From barriers to bridges: Actors actively shaping intersectional equality policy-making in R&I

Fourth Working paper KSH3 - Intersectionality

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THIS DOCUMENT IS MEANT FOR ANYONE INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERSECTIONAL EQUALITY POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Executive summary

Over the past three years, the Knowledge and Support Hub (KSH) 3 on Intersectionality has built an extensive and innovative evidence base for advancing intersectional equality policy-making in Research and Innovation (R&I). This work has drawn on multiple, complementary sources: 10 in-depth case studies across European Higher Education and Research (HE&R) organisations, 4 Communities of Practice (CoPs), and five Knowledge Exchange Events (KEE) bringing together our CoPs, KSH experts and leaders, practitioners, academics, and policy stakeholders.

These collective efforts have informed a series of Working Papers that address a central question: ***How can intersectionality be translated into a praxis for R&I policy-making?*** We argue that such a focus on praxis is crucial as it moves the discussion from "what *is* an intersectional policy" to "how to *do* intersectionality in policy-making" to foster and sustain institutional change. Across the series, the objective has therefore been to bridge persistent gaps between theory and practice, critique and strategy, and academic and practitioner communities.

The Working Paper series has progressively mapped this challenge across different levels of analysis. Working Paper (WP) 1 established the conceptual foundations by mapping the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of translating intersectionality's ambitions into actionable practice. WP2 focused on current key barriers to "do" intersectionality to , including limited knowledge on intersectionality, single-axis approaches to equality, and the lack of methodologies to examine intersectional policies. WP3 discussed how intersectionality operates not only as an analytical lens but especially as a political strategy within policy-making to foster change, shaped by both facilitating and hampering (extra-)organisational factors. **WP4 shifts** from the macro level (mapping structural barriers and knowledge gaps) and the meso level (examining how organisations leverage facilitating factors and overcome barriers), **to the micro level, engaging with the role of actors as "bridge builders"** (Montoya & Seminario, 2022) **in overcoming barriers and fostering change towards intersectional equality.**

In this Working Paper, we argue that there needs to be a shift in how we understand intersectional policies. **Rather than evaluating whether institutions have designed and implemented a fully-fledged "intersectional policy", we adopt an alternative approach that identifies "traces of intersectionality": existing policies and practices through which intersectionality is already being enacted. While these traces may be partial, informal, or even fragile, the**y provide **entry points** to further develop and can constitute the building blocks of broader change processes towards institutional change (Beeckmans et al. 2026)**.** This approach overcomes the risk to reproduce binary logics of presence versus absence, when intersectionality is destined to remain an unattainable ideal or a rhetoric "buzzword". In doing so, it highlights how intersectional equality policy-making is not only a matter of policy design and implementation, but a political process involving actors' agency, negotiation strategies, and collective action to counter intersecting inequalities within R&I.

The paper is structured into three parts: first, the purpose of the fourth Knowledge Exchange Event (KEE4) is explained, which brought together KSH leaders, experts and CoPs to reflect on how institutional actors navigate constraints and develop strategies to sustain change. Second, the knowledge exchange insights are presented to discuss ways to move beyond symbolic commitments on paper to the agents and communities of change who actively shape intersectional equality policy-making in practice. Finally, insights from some of our CoPs and KSH experts are collected.

1. Knowledge exchange insights

The Fourth Knowledge Exchange Event (KEE4) took place on-site at the Jagiellonian University on the 10th of October, from 9am until 4.30pm. The participants included all KSH leaders, two of our four experts (Ashlee Christoffersen and Barbara de Micheli), members of each of our CoPs, and CoP members from the other 3 KSHs. Building explicitly on the conceptual, empirical and practice-based insights consolidated in Working Papers 1, 2 and 3, in KEE4 we shifted the focus from identifying barriers and facilitators for intersectional equality policy-making towards examining how institutional actors contribute to overcoming barriers and sustaining change for intersectional equality in R&I and HE&R organisations.

