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UniSAFE
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Report on Case Studies on the Effects and Consequences of Institutional Responses to Gender-based Violence along the 7Ps in Research Performing Organisations

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SUMMARY

The objective of this report is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the effects and consequences of the design and implementation of institutional measures and responses to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in research performing organisations (RPOs). This is done through a multi-level analysis of 16 case studies conducted in 15 European countries: 11 case studies were carried out in EU-27 countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Sweden) and four in Associated Countries (Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, the United Kingdom).

The 16 case studies were selected from the UniSAFE's inventory of policies and measures to respond to gender-based violence in European universities and research organisations (Deliverable 5.1, Huck et al., 2022). This report is also related to other UniSAFE's deliverables: it makes use of the 7Ps framework (prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships, and policies) developed in deliverable 3.1. "Report on the conceptual and theoretical state of the art" (Strid et al., 2021) and it also benefits from insights from deliverable 3.2 "Report on the European policy baseline" (Fajmonová et al., 2021) and deliverable 4.3. "Gender-based violence and its consequences in European Academia, Summary results from the UniSAFE survey" (Lipinsky et al., 2022).

The findings presented in this report are the result of a two-step methodology. First, after a methodological model and analytical framework for the case studies was developed by UCM, a team of 15 national researchers (all but two being team members of UniSAFE project partners) carried out the individual case studies analysing the selected institutional responses against gender-based violence. The fieldwork was done between January and April 2022 and the individual reports were delivered between May and June 2022. Revision, by the UCM, was carried out until September 2022. Second, a multi-level qualitative analysis of the entire set of 16 case studies was conducted, to investigate how the institutional responses to gender-based violence are implemented, how they work at the organisational level and to produce generalisable findings from the individual cases.

The rationale behind the case studies selection was a comprehensive coverage of the 7Ps model and the geographical coverage of the 15 selected countries (hence having one case per country except for Spain, where two case studies have been performed). We also took into account other criteria such as variety in the type of institutional response, avoiding having only policies, or variety in the longevity of the responses, having both new and more consolidated ones.

Along with the 7Ps theoretical model, based on Mergaert et al. (2016) and further developed by UniSAFE (Strid et al., 2021), the analysis follows Feminist Policy Studies in recognising the importance of paying attention to the post-adoption phases of policy, hence focusing our analysis on the implementation of the institutional responses. We also build on the concept of "gendered organisations" from Feminist Institutionalism, which allows us to connect implementation processes with formal and informal rules, as well as to formal and

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informal interactions within the institutions. Moreover, we pay attention to the ways in which framing, as well as resistances and counter-resistances, hinder but also create opportunities for implementation, which have been of growing interest within implementation studies.

The analysis of the individual case studies was carried out along the following major dimensions: the **description** of the background and context of each RPO and institutional response. **Institutions**, encompassing the analysis of the institutional policies, its structures and set-up and its organisational culture. **Actors**, encompassing their role as designers and implementers and as target audiences and users, and the relations among actors, paying particular attention to power relations and informal relations. **Ideas,** comprising: the theory of change underlying the institutional response, how the response is framed, and which set of beliefs sustain it; the intersectional approach adopted (or not) by the response to tackle coinciding axes of inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989; Walby et al., 20212); and the gaps of the institutional measures between what is said on paper and what is actually implemented. A further dimension aims at understanding the **facilitating and hindering factors** for design and implementation. Last, all data is analysed considering the overall dimension of the **7Ps framework**, considering the extent to which the institutional responses analysed consistently cover (or not) this holistic model. For the multi-level analysis of the set of 16 case studies, one more dimension was added, which focuses on the **effects and consequences** of putting in place the institutional responses for the institutions and their contexts. The structure of this report is drawn along these dimensions except for the first one (description of the background and context of the institutions) to preserve confidentiality.

The methodology applied includes several qualitative methods, namely: document analysis, interviews, focus groups, field diaries and maps of actors. Overall, 100 interviews and 25 focus groups were conducted with 176 participants, and 194 documents were analysed. All data was coded to facilitate a mixed-methods analysis that included content analysis, discourse analysis, network analysis and critical frame analysis. For that purpose, an analysis matrix was developed which included 14 categories and 50 subcategories, all of them with their assigned codes.

Findings of our analysis show how the societal and institutional context is key for the effective adoption and implementation of institutional responses against gender-based violence. It also identifies the crucial importance of counting on the support of the governing bodies and top management of the institution to guarantee a smooth implementation and counteract resistances. Additionally, the results indicate that institutions still need to make an effort to foster accountability and include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Also, the lack of resources (budget, human resources, proper space, and time) stands as one of the main factors hindering implementation.

While counting on clear formal procedures is reported to be fundamental for successful implementation, the case studies reveal that informal procedures are also followed in most of the analysed institutions with different purposes, including providing responses to victims or managing resistances more rapidly. This is linked to the relevance of informal relations, which also emerge as key for the proper implementation of the measures. Organisational

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cultures play a major role in implementation; power relations and academic hierarchical structures and dynamics have been highlighted as particularly important hindering factors preventing victims from disclosing gender-based violence incidents.

Efforts should be made to recognise and support the work done by key actors. Within a majority of the cases studied, a large share of implementation work is carried out voluntarily by key implementers, often sustained by their personal beliefs in equality and activism. A wide range of actors are identified as key, first and foremost the gender equality bodies and/or officers, but also others: social and support services, implementing working groups created specifically for the response, decision makers (including top and mid-management), Human Resources, the legal departments or the Ombudsperson and ethical committees. Administrative and professional staff have been pointed out as especially relevant actors across cases, while students are notably missing when it comes to their involvement in design and implementation in many cases (despite being targeted as users in 14 of the case studies, in some of them as the primary beneficiaries). External actors also emerge as fundamental in many cases, for improving the provision of services.

Institutions are increasingly adopting participatory approaches to effectively put the responses to gender-based violence in motion. Still, more effort is needed in this regard, also when it comes to inclusiveness. On the one hand, it is noticeable how many of the actors pointed out as key for implementation were not included in the design phases. On the other hand, relevant actors from specific target groups (in particular vulnerable groups, such as PhD students, international staff and students, etc.) are hardly found among the designers and implementers of the measures.

The analysis identifies three main frames used by the institutions: A Human Resources frame (used in six institutions), which tends to explain gender-based violence with “bad working environment” arguments, and then a Gender Equality frame and a Gender Equality and Diversity frame, both of which point to the structural level causes of gender-based violence, including hierarchical gender-related conditions and non-accepted diversity. Nonetheless, a structural approach that entails consistent strategies and action plans is still necessary in several institutions, rather than an incident-driven approach. Bridging a top-down and a bottom-up approach seems to be working well in different institutions, having a clear mandate from the institution while fostering ownership in the RPO community, something which leads to a more effective implementation.

Regarding intersectionality, most of the institutional responses analysed for the case studies acknowledge the existence of discrimination based on multiple and intersecting grounds, but the interaction among them is not yet being properly tackled. Institutions tend to apply a multiple approach, rather than an integrated one, and there are some gaps regarding which groups are considered vulnerable, how the combination of factors aggravates vulnerability, and what specific measures should be put in place.

The analysis identifies several facilitating and hindering factors. Facilitating factors include external factors -such as the general increase in feminist activism in society and movements like #MeToo- and internal factors, such as the political willingness and support of decision makers. Hindering factors tend to be internal to institutions, predominantly linked to

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insufficient resources as well as individual and institutional resistances. Power relations also emerge as a major obstacle, conditioning the disclosure and reporting of cases. Regarding the positive effects of the institutional responses, they are found to contribute significantly to raising awareness around gender-based violence and harassment in academia, although their transformative capacity has not yet been fully realised. The main negative effect relates to re-victimisation, found to be affecting several cases in the study.

Three out of the 16 case studies adopt a holistic coverage of the 7Ps model. Overall, prevalence is the P less systematically covered, while prevention is widely and consistently covered by all the analysed measures. Efforts for a more coordinated approach towards the different Ps that considers their overlaps, links and ways in which they enhance each other would be desirable. Some Ps, like protection and prosecution, seem to be resisted to a greater extent and applied in more fragmented ways, while important efforts are being undertaken towards other Ps, namely provision of services or partnerships. Policies, being another P with inconsistent coverage, is revealed as key for ensuring higher levels of comprehensiveness around gender-based violence and better strategies that guarantee a victim-centred approach to tackle it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEP	Gender Equality Plan
HR	Human Resources
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
UCM	Complutense University of Madrid
WP	Work Package

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1. INTRODUCTION

UniSAFE is a Horizon 2020 project (Grant Agreement number 101006261) funded under the call topic SwafS-25-2020: *Gender-based violence including sexual harassment in research organisations and universities*. It has a dual objective: (1) to produce robust knowledge on gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in universities and research organisations and (2) to translate this knowledge into operational tools and recommendations for universities, research organisations, and policymakers to reduce gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual harassment (SH).

This deliverable 5.2 "Report on Case Studies on the effects and consequences of institutional responses to gender-based violence along 7Ps in research performing organisations" is one key result of the UniSAFE Work Package 5 "Qualitative research on GBV: inventory, case studies and interviews on institutional responses".

Objectives of the deliverable

This deliverable responds to the WP5 objective to "offer a comprehensive understanding of the effects and consequences of the design and implementation of institutional measures and responses" to gender-based violence and sexual harassment. As expressed in the Grant Agreement (p.24), this deliverable reports on the qualitative insights gained through the analysis of 16 case studies of institutional responses to gender-based violence in RPOs, and on the actual effects of existing measures. A holistic approach is taken that allows for coverage and consistency of institutional responses to the UniSAFE's 7Ps model, covering prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships and policies.

What is offered here, rather than an analysis of each case study that reports on each selected measure, is a multi-level qualitative analysis of the 16 cases across the dimensions developed in the analytical framework (see section 3.3). A two-step methodology is applied: First, the 16 individual case studies were carried out by the different partner teams in the consortium coordinated by the UCM. The researchers carrying out the individual case studies were trained and supported by the UCM on how to implement the case study approach, fieldwork and analysis methodology and tools during the entire process of the research. Second, the UCM performed a multi-level qualitative analysis of the 16 case studies, explained further in section 3 (Methodology).

The objective of the multi-level qualitative analysis of the case studies is to provide evidence on the implementation of institutional responses to gender-based violence, extracting issues that the cases have in common to contrast how RPOs are dealing with them. More than an overgeneralisation of what works or not, this multi-level analysis aims at finding patterns that illuminate a theory of action for RPO's responses to gender-based violence and promote mutual learning among the RPOs community. The aim is to understand how the institutional measures are implemented by a multiplicity of actors and how they work in context at the organisational level, focusing on the coverage, interactions, effects and consequences of each institutional response.

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Implementation involving a multiplicity of actors ensures that the perspectives of the three main groups of RPOs (students, administrative and professional staff, and academics) are included, focusing on users and providers[1], as well as decision makers. By users we refer to those who the measures target and/or those who benefit from the institutional response, as well as potential users. By providers we refer to those who are implementing the measure or in charge of the provision of services offered by it.

It is important to note that, rather than an evaluative exercise, the **focus of the analysis is on the implementation** process of the institutional responses, key actors' experiences, as well as the positive and potential negative effects of the measure and the facilitating and hindering factors across the 7Ps. The focus lies on what works and what does not work and for whom, as well as how and why this is so, when institutional responses to gender-based violence are implemented in RPOs.

Relation with other Work Packages

This deliverable report is a key result of Task 5.2 "Case studies on institutional responses to gender-based violence in Research Performing Organisations (RPOs)" and is closely linked to the other UniSAFE's Work Packages (WPs). First, it benefits from deliverables D3.1. "Report on the conceptual and theoretical state of the art" (Strid et al., 2021) and D.3.2 "Report on the European policy baseline" (Fajmonová et al., 2021), which offer both the context and theoretical frame for our in-depth analysis. Hence, the report uses the UniSAFE 7P model (prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships and policies) as one of our main analytical models, as explained in section 2.2.

It is also very much related to other WP5 tasks, as the 16 cases analysed were selected from D5.1 "Inventory of policies and measures to respond to gender-based violence in European universities and research organisations" (Huck et al., 2022). Insightful contributions to our analysis have also been gained from D5.3. "Report on interviews with researchers at higher risk of gender-based violence (GBV)" (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič & Blažytė, 2022) and from D.4.1. "Final UniSAFE-survey questionnaire" (Lipinsky et al., 2022).

Further, the insights gathered as part of the work done for this deliverable, along with that performed in Task 5.1, have served to feed the work in Task 5.4 'Development of qualitative indicators' and will provide more insights and reflections for WP6 (for which a specific internal preliminary report was delivered in July 2022) and WP7, which will translate the results into operational insights and recommendations.

Structure of the report

This introductory section is followed by the theoretical section that explains the theoretical background used and UniSAFE's 7Ps framework. After it, in the methodological section we explain what a case study is and how we selected the institutional responses for the analysis. Here we also present the analytical framework and dimensions used for the

[1] The term "implementers" is used interchangeably with "providers" in this report.

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analysis and elaborate on the fieldwork and analysis methods carried out in the first (individual case studies) and the second step (multiple case studies' analysis).

Following this, the results of the analysis are presented. The results are structured in several sections around the analytical dimensions used (see section 3.3): First, three sections on institutions, actors, ideas. Within the last, an intersectional analysis is provided on how different intersecting grounds of discrimination in addition to gender are covered by the institutional responses. The final part of this section presents an overview of the main gaps between design and implementation. This is followed by the assessment of the facilitating and hindering factors, including an overview of both the factors leading to under-reporting as well as a section on the resistances faced by those implementing the institutional responses. The following section explores the effects and consequences of the institutional responses to gender-based violence for the RPOs in question. The section preceding the conclusions is dedicated to the overall coverage of the 7Ps. Despite our cross-cutting framework in which the 7Ps are mentioned throughout the report, the 7P model requires a standalone analysis spanning all insights stemming from previous sections. This particular analysis has been conducted to differentiate what is said on paper about each P and what is actually implemented.

The final section comprises the conclusions along with some further ideas, reflections and questions that have arisen during the analysis that could inform future research.

Note for the reader (I): It should be taken into account that when we mention or provide a number of cases having or not having a specific feature, procedure or services, we are referring to the information from the national case study reports; it does not necessarily mean that the feature, procedure or service does not exist (or that it is/is not implemented), only that it has, or has not, been mentioned in the case report which served as a basis for the multi-level qualitative analysis.

Note for the reader (II): Quotes from the case studies reports are used throughout the report to explain the findings. From those quotes, only those that are verbatims from interviewees are in italics.

Note for the reader (III): To preserve confidentiality and minimise identification potential risks, we have removed the reference/code after some examples or replaced it with an asterisk in some quotes of the report. E.g., instead of (H1) you will see (*). This especially affects some sensible parts of the following sections: actors, gaps and facilitating and hindering factors.

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: FEMINIST STUDIES

Our theoretical background is articulated around the following areas:

Implementation and Feminist Policy Studies: The focus on implementation is inspired in the implementation studies literature within the area of Public Policy Analysis, and the later attention the Feminist Policy Studies have specifically paid to the post adoption phases (the implementation and evaluation of a measure or policy that follow its adoption). We understand implementation as the complex phenomenon of putting into practice public policy, which is an inherently political, complex, and dynamic process. It is key to determining the effectiveness of any given policy (Engeli & Mazur, 2018), during which "much can go wrong" (Hill & Hupe, 2009). It involves multiple interacting actors, or networks of actors, which show its political nature. These multiple actors may (or not) have been present in the adoption stages, may have diverse competencies, ideas, and interests, including competing ones, and preferences. They may be in favour of the change the policy seeks to make or oppose it, and they operate in institutions with specific organisational arrangements and legacies, political and economic contexts.

Feminist institutionalism: Gender-based violence including sexual harassment occur in institutionally gendered institutions shaped by formal and informal rules, which are shared in organisational contexts (Mackay et al., 2010; Chappell & Waylen, 2013). Formal rules are consciously designed and written, and informal rules are unwritten norms and practices with collective effects that play an important role in the implementation of measures.

Gender regimes theory: RPOs are gendered organisations like any other because they are defined by how 'advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine' (Acker 1990: 146). Gender regimes define the organisational culture of RPOs and have an impact on different aspects, including: "who is recruited to do what work; what social divisions exist in the workplace and away from it, particularly in the domestic sphere; how emotional relations are conducted in the workplace; and how institutions relate to one another in relation to gender sensitivity" (Rosa et. al., 2020: 2). This gender regime can be appreciated in what is seen, but attention must also be given to that which is not visible to the naked eye, those non-events (Husu, 2020), related to how women are discriminated against within the academic structure.

Frame and discursive analysis and the importance of ideas: There is a general blindness to the gendered nature of implementation processes, and how structural inequalities affect implementation. However, the role of ideas, discourses and resistances is of growing analytical interest in implementation studies (Ciccia & Lombardo, 2019; Lombardo & Bustelo 2021). In the case of gender-based violence, due to organisational complexity, the structural gender inequality embedded in RPOs, the "normalisation of violence" (Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020) and resistances, institutional responses can unintentionally produce re-victimisation, failing to adequately prevent harassment or protect.

