Portrait of the National Research Programme (NRP 60)

Gender Equality
Contents

1 Editorial
   Equality is not a matter of course

4 Overview
   Tracking down gender inequality in everyday life

7 Research
   Work – Education – Family

17 Knowledge transfer
   Creating new visions for the future

18 Information

What is an NRP?
The National Research Programmes (NRP) contribute scientifically substantiated solutions to urgent problems of national significance. They are approved by the Federal Council, last from 4 to 5 years and are funded with CHF 5 to 20 million. The NRPs are problem-oriented; inter- and transdisciplinary; dedicated to achieving a defined, overall goal through co-ordination of individual research projects and groups and focused on the knowledge transfer of the results.
Equality is not a matter of course

More than a generation ago women in Switzerland were granted the right to vote, and the equality of men and women was established in the Federal Constitution and through the Gender Equality Act. Although in comparison with other European countries Switzerland developed its gender equality policy rather late, within a few years it quickly made up for the lack of modernisation. Since the 1980s Switzerland’s orientation towards international norms, the activities of the women’s movement and organisations, numerous measures at the federal level and in labour organisations, and not least economic developments have led to comprehensive improvements in equal opportunity for men and women in education, at work and at home.

In light of these developments, the National Research Programme “Gender Equality” (NRP 60) begun in 2010 seems...
outmoded: Is it not so that today’s young men follow different examples than their fathers did? Certainly today’s younger women can count on having far better opportunities and greater support in their working life? Is it not safe to assume that any remaining inequalities will simply disappear in the coming years?

The answer is no. Legal improvements and institutionalised gender equality policy do not necessarily also determine social order. The discrepancy between public discourse on gender equality in government and the media and the reality of gender relations has become all too evident over the past few years. The
persistent unequal distribution of burdens in the family, wage discrimination and unequal prospects for promotion in the work environment, as well as the fact that to this day women are still victims of domestic violence, are evidence of continuing discrimination that mainly affects the female gender. In addition, new inequalities are becoming more evident where gender is combined with other social differences, such as ethnic or social background, age or parental status.

This means that overcoming inequality is a permanent challenge, which must be achieved by women and men everyday and woven into everyday life at home and at work. Gender equality demands reflection on ideas about femininity and masculinity at the societal level as well as conscious biographical decisions by each and every individual. Last but not least, the practice of gender equality must also be mirrored in the structures of the working environment and in the social institutions. As long as in 2010 we are still surprised that four members of the Federal Council are women and as long as it still seems unusual to find men who are single-parenting or caring for parents, gender equality is still far from being a matter of course. But even if that were no longer the case, social transformation requires that we re-examine the actual equality of men and women time and time again.

NRP 60 supports long-term processes of reflection and change with the goal of equal opportunity.

Professor Brigitte Liebig
President of the NRP 60 Steering Committee
University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland
Overview

Tracking down gender inequality in everyday life

Gender equality aims to eliminate unlawful inequality. This entails a process that is ridden with prerequisites, and the effectiveness of the process cannot be guaranteed through laws and statutes alone.

Following up on thirty years of gender equality efforts in Switzerland, NRP 60, as the first research programme of systematic investigation on the topic, will deliver findings that will make it possible to assess the effects of gender equality policy strategies, programmes and measures (also in comparison to other European countries) and to identify the complex conditions of success or failure of gender equality policy and implementation. In this context, the research will also study policy areas and measures that do not address gender equality directly – such as reforms of the Swiss social insurance system or tax policy – but are important for gender equality both directly and indirectly.

We learn to deal with gender-specific expectations – in every phase of our lives. What contributes to decisions that contradict those expectations?

Furthermore, for gender equality to succeed, we must track down gender inequality in everyday life. In addition to everyday habits and habitual ways of thinking that produce differences and hierarchies between men and women, we have to identify the individual decisions and the structural framework that often go unnoticed even today but still contribute to discrimination and inequalities at home, at school and at work – and at interfaces and transitions between these spheres. Uncovering the causes of gender inequality is expected to yield not only information on the
effects and limits of gender equality policy measures but also concrete indications of ways and means to influence gender relations.