The **overarching purpose of this KEE4 was to bridge barriers and provide concrete examples** of practices by focusing on actors as drivers of change. Specifically, the event aimed to:

- Consolidate and synthesise lessons from KSH3 research, CoP work and earlier knowledge exchange events, with particular attention to implementation challenges.
- Identify *counter-resistant strategies* to commonly observed individual, organisational and extra-organisational barriers and resistances to intersectional equality policy-making.
- Explore how these strategies can be embedded in the everyday practices, roles and competencies of key institutional actors in order to sustain intersectional equality over time.
- Support mutual learning across contexts by translating individual experiences into shared, transferable insights for R&I organisations.

Brief description of the session and main insights

10th October	
09:00–09:30	Registration
09:30–12:00	Introduction, keynotes, contributions from experts & CoP members
12:00–13:00	Lunch
13:00–13:10	Introduction to the workshops
13:10–14:00	First breakout session: Tackling Resistance
14:00–14:30	Coffee break
14:30–15:30	Second breakout session: Sustaining Change
15:30–16:30	Summary & open discussion
16:30	Close of day

Figure 1: Agenda of KEE4

Based on a participatory and co-creative process, the event was structured around two complementary breakout sessions: (1) *Tackling resistances to intersectional equality policy-making* and (2) *Sustaining change towards intersectional equality*, and combined facilitated group work with plenary reflection. We examined how different actors (e.g. EDI officers, middle and top management, academic staff, students and intersectionally minoritised groups) navigate resistances, mobilise resources, and transform individual strategies into institutionalised practices. Both sessions were recorded to ensure that no relevant contributions to the discussion were missed in the systematisation, and we have added a list of the participants that gave their permission to be recognised for their insights[1].

1.1 Tackling resistances to intersectional equality policy-making

Building on the barriers identified in our earlier Working Papers and 10 case studies, we can identify **three types of resistances** related to intersectional equality policy-making:

1. **Individual ones** (e.g. lack of knowledge, segregation of knowledge, lack of ownership and accountability)
2. **Organisational ones** (e.g. lack of data, lack of resources, gender dominance)
3. **Extra-organisational ones** (e.g. gender dominance, academic culture, no legislation and hostile political context)

The first breakout session shifted the focus from *diagnosing* resistances to *navigating* them. Through the collective shaping of intersectional counter-resistant strategies, participants stressed that **resistances to intersectional equality policy-making are rarely experienced in isolation.** They demand a combination of political pragmatism, relational work, and institutional creativity. Specifically, we worked around these **6 commonly identified resistances:**

1. Experiences & proposals from marginalised and minoritised groups not taken onboard.
2. The lack of accountability to implement intersectionality.
3. The lack of disaggregated data is used as an excuse for inaction.

[1] Ashlee Christoffersen, Sara Clavero, Barbara de Micheli, Mirelur González, Anna Grydzinskà, Diogo Parente, Aldona Tomczyńska

4. The denial of other structural inequalities beyond gender.
5. Political backlash used as an excuse to reduce support to work on intersectional equality.
6. Intersectionality perceived as too complex to translate in practice.

The triggering question launched to the group to understand **how to build intersectional counter-resistance strategies**, was ***"Which practices/strategies have already had a positive impact for intersectional equality in your organisation?"*** This created a participatory and non-judgemental space, leaving the room open to brainstorm and share of experiences in a participatory while trying to guide the conversation from individual strategies into collective and institutionally supported ones. What emerged was not a singular blueprint for action, but a repertoire of action (Lépinard, 2014) through which actors "do intersectionality" in contentious environments, such as R&I and HE&R organisations.