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Resistances and counter-resistances: Resistances to gender equality measures can be explicit or implicit, individual or institutional (Mergaert & Lombardo, 2013; Verge et al., 2018; Tildesley et al., 2021). As opposed to resistances, we find opportunities and/or alliances and counter-resistances by gender equality actors, coming from feminist activism, "insiders within" (Mackay, 2021) and other coalitions.

Qualitative and feminist research: Lastly, this study is based on the connection between qualitative methods and feminist research. The qualitative methodology allows us to comprehend the implementation of the institutional responses under analysis. The research design is adaptable, emergent, and open, and the researchers' attitude, methodology, ideals, traditions, and personal characteristics are reflected in their study. Following feminist epistemology, the research process must take into account reflexivity and positionality, where we need to recognise power imbalances by embracing the reciprocal character of the researcher-participant connection and challenging the assumption of neutrality in this relationship (Given, 2008).

2.2. THE 7PS MODEL IN RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As in previous UniSAFE publications, this report makes use of the 7P model introduced in deliverable report 3.1 (Strid et al., 2021) building on Mergaert et al. (2016). This holistic 7Ps model helps to understand the complexity and modes of intervention and regulation and the institutional responses put into place to eradicate gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, in RPOs (Strid et al., 2021). At the core, is the measure of the **prevalence** of gender-based violence, with the aim to understand the roles of university and research organisations in **prevention**, **protection, prosecution, provision of services**, supported by **partnerships** and **policies**.

Prevalence and incidence estimates and data collection contribute to reasoned, comprehensive and coordinated policy-making. Therefore, prevalence estimates allow for an understanding of the approximate extent of the problem. **Prevention** refers to measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour and attitudes, and may include, among others, awareness-raising initiatives, the development of educational materials, and the training of professionals. **Protection's** primary objective is to ensure the safety and meet the needs of (potential) victims. Protection comprises (cooperative) actions to protect (potential) victims of any form of gender-based violence. Protection also includes putting into place procedures for reporting the occurrence of, or potential for, abuse or harassment. **Prosecution** and disciplinary measures cover legal and internal proceedings against those suspected abusers or harassers, and related investigative measures and judicial proceedings, including court cases. This includes criminal and civil offence procedures, as well as disciplinary/internal grievance procedures. **Provision of services** refers to the services offered to victims, families, bystanders, and alleged perpetrators of gender-based violence in universities and research organisations. It also covers the professionals who provide these services (e.g., those involved in specialised training) and the existing tools (e.g., guidelines, learning materials) to assist these in better addressing the needs of the specific target groups. **Partnerships** relate to the involvement of relevant actors at the international, national, regional, and institutional levels, including governmental

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agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, staff and student associations, etc., working in collaboration on concerted actions to combat gender-based violence in universities. **Policies** refer to the existence of a coherent set of measures covering the 7Ps with a clear vision and comprehensive strategy that respond to the problems of gender-based violence in an integral and structural way. (Strid et al., 2021).

Figure 1. The 7Ps model

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3. METHODOLOGY

We have applied a two-step methodology consisting in the realisation of 16 cases studies, followed by a multilevel analysis of those 16 cases, which results are presented in this deliverable. In this section, the concepts used, and the selection of the case studies done are presented, as well as the analytical framework, which guided the cases studies and the multilevel analysis, the phases, the fieldwork and the analysis followed.

The case studies were carried out by a team of 15 national researchers[2] coordinated by the UCM. The UCM team provided training and guidelines for the overall concept and development of the case studies, from the desk research phase, during fieldwork, to finalising the analysis of each case studied. Specifically: two different three-day training workshops were conducted online, the first on qualitative research methods and guidance for fieldwork (in October 2021) and the second on qualitative analysis tools and guidance for elaborating the reports (In March 2022). Two sets of instructions and guidelines were also developed and distributed among the researchers and regular online meetings, helpdesk sessions and bilateral support were provided from November 2021 to May 2022.

Each national researcher or research team conducted fieldwork on a specific measure inside a research performing organisation (RPO) and produced a report on that specific institutional response. Then, the UCM did a further two-step analysis, first analysing and coding each of the case studies' related documents which consist of final reports, field diaries, maps of actors and codebooks (more details in section 3.5). This was followed by a global comparative analysis of the responses, the results of which are presented in this document.

To capture how the dimensions -institutions, actors and ideas (described in section 3.3)- and facilitating and hindering factors affect the implementation of institutional responses against gender-based violence including sexual harassment, we developed a multiple case study methodology, in which the individual case studies has been conducted based on qualitative inquiry and methods that permit the researcher to study the selected issues in-depth. This case study methodology was developed within an overall multiple case study methodology of 16 different measures and research performing organisations in 15 countries.

During fieldwork, the national researchers conducted a total of:

- 100 interviews (30 to 90 minutes duration) with 105 people (78 women, 27 men)
- 25 focus groups, involving 71 participants (49 women, 22 men)
- 26 maps of actors

[2] Two of the national researchers were externally hired (for the Icelandic and Turkish cases) while the other 13 were members of the following UniSAFE partners: GESIS, ISAS, JU, LCSS, ORU, UCM and YW. See acknowledgments.

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194 documents were analysed, and 16 field diaries were developed and 14 of them digitalised (with a total of 201 pages).

There were a total of 176 participants (127 women, 49 men) and no ethical issues arose during fieldwork.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted in the national languages except for one interview and three focus groups, conducted in English instead. All of them were audiotaped (except for one where the participant preferred not to be recorded, so the researchers conducting it took intensive notes) and fully transcribed for further analysis.

Given that in qualitative inquiry the researcher is the instrument, and thus validity hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, ethics, and rigour of the person doing fieldwork (Guba, 1990; Patton, 2014; Schwandt, 2014; Stake, 2013), two training workshops were conducted with the national researchers to ensure the highest possible scientific standards.

3.1. Concepts

A **case study** is a qualitative research methodology in which either hypotheses, theories or findings are put in specific structuring contexts to be further analysed, that is, it is the empirical investigation of a specified or bounded phenomenon (Smith, 1978; Mabry, 2008). Hence, it is essential that the setting for research is connected to previous theories, which form a foundation for the analyses and interpretations in the conclusions. In the results, the objective is a thorough understanding and interpretation of the individual cases in their own specific context, and to find information concerning the dynamics and processes of interest. A case study may also produce hypotheses and research ideas for further studies. In this sense, though dealing with unique situations, case studies carry theoretical pretensions (Mills et al., 2010).

A **multiple case study** methodological design has been elaborated for studying in-depth the institutional responses to gender-based violence in UniSAFE RPOs. A case study is appropriate when the inquirer seeks answers to how and why questions, when the object of study is a phenomenon in a real-life context, when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear, and when it is desirable to use different sources of evidence (Yin, 1989). The foremost concern of much, if not all, case study research is to generate knowledge of the particular. However, case studies can be used for theoretical elaboration and in the subsequent multi-level qualitative analysis, and cases can be chosen and studied because they are thought to be instrumentally valuable for furthering understanding of a particular problem, issue, or concept (Stake, 1995).

For this analytical generalisation, several cases can be chosen within a single study to shed light on a particular pre-given issue, concept or problem, and each case is thought to be useful in that regard (Stake, 1995). This kind of **multi-level analysis** includes a rationale for the selection of multiple cases in a single study and the procedures for analysing data across cases, which is explained in section 3.6.

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The 16 case studies conducted by UniSAFE aim at understanding how institutional measures against gender-based violence are implemented in RPOs. By **institutional response** we mean any structure, action or measure put in place by the institution to actively cover one or more of the 7Ps to address gender-based violence and/or any kind of sexual or sexist harassment.

3.2. SELECTION OF THE CASE STUDIES

According to Mills et al. (2010:61), the selection of cases is an essential part of the multiple case study research design. Because of the intensive data collection methods in case study research, the number of research units can be very limited. These authors explain that multiple-case designs typically compare 2 to 10 cases and that this relatively limited number of research units puts an emphasis on the researchers' justification of the selection of cases. In contrast to survey research, case study research samples are ideally selected strategically rather than randomly (Mills et al., 2010:61). When more than one case is to be studied, the scope of the inquiry may include contrasting cases. Contexts, circumstances, and their effects on each case may provide a fuller picture of the larger phenomenon as different cases feature different aspects of interest (Mabry, 2008).

In our report, the 16 cases analysed were selected from the inventory of existing measures developed in the aforementioned deliverable 5.1, following the criteria listed hereafter. The rationale for covering as many as 16 case studies was geographical coverage among the sample of 46 RPOs in 15 countries.

Our selection of cases ensures a comprehensive coverage of the 7Ps as well as geographical coverage. Altogether, the final case selection criteria were:

- Variety in the 7Ps addressed: prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services, partnerships, and policies.
- Geographical coverage: one institutional response in each country (except for Spain, where we analysed two cases): 11 EU-27 countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Sweden) and four Associated Countries (Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, the United Kingdom).
- Variety in the type of institutional response: policies and protocols, helpdesks and/or contact-points, prevention and awareness-raising programs and training.
- Variety in their nature (general vs. specific): general well-being, anti-harassment and bullying etc., or gender-based violence specifically.
- Variety in the longevity of the institutional response: new vs. more consolidated institutional responses.
- Variety in the adoption of an intersectional approach: yes, no and to different degrees.
- Variety in the focus of different vulnerable groups addressed.

The final selection encompasses three helpdesks, two awareness-raising and training programs and eleven policies covering from more general gender equality action plans to specific protocols or directives.

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To protect the confidentiality of the informants who participated in each of the case studies, this report does not identify any of the research participants nor the RPOs in which the case studies were conducted. Also, to preserve the anonymity of the RPOs and the institutional responses analysed, all the information has been pseudonymised and coded.

The case studies reports and data are presented by using the following codes:

- H for helpdesk (codes from H1 to H3)
- P for policies (codes from P1 to P11)
- T for training and awareness raising programmes (codes T1 and T2)

3.3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK & DIMENSIONS

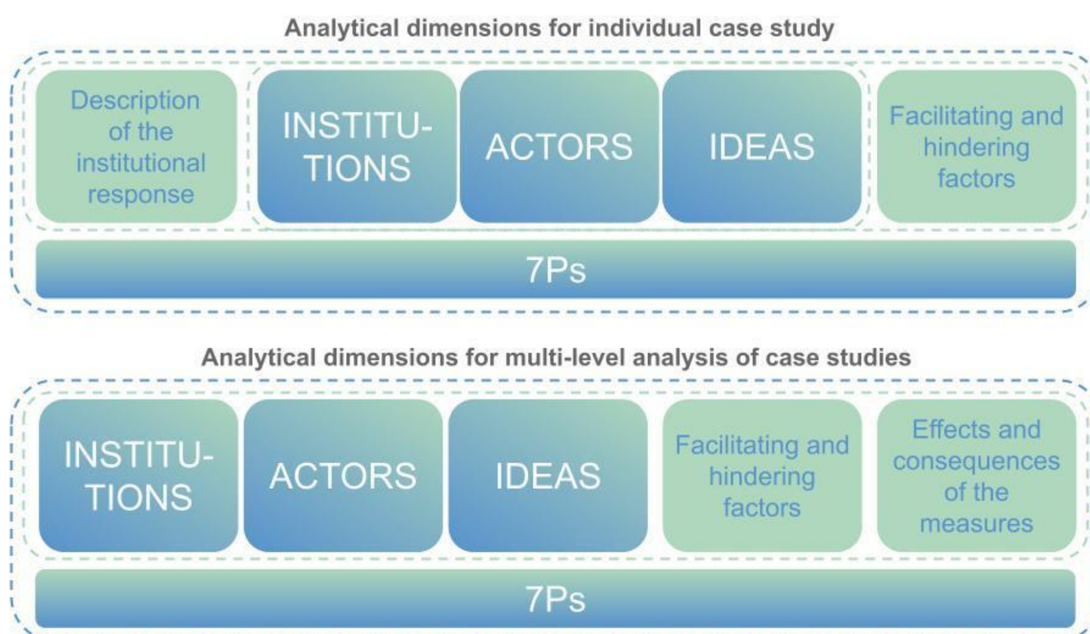

Figure 2. Analytical dimensions for individual and multi-level qualitative case studies analysis

Along with the 7Ps, the **analysis process developed for the individual case studies** seeks to explore five additional major dimensions: a first general one devoted to the description of the institutional response and its context, three central ones along the three basic axes of analysis (actors, institutions, and ideas), and a last one that encompass the facilitating and hindering factors as cross-cutting issues. Each of them comprises, in turn, several categories as detailed hereafter. The national researchers had to articulate their reports along these dimensions (see annex II).

For the **multi-level analysis** and the information contained in this report, one further dimension/section was added on the effects and consequences of the institutional responses for the RPOs. The descriptive information is skipped here to protect the institutions' confidentiality, considering that this information is too particular and includes

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contextual data which could lead to the identification of the specific organisation and its institutional response.

The information comprised by each major dimension is as follows:

1. **Description of the institutional response (individual case studies)**

This dimension refers to the background and context of the institutional response under analysis, which is very relevant for understanding the specificities of each case study and the differences between the implementation processes of similar measures. The following categories are explored:

- Reasons for the adoption of the measure
- External factors like national and/or regional context, legal context, external constraints, and leverages
- Institutional history such as information about the organisational context and the institution's journey on gender-based violence relevant to the adoption and/or the implementation of the institutional response

2. **Institutions**

The categories within this dimension are based on the three pillars that structure the organisational analysis, namely:

Policies, programmes and/or actions: This category relates to all the formal and official policies and documents of the institution that are relevant for the implementation of the analysed measure, including any significant aspect regarding the decision-making, design, approval and/or monitoring and evaluation procedures and mechanisms.

Structures and set-up of the measures: This category comprises a series of subcategories that relate to:

- Resources directly or indirectly allocated to or utilised in the implementation of the institutional response, like budget, human resources, time or space.
- Means of communication and dissemination, tools and activities, including both passive and active modes.
- Formal and informal implementation and decision-making structures, put in place specifically or already existing, that are relevant for the implementation of the institutional response. The informal structures[3] can include personal or group and departmental relations, interactions among people in the institution, informal communication channels, created in an unplanned and/or unofficial way.

Organisational culture: This relates to the rules, norms and processes within the institutions. The way things are done. It has two main subcategories that differentiate between formal and informal rules. The latter encompass all the unwritten rules and "ways of doing things" related to the organisational culture, covering informal ways of interacting,

[3] Informal structures are directly tied to relationships among actors. Therefore, these two analytical dimensions are intertwined and there is a certain overlap between them.

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norms, behaviours and beliefs shaping the day-to-day of the organisation. It includes such aspects as the division of labours and locations, the construction of symbols and images, the underlying assumptions and practices, the interactions and language used or the conceptualisation of social structures within the institutional structure (Acker, 1990). Also, it is related to ideas and notions of gender equality and gender-based violence held by the university community and implementing actors as well as unconscious bias that lends unspoken support to harassment practices.

3. Actors

This dimension primarily focuses on the **key actors for implementation and their positions** in the net of actors, including (but not limited to) decision makers, supporters of the measure, opponents or people showing resistances, either by action or non-action, and implementers or providers[4]. This category also includes references to the level of key actors and stakeholders' involvement. Along with the key actors, we also analyse:

- Users and target audiences: We differentiate between the intended users/ targeted beneficiaries (people whom the measure intends to benefit) and the actual/potential users. It also includes vulnerable groups and bystanders (any person witnessing or having direct knowledge of any act of harassment/violence but not taking part in it).
- Perpetrators: Analysis of the perceptions of the RPO's communities around alleged or actual perpetrators of gender-based violence including sexual harassment and how the institutional responses address them, if they do.
- Groups within the university community: Faculty or academic staff; administrative, technical or professional staff; and students.

It is also important to analyse the **relations among the identified key actors**: This is a crucial category, as it is where power resides and can provide insight as to understand why a measure may or may not be working in a certain set-up or context. This category encompasses two main subcategories, although often they are very much intertwined:

- Alliances and formal networks, either with internal or external stakeholders: This includes the formal hierarchical relations involving power dynamics.
- Informal networks and interactions. This includes the informal patterns and means that also shape power dynamics (although normally unspoken).

4. Ideas

This is an overarching dimension that encompasses frames, approaches and understandings underpinning the institutional responses. We include three main categories within this dimension. The first one is the **Theory of Change** or Theories of Change in plural, of an institutional response -such as a project, a program, a strategy, an initiative, or a policy- is "the set of beliefs that underlie action" (Weiss, 1998: 55). That is, an explicit

[4] It should be taken into account that talking about actors implies mostly talking about people, but not always. I.e., a counsellor can be pointed out as a key actor, being the *position* in charge of implementation, regardless of the person holding it. In this sense, this can overlap with "structures", given that the different organisational dimensions are intertwined, as already explained above.

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theory or model of how that intervention contributes to a chain of intermediate results and finally to the intended or observed outcomes (Funnell and Rogers, 2011). But, as Weiss (1988) reminds us, interventions are complicated phenomena generally born out of professional experience, and not likely to be laid out in rational terms with clear-cut statements of why certain actions would lead to the desired outcome(s). The theory does not have to be uniformly accepted and it does not have to be right. It can be based on a formal theory or theoretical model, or on informal, tacit and implicit (unspoken) assumptions of the practitioners involved. Therefore, the theories of change might be identified or developed with a deductive strategy, based on previous research, stated policies, model programs or interventions, and logical analyses, or with an inductive one, starting from direct or indirect observations of how a program actually works and articulating stakeholders' mental models of how a program works, or a combination of both strategies. According to Carol Weiss (1998), the programme's theories of change can be divided into programme theory (based on the 'why') and implementation theory (based on the 'how'), on which we will focus. This theory offers another relevant analytical frame to better understand how an institutional response is expected to work.