In this way NRP 60 provides a knowledge base to actors responsible for successful gender equality policy and shows the practical sphere how, in the context of social change and the upheavals in gender relations, gender equality can sustainably be achieved.
Overview

**Focal points of equality**

**Work + Organisations**
In past years numerous gender equality policy measures have been implemented in the area of employment. Nevertheless, a more equitable distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women has not yet been achieved. Part-time hours and marginal employment are widespread among working women – with considerable consequences for their social security. Besides complex political and labour market-specific factors, conditions and processes in the work organisations themselves influence gender equality and inequality in the world of paid work.

**Education + Careers**
Upbringing and education shape identities and individual lifestyles. Here the foundations are laid for decisions about education, and the course is determined for success in working life. Despite definite improvements, young women and men still do not have the same access to more than a few pathways and levels of education and training. In neither lower qualified nor highly qualified employment areas are women able to turn their qualifications into employment positions and pay as successfully as men.

**Family + Private Household**
The traditional breadwinner model seems to be a thing of the past, but the main responsibility for care of children and others needing care still falls to women, and even young couples are choosing traditional models of division of labour. In addition, violence has not been wiped out of the domestic setting. The decline in the birth rate, the increasing divorce rate, and a variety of new ways of life and types of households point to far-reaching changes in private life and are linked to new gender equality policy challenges.
Research teams from all over Switzerland are conducting projects under NRP 60: from Geneva and Lausanne to St. Gallen, from Lugano to Basel, Bern, Lucerne and Zurich. The investigations are transdisciplinary, applying sociological, political and educational science, economic, and psychological perspectives. The following presents a brief overview of the 21 projects:

**Work – Education – Family**

There are 21 research projects in NRP 60. They cover a wide range of gender equality issues. Research is being conducted in the areas of policy, labour market, education, and the family.

The bigger questions emerge at the interfaces and transitions between the different spheres.
The NRP 60 projects at a glance
For further information about the projects, see www.nrp60.ch

Work + Organisations

1 Development and steering of gender equality policy at work
   Dr. Thomas Widmer, Institut für Politikwissenschaft, University of Zurich
   Professor Silke Bothfeld, University of Applied Sciences Bremen
   Dr. Andrea Leitner, Institut für Höhere Studien, Vienna
   Dr. Gesine Fuchs, Institut für Politikwissenschaft, University of Zurich

2 Gender-specific inequalities in the working environment: political-institutional factors
   Professor Michael Nollert, Departement Sozialwissenschaften, University of Fribourg
   Dr. Ruedi Epple, Departement Sozialwissenschaften, University of Fribourg
   Dr. Sebastian Schief, Departement Sozialwissenschaften, University of Fribourg

3 An activating social policy for the advancement of women?
   Professor Eva Nadai, Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Olten
   Professor Gisela Hauss, Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, Olten

4 Trade unions and gender equality (SynEga)
   Professor Emmanuelle Lada, Centre en études genre LIEGE, University of Lausanne
   Professor Olivier Fillieule, Centre de recherche sur l’action politique de l’Université de Lausanne (CRAPUL), University of Lausanne
   Dr. Martina Avanza, Centre de recherche sur l’action politique de l’Université de Lausanne (CRAPUL), University of Lausanne
   Dr. Magdalena Rosende, Centre en études genre LIEGE, University of Lausanne

5 Gender equality among older employees (EGALISE)
   Professor Nicky Le Feuvre, Institut des sciences sociales (ISS), University of Lausanne
6 Equal opportunity in the enterprises and programmes of SRG SSR
Dr. Ruth Hungerbühler, Istituto Media e Giornalismo, University of Lugano
Professor Nelly Valsangiacomo, Section d’histoire, University of Lausanne

7 Gender, generations and equality in farming in Switzerland (AgriGenre)
Dr. Yvan Droz, Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement (IHEID), Geneva
Dr. Fenneke Reysoo, Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement (IHEID), Geneva
Valérie Miéville-Ott, Association suisse pour le développement de l’agriculture et de l’espace rural (AGRIDEA), Lausanne
Ruth Rossier, Forschungsanstalt Agroscope, Reckenholz-Tänikon