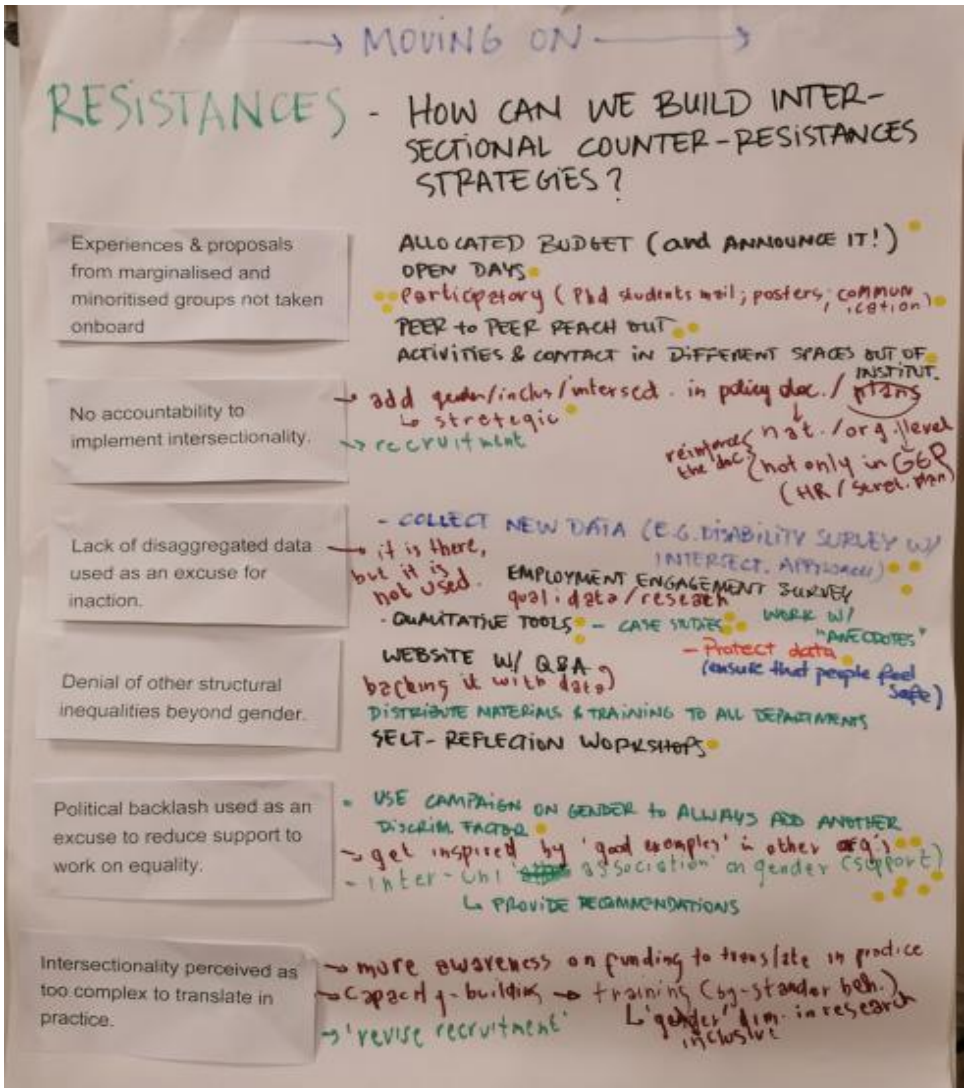


Figure 2: Results of Breakout room session 1

1. Experiences & proposals from marginalised groups not taken onboard

Participants emphasised that the **uptake of marginalised voices depends less on formally being invited or consulted than on sustained trust-building**. This involves engaging

communities beyond institutional spaces, acknowledging how the institution can be discriminatory for groups who have experienced repeated institutional violence, and investing time in trust-building before participation even becomes possible. These practices were described as labour-intensive, nonetheless crucial to creating safer conditions for engagement. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included **strategies within and outside the organisation:**

- Allocate a budget for bottom-up initiatives and inform people interested in organizing events about it (e.g. through posters, open days, one-on-one conversations, etc.).
- Update existing policies and protocols through participatory processes involving focus groups, interviews and surveys, and "asking the other question" (Matsuda, 1991)[2] to ensure your policy leaves no one behind.
- Counter suspicion through peer-to-peer reach-out strategies: use your role as a student or institutional actor who wants change and convince them that institutional barriers can be addressed through collective efforts; personally invite people through mails or open days.
- Participate in activities & invite people outside of the institution: go to the places where communities are at and explain initiatives to counter violence within academic spaces (e.g. meet people at a bar, community spaces, etc.)
- Work with communities in research (e.g. participatory methods in health research), as part of responsible research requirements.