Another way of identifying and making explicit the theory of change of an intervention is using Critical Frame Analysis, identifying frames on how the problem to be solved is defined or represented by institutional actors and providers/implementers and which are the solutions given. This includes references to who are supposed to be the problem holders and who is causing the problem. Who are the target groups of the institutional responses, who is responsible (or not) to do what, and who is authorised by the institution for suggesting a suitable course of action, can also be identified.

Several subcategories are relevant to our theory of change:

- Strategy: Information about the implementation strategy: What steps or phases were planned for successful implementation and how to achieve goals. What the organisation and implementers think are the necessary steps to be taken or actions to be carried out to achieve the response's objectives.
- Framing and frames: Problems (diagnosis) and solutions (prognosis): Relate to any reference about how the problem was identified or defined and what solutions were proposed to solve it, including the hierarchy and priority of goals.
- Role attribution in diagnosis (who is the problem holder?) and procedures and responsibilities in prognosis: Target groups (who is acted upon?); call for action and non-action (who should [not] do what?); legitimation of (non)action; who has a voice in suggesting a suitable course of action?
- Achievements, successes and lessons learnt (foreseen or unforeseen): Feminist scholars are very much aware of the political importance of the 'small wins', so it is crucial to adopt a careful look and be attentive to small accomplishments and steps forward and how they were achieved, as it will all provide inputs for future recommendations. This aspect is explained under section 4.5 (effects and consequences) of this report.

The second major category is **intersectionality**, a term which originated from the work of Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and that can be understood as coinciding inequalities

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shaped by different axes of power among different sets of social relations (Walby et al., 2012). We use it to refer to either how intersectionality is theoretically and/or practically framed in general by the RPO, or to how the response addresses or mentions specific axes of inequality, e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, age, religion and other beliefs, class, or other. A subcategory within this is how the measure mentions or addresses vulnerable groups, e.g., international students or staff, early-career researchers, students or staff with disabilities, migrant and/or ethnic minority background students or staff, LGBTQ+ students or staff, staff with temporary contracts, new and expectant mothers, or other. Another idea to explore here refers to whether other vulnerable groups or inequalities are mentioned and taken into account but treated separately, or interactions among them are (not) addressed in practice from an intersectional perspective.

Last, and as the third sub-category, this dimension also includes everything that relates to the **gaps** between what is said on paper and/or designed, and what is actually implemented in practice. It includes unexpected aids and potential negative effects. This analysis, which is related to the theory of change, feeds into the research with insightful information about what works and what does not, regarding the strategies and understandings on how to put institutional responses effectively in motion.

5. **Facilitating & hindering factors**

This dimension refers to the facilitating and hindering factors, obstacles and resistances for implementation, either external or internal, specifically:

- The facilitating factors are related to any relevant information on what makes implementation successful or enables any implementing aspect or step, formally or informally.
- The hindering factors refer to general obstacles or constraints that negatively affect implementation, to resistances and explicit or implicit opposing strategies oriented to maintaining the status quo, or to hinder the implementation of the measure, as well as negative reactions that have arisen as a result of the implementation of the institutional response.

Especially, it is of great interest to explore the relationship between the more formal aspects of the institutional setting and the informal ones, as well as to explore both the individual perceptions and attitudes and the more structural and systemic patterns and rules (regarding the institutional response), as they all shape the unique organisational culture of each institution.

The described analytical dimensions and the categories they comprised were depicted in a mindmap (figure 3 hereafter), that was later used to elaborate the analysis matrix explained in section 3.7.

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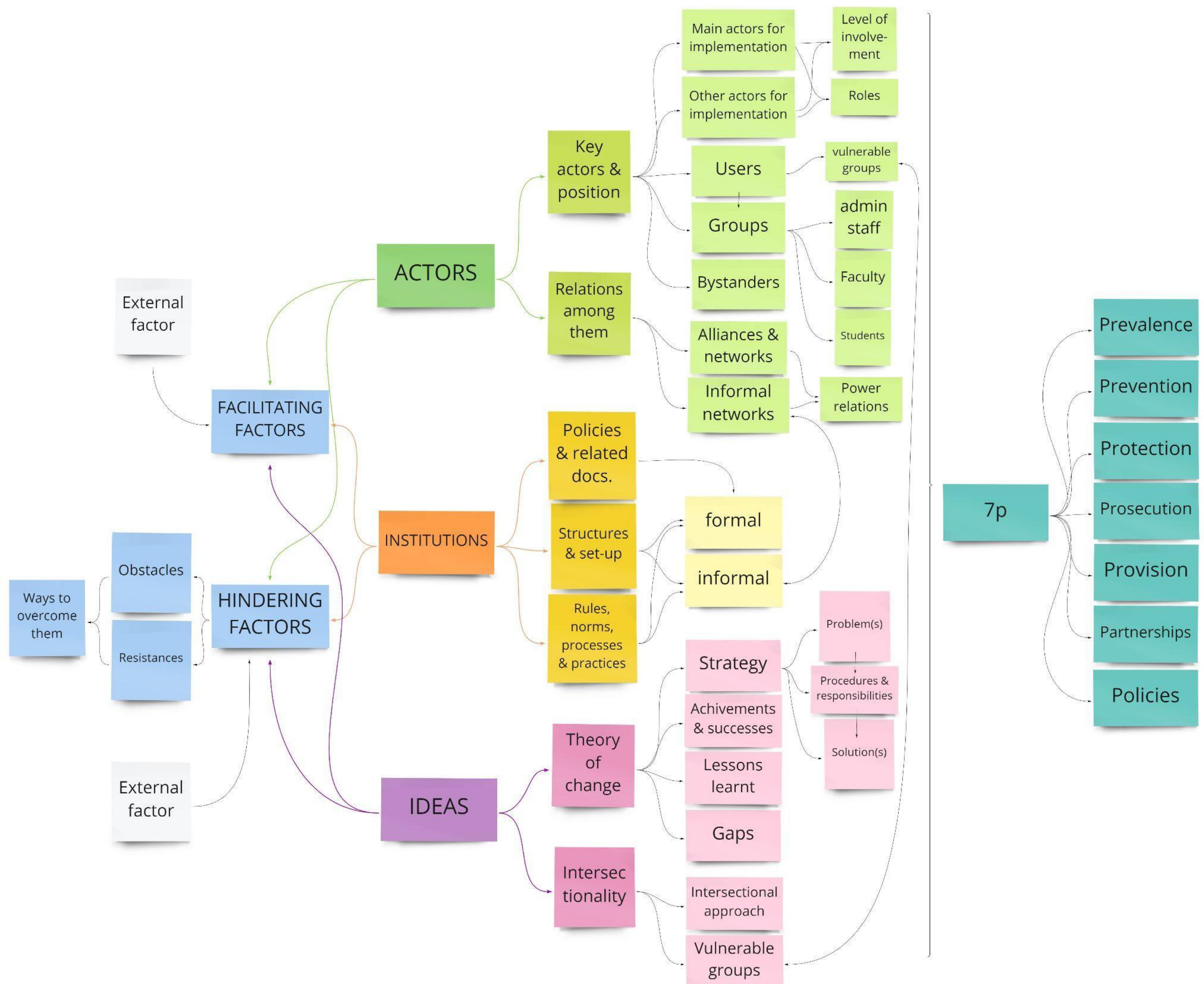

Figure 3. Mind map of the analytical dimensions

3.4. PHASES

The UCM team leading this research designed a three-step methodology for national researchers that consisted of a preliminary desk-based research phase, followed by fieldwork and analysis. Before starting, the UCM team engaged in a **preparatory phase**, designing and producing guiding materials for the national researchers, including:

- Ethical guidelines and informed consent forms (developed together with the Jagiellonian University team, the project partner in charge of ethics).
- Templates of the tools to be applied (field diary, map of actors) and scripts for the interviews and focus groups.

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- Guidelines: step-by-step guide with ethical and feminist epistemology principles mainstreamed. Practical tips and suggestions were also included. The document included a FAQ section that was consistently updated based on the questions and insights of the national researchers in the helpdesks and follow-up sessions.
- Guidelines on research participants' safety and wellbeing (developed by the Jagiellonian University team, in charge of ethics within the project).
- Guidelines on researchers' welfare and security (developed by the Jagiellonian University team, in charge of ethics within the project).

The phases in which the national researchers were involved were:

1. **Desk-based research**: In preparation for the fieldwork in each RPO and in addition to attending the three-day training workshop, researchers undertaking the case studies, supported by the UCM team, had to:

- Review the existing documentation related to the institutional response under analysis.
- Outline a preliminary mapping of the actors involved in the implementation of the response and identify and select the participants in the fieldwork.
- Coordinate with the contact person in the RPO and the participants in preparation for the fieldwork (for which a template contact letter was provided).
- Revise and complement the information about care support services (support pathway information for respondents in need of support).

2. **Fieldwork**: The fieldwork should have ideally taken place face-to-face, however, some activities had to be conducted online due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and travel related constraints. While all case studies entailed the same activities, we distinguished between "in-depth" and "lighter" case studies, the former being the ones that were conducted in the countries of responsible partners or to which responsible partners had good access, and the latter in a different country and with fewer interviews.

During the duration of the fieldwork, helpdesk sessions were carried out every other Friday between the 4th of February and the 11th of March to support national researchers and promote the sharing of experiences, doubts, and knowledge among them.

3. **Analysis**: Once the fieldwork was finalised, researchers attended the analysis training workshop conducted in March 2022 to proceed with the analysis of the fieldwork results, which included:

- The literal transcription of the interviews and focus groups in the language in which they were conducted.
- The preliminary analysis of the results in the respective language in which the work was carried out.
- Filling out the individual case studies final report template in English (including translated direct quotes from the transcriptions) and the corresponding annexes (field diary, map of actors, documental analysis and analysis codebook).

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- Being available for questions and feedback during the review and quality check process done by the UCM Team. This included the possibility of having to revise and complement the report or related documents if necessary.

During the analysis phase, again the helpdesk sessions were offered by the UCM to all national researchers, this time on a weekly basis during May 2022, combining helpdesks with participatory workshops to share insights and gather first impressions and preliminary results.

The last part of this phase was the meta-analysis which was completed by the UCM team. We collectively analysed all the case studies, coding all documents and conducting a comparative analysis by each one of the analytical dimensions. It was finalised with the writing of this report and the extraction of the general conclusions presented at the end of it.

3.5. Fieldwork methodology: qualitative techniques

The applied methods during the desk-based work and the fieldwork were:

1. Document analysis, which included selecting and reviewing the existing documentation related to the institutional response under study, including:

- Institutional documents, policies, programs and process-related documents
- Non-institutional or informal documents, including leaflets, posters, brochures, etc.
- Communication means and tools to provide information, including online newsletters, web pages, social media, etc.

After the review, the researchers had to fill in the document analysis template.

2. **Field diary**: Most qualitative research methods encourage researchers to take field notes to enhance data and provide rich context for analysis. The field diary also serves to control the research process: the temporality, our subjectivity in the interaction with others, emerging results, etc. It shows the difficulties, how we cope with problems and solve them and, in general, the daily research process implementation. The diaries were meant to serve as a primary source for the elaboration of the “case study report”, given that:

- Field notes can improve the depth of qualitative findings.
- Field notes can be valuable when examining data at a later date or providing data to other researchers for secondary analysis or meta synthesis (Hinds et al., 1997).
- It also contributes to the identification of biases, prejudices, etc.

All researchers kept a field diary for which a template was provided. Although this is a tool mainly intended to capture the impressions of the researchers when visiting the RPO and addressing aspects like the climate of the RPO, the visibility of material publicising the response under analysis, etc., it was also required for those activities conducted online. The field diary had to include information about each activity (interview, map of actors, focus group or other) conducted.

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3. **Interviews**: An interview is a social interaction between the participant or interviewee and researchers as interviewers in a specific context. Its relevance for the research process is not only the information provided, but also elements of this interaction. The method is relevant to case study work for several reasons:

- The information provided is embedded in the biography of the person ("embodied").
- Focus: the way in which the person elaborates the discourse about a particular episode, process or activity assesses the "production of social meaning".
- Modality: In an interview based on guidelines there is a selection of topics or issues to discuss (so a script was provided to all national researchers) but there was freedom to choose the order and the specific formulation of questions.
- Beyond the list of topics or questions there was an indication to pay attention to the emergence of unplanned topics and elements.

4. **Focus groups**: Its primary aim is to describe and understand the meanings and interpretations of a select group of people to gain an understanding of a specific issue from the perspective of the participants of the group (Liamputtong 2011), not only obtaining accounts of individuals. The key aspects of this technique are:

- Focus groups do not aim to reach consensus on the discussed issues. Rather, focus groups "encourage a range of responses which provide a greater understanding of the attitudes, behaviour, opinions or perceptions of participants on the research issues" (Hennink 2007: 6).
- The central point is the group interaction. Answers and interventions emerge as a response or reaction to responses or interactions from other members.
- Focus group interviews allow for group dynamics and help the researcher to capture shared lived experiences, accessing elements which other methods may not be able to reach. Focus groups permit researchers to uncover aspects of understanding that often remain hidden in more conventional in-depth interviews.

5. **Map of actors**: Its main purpose is to represent the social reality in which we are working to understand its most complex extension and provide insights into domains that have an important dimension of multi-actor complexity (Rodríguez Villasante, 2000, Hermans and Thissen, 2009). The map of actors is important not only because it helps to identify those who are potential allies or possible gatekeepers (EIGE, 2022), but also because it:

- Allows a better understanding of multi-actor processes.
- Allows for network analysis: Enables thinking in terms of structures and shifting the focus from individuals or groups to relationships and networks.
- Facilitates bridging the micro and macro level.
- Facilitates understanding of the functioning and role of informal networks and groups that are not isolated.
- Allows analysis of key alliances and "local bridges": related to the analysis of weak relationships or "weak ties" (Granovetter, 1973).

This is a three-step methodology for which all national researchers were again provided with a template and indications on how to conduct it, specifically:

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- How to identify key actors.
- How to define their position towards the measure based on: level of resistances (related to the supporting/opposing position of each actor around the measure) and level of influence (related to their capacity of action and decision-making).
- How to represent the links between actors (where relationships can be of different types: regular contacts, circumstantial/ occasional contacts, conflictual relations).

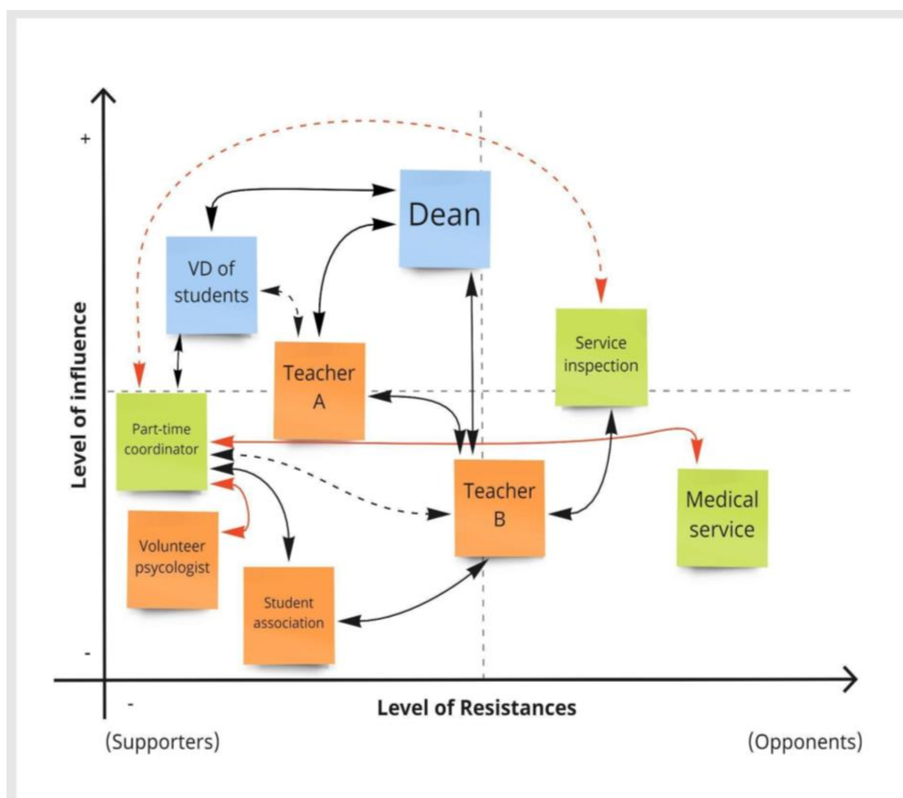

Figure 4. Example of map of actors

3.6. Analysis Methodology: Mixed Methods

To conduct the analysis of all data collected, we used a methodology where the following methods are combined: content analysis, network analysis, discourse analysis and frame analysis. The use of these different methods was encouraged among national researchers, in order to promote triangulation, although the main or dominant technique was discourse analysis.