8 Sexual harassment at the workplace: who harasses whom, how and why?
Professor Franciska Krings, Département de comportement organisationnel, University of Lausanne
Marianne Schär Moser, Forschung und Beratung, Bern

Education + Careers

9 Dolls, building blocks and outdoor activity days: (un)doing gender in the nursery
Dr. Julia Nentwich, Lehrstuhl für Organisationspsychologie, University of St. Gallen
Dr. Franziska Vogt, Institut für Lehr- und Lernforschung, Pädagogische Hochschule des Kantons St. Gallen

10 What do the schools teach about gender equality?
Professor Farinaz Fassa Recrosio, Institut des sciences sociales (ISS), University of Lausanne

11 Career and gender: why do women choose male professions?
Professor Walter Herzog, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft, University of Bern
Dr. Elena Makarova, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft, University of Bern
12 More equal opportunities in the choice of careers
Professor Dominique Joye, Faculté des sciences sociales et politiques, University of Lausanne
Dr. Karin Müller, Service de la recherche en éducation (SRED), Geneva
Dr. Edith Guilley, Service de la recherche en éducation (SRED), Geneva
Dr. Lavinia Gianettoni, Méthodologie, inégalités et changement social (MISC), University of Lausanne
Dr. Jacques-Antoine Gauthier, Méthodologie, inégalités et changement social (MISC), University of Lausanne
Dominique Gros, Service de la recherche en éducation (SRED), Geneva

13 Gender inequalities in educational and career pathways
Professor Andrea Maihofer, Zentrum Gender Studies, University of Basel
Professor Max Bergman, Institut für Soziologie, University of Basel
Dr. Sandra Hupka-Brunner, Institut für Soziologie, University of Basel

14 Career entry and wage discrimination (BELODIS)
Dr. Michael Marti, Ecoplan, Bern
Kathrin Bertschy, Ecoplan, Bern

15 Work inequalities related to gender and ethnicity
Professor Doris Wastl-Walter, Geographisches Institut, University of Bern
Dr. Yvonne Riaño, Geographisches Institut, University of Bern

16 Women in engineering professions: sought-after and respected?
Dr. Heinz Rütter, Rütter + Partner Sozioökonomische Forschung und Beratung, Rüschlikon
Anja Umbach-Daniel, Rütter + Partner Sozioökonomische Forschung und Beratung, Rüschlikon
Family + Private Household

17 How gender-sensitive is family policy in the cantons of Switzerland?
Professor Andreas Balthasar, Interface Politikstudien Forschung Beratung, Lucerne
Professor Joachim Blatter, Seminar für Politikwissenschaft, University of Lucerne
Franziska Müller, Interface Politikstudien Forschung Beratung, Lucerne

18 The effects of pension reforms on families
Professor Monika Bütler, Schweizerisches Institut für Empirische Wirtschaftsforschung (SEW-HSG), University of St. Gallen
Professor Franz Schultheis, Seminar für Soziologie (SfS-HSG), University of St. Gallen

19 Care trends in private households: redistribute or outsource?
Professor Annegret Wigger, Institut für Soziale Arbeit (IFSA), University of Applied Sciences St. Gallen, Rorschach
Dr. Nadia Baghdadi, Institut für Soziale Arbeit (IFSA), University of Applied Sciences St. Gallen, Rorschach

20 Child care services and gender equality
Dr. Rolf Iten, Infras AG, Zurich
Professor Michael Lechner, Schweizerisches Institut für Empirische Wirtschaftsforschung (SEW-HSG), University of St. Gallen

21 Domestic violence interventions from the victims’ perspective
Dr. Daniela Gloor, Social Insight – Forschung, Evaluation, Beratung, Schinznach-Dorf
Research

**Work + Organisations**

**Project 1:**
Development and steering of gender equality policy at work
In Switzerland, the various policy measures for gender equality in the world of work have not had sweeping success. This research project will produce knowledge on the dynamics and the interplay of these measures so that state actors can better plan and coordinate gender equality policies in future.