2. Lack of accountability to implement

Beyond formal accountability mechanisms, participants mentioned pragmatic forms of agency operating in institutional 'grey zones'. These included formally embedding intersectional language into policies when awareness is low, or **reinforcing preferred frames such as diversity and conclusion**, while also proceeding without formal permission to avoid anticipatory resistance. **Informal peer support**, described half-jokingly as "sharing a beer with trusted colleagues", was also recognised as a key coping mechanism in the face of isolation and hostility. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included both **formal and informal strategies:**

- Put as many intersectional inequalities as you can in written documents: "institutionalising" as a way to strategically "lock intersectionality into policies" and "instrumentalising" bureaucracy as it makes it difficult to cut out once it is in written responsibilities with clear expectations.
    - Put intersectionality into strategic documents of the university (HR, research strategy, education)
    - "Reinforcing the frames that you want", this is, framing problems that you want to be addressed as problems (Bacchi, 2012).
    - Leaving traces here and there, so that when there is backlash there are still formal requirements to hold the institutional accountable

[2] Enquire about what is left out from your current policies and practices. For example: "When I see something that looks racist, I ask 'Where is the patriarchy in this?' When I see something that looks sexist, I ask 'Where is the heterosexism in this?'" (Matsuda, 1991,)

- Train people to know what it means to recruit from an intersectional perspective, beyond gender balance.
- Find support among like-minded people to counter the discouraging feeling of facing resistant actors, e.g. when colleagues do not realise they are racist/sexist, vent about it with peers.

3. Lack of data as excuse for inaction

Participants highlighted how qualitative data, complemented with quantitative data collection, matters. They framed **qualitative data** not merely as a "workaround" in restrictive legal contexts when quantitative data is prohibited, but as **politically powerful evidence capable of making structural inequalities visible**. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included both **strategies for quantitative and qualitative data collection:**

- Collect new quantitative data or update existing tools with intersectional approach (e.g. disability survey, employment engagement survey, work safety surveys).
- Using qualitative data to counter prohibitions: research on sexual harassment, focus groups, interviews, case studies.
    - Qualitative information might not map the full scale of issues (quantitative data often neither) but can identify the need for more research and evidence on this.
    - Myths need to be debunked: GDPR does not prohibit data collection but data is often not used or politically misused, which creates data suspicion.
- Work with anecdotal information, lived experiences (ensuring that people feel safe), and case studies as people dealing with issues sometimes speak louder than numbers.

4. Denial of structural inequalities beyond gender

Participants highlighted self-reflection workshops and pedagogical approaches as ways to address denial without direct confrontation. Participants stressed the importance of **creating spaces where individuals could reflect on their own positionalities, experiences of privilege, and moments of discrimination** as entry points to broader structural discussions. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included **strategies both for short-term and long-term effects:**

- Build change gradually, adapting existing policies or campaigns and mentioning the importance of gender with other discrimination grounds.
- Use the institutional website as an awareness-raising tool where arguments for resistance are clustered and answered through a Q&A section (e.g. campaigns about 'reverse discrimination' against men responded with evidence-based information and statistical data, e.g., imbalance in STEM and its effects for research excellence)
- Distribute materials and training to all departments to raise awareness.
- Organise self-reflection workshops to reflect on positionality and privilege.

5. Political backlash as excuse to reduce support for equality/intersectional work

Given the current global political landscape, several participants stressed the value of learning from countries and institutions already experiencing severe political backlash. How they frame issues and engage in alliance-building can be insightful to pro-actively anticipate backlash

rather than engage in defensive mechanisms. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included both **top-down and bottom-up strategies:**

- Use 'accepted' campaigns on gender and always add other discrimination grounds.
- Remain critical about the current backlash against intersectionality, similarly to gender, to avoid the "evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot" (Longwe, 1997). Recognize what happens when feminism is seen to be 'too radical', so it is reduced to technicalities (hence evaporated). Be aware that, before getting intersectionality done, it has not already been evaporated.
- Get inspired by good examples of other organisations.
- Organise across universities and academics, e.g. Polish "inter-university association" for support: collaborating with ministries, providing recommendations.