Each one of the methods serves a specific aim and their triangulation provides a deeper understanding and complementary standpoints. While **content analysis** seeks to discover, explain and conceptualise the variety of existing discourses focusing on the descriptive (Bardin, 1996), **network analysis** focuses on the central role of interactions and relations, where actors and networks are the key elements to be analysed. For its part, **discourse analysis** is a very broad interpretative technique, used by different disciplines, in which the researcher approaches the discourses of the participants in search of information,

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meanings, social roles, etc., based on the research questions. Discourse analysis makes it possible to identify social discourses and the positions occupied by subjects in a given context. Therefore, discourse analysis is particularly sensitive to relations of power. Lastly, **critical frame analysis** emphasises the analysis of the policy frame as an organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed (Verloo, 2005).

3.7. Analysis matrix

To facilitate the development and organisation of the analysis, specific **guidelines** were developed, and a **template of the final report** was drafted (see annex II) in accordance with the analytical dimensions for individual case studies described in the analytical framework section above (description and context of the institutional response, actors, institutions and ideas, and the cross-cutting aspects: facilitating factors, hindering factors and 7Ps coverage). A three-day training session was conducted for UniSAFE partners and national researchers where these materials and an **analysis matrix** were presented.

The matrix (see annex I) is useful to identify and organise the key elements of our research and ensure that the qualitative data collected through the different techniques is analysed in a rigorous manner. The analysis matrix aims at providing a better understanding of the relation between the analytical dimensions described in section 3.3, as it mirrors from the mind map depicted in figure 3. In this sense, each idea or concept outlined in the mind map constitutes a specific category of analysis in the matrix, further divided into different sub-categories.

The matrix served as a living tool, not closed, taking into consideration that the analysis should not solely focus on those (mostly descriptive) aspects. Each national researcher was encouraged to generate new categories or codes that took into account and paid attention to the implicit or explicit values that disclose the system of beliefs of the speakers of their case, so that emerging categories and subcategories could be added to the particular case studies. These emerging categories have also been part of the final global analysis.

Coding

Coding is the detailed process of identifying a passage in the text, searching for and identifying relevant concepts, meanings, beliefs, etc., and the links between them. It involves carefully reading and re-reading the transcripts. Multiple codes can be assigned to a piece of text. This process is particularly relevant in research processes like the one conducted for this deliverable, involving multi-level analysis. To organise the collected information and perform the analysis described above, a first coding of all the documents and transcriptions was carried out by the national researchers. For the cross-case analysis, a second coding was performed by the UCM team of all the institutional reports and related documents.

In the analysis of the case studies, we proposed to do this exercise combining types of codes that are not mutually exclusive: descriptive and interpretive coding, as well as

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deductive and inductive coding. **Descriptive** codes are useful for identifying important elements of what has been said and help with the classification and grouping of the information. In turn, **interpretive** coding goes a step further where the researcher focuses on the underlying meanings, assigning data a particular value. As for **deductive** coding, it is based on a previously designed set of codes and, in this regard, a codebook based on the analysis matrix was provided to all national researchers. Last, **inductive** coding is based on open coding chosen from the verbatim transcripts or new codes created to facilitate the interpretation of pieces of information that cannot be fully explained by the initial coding tree. This allows for the integration of codes regarding specific characteristics of the case studies, as each one entails its own specificities and nature that might not be adequately captured by the proposed codebook. To avoid losing the richness of the individual case studies analysis, all national researchers were asked to provide their final codebooks, with all the original codes and the new ones, if any. This allowed us to compare the usefulness of the common code tree, the density of each code and their overlaps and concurrencies, as well as to gain a better understanding of the specificities of each case, all in all contributing to drawing out the final conclusions.

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4. RESULTS

4.1. INSTITUTIONS

4.1.1. National (policy) context

To understand the national policy context, a mapping of national policies was carried out within the UniSAFE project, D3.2 (Fajmonová et. al., 2021), and an inventory of existing institutional responses within different RPOs, D5.1 (Huck et al., 2022).

In the analysis of the implementation of institutional responses through the case studies, it is essential to connect the implementation of these policies to the national context and, in some cases, the regional level context because of the implications that this has as a component that either facilitates or hinders the design and implementation of measures against gender-based violence within RPOs. In other words, context matters in understanding each of the institutional responses analysed. The 16 case studies conducted by UniSAFE are guided by an in-depth comprehension of each of the cases in its specific context. Although the comparative multi-level analysis presented in this report does not identify the country of the RPOs, it is necessary to include a brief reference of national contexts.

In this regard, a distinction has to be drawn between the following different contexts across Europe:

1. Countries where gender equality has long been institutionalised and there is a significant body of previous research and studies on gender and gender-based violence issues.
   In countries with a longer history of adopting equality and anti-gender-based violence legislation, there is, in turn, greater experience in implementing equality institutional responses by RPOs (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom). Nevertheless, despite this longer history, the **work to address gender-based violence inside RPOs is relatively recent.**
   In some of these cases, the implementation of the institutional responses under analysis is a consequence of the national legal requirements to design and implement the institutional response (Finland, France, Ireland, Spain, Sweden).
   In three cases, it has been pointed out that the development of the institutional responses has been to a greater extent influenced by the regional or local context (Belgium, Italy, Spain).

2. Countries where gender policies, including anti-gender-based violence measures, are emerging and becoming institutionalised (Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Turkey).
   Within some of these countries the role of the EU has been noted in different ways: implementing institutional responses in universities to comply with criteria established for European research funding or influenced by Horizon 2020 projects (Czech Republic, Serbia, Turkey).

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3. Countries where anti-gender narratives are gaining influence and control in governmental institutions and adversely affecting gender policies, including those to combat gender-based violence.
   In one of the reports, an anti-gender climate that had an influence on the implementation of institutional measures was addressed directly, while in another report, an anti-gender atmosphere was referenced implicitly.
   However, even in these settings, the effects of EU policies are remarkably identified as a factor that favours the development of gender policy in some institutions.

4.1.2. Societal context

Regarding the institutional context, consideration must also be given to the societal environment and its influence as a catalyst for decision-making processes, design, and implementation of institutional responses in some circumstances. There have been cases in which it has been mentioned that the general social atmosphere is favourable to implementing measures against gender-based violence in academia (P1, P3) and on other occasions, what has been cited more frequently is the influence of the rising social awareness about sexual harassment, which is attributable in large part to the attention given to the issue by the #MeToo movement (H1, H2, H3, P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, T1). The impact of the #MeToo movement has been underlined most prominently. This is especially relevant because literature about gender-based violence within academia states the normalisation and invisibility of sexual harassment (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2020) and in many contexts, unless the national legislative framework required action to be taken, explicit measures were not implemented.

Therefore, the #**MeToo** movement has pushed universities to reflect and brought sexual harassment and other forms of violence into the spotlight. As Liisa Husu (2022:172) explains, “sexual harassment before the #MeToo debate was an issue on which managerial avoidance and non-decision-making in academia was rather common even in the Nordic countries”.

In the cases analysed, the impact of #MeToo was mentioned in the following examples:

- At the structural level: cases in which the influence of the #MeToo movement and the rise of feminism during the pre-pandemic years succeeded in bringing gender-based violence into the centre of the political and public agenda, including RPOs’ agendas. The growth of feminism allows a wider acceptance of this type of institutional responses (H1, P1, P6, P9, T1). Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that the prioritisation of ending gender-based violence is nowadays becoming less of a priority as a direct result of the #MeToo and general feminist movements’ decreased visibility in some contexts (P1, P6).
- At the individual level: it is worth mentioning that the influence of #MeToo was also discussed in relation to raising awareness about harassment among women who work in academic institutions themselves and bystanders of these incidents (T1). This is important since the normalisation of gender-based violence implies that without preceding awareness-raising activity, many incidents would not be recognised as violent.

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> "The organisational culture and the attitudes towards gender-based violence have changed a lot since #MeToo, new norms and boundaries have been set and people are now less likely to be silent bystanders" (T1).

Regarding the societal environment, RPOs are also concerned about their public reputation. Concerns have been expressed in different cases analysed about public scandals regarding gender-based violence, especially when these scandals have been mediatised and had a negative impact on the RPOs' reputation. In some situations, the measures have been approved as a result of public controversy regarding incidences of gender-based violence within the university community (H3, P6, P11, T2). In another case, concerns were expressed about the possibility of this happening (from seeing what has happened in other institutions) (P8).

4.1.3. Policies

In the analysis of the implementation of institutional responses, it is important to understand the history with respect to the institutionalisation of gender equality policies in the institutions, as well as their level of engagement and development with regard to gender-based violence. Information about policies is included in the inventory of existing policies developed within UniSAFE D5.1 (Huck et al., 2022). In order to protect the confidentiality of the information presented here, this section outlines the types of policies that exist in the different RPOs (where institutional responses have been analysed) and the formal relationship, if any, between them.

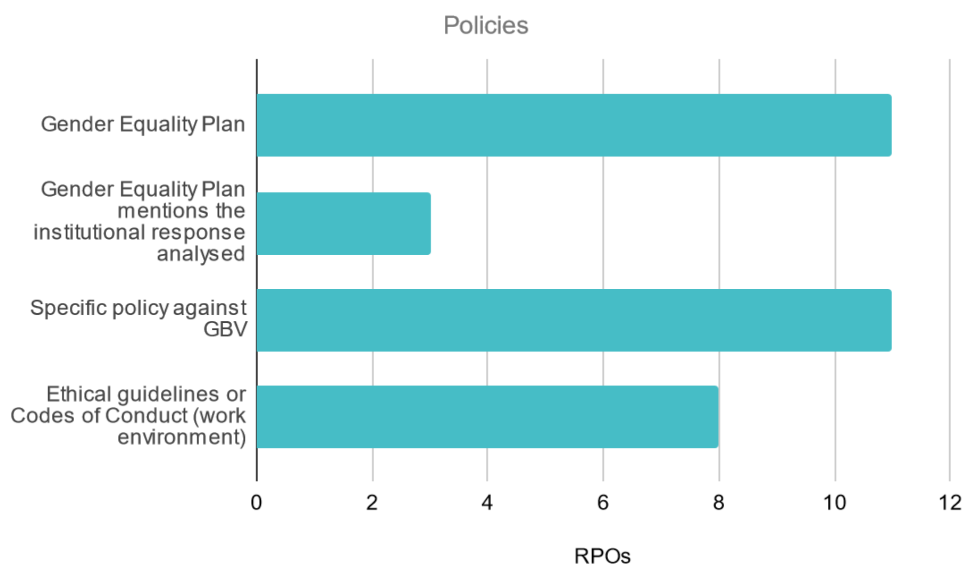

Figure 5. Type and number of policies chosen for analysis

- Gender Equality Plan (H1, H3, P1, P2, P5, P8, P3, P10, P11 P9, T1)
    - The equality plan formally mentions the institutional response under analysis (H1, H3, P1)

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- Specific policy against gender-based violence: plan, protocol or guidelines against sexual harassment and/or sexualized discrimination (H1, P1, P3, P4, P2, P6, P7, P9, P11, T1)
- Ethical guidelines or Codes of Conduct related to the work environment (H2, P2, P3, P4, P6, P10, P11, T1)

4.1.4. Structures and set-up

Support from the RPO governing board is one of the factors that facilitates the adoption and implementation of measures against gender-based violence. As discussed in the following section on actors (section 4.2), in some cases the Rector's endorsement was essential in the process of drafting and adopting the measure (P1, P6, P11, T1, T2); giving it a higher level of legitimacy among the formal organisational structure.

In terms of the formal structures that put measures into effect, in some of the cases a **formal structure was created to design** and draft these measures –e.g., a design working group, task force, team (P1, P2, P5, P9, P11). It is noteworthy that in order to address the design from a **certain bottom-up approach** and involve the RPO community in the ownership of the measure, some RPOs developed a participatory process in which the involvement of different groups within the RPO was promoted (P1, P2). In two other cases (P4, P3), consultation with staff and student unions around the design of these institutional responses is required and, in another of the institutional responses analysed, consultations with different members of the RPO community and external actors have also been undertaken (H3, P9).

Moreover, where the institutional responses are located within the RPOs' structure is relevant. Among the measures analysed, some of them are embedded in permanent and formal bodies/structures that rely directly on the Rector or governing board, therefore holding a prominent position in the academic structure (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P6), while others are at a lower level in the institution's hierarchical structure, as described below.

The bodies in which the measures are embedded and their positions within the academic organisation are as follows:

1. Dedicated structures positioned immediately underneath the Rector (2/16); formal structures that depend on or are related to vice-rectors (5/16).
2. Formal structures that rely upon the governing body (1/16).
3. Departments with cross-cutting competencies (5/16), such as the HR department.
4. One of the institutional responses is implemented at the faculty level and therefore relies on the faculty Dean.
5. One of the institutional responses is supported by the Rector but is reliant on organisational units (centres and faculties that are part of the university).
6. One institutional response depends directly on a research project about gender-based violence.

However, there could be disagreement inside the university regarding the measure's ownership and the place it should have in the academic structure:

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> "One unexpected aspect which emerged in the fieldwork was the tension between HR and central administration "owning" the [institutional response], on the one hand, and the academic staff, on the other hand, including feminist activists among them specifically, who are highly motivated and have done voluntary work for a long-time against sexual and gender harassment in academia" (P3)

The position these bodies hold and the department or vice-chancellor to whom they belong to within the organisation may promote or inhibit the adoption of certain measures, for example the option of awarding credits for training programme participation:

> "The location under professional services can be a hindering factor, e.g., for the academic accreditation of the course or because of the fact that the content is not protected by academic freedoms." (*)

Formal structures

When it comes to the formal structure in charge of putting the institutional response into action, several of the responses analysed had a distinct **formal structure defined on paper** as the implementation-responsible structure. These structures may have existed before the institutional response and have added the implementation of the institutional response to their responsibilities, or they may have been established as a result of the approval of the institutional response.

The name these structures take varies according to the type (Committee, Commission, Group), as well as the composition and the framework in which they are established. Among the frameworks identified, the following stand out: gender, gender and diversity, diversity, human resources, and community values.

Furthermore, the structures dedicated to the implementation must be understood in connection to the other RPO structures with which they are engaged, in formal and informal relationships, in order to facilitate the development of the measures in practice, as further delved into in section 4.2. on actors.

Set-ups of clear formal structures to implement the institutional response depend on the nature of the institutional response:

- **Institutional structures**: These measures set up the helpdesk as a formal permanent structure with specific staff providing the service (H1, H2, H3). In addition, further formal structures can be constructed within the helpdesk to establish the interaction between the essential implementing actors. Moreover, these helpdesks could be embedded within other formal structures, such as the Gender Equality body.
- **Training programmes**: With respect to this type of institutional responses, in the two cases analysed (T1, T2), no new structure is formed; instead, this function is assumed by existing university entities, such as the HR department, the Equality body, or a team within a department with cross-cutting competencies.

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- **Policies**: To implement these policies, different formal structures are developed, taking the form of a committee, commission, working group or formal contact persons. These structures set up the formal network of key actors in charge of implementation and, to a large extent, are responsible for evaluating and investigating incidents. Only in one instance of a policy with a mainstreaming approach, is there no identifiable formal structure, but rather networks of actors (lacking a formal structure) responsible for its implementation.

A difference can be made between **commissions or committees** established and convened to evaluate incidents, and other formal bodies such as working groups or units that develop other implementation-related activities. Formal committees or commissions whose primary function is incident handling, particularly when a formal complaint has been filed (P1, P6, P7, P10, P11), are built by a limited number of actors, and the exact composition differs from case to case. The membership of these formal structures, the frequency of meetings and the role of actors are not always stated, as it will be detailed in the section about gaps (section 4.3.3) between design and implementation.

> "The composition of the Group (three women and four men) was also decided by the Rector who invited the academic staff active in the field of gender equality and equal opportunities" (*)

> "Investigative Committees are formed on a case-by-case basis; therefore, its members vary. The Committee is formed of five members (all academics) and the Dean of Student Affairs is a permanent member." (*)

> "The Commission is the entity responsible for implementing the protocol in situations of gender-based violence. It states that the commission includes: the Equality Technician (from the Equality Structure), a representative from the Prevention Service, a representative from the Psychological Care Service, and the Head of Security. When the complaint involves at least one employee of the institution (victim/s or perpetrator/s), the commission must also include a trade union representative." (*)

In two cases, single-person structures, such as the Ombudsperson or individual officials are established to carry out this function.

Relationships between the formal structures responsible for implementation and other structures within the university are crucial for implementation. Formal structures must have links with other structures in the university so that the measures can be applied. This is particularly relevant when prosecution measures (including sanctions for perpetrators) are to be carried out, especially if the perpetrators are faculty members. In these situations, coordination between the formal structures and governing boards of faculties or academic departments plays an important role.

In other cases, the structure implementing the institutional response takes the shape of a broader **working group**, whose membership is generally reduced. In one of the cases studied, it was noted that whilst the working group meets formally to solve implementation challenges, beyond the formal meetings members also network informally:

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> "There is a working group (...) of 25-40 people, coming from various schools and services, as well as students' representatives, who meet twice a year to take stock on the implementation of the [measure] and to develop it further. At the biannual meetings, people get to know each other and exchange information, so they form an informal network" (*).

