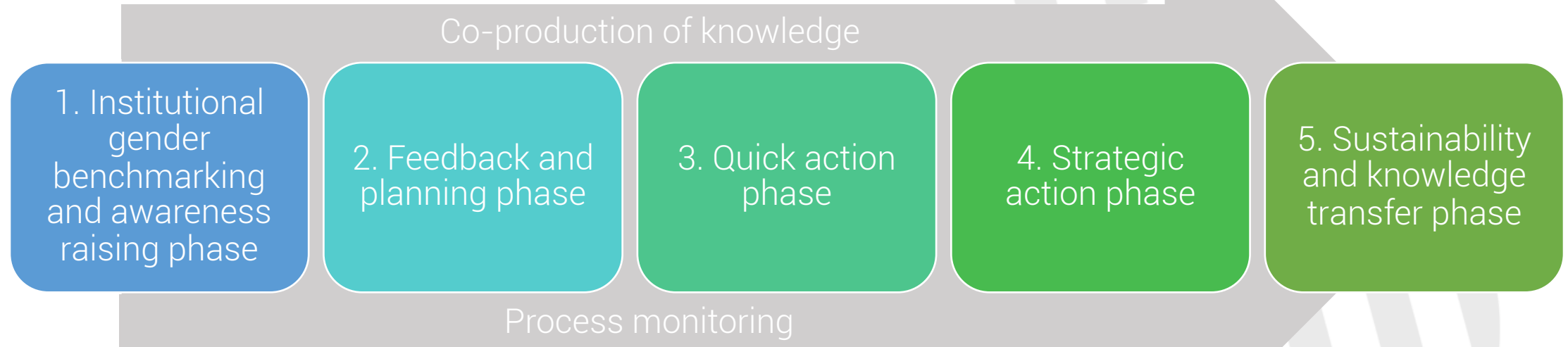
Co-producing CHANGE

- Involve actors from different status groups and fields
 - administrative AND scientific staff
 - actors from different scientific fields
 - various genders, age, care responsibilities etc.
(Gender+ / intersectionality)

Idea: Set up a **GEP working group** to design an inclusive plan, which meets the needs of as many institutional members as possible

→ GEP working group needs resources and the time invested must count as working time → institutional care work!

Organisational CHANGE in 5 steps



Quick actions

Create short term wins!

- Find short-term wins by implementing visible measures with high approval and no resistance!
 - Photo exhibition "Women at university" (University of Žilina, Slovakia)
 - Brown bag sessions (University of Aveiro, Portugal)
 - Focus groups on work life balance for all genders (IFZ, Austria)
 - ...
- Can enhance the commitment of the involved actors
- Shows the involved organisations that this project really changes something (rather than merely speaking about change)
- Idea of "giving something back" to the involved staff
- Generate success experiences for the change agents



Windows of opportunities



Use what you've got!

- Use organisational events/procedures which can be 'enriched' with gender equality (work-life-balance, career events, ...).
- Support from outside, change is not only perused from inside the organisation.
- Utilize current national or European (science political) developments, events, policies regarding gender equality for the project initiatives
- E.g. Horizon Europe eligibility criterion



Knowledge co-production

Create relationships!

- To produce relevant gender equality knowledge together with actors from the organisation to come up with practical knowledge, which is relevant for and will be meaningful for the respective actors ([Dahmen-Adkins, Karner & Thaler 2019](#))
- To make different types of knowledge more accessible and responsive to each other
- To establish a mutual understanding
- To learn from each other and come up with more integrated knowledge, and to better align activities.

Transfer Agents

Find allies with power!

- To successfully and sustainably implement gender equality knowledge in a strategic manner, it is necessary to involve individuals in powerful and relevant positions, who are committed to the idea of gender equality in science and research and support the implementation of the gender equality plans
- TAs are relevant actors of CHANGE institutions (e. g. human resources managers, heads of institutions, or equal opportunity officers) and additionally stakeholders from science and research (e.g. policy makers, research funding actors)
- TAs support the sustainability of gender equality projects with time-limited funding

Communication

Implementing a GEP is a constant process of communication!

- Tailored information for different audiences
- Choose adequate channels, emails are not enough
- Make the benefits for the whole organisation visible
- If necessary use other wording, instead of "gender" talk e.g. about work-life-balance and career possibilities
- Communicate regularly to make your work and efforts visible, this helps also to increase transparency about the change process

Practice Self-Care as Change Agent

([Dahmen-Adkins & Peterson 2021](#))



The implementation of gender equality change in organizations commonly encounters manifestations of resistance and the reasons for this are complex and multidimensional (Benschop and van den Brink 2014).

As a change agent disrupting the system

- means questioning existing traditional structures,
- challenging embedded processes and
- identifying (hidden) mechanisms of exclusion and inequality

As a consequence managing negative experiences and emotions, such as resistance to implementation measures requires learning new strategies for dealing with them, or resorting to tried and tested strategies

- High degree of flexibility and resilience is necessary to persistently maintain the personal motivation



How to get involved...



- 26. +27. April 2022 [International Stakeholder Workshop](#) in Aveiro/Portugal
- Regular updates on
 - our website: www.change-h2020.eu
 - on Twitter: @CHANGE_H2020
 - and on Researchgate.
- Policy papers and an English open access publication at the end of the project.