6. Intersectionality perceived as too complex

Participants highlighted how, in general, embedding intersectionality across mandatory training formats was described as a particularly effective strategy, as it normalises complexity through repeated exposure and knowledge sharing rather than treating it as specialist and siloed knowledge. Some inspiring practices shared by participants included both **strategies aligning with the business case and the social justice case for intersectionality:**

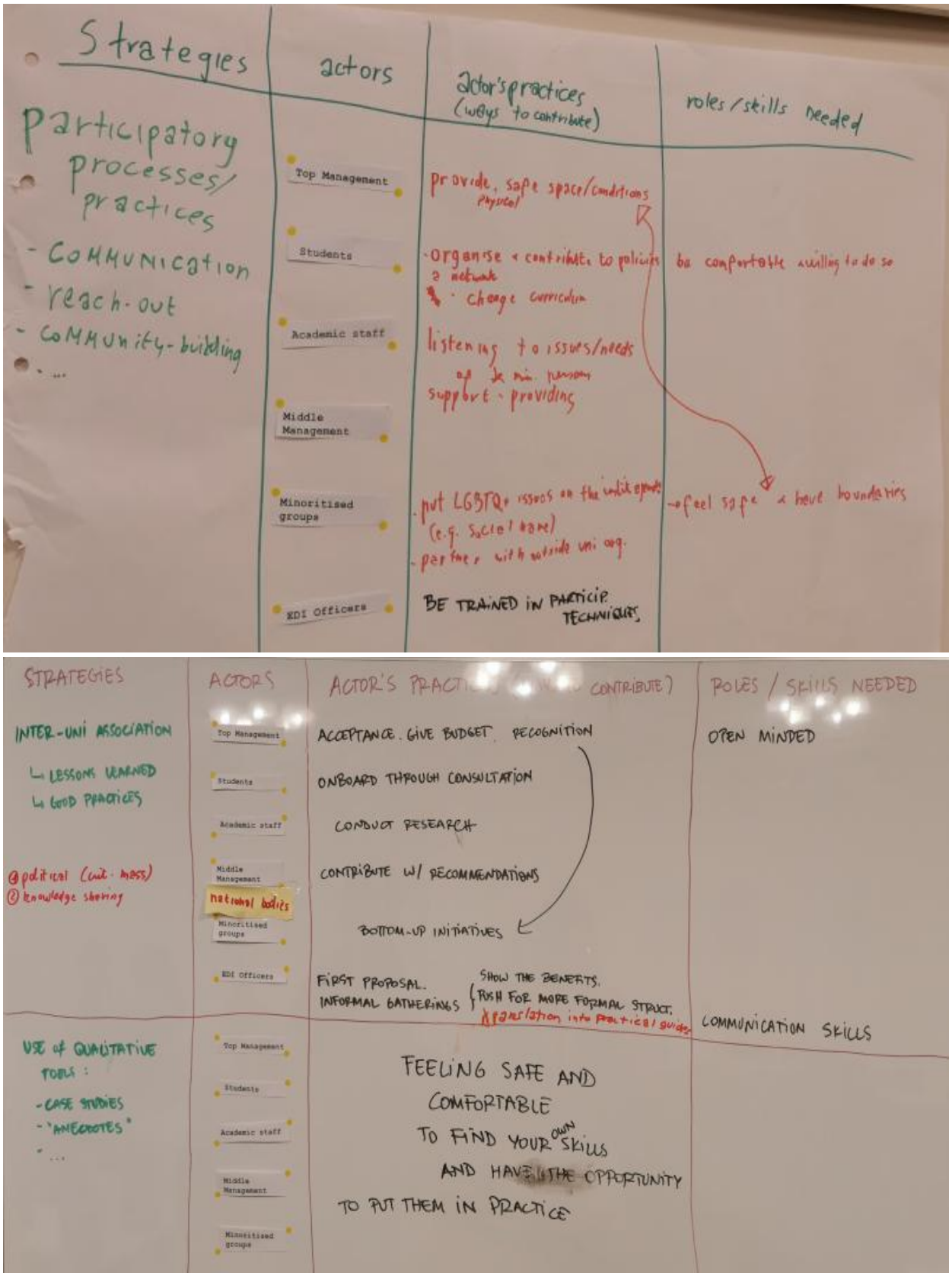
- Raise more awareness on intersectionality as funding criteria (e.g. GEP requirements, Widening ERA), and how to translate it into research & innovation and in education.
- Raise awareness on intersectionality in all trainings to build capacity (e.g., bystander behaviour, gender-based-violence, gender dimension in research, recruitment, etc.).