In some cases, although these formal structures are responsible for some of the main implementation tasks, in practice they do not always have this authority. This can be related to different circumstances, such as the structure's lack of power (P10), or as a result of the importance placed on informal structures, as described below.

Among the measures that provide services for gender-based violence victims, there are, on the one hand, those that establish clear **procedures** for victims or bystanders to access the services provided and/or to file a complaint. On the other hand, there are those where the formal procedure is not set out in the documents relating to the institutional response. Among the institutional responses analysed, it has been identified that on paper several of them detailed the formal procedure:

- Institutional responses that feature a formal straightforward procedure on paper (H1, H3, P1, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11) or a general description of the procedure (P4).
- In one the formal procedure was described as less obvious because there is a lack of unified criteria (P2).

In terms of procedures, it is essential to emphasise the need for **monitoring and evaluation** in order to determine the degree of institutional responses' effectiveness. In this regard, one of the key issues is that the majority of cases analysed (15 out of 16) do not foresee monitoring or evaluation mechanisms. Only one case explicitly mentions it but without defining clearly the mechanisms nor the timeline. Apart from this, it has to be noted that one case has recently been reviewed through a participatory process, and another explicitly requires a review every two years. However these reviews do not include an evaluation. That is, no systematic evaluation procedure is carried out, rather documents are internally reviewed and modified to include new concepts or activities. The importance of evaluation should be stressed because it is recognised as a crucial aspect of analysing the institutional responses over a particular period and enables RPOs' accountability (Bustelo, 2004).

As will be detailed in the subsection 4.6.1 on Prevalence, monitoring procedures can include the annual quantification and publication of the number of (anonymous) cases handled and, in some instances, the type of violence in each case. Some of the bodies involved in the implementation are accountable to the governing boards or university structures. These bodies deliver reports (to the RPO governing board), which include the number of cases handled and/or activities conducted (H1, P1, P6, P10).

Centralisation, decentralisation, and mainstreaming approach

In the case of specific anti-gender-based violence policies, structures also depends on the approach with regards to how reported incidents are handled: establishing a formal structure to **centralise** the procedure, **decentralising** it or adopting a **mainstreaming** approach:

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Where the formal structure has a centralised procedure, there are policies that attempt to harmonise the responses addressing gender-based violence within the RPO. For that reason, a unit or a key actor is in charge of the procedure (P1, P6, P7, P8, P9).

- In one case, some measures to combat gender-based violence have been implemented at faculty level in recent years, and the institutional response analysed is a clear attempt to centralise at the university level.
- In another case, it is argued that it is preferable to have a centralised and unified method for handling complaints and the examination of incidents, with actors who know how to apply the policy.
- In one institutional response analysed only a part of the procedure is centralised. There is a centralised reporting mechanism, but this does not replace other actors who are involved as entry points at different levels (gender equality officers, human resource managers, academics, medical professionals). These actors then decide whether to use the RPO centralised report system.

Regarding decentralisation, two of the institutional responses analysed applied this approach:

- In the first, implementation relies on "gender equality delegates, other central units and leadership staff of the university", "the implementation of the measure varies from school to school" (*).
- In the second case, decentralisation is a means of applying the measure while maintaining the autonomy of each of the university's units.

Concerning a mainstreaming approach (P3, P4), in one of the institutional responses analysed a contact person is established at the university level and, in addition, responsibility is dispersed among managers, a supervisor, HR, heads of units and other managerial positions. In the second case, the responsibility for implementing the measure seems to be diffused:

> "Responsibility follows a line management of accountability, throughout the chain of command, but the responsibility to implement the work extends to all staff and all students and should permeate all the work they do in the course of their employment and studies at the RPO. Identifying a single budget entry linked to all the work included in the institutional response therefore becomes difficult and also misleading in relation to the work that is being done." (*)

The measures that tend to centralise processes imply a certain contradiction. On the one hand, centralization is valued positively when it provides unified criteria for the entire RPO. Yet, on the other hand, concerning large RPOs, centralisation may lead to distance from the specific contexts and cultures of the faculties and campuses (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022), and this could be seen as a hindering factor for implementation of the institutional responses. Consequently, measures that attempt to decentralise aim to adapt to organisational settings and cultures of campuses and centres and expand responsibility for the measure's implementation. However, as will be explained in section 4.2 on actors, the level of implementation efficiency and success may not depend so much on the degree of

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centralisation or decentralisation, but rather on fluidity of the relationships between the key actors, regardless of their level of involvement or responsibility.

Concerning these different approaches, RPOs' **size** and the presence of contracts between small and multi-campus RPOs are worthy of attention:

On the one hand, complexity or difficulty implementing measures arises in RPOs with multiple centres in different campuses, cities or regions (P1, P2, P3, P9, P10). Difficulties of implementation related to the size of the institution are raised especially for approaches that attempt to centralise procedures. In these cases, it should be emphasised that centralisation is more successful if there is effective communication and networking amongst actors within the different centres and faculties. One of the institutional responses has been designed and implemented at the faculty level.

On the other hand, and as will be highlighted in the subsection 4.4.1 on facilitating factors, it is considered easier to establish networks in small universities to implement the measure: "being a small university with short communication channels had a positive effect in organisation of the meetings and training" (*) (H1, H3, P4, P6, T1). Nevertheless, ensuring actors' anonymity in smaller institutions is more challenging, and this is especially concerning in terms of victims' protection.

Informal structures & procedures

The existence of a formal structure and formal rules gives legitimacy and ways of proceeding to implementers, however sometimes formal structures make implementation difficult when it comes to providing a relatively quick solution, protecting and preventing the re-victimisation of victims. For these reasons, in some cases, a dialogue has been developed between the formal procedures and structures and the **informal structures or procedures**. The informal elements of the implementation are not regulated or stated in the documents and relate mostly to the actors' interactions outside of the formal framework. In order to have a clear overview of the implementation of institutional responses, these unwritten and informal rules and procedures require analysis.

The following informal structures and procedures examples have been identified in the analysed measures:

Informal procedures are presented by some informants (implementers and providers) as a way to reach out to victims and bystanders who do not wish to report formally, due to mistrust, among other concerns (as will be explained in the section 4.4.2. on hindering factors).

> "These students show mistrust of the institution and a rejection of the fact that the burden of harassment falls on the victims who must file a complaint that requires that victims should disclose their names, which is a challenge for them and their security" (P6).
> "There is an understanding that many people do not want to make a formal report" (P4).

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Informal structures are seen by some informants as a faster way to respond to gender-based violence incidents (H3, P1, P2, P5). The following quote explains that, although having a formal structure, an informal mechanism is used to respond more promptly, as convening the formal structure requires more time and bureaucracy: “informal approach in which matters are dealt with in the shortest possible way. To this goal, the Commission is not convened” (*).

Informal procedures and structures that were mentioned (e.g., P1, P8) include: informal advice, mediation presented as an informal procedure, or advice that office staff can propose a meeting with the accused perpetrator (if member of staff) as an informal disciplinary measure. In one case, part of the formal procedure is followed but an informal structure (rather than the formal structure defined on paper) investigates and reaches a conclusion on the reported incidents. Some implementers argued that this informal structure performs effectively because the actors in this small group have better relationships amongst them and share a similar approach to work, which is not always the case within the formal structure. In another case, an informal response pathway is also sometimes followed: the formal procedure involves a committee, nevertheless, one key actor in a managerial position within the RPO also has the authority to investigate and apply sanctions without consulting the formal structure. This is considered positive because this key actor can provide a rapid answer. However, this may also cause concerns in terms of transparency as well as for the follow-up of cases.

Thus, informal processes could ensure that potential victims are reached or a faster response to incidents. Nevertheless, they have some **limitations**:

In incidents of gender-based violence where the offender is a university employee, informal processes might not offer the same legal guarantees if the perpetrator refuses to accept disciplinary sanctions or takes legal action against the RPO. In one institution, it was firmly emphasised that formal procedures are always followed in cases where an RPO staff member is involved. Thus, the informal approach is applied more frequently in student-on-student incidents than in those involving RPO employees (especially when the perpetrator is a staff member).

Secondly, case follow-up can be complex in some circumstances due to the articulation of informal procedures or the lack of a unified procedure (H3, P2, P4). In other cases (e.g., P3), anonymity demands are mentioned as added difficulties for efficient case follow-up.

Moreover, informal procedures may serve as an obstacle to implementation, as in the example where incidents are often resolved by going directly to management board authorities rather than following the procedure established by the institutional response (P10). This last point is congruent with the analysis developed by Naezer et al. (2019) and Pilinkaitė Sotirovič and Blažytė (2022). These researchers highlight that approaching the management body is an informal rule sometimes used by victims looking for support and/or informally reporting an incidence of gender-based violence.

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4.1.5. Budget & available resources

Adequate financial and human resources, as well as time, must be allocated to enable measures to be institutionalised and implemented in an effective manner (EIGE, 2022; Palmén and Kalpazidou, 2019). In the majority of the analysed institutional responses, the implementation structures are either under-resourced or resourceless. As argued by Tildesley et al. (2021:12), "the scarcity of personnel and budget allocation reveals informal norms about gender equality not being an institutional priority".

Budget

Regarding budget and other financial resources, the following situations have been identified among the institutional responses examined:

In some cases, **external funding** has made development of the measure possible. In six cases, this external budget comes from national or regional government agencies or ministries (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P9). Different examples of this are observed:

- Institutional response implemented entirely with external funding through an agreement reviewed every year.
- Institutional response implemented partly with external financing. In one case, a time frame is not specified. And in another case, the budget appears to be guaranteed for the following years.
- External funding mentioned, but no specific amount has been allocated to implementation.
- Measure was initially funded with external funds from a research project, although it was funded in the second year by the NGO (external actor) in charge of implementation and currently it is funded by the RPO itself.

In terms of **internal funding,** the following circumstances have been described (H3, P1, P3, P9, T2):

- The budget for implementing the institutional responses is included in the budget allocated to the RPO's Equality and/or Diversity body or Human Resources. In other words, the amount used for the activities, services and/or the staff implementing the measure is incorporated in the general budget of the body on which the institutional responses rely (equality body and human resources).
- Implementation is funded with resources from other bodies within the RPO.
- There are two cases with both external and internal funds allocated.

On the other hand, seven out of the sixteen measures analysed have **no specific budget allocated** -either external or internal- to the implementation of the institutional response, (P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11). In the case of one measure with a mainstreaming approach, it is stated that: "Separate budget figures are difficult to present as the underlying strategy is that this is an effort that should permeate all work at the RPO." (P4)

It is noteworthy that economic resources and the hiring of staff have been highlighted as one of the factors with the greatest potential for conflict within academic organisations. That

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is, financial and human resources are issues that can trigger power struggles within the RPO. Therefore, external funding has been pointed out as a facilitating factor for the implementation of some institutional responses, helping to overcome resistance and potential resource conflicts.

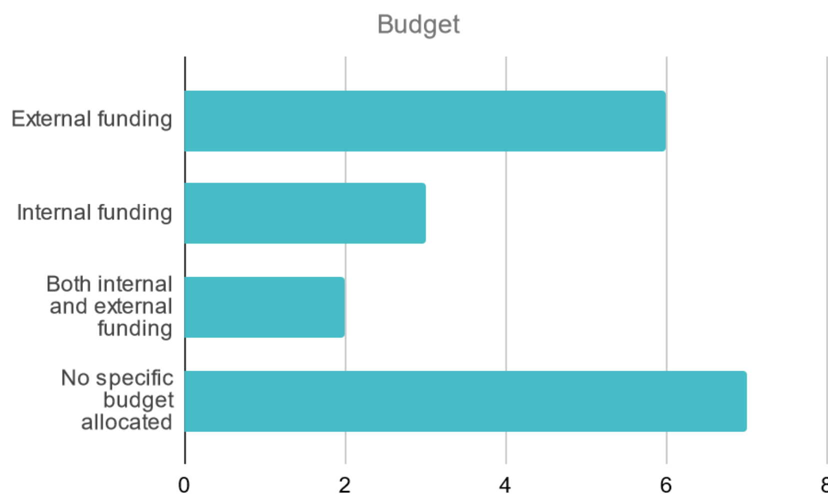

Figure 6. Budget allocated: types of fundings

Human Resources

In terms of **human resources available**, in the majority of the cases analysed the implementation of the measure is included within the duties of the actors in charge of the implementation and in some cases new staff, with specific implementation duties, have been hired. As far as human resources are concerned, the following situations have been identified:

- If there were previous staff in the institution's Equality & Diversity structures or Human Resources department, they have been assigned with tasks and responsibilities for implementation of the measure (P1, P2, P3, P9, T1).
- New staff hired, dedicated (part-time or full-time) to the implementation of the institutional response (H3, P2, T2). For example: "The person in charge of the [institutional response] has a permanent contract which is partially (…) financed by external funding from the higher education authorities" (*).
- In two cases (P1, P9), staff have been recruited to work on the design and drafting phase. In one case, an intern was hired. In the other example, an external technician (gender expert) was hired to lead the participatory process for designing the measure.
- In three cases, the staff hired to implement or assist in the implementation is external to the university (H1, H2, P1). That is, external experts are employed but they are not university staff.

As previously stated, alongside financial resources, human resources are among the issues with greatest potential to generate conflicts and opposition from different sectors of the

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university. Different strategies have been established to navigate these possible conflicts and/or the bureaucracy of hiring processes:

- Related to actors and partnerships: The fact that the measure is implemented (completely or partially) by an external actor enables it to remain "free" from the dynamics and conflicts of interest within the university regarding resources (H1, H2, P1).
- In other cases, where no staff has been hired to implement the measure, participants in the case study underline how this helps opposition and conflict over resources and personnel within the university to be avoided (e.g. P4).

In relation to this, the results of the comparative analysis show that when existing administrative staff or academic staff are put in charge of implementation, they are rarely compensated for the tasks they perform in this respect. As highlighted in the actors' section, implementation depends to a large extent on the efforts of the volunteer work of actors. In other words, much of the implementation of the measures is sustained by the commitment of administrative and academic staff who spend their time and effort on a voluntary basis, without economic, time or academic compensation. As a result, much of the implementation is bound to person-dependent staff voluntarism, especially from the academic staff (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10, T1). There is a certain perception that the implementation of measures "is seen as "*feminist activism*" at the university" (P7), in relation to the role played by feminist scholars and the lack of institutionalisation. This idea of implementation being a voluntary activity is mentioned in several cases:

> "Attaching effective implementation to a person-dependent condition and to volunteering." (P2)

> "Academic staff who collaborate by creating awareness-raising material or accompanying students to the service." (H1)

> "Regarding human resources of the academic staff who initiated the meetings, they had to do that in their own time and were not compensated for that work, for example, with additional pay or teaching discounts. Thus, the meetings took time from other academic activities, such as research, that play a key role in their career and salary progression." (T1)

> "The time allocated by the Committee members to the implementation of the Directive is not remunerated, nor is it included in their working hours or performance evaluation." (P7)

> "Dedicated or voluntary work against harassment and bullying is seldom considered a merit in career progression [of academics]." (P3)

> "The line managers and supervisors process the incidents and cases that come up as part of their ordinary workload, and HR provides assistance, similarly, as part of their overall activities." (P3)

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A sense of the actors in charge of implementing equality and gender-based violence issues being overwhelmed was stated directly in four of these cases (H1, P1, P3, P9). This work overload is related to the **lack of sufficient resources.** General comments around the insufficient resources allocated, budget and/or human resources were stated in a further five cases (P1, P2, P5, P7, P11).

Space & time

Regarding **physical resources (office space)** available to actors in charge of implementation, requirements depend on the nature of the measure:

In all three cases where an institutional structure in the form of a helpdesk has been implemented, it is emphasised that the aim is to create a safe space for victims and bystanders. The importance of the helpdesk being a permanent physical point of contact on campus (however, in some cases it might be available only a few days a week) was stressed (H1, H2, H3).

In defining what is meant by safe space, a potential contradiction arises between promoting the visibility of the resource and ensuring the privacy of users (H1, H2). To solve this contradiction, the specific **location** where the helpdesk is situated seems crucial.

In one case, the **helpdesk** is located within a permanent office located in the area dedicated to student services. In another case, the helpdesk is located in the Main Hall of the university (which is open to the public only on Thursday afternoons). In the third case, the helpdesk is located in the library building, which affords a certain privacy and anonymity for users, as the "[library] could be a good place for the individual not to be identified, given that the library is a relatively neutral and transitory space" (*). In this last case, a non-permanent physical helpdesk is also set up outdoors in the event of on-campus celebrations or parties, to provide information and make visible the service, with a particular emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence in the context of leisure time.

- In two of the cases, the institutional responses are provided with an individual room in which interviews and follow-up meetings with victims are conducted, guaranteeing them privacy (H2 H1): "it is important that such meetings are developed in the same place all the time, to give a sense of stability and continuity to victims" (H2).
- In one case, the idea was expressed that the helpdesk provides students a closer and safer space than the university's institutional structures, such as gender structures, that may be identified by users as belonging to the formal academic structure (H1).