**Project 2:**
Gender-specific inequalities in the working environment: political-institutional factors
There are gender-specific inequalities in the working environment in Switzerland with regard to paid employment, family work and housework, and volunteer work. In this project the researchers examine the situation in different cantons and identify the decisive political, institutional and sociocultural factors.

**Project 3:**
An activating social policy for the advancement of women?
Current social policy emphasises work instead of welfare and seeks to integrate the unemployed in the labour market rather than to merely give them monetary support. Can such measures open up new educational and employment opportunities for unemployed women, or do they instead tend to result in additional burdens?

**Project 4:**
Trade unions and gender equality (SynEga)
The SynEga project is a study on the gender equality policy of trade unions in Switzerland since 1990. How is the policy that targets gender equality within the trade unions and in other occupational contexts developed and implemented? What factors are beneficial, and what factors act as impediments?

**Project 5:**
Gender equality among older employees (EGALISE)
This project compares the age management strategies of companies in Switzerland to the expectations and experiences of employees over age 50 and investigates how new inequalities between men and women arise for this age group.
**Project 6:**
Equal opportunity in the enterprises and programmes of SRG SSR
This project examines equal opportunity of men and women and the gender equality policy of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) at the level of the institution and its journalistic programmes from 1980 to the present. Special attention will be paid to differences among the language regions and the two media, radio and television.

**Project 7:**
Gender, generations and equality in farming in Switzerland (AgriGenre)
Economic developments have changed farming profoundly. This project investigates changes in gender relations and intergenerational relations and examines the factors that foster the emergence of new, more egalitarian family forms. The findings will be compared to studies on other small family businesses.

*The realisation of gender equality is a complex process depending on a multitude of factors.*

**Project 8:**
Sexual harassment at the workplace: who harasses whom, how and why?
Sexual harassment at the workplace is a serious problem. But how exactly does it arise? Who harasses whom, and under what conditions? And based on that, what consequences become evident for prevention of sexual harassment in companies?
Education + Careers

Project 9:
Dolls, building blocks and outdoor activity days: (un)doing gender in the nursery
How do children in nurseries learn to be boys or girls? Do men as preschool teachers bring a different impetus to the work compared to women? Using qualitative methods, the researchers will investigate “doing gender” in Swiss nurseries.

Project 10:
What do the schools teach about gender equality?
In the face of stubbornly persisting differences in the careers of women and men, equality has become a priority school topic. This project investigates teachers’ courses of action and how their perceptions of this urgent societal issue influence their handling of the topic.

Project 11:
Career and gender: why do women choose male professions?
This project examines young women’s reasons for choosing or not choosing male professions, focusing on the question as to what is more decisive in the choice of a gender- atypical profession or course of study: personal role models (parents, teachers) or school subjects.

Schools and organisations can contribute a great deal towards realisation of gender equality.

Project 12:
More equal opportunities in the choice of careers
In Switzerland girls and boys choose their careers according to different patterns. What are the causes of these differences? How can effective action be taken against them?

Project 13:
Gender inequalities in educational and career pathways
Substantial gender inequalities still prevail in the educational and career pathways of young adults in Switzerland today. How can they be explained? What factors and mechanisms play a role? And where can changes be identified?
Project 14: 
Career entry and wage discrimination (BELODIS) 
Even with the same qualifications, women still earn 10% less than men. What are the causes of the discriminating wage gap between men and women, and at what point in time in the educational pathway and working career does it arise?

Project 15: 
Work inequalities related to gender and ethnicity 
Women experience inequality in the labour market in various ways and intensities depending on their ethnicity/nationality. This study aims at providing an empirically sound understanding of how gender and ethnicity intersect to generate gender inequalities in the labour market.

Project 16: 
Women in engineering professions: sought-after and respected? 
Women engineers are underrepresented in the economy, and they have fewer career opportunities than men. In this project the researchers analyse the influence of company culture and formal and informal company recruiting and promotion practices on the careers of women engineers.