1.2 Sustaining change towards intersectional equality policy-making

The previous session ended with voting which strategies participants wanted to further develop in the second session, using sticky dots. The **three strategies** that received the most votes were:

1. **Inter-University Association** (to counteract the "political backlash")
2. **Participatory processes** (to counteract that "marginalised voices are not taken onboard")
3. **Use of qualitative tools** (to counteract the "lack of data as an excuse for inaction")

The triggering question here was ***"How can these strategies be transformed into the different actor's practices to sustain change?",*** **hence shifting the discussion from *what works* to *who carries the work.*** Hence, in this session, we explicitly **focused on sustainability and, particularly, "the sustainability of activism"** (Barry and Đorđević 2007). Participants reflected on how the selected counter-resistance strategies could be translated into the everyday practices of different actor groups, and under what institutional conditions these practices could be sustained. A recurrent theme was that sustainability is not primarily a technical challenge, but a political and organisational one. It is closely tied to recognition, resources and safe(r) working conditions and spaces. Below we present the main **insights from the conversation, that finally stirred around the two first strategies.**



Figures 3 & 4: Results of Breakout room session 2

1. *Inter-University Association (political and practical role)*

- Discussed as a key strategy against the political backlash in Poland, this alliance started with informal exchanges from EDI officers and practitioners. It gradually evolved into a more formalised structure as participation grew, since formalisation was seen as an opportunity to receive support from management (budget, trainings, meetings).
- Grown to serve **two complementary roles: politically**, they help build critical mass, allowing equality agendas and ideas to be defended collectively rather than by isolated individuals or institutions. **Practically**, they function as sites of knowledge exchange, producing guidelines, manuals, conference presentations, thematic sessions, recommendations and tailored feedback for universities and governments, enabling them to shape "soft law" and national Higher Education policies.
- There are **different skills needed** from the different actors: e.g. to translate ideas into "sellable products", including different communication skills (e.g. students versus top-management) to convince how those changes can bring good things to the university, despite far-right backlash.
- Alongside, participants highlighted **significant challenges**. **Much of the work** underpinning these associations, such as research, drafting recommendations, mentoring other institutions, organising working groups or Communities of Practices, was described as largely **unpaid and unrecognised**, often performed on top of already demanding roles. This raised concerns about who can afford to sustain such efforts over time, particularly in contexts marked by precarious employment or political hostility. Participants also noted that students, while often the primary beneficiaries of these initiatives, were frequently excluded from decision-making roles, reinforcing existing hierarchies.
- The **dependence on institutional goodwill** and political stability was identified as a key vulnerability, as changes in leadership or political orientation can rapidly withdraw financial or symbolic support, underscoring the importance of Horizon Europe projects to help with this.
- Last, other examples of top-down initiatives such as Athena Swan, Spanish Network of Equality Units within the Rector's Conference were raised as useful for alliance-building, however, restrictive in scope. Hence, the **importance and complementarity of other bottom-up initiatives** was also underscored: e.g. students self-organising for queer inclusion which led to a new procedure for changing legal names to preferred names and to foster inclusive curriculum changes.

2. *Participatory processes (communicative & community-building role)*

- Discussed as a key strategy to counter the marginalisation of certain voices in formal decision-making structures, participants emphasised that **participation cannot be understood as a one-off consultation**. It requires ongoing relational processes deliberately investing in trust and accessibility, where safety is crucial.
- The importance of **creating physical safe spaces** was particularly emphasised. Having a visible, accessible location, such as an equality office open to students and staff, was described as a form of political infrastructure that makes participation more tangible and less intimidating. Participatory activities were seen as most effective when combined with

clear signals that individuals were welcome to engage on their own terms, rather than being expected to perform vulnerability or expertise.