With regard to the **policies** examined: the situation varies significantly depending on the aims and the structure in which the policy is embedded. The individual reports of most of the case studies did not mention the allocation of any physical space, therefore, it can be assumed that no specific space is allocated and, when it is required, different RPO offices or meeting rooms are used. In the two policies where space is mentioned and allocated (e.g. P1, P7), it is stated:

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- In one case, there is a dedicated office in the library building and an individual room where interviews with victims are conducted. The reasons behind the decision to locate the service and helpdesk in the library building are similar: i.e. the library is a neutral area frequented by individuals for a wide variety of reasons (in both cases the library building houses numerous services in addition to the actual library).
- There is currently no office due to the new Rector's criteria: "The only allocated resource was office space. However, the office was taken away by the current Rector" (*). This suggests that allocation of resources can be unpredictable, as it is dependent on changes in the governing board.

Regarding **training programmes** analysed, the university's facilities are used for the sessions, as opposed to being given a specific location or separate office are not (T1, T2). "University rooms do not have to be paid for and do not burden the budget" (T2).

Concerning **timings** and planning of measures, this is rarely taken into account (P2, P8, T1). In most cases no time frame to implement the activities of which the measure is composed of nor is there a clearly defined time frame around the complaint process. As indicated in the previous section, there is a wish to expedite proceedings in some cases, in particular for the protection of victims, although there are no fixed time frames defined for it. In relation to this, it is also worth noting the contradictions between the time it requires to deal with a complex gender-based violence case and the fact time is a very scarce resource in academic institutions: "Processing complex cases properly demands time, and time is a limited resource in academia" (P3).

4.1.6. Communication

To carry out implementation effectively, the measure must be known by the different groups of the university, specifically by providers, potential users or bystanders. Therefore, it is crucial that the institutional responses are known by the community.

Among the institutional responses analysed, it is important to note that only one has a clear **communication strategy** in place; and one has created a subgroup on communication to work on these issues.

In five other RPOs, the implementers of the measure coordinate with the **university's communication department** to disseminate information and campaigns through institutional channels (H1, H3, P3, P6, T2).

The involvement of these central communication services is considered highly important in one of the cases because of collaboration with a graphic designer to design a presentation on the institutional response in order to provide information and promote it, although they have not singled him out as a 'key actor'.

In one of the cases, the implementers developed specific social media channels, in addition to institutional channels, in order to share information about activities without constantly going via the communication department and, in doing so, be able to deliver more online material. These materials are developed by students involved on a voluntary basis.

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Regarding **passive communication:** 12 out of 16 RPOs include information about the institutional response on the RPO official website or intranet website (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, T2). In one case, although the information is published on the website, it has not been made easily accessible; and in other, general information on the measure has been published but specific operational information about some activities is missing. However, this is due to a strategic decision to ensure implementation flexibility.

Concerning **active communication** initiatives, the following activities are developed:

- Campaigns to disseminate information about the institutional response: brochures, posters, printed copies of the policy (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P9).
- Active dissemination via institutional channels: intranet, newsletters and/or emails (P1, P3, P6, P9).
- Training and awareness-raising activities (H1, P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P9, P11, T1,T2). In one case, it was stated that implementers had great difficulties disseminating information and encouraging people to participate, therefore, they created job positions for students to help communicate about the measure. Moreover, in terms of training, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic meant that some activities took place online, which was a challenge for the implementers but also increased the number of people who participated in the last editions (e.g. P1, T2).

In general, it can be argued that in all cases under study, communication efforts are seen as insufficient or ineffective in making the measure known to all members of the university community. This is explored in more detail in section 4.3.3 on gaps.

4.1.7. Organisational culture

Organisational culture has an impact on the implementation of measures against gender-based violence and questions related to **power relations and hierarchical structures** have been highlighted in many of the cases analysed as a hindering factor for implementation (H1, H3, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, T1). Figure 7 below illustrates the concurrent codes in the analysis. Power relations are associated with a wide variety of implementation-related issues. This figure illustrates how power dynamics cut across the cultures of the organisations.

In this study, **academic hierarchical organisation** and the asymmetrical power relations among actors have been highlighted as problematic regarding implementation in a number of cases analysed (H1, H3, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, T1). In one case, elitism and authoritarianism have also been reported to a certain extent.

These hierarchies and **power relations** are one of the most repeated themes mentioned as hindering factors for implementation and obstacles standing out in the way of structural change. They emerge as one of the main barriers to reporting (H1, P2, P4, P5, P6). One participant described how “you can never report upwards without risking consequences (...). And if you report downwards, you lose a bit of respect in the organisation” (P4). Analysis of the different reports reveals that power dynamics within the hierarchical structures is the main factor perpetuating the silence around gender-based violence and sexual harassment,

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and to a lesser extent, it poses a challenge to the implementation of disciplinary measures (P1, P6, T1).

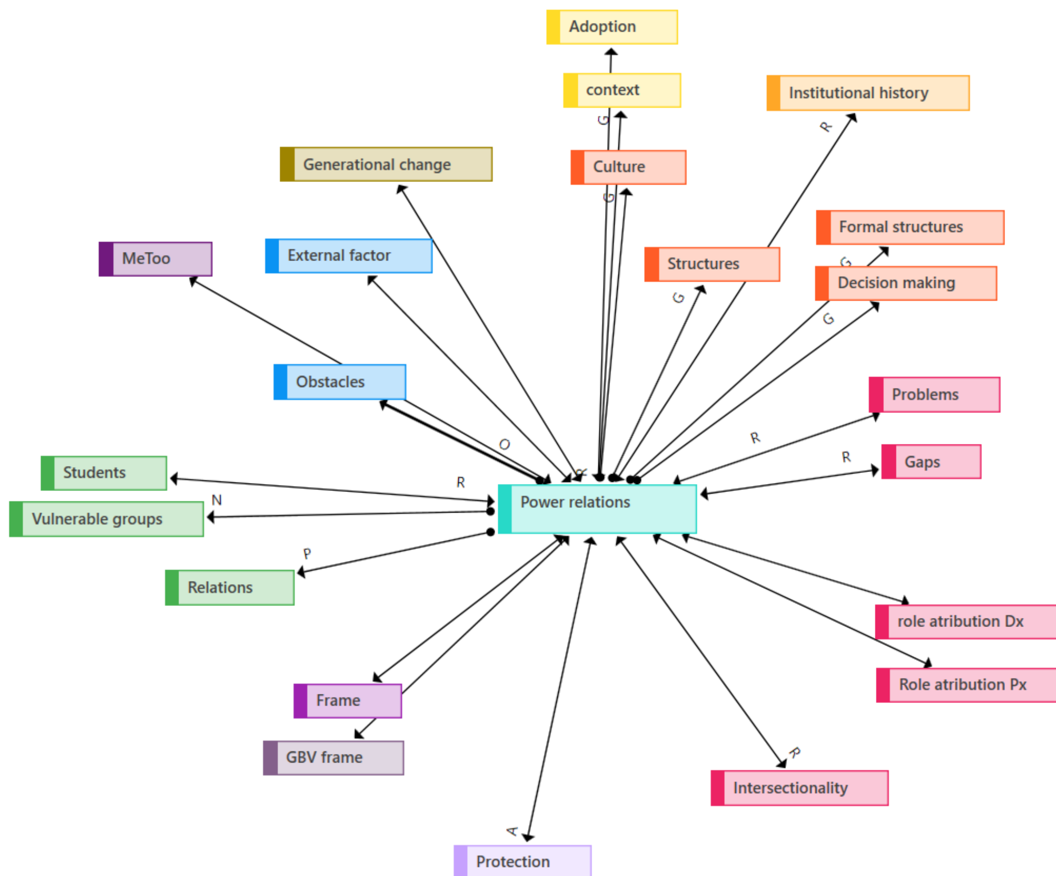

Figure 7: concurrent analytical codes with 'power relations'

In the reports, **the situation of students and young and early career academics** in the academic hierarchy was given particular attention (H1, P4, P5, T1):

> "One reason for the reluctance to report discrimination is the academic position of students and young academics. They are in a relationship of dependency, may still have to interact with the perpetrators in examination situations and are afraid for their academic career. Young junior researchers resign themselves and accept the situation" (P5)

However, power relations, including student-teacher relations, seem to be a topic that is barely touched upon (P6, T1). Where there are relations of dependency between professors and students, this might prevent students from reporting or approaching a counsellor (P5). This also affects young academics that fear for their academic career as analysed in-depth by Pilinkaitė Sotirovič & Blažytė (2022).

Therefore, **relations of dependency** and strong hierarchical relationships are identified as one of the barriers to reporting incidents of gender-based violence, since the fear of retaliation prevents the institution from being perceived as a safe space:

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> “[the institution] fails to begin dismantling the barriers stopping institutional structures from being considered safe spaces for seeking support and/or reporting violence committed within the institution, especially when it is perpetrated by hierarchical figures. It seems that these institutional responses are insufficient in providing victims with a sense of security and protection and in reducing their fear of reprisal.” (H1)

> “There are still some issues that are not touched up on, including students’-teachers’ relations.” (T1)

> “The institution must implement measures that take into account the university’s hierarchical dynamics, which make reporting gender-based violence even more difficult.” (H1)

In relation to this, it has been emphasised that the **definitions of gender-based violence** in these institutional responses should take into account the specific scenarios and types of incidents taking place in the academic environment:

> “The interviewed students would welcome more specific definitions of what discrimination represents in the research context, e.g., through statements by professors. The boundary between "*freedom of teaching*" and discriminatory statements seems blurred to them. This topic could be addressed in the guideline in order to better reflect students' experiences of discrimination.” (P5)

> “The conceptualisation of violence developed in the protocol uses the concepts contained in state and regional legislation but does not take into account the specific characteristics of violence that occur within universities and the dynamics established in academic institutions that make it difficult to detect, identify or report incidents.” (P1)

As highlighted in the theoretical framework, RPOs are gendered organisations. Concerning the **gendered distribution of roles**, power and resources, in two cases the RPO has been labelled as a masculinised university by some participants in the case study. In one of these cases, informants described male dominance as a structure of the past, but this has changed in the present (after #MeToo).

> “The inherited structure of gender inequality is embedded in the attitudes of male domination among the majority staff. Consequently, this made an impact on the potential victims of sexual harassment and their refusal to report a case.” (*).

> “Many admin and academic staff would consider that the culture of dominance and power hierarchies along gender lines were the norm and would hardly recognize the features or any manifestation of inappropriate behaviour.” (*)

In another case, the commission in charge of dealing with gender-based violence cases consists of male academic staff, an external actor who is also a man and only among the students who take part there are women.

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Moreover, incidents of sexism (sexist jokes, comments or attitudes) were commented on in one case during the fieldwork as being normalised within the institution.

Our findings affirm that power relations are seldom reflected upon or explicitly mentioned in the different measures. When they are, they are only mentioned as a hurdle, whilst transformative actions to tackle them are not provided. Therefore, formal procedures exist but they are insufficient to create a safe environment regarding power relationships. As Wroblewski & Palmén (2022) point out in their study on the implementation of gender equality plans in RPOs, adopting a reflexive approach, measures designed to promote structural change within academia need to take into account complexity due to the combination of organisational logic and academic logic. Institutional responses to combat gender-based violence must also pay special attention to both logics; else it will be impossible to break the culture of silence around this issue within academia.

In addition to the power dynamics and strong hierarchies, the following concerns about organisational culture also stand out:

Generational change has been highlighted as one of the elements that contribute to changing organisational culture, as sexist behaviours that may have been normalised in previous generations are challenged by the *#MeToo generation*. This does not occur homogeneously in all RPOs and faculties, but it is generally noted that young people are challenging the normalisation of violence within universities (H3, P1, P3, P6, P7, P9, P10). In one of the cases, the active role of student unions in contributing to this change is mentioned. In relation to generational change, references were also made to the difference between new and old universities (H1).

While the generational change is highlighted in a number of examples related to culture, this does not however always clearly correlate with the engagement of students (the youngest group in the university community) in addressing gender-based violence. Thus, when activities such as training are offered to students, their participation is low, which might be attributed to a lack of interest in the topic, a competitive environment and their lack of time for these kinds of activities, or the fact that their participation depends on the direct advantages they can receive (credits): "Lack of interest of some students in gender-based violence events due to the highly competitive atmosphere fuelled by the university culture" (P7).

In relation to changing this organisational culture, in one of the cases, it is emphasised that the training helps to change the culture of the organisation (T1).

In another case, it was remarked that certain topics -related to gender equality- are perceived differently across academic disciplines, such as the sciences and the humanities (P3), suggesting that these topics are better welcomed in the social sciences and humanities, because STEM is more male-dominated.

It is also worth mentioning the perception of an antagonistic relationship between the university management board and the organisational culture at the faculty or campus level

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(P3, P8). This antagonism may have a negative impact on implementation of institutional responses to combat gender-based violence.

Moreover, the differences among groups regarding **status** within academic institutions were pointed out: "Struggles for power between different groups of professors, some of whom considered themselves to be in "a different class" (H3). This issue could be related to the fact that if an institutional measure is designed for all groups of the university community, academic staff might not feel targeted as users: "It seems that academic staff do not feel recognised as users of the service that is also for students, and this fact is related to organisational culture and informal rules within the university" (H1).

Main takeaways of the section on institutions

- The national (policy) and societal context are key factors for the adoption and implementation of institutional responses against gender-based violence. In addition to the national legal and policy frameworks, the societal impact of the #MeToo movement, raising awareness around sexual harassment, has been significant.
- At the structural level, the successful implementation of the measures depends greatly on the support of the RPOs governing bodies, especially individuals in the highest leadership positions or heads of the institutions.
- Concerning the formal structure and bodies in direct charge of the implementation, those located directly under the board of governors or with formal and/or good relations with governing actors, tend to have a greater authority and legitimacy within the RPO, preventing resistances.
- In some cases, when drafting the institutional response, incorporating participatory or consultative approaches might be one strategy to engage the RPO community and give the different groups (academic and administrative staff and students) a sense of ownership over it.
- Outlining clear procedures for reporting and investigating incidents is particularly important for providers, implementers and users.
- Most of the institutional responses examined do not include evaluation mechanisms, despite this being recognised as crucial for analysing the institutions' response to this issue over a particular period and establishing RPOs' accountability.
- In some cases, informal and unwritten procedures can replace formally established processes and structures. Informal procedures are followed for various reasons, including attempting to provide a quicker response to victims. However, informality can hinder the monitoring and follow-up of incidents.
- The effectiveness of implementation might be more dependent on the fluidity of the relationships between key actors than on the degree of centralisation or decentralisation.
- In terms of resources, implementation is often characterised by absent or insufficient resources (budget, human resources, physical and time-related resources). This clearly hampers implementation. In some cases, lack of human

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resources is related to relying on a significant amount of voluntary work for implementation.

- Most RPOs implement both passive and active communication activities to disseminate information about the measure. However, only one case includes a communication strategy.
- Regarding organisational cultures, power relations and hierarchical structures are identified as hindering factors for implementation. Strong hierarchies and academic dynamics might prevent victims from disclosing or reporting incidents.

4.2. ACTORS

We understand actors as key analytical components to be studied for understanding the implementation of institutional responses in RPOs, given that: Most policy analysts recognise the value of understanding the role of actors in policy making and implementing processes (Hermans and Thissen, 2009), and that institutional processes, decision-making, or social and cultural transformations are controlled, obstructed or facilitated by social actors and their differing interests (Ackermann et al., 2003).

In this section we delve into the specificities of the key actors, their relations, level of involvement and roles mentioned in the case studies, notably, the difference between the main two roles of actors as designers and as implementers. Before looking into these specificities, there are some general reflections to be made.

The first one relates to the **difference between key actors and change agents**: While the latter would normally be included within the first, not all key actors are motivated and active agents fostering transformation, despite their indispensable role for smooth implementation. Hence, in the group listed hereafter, we can find both types of actors, showing the vital communication and interactions between them.

Many of the actors pinpointed as key by participants in the study fall into the general interpretation of **change agents** that defines them as “the individual or group that undertakes the task of initiating and managing change in an organisation” (Lunenburg, 2010). Participants in a majority of the case studies, both in contexts with longer histories of gender related policies and those with less gender sensitive environments, highlighted three intertwined elements of this: volunteering, personal activism and/or feminist beliefs (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P11, T10). This raises a question about the positive and negative aspects related to how change agents work on a personal voluntary basis which often barely entails any recognition by the institution.

As described in the previous section, several examples illustrate the role of **volunteering and unpaid work**: In RPOs where the equality officers are not specifically recruited but appointed from the existing workforce from different institutional units, “*they are volunteers, this is not their main job. They have a mission statement but no obligation to do anything, it depends a lot on each unit how much gender-related work is done*” (P9). This “commitment of knowledgeable and/or experienced individuals through unpaid work and partnership” is

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defined as "crucial" (H1) and seems to be recognised principally by other actors already aware of their work, but not institutionally: "All members of the [implementing working] group and of the Rector's office who engage in these issues work voluntarily. *I call them «don Quixotes» who fight for gender equality with all their power and energy"* (P6).

The case studies also show the importance of **personal activism** for moving the actions forward, referred to as "personal determination", "personal goal" or otherwise. It is considered the vital force initiating the development of measures or for effective implementation, both globally or in particular decisive steps, e.g., actors having "a decisive role in deciding not to delay any further the implementation of the service" (H3) or cases where "very strong individuals within the university, who are very equality-centred, rose up and took the lead" (T1).