Project 17: 
How gender-sensitive is family policy in the cantons of Switzerland? 
Examining the case of tax and social transfer policies in Switzerland as an example, this project aims to find out how strongly family policy in the Swiss cantons takes gender-relevant factors into consideration, and what factors promote or hinder evidence-based policy making.

Project 18: 
The effects of pension reforms on families 
This project examines the effect of pension reforms in Switzerland on spouses’ labour market participation (who is in paid employment and with what work-time percentage) and on
divorce patterns. The aim is to assess if and to what extent the pension reforms have an impact on gender equality.

Tax policy, childcare services, pension reforms – all these have an impact on gender equality.

**Project 19:**
Care trends in private households: redistribute or outsource?
This project investigates care arrangements with paid service providers and the policy and institutional framework conditions for care of persons in private households. The goal is to be able to assess consequences for gender equality.

**Project 20:**
Child care services and gender equality
This project explores the connections between the provision of child care services and career opportunities of women and men in Switzerland.

**Project 21:**
Domestic violence interventions from the victims’ perspective
The public stance on domestic violence has changed from taboo to intervention. Today, victims of domestic violence receive support from advice centres, the police, legal authorities, the health care system and other institutions. However, it is not known how appropriate and efficient the new interventions are. This project focuses on the perspective of the affected persons.
Knowledge transfer

Creating new visions for the future

NRP 60 started in autumn 2010 with 21 research projects. Results are expected in autumn 2014. The projects make it clear that solving social problems as well as social and economic progress require approaches that reflect gender.

The continuing existence of gender inequalities violates the principle of social justice and equal opportunity and leads to a waste of economic resources. It is thus inconsistent with both social and economic sustainability goals. Improved equality between men and women benefits the Swiss economy and society as a whole.

Gender equality benefits everyone
Gender equality is a fundamental part of every viable future society, towards which NRP 60 can make an extensive contribution. It will deliver empirically sound information on the causes of gender inequality and thus identify starting points for strategies and measures to reduce it. NRP 60 is expected to generate insights for better utilisation of women’s potential in the labour force, produce knowledge on possible ways to influence educational and vocational decisions and provide recommendations for a viable future policy that will promote gender equality sustainably.

Communicate and network the know-how
NRP 60 attaches particular importance to knowledge transfer – that is, communicating core research results to interested parties. For this reason, the research programme was devised from the start with a view to networking between research and practice. It seeks intensive dialogue with politicians and the media, companies, social institutions and administrations, gender equality offices and representatives, as well as women’s and men’s organisations.
Information

November 2007
The Federal Council commissions the Swiss National Science Foundation to carry out NRP 60

May 2009
Call for pre-proposals for NRP 60

August 2009
119 project pre-proposals submitted

Participants

Steering Committee
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(President of the Steering Committee)

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Laboratoire interdisciplinaire d’étude des parcours de vie (PAVIE)
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Professor Alfonso Sousa-Poza
Lehrstuhl für Haushalts-, Konsum- sowie Genderökonomik
University of Hohenheim (D)
February 2010
41 full proposals submitted

September 2010
Start of research

July 2010
National Research Council evaluates and decides; 21 research projects approved for NRP 60

2014
Programme results and knowledge transfer
The Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is Switzerland’s leading provider of scientific research funding. Commissioned by the federal government, it supports research work in all academic fields, from philosophy and nanoscience to biology and medicine.

The focus of its activities is the scientific endorsement of projects submitted by researchers. Each year, approximately 3,000 projects and 7,000 researchers are funded by the SNSF with an annual total amount of around CHF 700 million.

Copies of this brochure can be obtained from:
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www.nrp60.ch
NRP 60 in brief

NRP 60 will generate knowledge and recommendations for a sustainable gender equality policy in Switzerland. The programme has funding of CHF 8 million, with a programme duration from 2010 to 2014. A total of 21 research teams from all over Switzerland are taking part.

Goals of NRP 60

- Highlighting the successes and shortcomings of equality policy programmes and measures in Switzerland
- Identifying the complex causes of the persistence of gender inequality
- Providing knowledge and recommendations for sustainable gender equality policy and equality practice