

# Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research

## KIF'S MAIN TASKS:

- Counseling academic institutions
- Political advocacy
- Seminars
- Site visits
- Research dissemination



Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research

# Solving the problem of inequality in Norwegian academia

The KIF Committee contributes to gender balance and ethnic diversity in Norwegian academia in two principal ways. First, it assists research institutions with implementing policies designed to improve the situation. Second, by raising the issue of gender balance and diversity within academia and among the general public, the committee functions as a “watch dog” vis-à-vis institutions as well as national authorities. Although much work remains to be done, the KIF Committee has played a

significant role in promoting a more gender balanced and diverse research sector.

This year marks the end of the KIF Committee’s current period, which began on 1 January 2014. In August 2014, ethnic diversity was included as a new working area under the committee’s mandate. This policy brief sums up the work of the current committee, presents what has been achieved and points to challenges and opportunities ahead.

## THE NORDIC PARADOX

Nordic countries are known for gender equality, and Norway is ranked as one of the most gender equal countries in the world. For instance, the percentage of men and women participating in the labour force is almost equal in Norway (73 and 68 per cent, respectively). However, academia in Norway, as in the other Nordic countries, lags far behind.

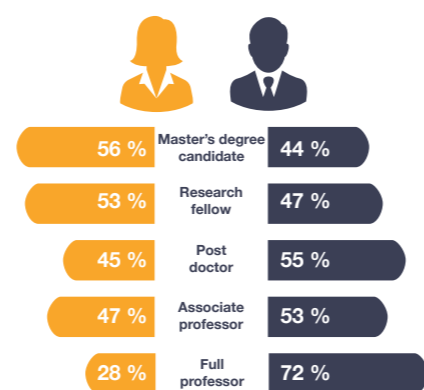
### Two main problems:

- There are too few women in high-level academic positions.
- Both among students and academic staff, there is a marked concentration of women/men in certain subjects, i.e. gender segregation.

## WHY GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY?

- **Democracy, fairness and transparency.** If institutions reflect the diversity of the population, their credibility will be enhanced.
- **Competitive advantage.** We cannot afford to waste talent.
- **Academic values and legitimacy.** The legitimacy of academia depends on a research and higher education sector that is based on academic merit without bias.
- **Quality of research.** Heterogeneous groups perform better than homogeneous groups.

## RESEARCH CAREER TRACK



The career of women and men at Norwegian higher education institutions: 2016<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Preliminary figures for 2016. Source: NIFU/DBH

# Diversity as a new topic

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Research expanded the KIF Committee’s mandate to include ethnic diversity among tenured staff. In addition, the committee is charged with promoting diversity and gender perspectives in research.

Since little was known about the role of immigrants in research, the committee commissioned a report from the Work Research Institute (AFI). This **research report** showed that although more people with an immigrant background wish to pursue an academic career than those from the majority population, they are less likely to be employed in the research sector. Institutions must take steps to more effectively include foreign-born academics in the workplace. There is also a need for greater expertise on diversity management. A literature review of existing studies clearly showed that diversity in academia is under-researched in the Nordic region.

A **statistical report** published by the Nordic Institute for Research and Innovation (NIFU) shows that the majority of researchers with an immigrant background in Norway are foreign-born academics, mostly from Europe, the US and Australia. Few researchers come from the Global South. Even fewer are descendants of immigrants with a non-Western background.

The KIF Committee has developed **recommendations** to follow up the findings of the AFI report. In addition to recommending measures already used to improve gender balance (action plans, promotion plans, mentoring, career planning), the committee suggested measures aimed specifically at improving career paths for people with an immigrant background. These include, but are not limited to: introducing policies/strategies for diversity, formulating criteria to include a diverse pool of applicants, and counteracting discrimination and racism.

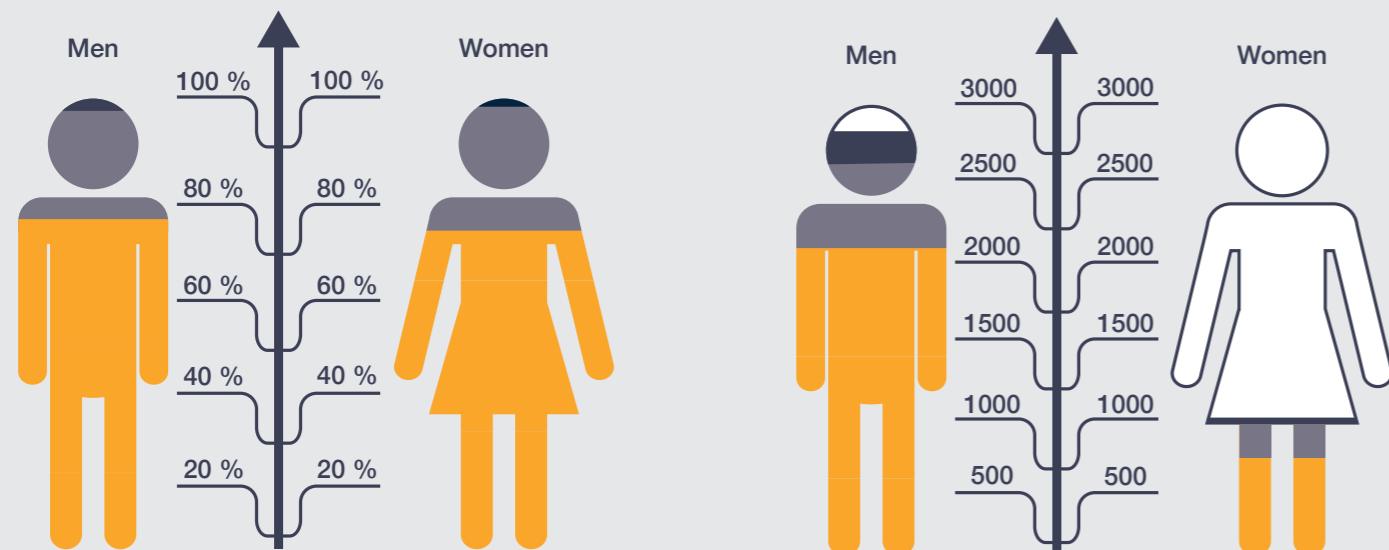
## Integrating equality in restructuring processes