- Participants also drew attention to the **material conditions of participation**. Time, income security, and recognition were identified as prerequisites for sustained engagement, particularly for students and staff in precarious positions. When participation relies on unpaid or voluntary labour, those most affected by inequality are often least able to contribute, leading to exclusion even within participatory processes aimed as inclusion. Ensuring sustainability, therefore, requires institutions to move beyond symbolic commitments and addressing the structural conditions that shape who can participate and at what cost.
    - Capacity-building was identified as a key enabler in this regard. "Train-the-trainers" programmes on participatory techniques and sharing of open-access resources were seen as ways to disseminate skills across institutions and reduce reliance on a small group of engaged actors.
    - The role of teachers was stressed to inform and invite those who are not aware of equality initiatives. They can act as bridge-builders and facilitators to avoid that the participatory processes remain confined to EDI offices.

To round off the session, participants were asked to summarise the key ideas in a single sentence that captured the essence of the discussions: "***Feeling safe and comfortable to find your own skills and have the opportunity to put them in practice***". Advancing intersectional equality policy-making in R&I organisations is, thus, less about eliminating resistance once and for all than it is about **redistributing responsibility for intersectional equality work and actively creating the conditions that make sustained action possible**.

2. KSH3 experts' and CoPs reflections

Ashlee Christoffersen (KSH expert)

This working paper explores the particular roles of actors aiming to advance EDI within their institutions, drawing upon their experiential knowledge to identify how resistance manifests and strategies to mitigate it. Of particular importance going forwards is the discussion of **preparing for and mitigating backlash**, and the example from Poland is one that should be replicated in other contexts. As part of this backlash/resistance to work on EDI, resisters rely upon **arguments that GDPR prohibits collection and analysis of data on protected characteristics, which is not the case** but unfortunately risk averse senior managers have at times accepted these spurious arguments. It is important to provide practitioners with tools to counteract these arguments. For example, AdvanceHE "Data protection and anonymity considerations for equality research and data" Guidance notes (2018).

Generally preparing for and mitigating backlash is an important area of work going forwards, **being mindful for the potential of intersectionality and equality to be diluted** in these processes. *How can we advance meaningful work in this context?*

Barbara De Micheli (KSH expert)

I found INSPIRE practice-oriented approach aiming to identify "traces of intersectionality" extremely useful in the perspective of building blocks of broader change processes. **Many initiatives**, including those aiming at designing Gender Equality Plans Plus, **tend to invest a lot of energies in the assessing phase, pointing out *what is missing*, and what *should* be implemented** in order to fulfil a multi faced, complex and theoretical definition of intersectionality, The ambition of the plan is afterwards used as an excuse for the lack of capability not only to reach the objectives but also to promote any kind of change. **Being able to move from *what is already in place in the organisation*,** giving evidence to existing policies and practices through which intersectionality is already being enacted, although in a non-complete way, **is a powerful way** not only to show that putting intersectionality in practices is possible but also **to recognise the voices and give value to those promoting the change, often from the margins** (hooks, 1989).

Irina Lungu (KSH expert)

The practice-oriented approach of the INSPIRE project is building bridges from being aware, inspired, motivated to actively approach and drive institutional changes, for anyone from a Higher Education Institution. Building a culture of intersectional equality is slowly advancing through participatory processes in which **the mind-setting of educators is shifting** from initiating extracurricular activities to the core educational activities, as simple as designing of the learning materials and the assessments **to accommodate the diversity of learners.** As universities are now more open to **design true and relevant interdisciplinary programmes** at all levels, the diversity of teachers will call and build a diversity of students, that as a group will grow into a generation that unconditionally support equality and equity. From the perspective of the bottom-up approach, more and more events and **Blended Intensive Programmes are serving self-development of each participant**, being it a student or a teacher, and for the hosting and participating institutions to practice and support the multi-dimensional layers of the intersectional equity. In **every European University Alliance**, institutional transformations are slowly building policies in intersectional equity and monitor their implementation, and considering the number of 650 universities in the current 73 Alliances the cultural change is **opening the door to many voices to uplifting barriers and build accountability at all levels.**