In this respect, the crucial role of **feminist scholars** (H1, P1, P2, P3) or "gender-sensitive" academics (P7, P10) was also highlighted. The presence of a recognised feminist actor as the Equality body director is especially valued for institutional responses implementation (e.g. H1, P2). The high level of knowledge and commitment of this actor may have wider positive effects: "*The director is a well-recognised feminist and the people pulled up to be in the [implementing working] group are those with a deep or personal interest and, hence, a high level of engagement. [They] feel empowered to be among 'warriors' and this also enhances the personal value of being part of it*" (*). Other cases show how their support is "vital, both in terms of their involvement in the design and the implementation, especially in terms of being a point of reference to whom students who suffer violence can turn" (P1).

However, there are some downsides at the individual and institutional level. At the individual level, some interviewees reported a high **emotional toll** of their personal implication. At the institutional level, the perpetuation of **person-dependent collaborations** was reported**.** This person-dependency can prevent a proper institutionalisation of the measure, as "a big share of the implementation relies on this personal activism when there are no resources nor time allocated to the implementing teams" (P2). This leaves the proper and effective implementation of the measure "vulnerable to personnel changes and it can also lead to overwork" (P4).

Another general reflection to be made regarding actors has to do with the importance of having implementing agents with **authority** (formally endorsed or contemplated in the institutional policies if possible). This appears as a critical factor facilitating the implementation of some institutional responses: "The positive point is that they do have enough authority, support and resources to successfully implement it" (H3).

However, authority -which in many cases derived from having considerable academic and/or operational experience on gender-based violence or related issues, and not necessarily by having a specific position within the organisational chart- does not always come hand-in-hand with institutional recognition. In this regard, whilst mapping the actors, reflections arose whereby some participants "depicted themselves as having low levels of influence, (but) this was expressed more in terms of the general lack of recognition of their work than of their authority" (H2). It should also be noted that only in one of the cases was

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it explicitly stated that a key actor was hired because of her considerable expertise from a feminist perspective (P1).

Last, a question arises with regards to the relation between the presence of **female rectors** and the effective approval or successful implementation of the measures (currently, there are female rectors in the following cases: H1, H3, P1, P3, P4, P6, P11, T1, T2). In several of these cases, this female figure is described as "the most senior supporter of the program" or "the main person" playing a crucial role, for example with respect to its approval: "t*hat was not just her idea, but she definitely decided that we needed to have that [measure]*)" (P11). In a different case, it was stated that "the Rector plays a vital role in mainstreaming gender equality. She has initiated and supports the policy on prevention and no tolerance (...). Her top administration is gender balanced" (P6). Another case reports how thanks to the female rector, "these issues are high on the agenda today. (...), the activities have been able to count on to receive enough resources" (T1).

4.2.1. Key actors for design and implementation & position

Although not all key actors actively adopt a change agent role, many of the main actors identified as key from across the different cases reflects the profiles normally catalogued as core change agents: active individuals based on personal motivations, dynamic informal groups and networks, committed equality officers or gender focal points, and supportive institutional figures (Callerstig, 2014; Cacace et al., 2015).

There are differences to be made between those actors named as key for design and for implementation. Contrary to the recommendations of the GEAR tool of promoting broad participation when designing gender equality measures (EIGE, 2022), we can still find that in a number of cases (see figure 8 below) some of those actors considered key for implementation are not taken into account in the design phase (or have not been mentioned in the case studies reports as relevant in that step)[5].

Specifically, the main actors mentioned for the **design** of the institutional responses are:

- The Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities or Women's bodies (in all its different naming and forms: units, departments, committees, coordinator, officers, directorates, etc.) (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P7, P9)
- Specifically appointed working group or task force (P1, P2, P5, P9, P11)
- Human Resources (P3, P8, P9)
- Legal department / advisor (P5, P10, P11)
- Students (though to a lesser extent) (H3, P2, P3, P5)
- Trade Unions (P3, P4, P9)
- Faculty Dean
- Certain academics and committed individuals (T1, P11): Specifically mentioned sociologists and professors with gender expertise (contacted also informally)

[5] It should be noted that all the actors reflected in the lists and figure 8 within this section are only those that have been expressly mentioned as **key** in the case studies' reports and do not necessarily mean that other actors have not participated (or are participating) both in the design and in the implementation of the responses.

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- Members of a specific project or research groups (H2, P7)
- External actors (H2, P1, P5), including: anti-violence or gender focused NGOs, a social educator contacted to facilitate the participatory design process, or external consultants.

Regarding **implementation**, the key actors mentioned are:

The **Gender Equality, Equal Opportunities or Women's bodies** (in all variety of naming and forms), along with the diversity or antidiscrimination officers or departments who are the main actors normally in charge or ultimately responsible for the measure (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P9, P10, P11, T1), including those cases in which the specific unit or commission serves just a faculty not the whole institution. This actor is sometimes the only one involved in all design and implementation stages (e.g. P1, P7). As an example of other actors put in charge with the implementation of measures, besides the general coordinator, we can find: referral/contact persons or entry points (not necessarily the same as the gender equality officers) in charge of receiving complaints or with an advising and facilitating role (P3, P9). In one case, one man and one woman fulfil this function; responsible person within each organisational unit (who can be any person, not just faculty) (e.g. P11).

As already described when talking about formal structures, a number of institutions also appointed a specific **institutional Working Group** or task force to take care of implementation (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P10, P11, T2), even if in some cases it is just a "small group of persons". These groups have different levels of operability: From those explicitly and solely dedicated to the measure, or meeting on a monthly basis and supervising its implementation (e.g. P2, P10), to those who meet infrequently, such as twice a year, and whose role is to take stock of the measure in a general capacity, or others who declare not to be very active (e.g. P5, P6). They may act as advisors or as general supervisors either on the implementing process, or on specific measures (P5, P2), or as contact points, service providers or direct implementers (P5, H1, P3) (i.e., work wellbeing group being a low threshold contact point).

Provision of social and support services (H1, H2, H3, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9), sometimes provided as general services, or otherwise found under specific ones, e.g., "student services". The naming and location of these providers within the institutional structure differ between the institutions. For instance, psychologists are sometimes mentioned within counselling and social services, others within medical or health (and safety) services. In other institutions 'counsellors' are mentioned (whether they are psychologists or not remains unclear) and may be placed under social or medical services or as occupational wellbeing. Six institutions have emphasised the role of their own psychologists (H1, P2, P3, P6, P8, P9) and the strength of the institution's health services were highlighted a total of five times (P2, P3, P4, P7, P9).

Decision makers below rectorate level: Deans and Vice-Deans (H3, P3, P5, P6, P7, P10, T2) or Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments (H2, P3, P4, P6, P8, P11, T1). These actors are also named as key, either in general, as potential "receivers" of complaints when the case refers to their faculty (H3, P5, P7), or for specific purposes such as being

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responsible for the investigation of cases or of reporting the implementation of gender equality measures annually (P4, P6). In other cases, they are mentioned as single key figures of a specific faculty or area (H2, P3, T2). Amongst these actors, we highlight:

- The importance of "gender sensitive deans and academic directors, as their approach dramatically changes the outcome of the disciplinary hearings and thus the level of trust towards the institutional response" (P7), or those having initiatives at their own faculty, campus or area, i.e., measure of a specific commission established by a female dean for her faculty or a case where "in the (…) campus there is one Vice-Dean with specific responsibility for (work against) harassment and bullying" (*).
- These actors are the first instance in processing cases (e.g. P3) or have the responsibility of "naming other key figures" (e.g. P11).
- In one case the heads of schools have been named as key for some tasks but absent in the overall dynamics: "*They are really important because the formal complaints go to them but they are not in the [working group]*" (P2).

The relevance of **external actors** has been highlighted in a number of cases (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P7, P8, P9, P11). In line with the argument by Cacace et al., (2015), external key actors are not only partnered as implementing agents for some specific activities (mainly the provision of services), but also used to gain internal legitimacy through external advice and support, to act as testimonials for a wider relevance and to engage leadership figures. The actors mentioned are: ministries (of education and/or research) (P2, P8, P9), having a supervision role, for consultation before approval, or providing guidelines; Regional and local governments and/or public bodies (H1, H2, P1); actors linked to EU projects; Anti-violence and gender focused NGOs (that can be also in charge of running the response) and civil society organisations (H2, H3, P2); Externally hired social educator, named to be "essential".

Human Resources (P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, T1) and **administrative and professional staff** (H1, P1, P2, P4, P6, T1). This last one has been mentioned as relevant in general (instead of specific units) in several cases. When they do so, they talk about: Technical managers or administrative personnel of the gender equality body (especially important for prevalence) (H1, P1); Management / administration (P4, P6, T1); Front staff / Desk staff (P1, P2).

Student's representatives or Students Union (H3, P2, P3, T2), as well as students in general, including in volunteer roles, e.g., "promoting the Gender Equality Unit on campus" (P7). Also **Unions,** mentioned in three cases (P1, P3, P4), although in one of these it was stated that "two of the interviewees for the case study were representatives from Unions and, while none of them were able to recall the exact role of the Unions in the formal implementation of the policies, they emphasised the importance of collaboration between the university and the Unions in work environment issues in general" (*).

Legal department or units, legal counsellor/advisor (not including Law faculties) (P3, P4, P5, P9).

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Ombudsperson (H1, P8) and/or the Ethics Committee ("They set the ethos, how it will be talked about, the discourse") (*) and **disciplinary / resolution units /** committee (H3, T2).

Communication departments (P2, P6) and **Gender research groups** or women's studies networks (H2, P7).

Other actors have been mentioned in a smaller number of cases, such as: Registrar or General Secretary; priest; library director; "Sustainability council" (collaboration platform working on social issues like diversity, environment, inclusion or gender equality); "person of trust" (staff or student) chosen by the victim to accompany them throughout the advisory procedure; security; campus planning and estates (in one case considered to be "the frontline"); workplace risk prevention; staff training and development (in one case considered "especially vital"); social departments, like the University Community Life Service or the Director of Social Inclusion; or the IT department.

It is noteworthy how only one institution has highlighted the role of men as key "missing" actors.

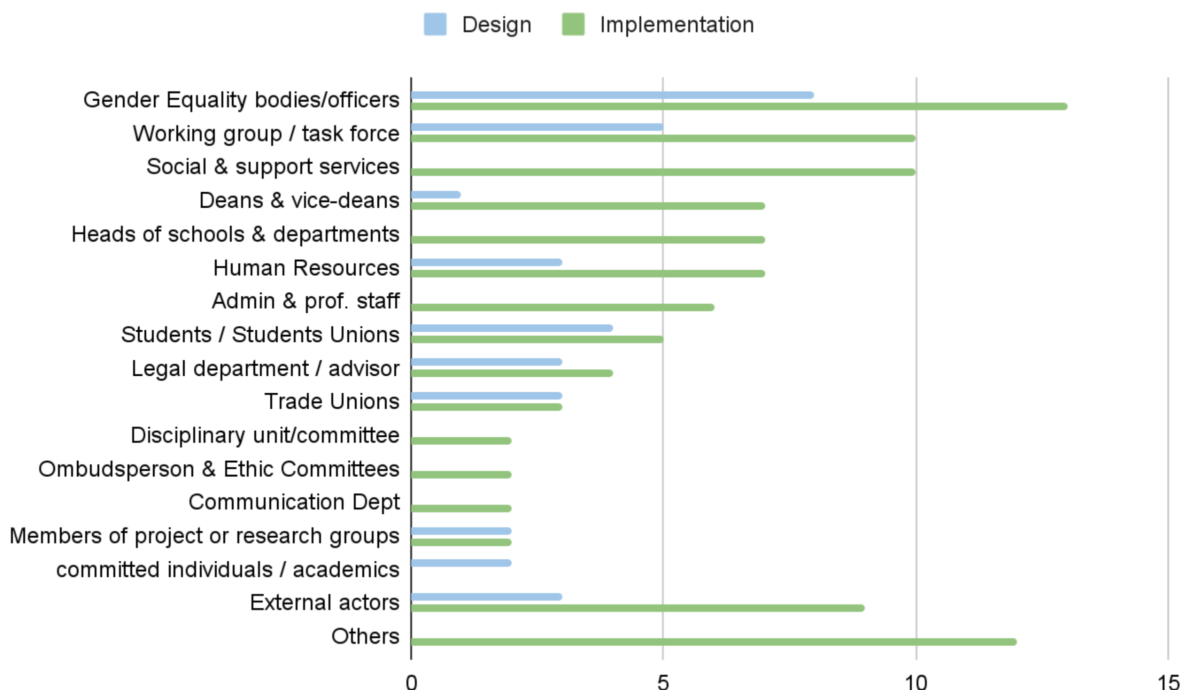

Figure 8. Name and number of actors named as key for design and implementation

There are some further aspects regarding these actors worth mentioning. Firstly, their level of responsibility and how it is more or less shared or centralised. In this respect, we can differentiate between measures with just **one main responsible individual** (e.g. H3, P1, P8, P11), and measures for which responsibility is **decentralised** (e.g. P3, P5) or where the responsibility structure is "a very complex system with a lot of actors / people / parties involved" (T2). Although it has been stated in one report that "a decentralised approach to coordinate the institutional response may show several gaps in implementation in a big-size

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university" (*), we also know that the involvement of a wide range of actors is necessary for the sustainable institutionalisation of gender equality measures (EIGE, 2022). How the measures are designed to help coordinate processes, communication, and people - especially in large universities- is key, taking into account that the level of success might not depend so much on the degree of centralisation or decentralisation, but on the fluidity of relations between key actors, whatever their level of involvement or responsibility. This will also likely have an impact on the general ownership of the measure and is linked to how the formal structures of the institution are organised, as elaborated in the previous section.

We can also differentiate between institutional responses that foresee the creation or recruitment of a **specific gender equality figure** or gender expert actor for implementation (even if employed by an external partner) (H1, H3, P2, P9, T2), and those that rely on **different existing figures** within the institution, either appointed as responsible for overall implementation (e.g. cases where Human Resources is the main responsible, T1, P3) or for particular activities depending on the type of measure (e.g. ombudsperson for mediation, disciplinary committee for prosecution), as has been described in the subsection on Human Resources.

With respect to specific gender equality figures, in some cases they hold a considerable share of responsibilities, including the development of new policies or the implementation of punishment and/or disciplinary measures. In other cases, each organisational unit is required to create or designate its own position (e.g. H3, P11), considered "essential links to the local level" (P9). In any case, this approach poses some challenges with respect to the proper and sustainable institutionalisation of these posts. Regarding the opposite strategy (reliance on existing units/actors), the question is raised about the need to guarantee a minimum level of gender expertise, as well as the workload implications, where gender equality work remains a permanent add-on to the person's actual work contract.

Differences can also be found with respect to different **actors' involvement in design and implementation**. Figure 8 above shows how some actors pinpointed as key for implementation have not been engaged in the design phase. The most salient example being support services, who have not been mentioned as key for the design stage by any interviewee, despite being indicated as the main implementers and/or providers. Where the actor designing the measure is not in charge of its implementation, there are different situations (e.g. P3, P8, T1): where HR designs but the main implementers are the ombudsperson and the psychologist; where academics are responsible for design but it is HR that implements, and where the Equality body designs but HR "owns" implementation.

Two further inconsistencies can be found. Firstly, **Communication departments** are rarely mentioned or considered as key for implementation (and not mentioned at all for design), yet, one of the main gaps highlighted is precisely the lack of effective information and communication (either in terms of dissemination or in terms of institutional communication among actors). Secondly, **decision makers below the rectoral team**, especially heads of schools and heads of department, as well as deans, are considered decisive key actors by many institutions in design and implementation. Yet, they are barely targeted by specific actions, such as training, and are rarely included in the design of the measures, which might hinder their subsequent engagement.

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Role of decision makers

It is important to consider the role of actors in senior management positions[6] as they have the power to make decisions that target the whole organisation and are therefore important change agents when setting up and implementing gender equality measures (EIGE, 2022, Palmén and Kalpazidou, 2019, Cacace et al., 2015). The different case studies serve as examples of how "the willingness of key decision makers to act was decisive for the implementation of the measure" (H3) and how their support and commitment are invaluable for success and key to smooth implementation and to prevent resistances, meaning that the main implementers need not continuously justify actions and "present so many arguments" (P3). These actors have also been mentioned as key for communicating the university's stand towards discrimination and inequality to all actors, both internally and externally (e.g. P3, P5), in one case even through public declarations in the main national newspaper.

However, there seems to be a general lack of training of top leadership and decision makers on how to address gender-based violence, so their support still depends on personal engagement and motivation. Uneven levels of knowledge and gender-sensitivity may impact their willingness and commitment to the implementation of measures, as well as give rise to arbitrariness in the type of actions supported (or not). For example, while one actor expressed being supportive of specific measures, like sanctions ("even hard ones such as dismissal"), was at the same time resistant to other types of measures, in this case softer measures, such as communication around gender-based violence (*).

Another case in our study shows how the lack of support from top management may foster the creation of informal networks to sustain implementation (P7).

Focusing on the different functions for which top management has been pointed out as key during the different stages, we see that for the **design** they played a key role in initiating, creating, designing or collaborating to some degree in the design (H1, H3, P1, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11), and in supervising and/or approving (H1, P1, P5, P8, P9).

As for **implementation**, the support of top management has been highlighted as key for the success of certain activities, such as "introducing a new model of open communication" (P6), for mainstreaming and for the smooth implementation of particular measures like sanctions or disciplinary hearings (e.g. P9), or for the general institutionalisation of the response, as described in section 4.1.4 on structures.