The committee has succeeded in raising the issue of equality during restructuring and reorganization in Norwegian academia. When restructuring takes place, the working culture and structure of institutions often change, which presents a unique opportunity to address gender balance and ethnic diversity. Equally important, merging units and recruiting new managers can be actively used to redress inequalities. The KIF Committee has met with leaders at several of the merged institutions to emphasize that postponing all equality work until the restructuring process is completed is an opportunity lost.

In 2016, the KIF Committee and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology hosted the conference *Structural reform in the higher education sector: Promising for equality?*

After the conference, the committee published the guide *Using restructuring to promote gender equality and diversity – a guide for the research sector*.

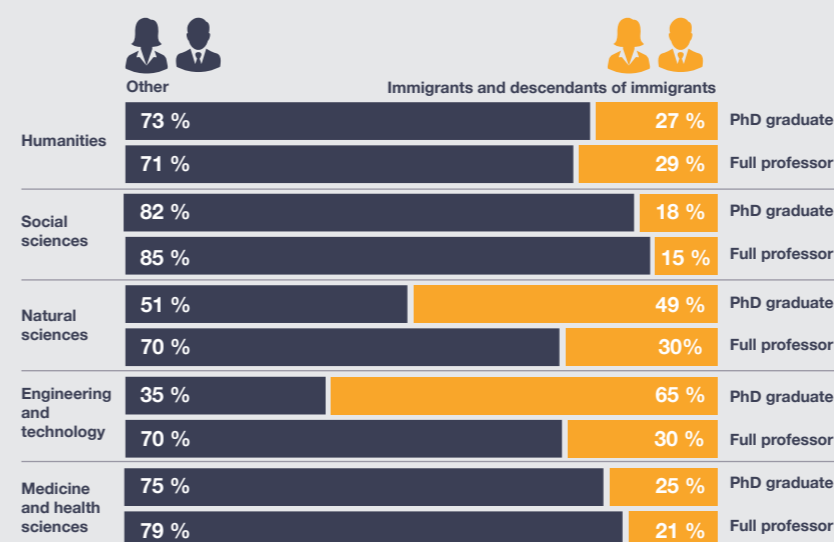
## FULL PROFESSORS IN NORWAY BY REGION OF ORIGIN: 2014. PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER.



■ Full professors from Asia, Turkey, Africa, Latin America, Europe except EU/EFTA, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand  
 ■ Full professors from EU/EFTA, North America, Australia and New Zealand  
 ■ Norwegian-born full professors

Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway

## FULL PROFESSOR AND PHD GRADUATES BY IMMIGRANT STATUS<sup>1</sup> AND FIELD OF SCIENCE<sup>2</sup>: 2014.



<sup>1</sup> The PhD graduate’s immigrant status is based on citizenship, and descendants of immigrants are not included in the PhD figures.

<sup>2</sup> Agricultural science has few PhD candidates and full professors, and is included in natural sciences.

Source: NIFU/Statistics Norway

## OTHER KIF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

- Visited 14 research institutions in the period 2014–2017.
- Hosted seven seminars and workshops on gender balance and diversity in research.
- Published the report *Action for diversity. Recommended measures to promote academic staff diversity in research and higher education* (2016).
- Published the guide *Using restructuring to promote gender equality and diversity – a guide for the research sector* (2016).
- Works to raise awareness of gender perspectives through a conference, site visits, lectures and the committee’s website.
- The website kifinfo.no regularly publishes news stories on issues relevant to the committee’s mandate.

