

Report from the Ge-Wonder Project at the Department of Information Technology

The Gender WORK eNvironment anD wEllbeing pRoject (Ge-Wonder) has run according to the project plan and has been successful in many ways.

Mental illness and stress is a large societal problem and affects many people. However, statistics show that women are generally more likely to experience stress and mental illness than men¹. This is due to for example norms related to gender and a segregated labour market. In academia PhD students and young researchers are a group that is more likely to experience mental illness and stress than senior staff². This is for example due to a feeling of lack of control and vague requirements. Hence this project aims at creating a better work environment for everyone, but with a particular focus on students and women.

Problems related to stress can be explained through theoretical models such as the Healthy Work model³ and the Effort Reward Imbalance models⁴, and include for example high requirements, a feeling of lack of control and lack of social support. The project activities are based on on these theoretical models, and also the results from the research project FESTA project that looked into gender equality and the work environment in academia⁵

The overall aim of the Vi2 WORK eNvironment anD wEllbeing pRoject (WONDER) was to improve well being and the work environment at Vi2. The more detailed aims of the WONDER project are to:

- Increase transparency in decision making from a gender perspective
- Improve communication and information from a gender perspective
- Decrease stress for everyone and increase visibility of gendered norms
- Improve wellbeing and increase visibility of gendered norms
- Improve the work environment especially from a gender perspective

The project consisted of three work packages and was run by a leadership team consisting of:

1. the Head of Vi2 Division Robin Strand
2. the Deputy Head of Vi2 Division Åsa Cajander
3. the Equal Opportunities Officer at the Department Ginevra Castellano.
4. Giulia Perugia, post doc at the Vi2 division

¹ Source: Undersökningarna av levnadsförhållanden (ULF/SILC), SCB, 2018

² Woolston, C. (2017). Graduate survey: a love-hurt relationship. *Nature*, 550(7677), 549-552.

³ Karasek, R. (1990). Healthy work. *Stress, productivity, and the reconstruction of working life*.

⁴ Siegrist, J. (2017). The Effort–Reward Imbalance Model. In *The Handbook of Stress and Health* (eds C. L. Cooper and J. C. Quick).

⁵ <http://www.festa-europa.eu/>

Work Package 1: Wellbeing

In this work package we have organised a number of seminars. All seminars had a gender perspective. We have announced them broadly at the division, and a majority of the people working at the division have participated. The following seminars have been organised:

1. Lunch to lunch seminar at Krusenberg Herrgård with Previa on gender, stress and wellbeing (7 hours)
2. Follow up seminar with Previa (3 hours) on gender, stress and wellbeing.
3. Workshop with [Magdalena Stadin from Jönköping University](#) (2 hours) on ICT demand and email management - what works well in our work environment and how we can make that even better. Magdalena's dissertation is about work-related stress linked to information and communication technology, ie. what is usually called "digital stress" or "IT stress" in everyday speech. The workshop focused on how ICT-related stress, in particular email management, in work life is linked to health.
4. Workshop with Annelie Häyrén on gender in the academic work environment and wellbeing. Annelie is a researcher and investigator at the Centre for gender research, Uppsala University, on part time. The other part of her work is as an equal opportunities specialist with an emphasis on gender equality. Her theoretical base is organization and gender, gender equality in everyday work life. At the workshop, academic household work and "who is baking the cake" was discussed, as well as terms and circumstances for carriers in the academic world for men and women with an emphasis on gender equality.

Work Package 2: Transparency and Leadership with a Focus on the Work Environment

In this work we have made improvements in the area of leadership and management. Areas that have been addressed are:

- 1. Develop and implement an inclusive and sustainable leadership strategy.**
 - 1.1. We have initiated a discussion about inclusive leadership, and connected it to an employee survey that was distributed.
- 2. Inclusive PhD education with a work environment focus**
 - 2.1. We have worked with the PhD students to increase the feeling of support and control. This work has been done in collaboration with the research education full professors Ingela Nyström and Anders Arweström Jansson.
 - 2.2. Special focus will be given to the PhD student situation in the seminars above and the invited speakers have been encouraged to pay attention to the PhD student situation.
- 3. Policy for distribution of resources**
 - 3.1. We have developed a policy document about faculty funding and teaching to make expectations clear for the different positions at the division, we will develop descriptions of expected teaching, faculty funding, and other duties.

3.2. We have discussed the current situation when it comes to distribution of resources from a gender perspective. This includes faculty funding, work load, time and office space. The gender perspective has been integrated in most discussions about funding, work load etc. during the year.

3.3. The project has resulted in a document on distribution of resources

4. Improved communication

4.2. We have had meetings four times related to communication with the Vi2 Communication Officer and the departments information officer Kajsa Örjavik (now working at the university administration).

Work Package 3: Dissemination of Results

The project work and the ideas has been disseminated using social media (Twitter and blog posts). We have also presented the project at a network meeting on November 11 2019 for Equal Opportunities Officers at the faculty of science and technology and at the Teknat yearly meeting for FUAPs on January 21st 2020. Regular updates on the projects are also provided within the meetings of the Equal Opportunities group at the Department of Information Technology

Evaluation of the Project

The effects of the project will be long lasting as the activities will result in policy documents, the start of an inclusive leadership strategy that is collaboratively developed, and in better communication at the division. However, many aspects of this kind of change project are difficult to evaluate. Surely this project has provided a common ground for discussions about the work environment and gender, and also provided new knowledge and changed ways of thinking.

Economic Report

The project was funded from two sources: Co-funding with 30 000 from the department of Information Technology and 165 000 kr from the "Utdelning av medel för särskilda satsningar inom jämställdhetsintegreringen"

Project management of the Ge-Wonder Project, six weeks of work. ~175000 kr

Costs for inviting an external expert from Previa to talk about stress and wellbeing. 33656 kr + 16125 kr

Krusenberg (kost, logi, konferenslokaler): 107984 kr

Costs for inviting Annelie Häyrén: 2 "lektorstimmar" = 2*850 kr