OpenEU CoP: *Maria Beatriz Pérez Cabello de Alba (Professor Vice-Dean for Research and Knowledge Transfer Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia – UNED); Ana Zamorano (Associate Professor Coordinator of the Master's Degree in Gender Studies, UNED); Dzintra Iliško (Professor at the Center of Sustainable Education Daugavpils University) & Esther Dominguez-Ramirez (Project manager Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit, Open University of Catalunya – UOC)*

Within **the OpenEU alliance**, the CoP has functioned **as a "bridge-builder" between institutions with different levels of experience and maturity in Inclusive Gender Equality (IGE) and Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)**, enabling those with more developed practices **to share tools, frameworks, experiences, and practical lessons** with institutions at earlier stages. The reflections in Working Paper 4 on participatory processes and safe physical

spaces are particularly relevant for online and digitally mediated higher education. Discussions within the OpenEU CoP have explored how these ideas translate into **virtual campuses, including the visibility and accessibility of support circuits, protocols, information, and contact points in digital environments increasingly shaped by AI, chatbots, and automated systems.** Beyond reflection and exchange, the CoP has contributed to concrete actions, including awareness-raising and visibility initiatives such as **role-model videos featuring groups underrepresented in higher education: women in STEM, people with disabilities, individuals from rural backgrounds, and people with migrant or refugee backgrounds.** Through these real-life cases, the initiative aimed to increase visibility and foster broader awareness of intersectionality among university communities. Finally, the participation of OpenEU CoP members in **broader international alliance spaces, including FOREU4ALL's thematic group on Diversity and Inclusion**, further reinforces the importance of transnational collaboration and inter-university networks as mechanisms to sustain learning, collective action, and institutional change towards intersectional equality.

WISE CoP: *Sara Mas, Strategic Lead for Impact and Responsible Research & Innovation (RRI) at Vall d'Hebron Institute of research. WISE CoP Coordinator.*

The WISE Community of Practice has highlighted that **advancing intersectionality in health research requires more than introducing new institutional policies or tools.** Through a survey involving 24 organisations across the European health research ecosystem, we identified common challenges, including the limited availability of institutional data to monitor inequalities from an intersectional perspective and the need for stronger organisational support, training and dedicated resources. However, our qualitative work, conducted in collaboration with the WISE CoP member IDIAP Jordi Gol, revealed that **the greatest challenge is not only technical but also cultural.** Researchers, clinicians and research support professionals often hold different understandings of what intersectionality means in practice, making its implementation inconsistent across institutions.

These findings suggest that **institutional transformation should begin by fostering critical self-reflection and helping professionals** recognise the assumptions and biases that shape research questions, methodologies and knowledge production. **Communities of Practice can play a unique role in this process by creating trusted spaces** where participants collectively explore these challenges, exchange experiences and learn from one another. Rather than promoting a single model for implementation, the WISE experience demonstrates that building an intersectional culture in health research **requires national adapted pathways, sustained institutional commitment and continuous dialogue among researchers, practitioners and equality experts.** In a field where intersectionality remains relatively new, Communities of Practice are not only spaces for knowledge exchange but also catalysts for organisational learning and long-term cultural change**.**

3. Conclusion

This Working Paper demonstrates that the role of actors in intersectional equality policy-making in R&I organisations is crucial yet often overlooked. Hence, we focused on how policy-making is shaped by change agents and communities of practice operating within existing

institutional constraints. The discussions held during KEE4 illustrate that the strategies to counter resistances to intersectionality are not only formal, top-down, or intra-organisational, but also informal, bottom-up and inter-organisational. They are tied to relational processes that address questions of trust and safety, recognition, time, and legitimacy. Addressing these dimensions is therefore central to sustaining intersectional equality policy-making.

By centring actors' experiences and strategies, WP4 reinforces INSPIRE's broader insight that institutional change does not emerge through "intersectional" policy design alone. Rather, it develops through the cumulative effect of participatory processes, alliance-building across actors and institutions, and the use of intersectionality as a political strategy in everyday practices. Overcoming barriers means acknowledging that there will always be barriers, yet the political process of bridging barriers is a core condition for intersectional equality to take root and be sustained.

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