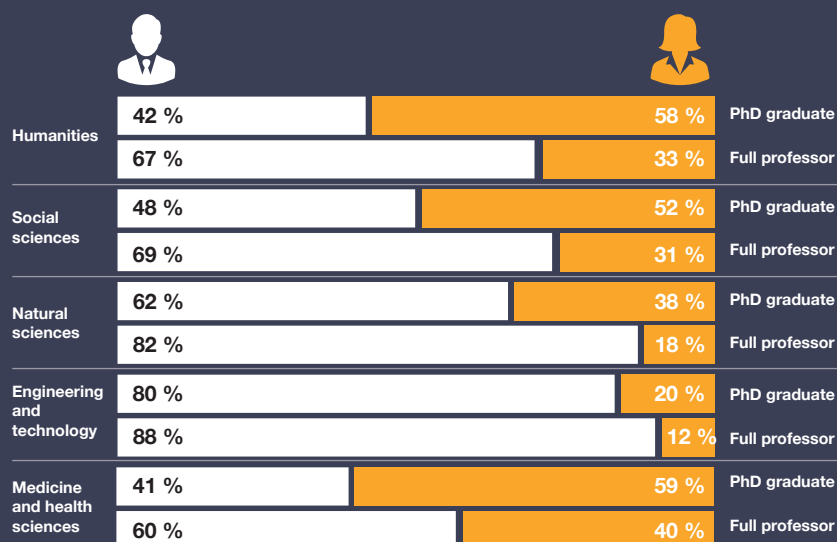
Visits to institutions are particularly important in this regard. Raising discussions around gender and equality makes the institutions’ management aware of these issues, and can therefore have a significant impact on their work towards this end.

## SHARE OF WOMEN AND MEN AT PHD GRADUATE AND FULL PROFESSOR LEVEL BY FIELD OF SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>: 2016<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Agricultural science has few PhD candidates and full professors, and is included in natural sciences.

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary figures for 2016.

Source: NIFU



## KIF AT WORK

Here are some of the results of the KIF Committee's work.

### Introducing a requirement on equality competence for leaders

Thanks to the KIF Committee's work, three universities and one university college introduced a requirement in which newly hired managers must demonstrate competence in equality and diversity when they are recruited to their positions.

### Greater knowledge on ethnic minorities in academia

As a result of the KIF Committee's work, there is a better basis for institutions to address ethnic diversity. By organizing seminars and calling for statistics on the issue, the committee has helped to place ethnic diversity in research on the agenda.

### Intervention in the ministry's evaluation of Horizon 2020

In March 2017, the KIF Committee learned that the working group under the Ministry of Education and Research charged with assessing Norway's participation in the EU's H2020 programme consisted only of men and did not include gender perspectives. Due to KIF Committee's intervention, the ministry requested input from the committee on how to integrate knowledge of gender issues in academia in the evaluation of Horizon 2020. This has led to a constructive dialogue and closer cooperation on the present and future evaluations.

### Input on the restructuring process at the Norwegian Defence College

The Norwegian Defence College has actively used the committee's recommendations in its restructuring process to increase equality and diversity. Recommendations from the KIF Committee's restructuring guide has been incorporated into the mandate of the college's reform.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The KIF model can be transferred to other sectors and other countries**  
The KIF Committee's independent role as an advisory group and watchdog is important for its impact. It works towards the Ministry of Education and Research, the Norwegian Research Council and research institutions. Transfer of experience is possible to other research areas, governed by other Ministries, such as defense, environment, innovation, health and culture. Elements from the KIF model may also be considered in other countries in the Nordic region.
- Compile Nordic statistics on gender balance and diversity in research**  
Given that Nordic countries share common challenges regarding gender balance and diversity in research, statistics covering the Nordic region should be compiled. An obvious source of inspiration in this regard is the EU's *She Figures*. Comparative and/or collaborative research studies on ethnic diversity in academia in the Nordic region should also be facilitated.
- Include gender and diversity issues in the curriculum of all leadership trainings in the research sector**  
The KIF Committee has gained extensive knowledge about how to integrate competence on gender balance and diversity in research. However, there are no formal procedures on how to integrate this knowledge in the training of top management. Research institutions should establish mechanisms for implementing this competence.

## REFERENCES

Bergmann, Solveig (2013): *The Nordic region – A step closer to gender balance in research? Joint Nordic strategies to promote gender balance among researchers in academia*. Nordic Council of Ministers.

Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (2016): *Action for diversity: Recommended measures to promote academic staff diversity in research and higher education*. Report of the working group.

Egeland, C., et al. (2016): 'Being a foreigner is no advantage'. *Career paths and barriers for immigrants in Norwegian academia*. AFI Report 2016:12.

European Commission (2015): *She Figures – Gender in Research and Innovation*.

NIFU (2016): *Mangfoldstatistikk - Statistikk om innvandrere og etterkommere av innvandrere i norsk forskning og høyere utdanning* ["Diversity statistics – Statistics on immigrants and children of immigrants in Norwegian research and higher education"].

Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2016): *Norwegian ERA Roadmap 2016-2020*.

Statistics Norway (2017): *Fakta om likestilling* ["Facts about gender equality"].

### Articles from Kifinfo.no:

- More research needed on barriers for immigrants
- The KIF Committee: Watchdog and help centre
- New committee with gender+
- Intensify the efforts!
- Mandate for the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF)

### Article from Kilden genderresearch.no:

- Folk må telles varsomt ["People must be counted carefully"]

**kifinfo<sup>1</sup>**

kifinfo.no/en

Publishes news articles, research results and tools for gender equality and diversity. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Written by Kilden genderresearch.no