
EVALUATION OF THE FEDERAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME

CONTEXT

Educational differences between women and men have lessened significantly over recent decades. However, if we consider the various hierarchical levels in universities, there still is - as there always has been - a considerable need for women to catch up. The higher the hierarchical level, the lower is the proportion of women. In 1999, the Councils of the Confederation followed the proposal of the Federal Council by allocating 16 million francs to promote equal opportunities at universities between 2000 and 2003. The Swiss University Conference (CUS) and the Federal Office for Education and Science (OES) then launched the Federal "Equal Opportunities" Programme. The overriding goal of this programme is to double the proportion of female teaching staff at the universities by 2006, from 7 to 14 per cent. The envisaged measures are divided into three modules.

The **incentive system** module is intended to motivate the universities to appoint more female teachers.

The **mentoring** module aims to promote the development and expansion of support and networking systems to assist female scientists and academics of the younger generation.

The **child care** module makes financial resources available to support child care facilities, so as to create favourable all-round conditions that will allow professional and family work to be combined.

GOAL OF THE EVALUATION

On behalf of the Swiss University Conference (CUS), three partners were carrying out the evaluation of the Federal Programme as a cooperative project (see INFORMATION: Evaluation Team). The evaluation was intended to answer questions about the implementation, execution and effects of the overall programme as well as the individual modules and the way they interact.

METHOD

The evaluation of the three modules and the overall programme made use of quantitative survey methods (written questionnaires, evaluation of existing statistical bases) as well as qualitative ones (guideline-based interviews, focus group discussions, analysis of literature). The target groups for the surveys were members of appointments committees, staff responsible for equality at universities, and project supervisors and participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the empirical results, the evaluation supplied processed information about the content, implementation and first results of the programme. It allowed subtly differentiated statements and an assessment of the strategies that have been embarked upon to implement the programme and of its effects, with regard to the institutional establishment of measures relevant to equal opportunities at universities. It encouraged transfer of knowledge regarding Best Practices. The evaluation also drew up basic principles for the purposes of future evaluations and quality assurance tools for the subject area of equal opportunities in the tertiary education sector.

INFORMATION