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# EQUALIST

Gender Equality in Information Sciences and Technology

## Gender Equality Progress Report

Kaunas University of Technology  
(Lithuania)



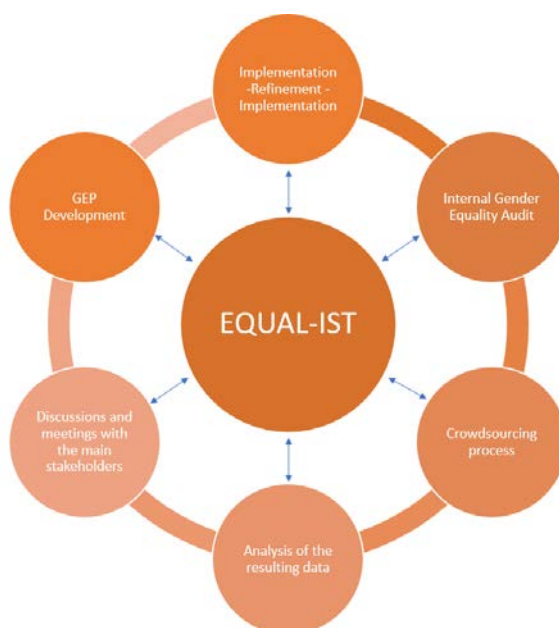
**Keywords:** EQUAL-IST, KTU, STEM, women in ICT, Gender Equality Plan, progress report.

### The EQUAL-IST Project

Women remain a minority among academic leaders, especially in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The project “Gender Equality Plans for Information Sciences and Technology Research Institutions” (EQUAL-IST) is improving this situation for seven partner Universities that are active in the fields of Information Sciences and Technology (IST) fields. EQUAL-IST joins the forces of those IST Research Institutions which are committed to introducing the internal structural changes necessary for boosting gender equality and removing barriers to the career progression of women in Research and Innovation (R&I).

The EQUAL-IST project does not only boost gender equality at the involved RPOs but also seeks to influence a bigger number of IST research organizations in order to address gender bias and contribute to the achievement of ERA objectives by increasing the number of female researchers in the IST fields.

### Case of KTU



The results of Gender Equality Audits have shown that the situation of Gender Equality in the Informatics Faculty of KTU was imbalanced and need some improvements. Later actions on Crowd Equality Platform (CrowdEquality - The Idea Crowdsourcing Platform for Promoting Gender Equality and Diversity), where the ideas on how to improve the situation were described, presented and given for productive discussion, ended with voting of the most promising initiatives for promoting gender equality and diversity. The voted ideas were introduced to the Leader

Board of Informatics Faculty.

The meeting with HR Management group and Researchers showed that two challenges required much of attention. The first one was that women feel a lack of concern of their career path compared with their male colleagues. Since ICT is shown as a male field of activity, women were not supported sufficiently in their integration to the field and their academic activities. Those young women express a need to get some specific support from their older colleagues. Especially while they are facing difficulties in their career, or they have troubles with deciding the actions, that should be taken to improve their career paths. Another challenge arises when women face problems while planning their career. The meetings with HR management group and interviews showed that women feel a little bit confused on what



they want to do with their career and how to plan it right. The main challenges of planning a career appear, when they start planning a family or expecting a baby as these situations keep a woman away from her active career for a while. Also, women feel some boundaries and do not know how to overcome them (mostly it is related to limited career opportunities in the institution).

The primary two solutions identified during the meeting with focus groups, and the interview are: 1) a mentoring network for Women and 2) helping women to create their career roadmap.

These two solutions aim to help women integrate in a better way into ICT field and become more confident about their career path. Also, it will ensure the support for women who are facing difficulties in their professional path and encourage them to take action into their hands.

### **Challenges and Key Performance Indicators**

The identified challenges along with the goals are presented in the table below.

Intervention Areas	Challenge Title	Goal
HR Management Practices	Challenge 3 –Lack of support to female students at KTU to retain them into ICT academic careers	Objective 3 – Create mentoring Network for Women PhD students at KTU
	Challenge 4 – Women struggle in creating a clear career vision	Objective 4 – help women to create their career Roadmap
	Challenge 5 – Women are not involved in decision making at the Faculty	Objective 5 - Involve women in organization decision-making process by supporting women leadership
Teaching and Students Services & Institutional Communication	Challenge 6 – The lack of visibility of women in IT	Objective 6 – Present more good practices for women working in IT
Other Gender Equality Issues	Challenge 8 - Lack of men involved in Gender Equality Actions	Objective 8 – Encourage men to stand for Gender Equality

### **First year's main results**

At the KTU 13 Activities were initiated: 6 of them were completed and 7 are in progress. The main results of the *completed* Activities are as follows:



- (i) creation and adaptation of a Career Planning Template for women working at the IF
- (ii) organisation and conduction of a special session for female researchers “Women in ICT” at the “Advanced Learning Technologies” (ALTA) international conference (<http://ndma.lt/alta2017/>)
- (iii) organisation and conduction of an event for girls, where role models of women working in the IT field were promoted
- (iv) organisation and conduction of a workshop about the gender equality issues, which was specifically targeted at male students at the IF.

The main obstacles faced during the 1<sup>st</sup> iteration of the GEP implementation included bureaucracy and the tedious process of getting approval from higher management to implement specific Activities. Nevertheless, it could be possible to overcome these obstacles and successfully finalise the 1iteration of the GEP implementation.

### Involved Stakeholders:

#### **EQUAL-IST project leader (1 W):**

Daina Gudoniene – Head of Distance Learning Technologies Research Laboratory, Lecturer at Informatics Faculty.

#### **Managing director of the Informatics Faculty:**

**Prof. dr. Eduardas Bareisa** – dean of Informatics Faculty, professor at Department of Software Engineering.

#### **KTU Working Group members of the EQUAL-IST project:**

**Prof. dr. Eduardas Bareisa** - Dean of Informatics Faculty, professor at Department of Software Engineering.

**Prof. Robertas Damasevicius** –Vice Rector for Science at Informatics Faculty, professor at Department of Software Engineering.

**Prof. Rytis Maskeliunas** – Profesor at Department of Multimedia Engineering; Senior researcher at the Centre of Real Time Computer Systems.

**Assoc. prof. Danguole Rutkauskiene** – Associated professor at Department of Multimedia Engineering, Head of the department of Learning and Projects at E-Learning Technology Centre, The Internal Evaluator at the KTU.

**Assoc. prof. Antanas Lenkevicius** – Associated professor at Department of Multimedia Engineering.

**Assoc. prof. Kristina Ukvelbergiene** – vice-rector for Science at Kaunas University of Technology.

**Assoc. prof. Irena Patasiene** – Coordinator of e-learning technology and Moodle Platform at Faculty of Social sciences, arts and Humanities, Lecturer at Department of Information Systems.

**Virginija Limanauskiene** – Lecturer at Department of Software Engineering.

**Daina Gudoniene** – Head of Distance Learning Technologies Research Laboratory, Lecturer at Informatics Faculty.

**Edvinas Zinkevicius** – Project analyst at Department of Multimedia Engineering, Project Junior Research at Department of Multimedia Engineering.

**Reda Bartkute** – Junior Researcher at Department of Multimedia Engineering.

