D0e

Report on Gender Issues

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All the HUMAINE partners have contributed data on their own gender makeup and issues.
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1 Background: Lisbon and FP6 objectives

The Lisbon Objectives established issues of gender equality and omni-level participation as priorities for European research. They identified several reasons for taking action:

1. The presence of women scientists would counter the public perception that scientific research was a male domain
2. The presence of women would reduce public fear of science.
3. 50% of the public would be able to relate more fully to ongoing scientific research that may have an impact on their lives.
4. Increasing the role and participation of women would positively contribute to the ongoing debate about gender mainstreaming and gender friendly activities.

Arising out of the Lisbon objectives, the Gender Action Plan (GAP) for FP5 projects set a target of 30% participation by women while the FP6 GAP aims at 40% participation by women. HUMAINE comfortably exceeds the Lisbon Objective in almost all areas. The FP6 target of 40% is much more difficult because the research community is male dominated, as an inevitable result of its history. However, there are areas where HUMAINE has more direct control over gender balance – in the proportion of women who have an input at policy level, and at the level of postgraduates, where it is not bound by the gender balance in a community of established researchers. In those areas, HUMAINE has met the FP6 requirement.

HUMAINE is able to achieve reasonable gender balance for two reasons. First, the area is one where there are female researchers who are well qualified to participate in a network of excellence. Second, gender balance has been consciously recognised as an issue whenever issues of selection have arisen (e.g. in identifying the project’s management bodies, subgroups selected to carry out key functions, etc). Gender balance has been recognised partly because the co-ordinating institution is, for historical reasons, very sensitive to equality issues.
2 Gender breakdown

2.1 Overall figures

Overall numbers do not represent gender breakdown adequately, not least because there are some areas where we can legislate, whereas in others we are bound by pre-existing patterns. Hence the figures are presented below in a way that separates areas where we have control from areas where we do not.

The overall gender analysis graph below (figure 1) identifies 4 categories of HUMAINE members; early researchers with less than 4 years experience by gender; PhD students by gender and lastly HUMAINE funded researchers by gender.

![HUMAINE: Analysis of Male and Female Members](image-url)

Figure 1
HUMAINE has 162 members comprising 105 males and 57 females. Hence the network as a whole does exceed the Lisbon objectives of 30% female representation. The actual HUMAINE female representation of 35% female is just short of the FP6 aspiration. The reason is apparent from closer inspection of the categories.

2.2 Closer inspection of the categories

2.2.1 Seniority

95 HUMAINE members are classified as established researchers (with more than 4 years research experience). Of them, women make up 32.6%, which exceeds the Lisbon objective but falls well short of the FP6 objective. In contrast, there are 67 more junior researchers (including PhD students), of whom 38.8% are female – all but reaching the FP6 target.

The senior researchers reflect the situation in which they trained and rose to prominence. The junior researchers reflect the situation being brought about by contemporary practice, including practice in HUMAINE.

2.2.2 HUMAINE Funded staff

31 members of HUMAINE are substantially funded by the network grant. They are at a wide range of career levels. Correspondingly, in that category, the proportion of females is in line with the overall proportion, at 35.5%.

2.2.3 Early researchers

HUMAINE has 24 members in this category, of whom 29% are female. Because the number is small, not too much emphasis can be put on the exact figure. It is effectively comparable to the figure for senior researchers.

2.2.4 PhD students

PhD students define the future pattern of the area. Of 41 engaged in HUMAINE, 44% are female, and so in this area, we far exceed the FP6 guidelines. Hence, HUMAINE both reflects and helps to promote a pattern where the emerging research community is much more gender balanced.

2.2.5 Board of Management

The Board of Management consists of one representative from each partner, necessarily at senior level. The proportion of females on the Board is above the proportion among senior researchers in the network as a whole, at 35%.
2.2.6 Workpackage Leaders

The highest priority for both the Lisbon Objectives and the FP6 gender policy was that women should have an input at policy level. In that area, HUMAINE has more control, and we fully meet the FP6 target: 40% our workpackage leaders are female.

2.2.7 Project Steering Board

The Project Steering Body is the main management body in HUMAINE. The PSB also meets to the FP6 target on gender makeup, with 40% female representation.

Subgroups of the PSB have also been gender balanced. The subgroup constituted to handle recruitment of new members was 40% female; and the Co-ordination group, which deals with day-to-day management, is 50% female.

In all the management-related areas, the women who hold positions within HUMAINE do so purely on merit and not through manipulation aimed simply at meeting gender criteria.

3 Endorsing women’s Role

3.1 Proactive encouragement

HUMAINE has adopted a range of ways to promote and encourage the role of women within the project. For instance, we actively seek distinguished female speakers to participate at key events. This approach delivers several proactive elements. As well as promoting women in science we believe that this approach creates positive role models for younger female researchers and extinguishes any residual bias due to historical baggage.

3.2 Workshops

All workshops held under the auspices of HUMAINE encourage female researchers to give presentations, with special encouragement given to female early researchers and PhD students. We believe that this approach aids the transition for females from early researcher to established and a similar process for PhD students to early researcher. This in turn will have a positive correlation in relation to the overall gender balance within the scientific community.
3.3 Research and development

Following on from Lisbon the European Council agreed at the Barcelona summit to increase the proportion of GDP spent on research and development to an unprecedented 3% by 2010 thus having a knock on effect on the number of researchers required to make this aspiration become a reality. It will become imperative to positively encourage women into the scientific and research field in order to satisfy the anticipated labour demand. As a micro example the number of female PhD students within the HUMAINE project is a welcome statistic within a field that has been male dominated for historical reasons.

3.4 Gender Mainstreaming

The above resume encompasses the Gender Action Plan as devised by the HUMAINE Project Steering Board. The gender balance within the project workforce surpasses the FP6 aspirations in some areas and in those areas where the gender breakdown slightly falls short of the target the high representation of females in the PhD section coupled with the arrival of new partners are positive signs that a sufficient gender balance across the network is achievable within a short space of time and more importantly it is sustainable.

Gender mainstreaming and the raising of gender awareness initiatives was innate from the beginning of the project and is ongoing. Contained within the Gender Action Plan are many aspects that promote the role of women in science. These include invitations to women speakers, encouragement of female PhD students to take an active role in workshops and the endorsement of women to positions of management and policy decision making – the latter being a key aspiration for both the Lisbon Objectives and the FP6 gender policy.

3.5 Possible developments

We are continually looking for new and innovative ways to improve gender issues across the network. While we cannot interfere in individual partner’s institutions and their special arrangements we can create platforms for women involved in the HUMAINE project to liaise with one another on a range of issues. One such mechanism has been the establishment of a site on the HUMAINE portal. This is not to be misconstrued as a grievance platform or a podium for discussing sensitive issues. Rather it is a positive development that allows female members to post items of interest on the portal. This could be drawing attention to a particular female speaker at a workshop or even organising a woman’s event at a Summer school or plenary session etc. The establishment of such a communication channel is both a proactive and pre-emptive initiative and given the geographical diffusion of HUMAINE activists seems a fairly sensible and progressive strategy.
4 Conclusion

HUMAINE is proud that women have an input at policy level. Indeed gender mainstreaming comprising of orderly integration of gender egalitarianism into all policies and programmes is innate within the organisation. The issue of gender was one that the management team paid particular attention to since the project was in embryonic stage. Indeed Ellen Douglas-Cowie has been the Management and Communications Director from its inception. While we cannot change the historical baggage with regards gender we can develop policies at management level that will be the building blocks for gender mainstreaming throughout the lifetime of the project and beyond.

A budget is available to support these gender initiatives.