The Rector's figure (or similar, e.g. Chancellor, Provost, Director, CEO) and Rector's council has been highlighted as key in the vast majority of cases (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11, T1, T2). Vice-rectorates or Vice-Chancellors, have been identified as having played a relevant role in half of the cases (H1, H3, P1, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, T2). Support at the dean's level has also been identified as crucial if the measure is implemented at the faculty level (P3, P10, T2).

[6] I.e. Senate, Rector & Vice-Rectors, Board of Trustees, Chancellor, CEO, decision-making committees, Government team, Deans, Head of Centre for HR management.

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4.2.2. Supporters & opponents

In this section we highlight those actors pointed out as supporters or opponents, whether being change agents and/or feminist activists or not. As different authors suggest, the effectiveness of feminist policy is dependent on broadening the number of actors who are on board with the policy and non-feminist allies have been found to be key in supporting policy demands at both the formulation and implementation stages (Mazur 2002, Verge, 2021). Having a wide range of supporters is one of the key facilitating factors for successful implementation, and appears to be particularly important in cases where opposition from other university levels and stakeholders is noted (e.g. P1).

We differentiate between compliant actors and supportive actors, especially important to do so when the actors in question occupy decision-making positions. In this sense, whilst all analysed responses have "formal endorsement" from top management, in some cases full or active support is not found (e.g. P7, P9): In one case, top management shows support for some actions but are resistant to others; in another, top management are identified as actually unsupportive, "stripping [the implementing unit] of much-needed visibility at the university" (*). On the other hand, one interviewee stated that it is highly appreciated when top management figures like deans "do more than what the formal document requires" (P6).

One important reflection in this regard is that **support should be visible**. Even where there is high-level support, "more visibility in how the university leadership takes ownership of the topic would be desirable" (T2). Visible support from top management for gender-based violence measures is also considered important to foster consistent perceptions of this support throughout the university. In some cases, parts of the community perceive a "cultural change at the top" regarding gender-based violence including sexual harassment, while other groups perceive these issues as "not being at the top of their agenda" (P2), which impacts on motivation and institutional trust.

We also consider the **level of influence of the supportive actors**. In several cases, a number of key actors for implementation were placed in the map of actors as supporters but with rather low influence and/or involvement, e.g., administrative and professional staff, key with practicalities of the implementation (H2, P1, P2, P9), external actors (H1, H2, P2, P7), as well as students (H1, P1, P6, P7, P8, T2) and gender-sensitive faculty (H1). In these cases, the relevance of both formal and informal networks and contacts in departments comes into play, including students and admin staff.

The actors who have been most frequently mentioned as **supporters** are:

- Rectors, with respect to design and implementation stages (H1, P1, P2, P3, P6, P11, T1, T2), as well as Vice-rectors and Deans (H1, H3, P1, P3, P6). Their support is especially vital in the cases where they are "the highest decision maker on equality matters" (H1).
- Students, either as student's associations and/or unions or as volunteer or engaged individuals or interns (H1, P1, P3, P6, P7, P8, T2).

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- Feminist actors (H1, P2, P3, P7, T1), including: gender research institutes and gender studies programmes, women researcher's association and feminist and gender-sensitive scholars.
- External actors, mainly providers of services (H1, H2, P2, P7).
- Administrative staff (H2, P1, P2).
- Others (T1, T2), like HR or personal contacts.

It is also noteworthy that in a number of cases "no clear opponents" have been identified or participants have stated that there has been no explicit or open opposition (H1, P1, P2, P6, P9, P10) or less pressure than expected (P8). In some cases, this may be the case because it is "too soon to grasp their presence" (P2), several of the analysed measures having been approved only within the last couple of years. However, actors most frequently mentioned as **opponents** are:

- Feminist and anti-institutional students' groups or students' council (3 out of 16 cases)
- Some top management figures (one case), particularly some heads of school (3 out of 16)
- The Rector (2 out of 16). In these cases, not strictly defined as an opponent, but considered a hindering, rather than supportive, actor.
- Individual administrative staff and scholars (2 out of 16 cases).
- A union representative (one case).

In two cases, the maps of actors suggest more powerful actors are most explicitly critical of gender equality work: "The map illustrates well that those who are outspokenly critical towards gender equality work at the university are considered to have more influence and power than those who were in favour and supporting the work". (e.g. P4, P7). It also should be noted that in some cases opposition appears not to be directed towards the measure itself but to the general functioning of the gender equality structure or to how cases are handled or by whom (e.g. H1, P1).

4.2.3. Levels of involvement

EU recommendations stress the importance of fostering the involvement of the whole community and of bridging a top-down with a bottom-up approach for the implementation of gender equality measures (EIGE, 2022, Cacace et al., 2015). In our study, few cases adopted such an approach or promoted participatory or collegial processes to foster co-creation and the engagement of all groups represented in RPOs. In those cases that did, even if just "partly" (P1, P2, P4, P8), participatory processes resulted in higher levels of involvement and greater sense of "belonging". Only in one institution, reference was made to a participatory approach being an explicit strategy for ensuring a successful implementation, "not only regarding who is responsible for implementation but also who is pointed out as a targeted population" (P2). In this case, a participatory approach appears to have strengthened ownership amongst staff and students, as well as levelled out certain power relations between different actors and groups.

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In a general overview, participation of students, not as users but as designers or implementers, has been low, whilst the participation-levels of staff -either faculty or administrative- are higher, although their involvement is hindered by routine work overload (P1, P2, P6), which simultaneously contributes to these actors feeling bad for not being able to participate in implementation work and relief as they are not relied upon to take action (P1). In larger organisations, uneven levels of engagement among actors can create disparities in the responses offered to victims (P3, P9). Last, power relations arose in several cases as a reason for uneven engagement levels, hampering the equal acknowledgement of each group's needs and abilities to contribute.

Examining the perceptions of the level and type of involvement of the different groups (faculty, administrative and professional staff, and students), we observe the following: **Faculty** appear to be the group whose involvement is perceived (by themselves and by the rest of the groups) to be most uneven. In some cases, faculty, including feminist faculty, were "critical about how poorly they have been consulted and involved in the design and update" of the measure (P3), while in others they "highlighted the efforts to involve them in the process". Although, in this case, "academics themselves acknowledge that still quite a lot of faculties *have zero interest in this, and they don't see it as part of their function or as part of their role or responsibility*" (P2). While in some cases faculty have been involved in the design (H2, P2, P7, P11, T1), in some of these cases, they are not involved at all in the implementation of the actions -particularly when linked to provision of services- and even in one case declared to "know nothing of what happens with [the measure]" (H2). Even in cases with a priori favourable scenarios, the engagement of faculty is seen to be hampered by the "fear of discrimination and stigmatisation" (H1), linked to second-level victimisation processes, developed further in the section on hindering factors (section 4.4.2).

Most commonly, faculty are engaged as members of a working group or a permanent structure, including disciplinary hearings and commissions (H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10). They may be either directly invited to occupy these positions by the top management (e.g. P6) or volunteer themselves for the position because "*we want to make a change*" (e.g. P2). In a few cases, faculty are engaged as liaison agents (P5, T2), or within informal networks that provide information or carry out reporting (P1, P3) as well as through volunteer collaboration in creating awareness-raising material or accompanying students to the service (e.g. H1).

Administrative and professional staff are more commonly included on paper as implementers or named by participants as key actors but are less frequently invited to design or negotiate the measure (except when HR is involved). However, their involvement has been pointed out as key, as they are, in many instances, the first to know about cases and play a crucial role in the practicalities around case administration. The role of the administrative staff within the equality units and specialised structures is considered particularly crucial (H1, H2, P5, P9). Nevertheless, in some institutions these individuals feel "undervalued" (P2), while in others they are problematised as they demonstrate a "strict adherence to rules and a fear of making mistakes, rather than a more proactive approach" (P3). In contrast, one case points to bureaucracy as the factor potentially hindering these

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actors' participation: "it was more difficult for administrative staff to engage (...) since they had to obtain authorization from their superiors'' (*).

This group is also involved as members of working groups (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6), as well as appointed implementers both for specific actions generally integrated in their functions and duties (P6, P9) or as main implementers or responsible for the day-to-day management (H1, H2, P2, P3, P6, P8, T1, T2). They significantly contribute to the provision of services (H1, H2, H3, P1, P8, P11) and are also voluntarily engaged, e.g., accompanying people. In a couple of cases, they are not mentioned at all as implementers (P7, P10).

Last, concerning **students**, they are mainly seen as users but not implementing or influencing actors. Student Unions in some cases are very active, with dedicated resources such as contact persons and training (e.g. P2, P3). In those cases where their level of involvement is low, their participation is described as "symbolic", "weak" or "passive" (H2, P2, P6, P10). Participation may also be "problematic" due to the student council representatives changing every year, "in contrast to the employees, who are often involved (...) for several years" (P5). Other reasons provided for their low involvement or lack of participation are that "they feel quite safe" in the institution and hence are not very active on the issue (P6) or that they "lack awareness" (P2). Students themselves explain that they do not participate due to the patronising approach of the measures or activities (P2) or because they are "only considered at the beginning of the process but not at other stages" and feel that they are "left out of the implementation" (P1).

Nonetheless, in some contexts, students are also seen as "more aware and willing to act" or "much more innovative" and key for communication and/or dissemination activities (e.g. P3, P5). They have also been decisive in boosting the adoption of the policy in one case by filing higher numbers of complaints.

With a few exceptions, it was hard to find student informants who were actually involved in the design or implementation of the analysed measures, although in several cases they have been invited to contribute to the drafting or the implementation of the measure (e.g. P6). Where they have not been invited, reasons for not including them are unknown (P5). However, the students we interviewed showed interest in participating in the further development process of the measure (P2, P5), and there are always "individual students who engage in the specific topics voluntarily" (P6).

Only in a few cases student participation was emphasised for the creation and further development of the measure, or to "discuss the needs, problems, and ways to address them" (P7, T2), specifically in those cases where the student body was one of the main advocates or those who first urged action on the matter. The ways in which they are enrolled are, again, as members of a working group or commission (P1, P2, P5, P7, P10) and also through volunteers' groups, the latter described as "one of the most positive aspects of their involvement" for reaching out to the student body. These groups can be key for planning specific actions like training for student's representatives or awareness raising campaigns (H3, T2). In two reports they were named as absent although invited (P2, P6), even though in one of them they actually did have representation through the Student Union's officer (which is administrative staff, not student).

4.2.4. Users

Within this section we distinguish between: users, who are the targeted populations (to whom the measure is intended to benefit) and the actual users of the institutional response if different; and those who are targeted as bystanders and perpetrators and how they are addressed. A specific reflection about vulnerable groups is included later within the section on intersectionality (section 4.3.2).

Targeted audiences

Ten out of the 16 institutional responses analysed target all staff and students (H2, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11) although in some cases with a specific or primary focus on one of the groups. Within these, there are four cases where, although the targeted population is the whole community, there are some key activities targeting only students (H2, P1, P2, P8), as depicted in figure 9 below.

This figure also shows that there are three more cases where, together with staff and students, the response also includes external actors (H1, P5, P11), named as guests, visitors, contractual stakeholders, etc. Of the remaining cases (H3, P9, T1, T2), two of them target only staff and the two others only students.

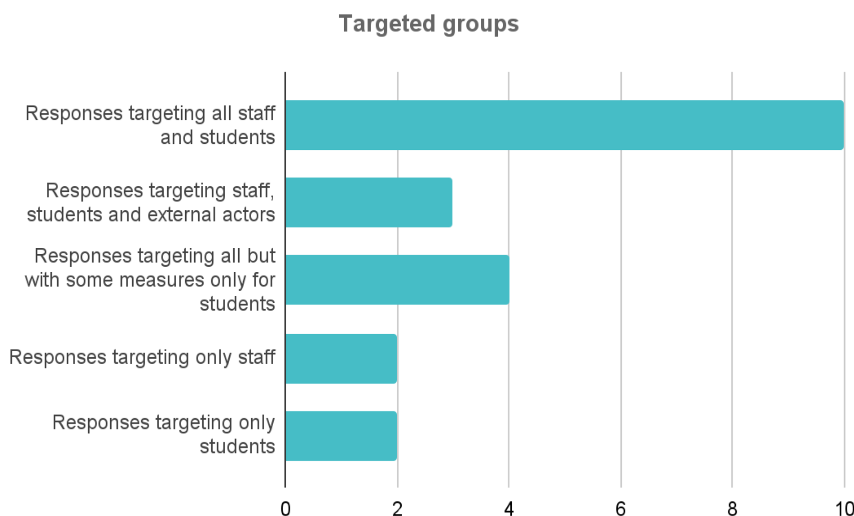

Figure 9. Targeted groups

In some cases, there is mandatory participation of certain groups in activities depending on the profile: For instance, senior members of student's clubs and societies that are obliged to participate in a five-week course when they have coordination duties. It is also interesting how decision makers are targeted as users mainly for training actions (H1, P9, T1), but never as mandatory, which, as reflected in one of the cases, entails a weak implementation: "*In the first training planned, no one from the highest management showed up*" (T1).

In two cases, the measure is linked to provision of services specifically for women who have suffered from male violence (H1, H2). However, despite the main users being women, other activities targeting the whole community are also included: "whereas its prevention actions

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target all members of the university community and any one can access it to get information, protection and provision of services activities target women explicitly and exclusively" (*).

Beyond what is officially on paper, there is quite a number of cases in which, even though the measure is thought to serve the whole community, it is not used by all targeted groups (and among staff, academic staff use it the least), but mainly students (H1, H2, P1, P4, P6, P7). The explanations provided by participants regarding this gap are varied. In one case, they reflect on how "academic staff may not feel recognised as users of the service, and this fact is related to organisational culture and informal rules within the university. (...) Academic staff appear to feel more connected when speaking to someone of their rank" (H1). While in another case, they related it directly to how "it is much more difficult to guarantee the privacy of staff" (H2), particularly in small institutions.

On the contrary, in one case it has been reported "the reluctance of potential users, in particular students, to report cases", where the students themselves named several reasons, like "fear of retribution from the perpetrator" or "concerns about the impartiality of the [commission] members" (P10). In one more case, the main reason offered for low student usage was that "many students do not know exactly about the practical implementation of the documents, about the steps to file a complaint and receive support" (P6).

Bystanders & perpetrators

Almost all cases somewhat address the **bystander** position at some point (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P9, T2). In only two cases there is no bystanders' approach, but they are mentioned as witnesses whose testimony can or has to be collected (P7, P10). In one of these cases, they also can be considered to fall under the general category of "interested party" that would allow them to file a complaint or report an incident. Even in those services in which only women are targeted as users, men are still addressed as bystanders and as perpetrators (H1, H2).

The frame or approach towards bystanders and actors targeted as responsible for counteracting gender-based violence and harassment seems to be shifting in a number of institutions towards a broader approach where all employees and students are expressly considered to share the responsibility to prevent it and act against it (P2, P3, P4, P6, T2). In some cases, the focus is placed on the "active" role of these actors rather than using the word "bystander". This places actors not only as reporting agents but as active awareness-raising and prevention and protection agents (H2, P2, T2), especially encouraged to break the silence and "to politely approach the potential perpetrators and inform them about their unacceptable conduct" (P6). In one more case it is stated that "each and every supervisor and teacher at the university is obligated to address the situation" (P3). Those cases with ad hoc bystander initiatives (2/16) seem to have had "an impact on their sense of responsibility, their confidence to intervene in difficult situations and enhanced their knowledge on methods, as well as how to best and safely respond as a bystander" (*).

On the other hand, some responses do not mention bystanders directly (P5, P11, T1). Amongst these, one grants a protection approach stating that "persons who witnessed

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sexual harassment" and those "who encouraged the initiation of protection proceedings" shall not face any harmful consequences, and other reports on the indirect impacts of their measures like having less silent bystanders.

If we focus on the specific actions targeting bystanders or services available to them, they are sometimes based on reporting mechanisms or an "obligation to act" approach (P1, P3, P4, P9). Others promote an open doors approach, welcoming all actors to seek free advice and information without needing to file a complaint, providing anonymous and confidential support in the steps to be taken, "through listening, guidance and support" (H1, H2, H3, P9).

Regarding **perpetrators**, they are more generally absent or only addressed when it comes to the investigative or disciplinary processes and sanctions (H3, P9, P10, P11).

We can find some differences between approaches as concerns its definition: While in only one case men are specifically pointed out as perpetrators (although not developing any action targeting them as such), in others, the whole community -whether male or female, staff or student- is indirectly put in that potential position, with statements such as "the subsequent actions would depend on his/her status", or by widely talking about "those accused of perpetrating such incident". Other than what is on paper, some informants reported specific profiles more commonly perceived or identified as perpetrators (i.e., senior male academics, P1, P6), as well as talked about both male and female perpetrators (P6). Findings of the multi-level case studies analysis show that, from the institutional standpoint, perpetrators are not identified based on existing figures like those of UniSAFE's research in D5.3, which shows that perpetrators are mostly men who perform supervisor roles and/ or occupy leading academic or management position in the RPOs (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič and Blažytė, 2022).

There are few cases in which perpetrators are explicitly mentioned to be reachable by the staff involved in the process (whether the staff act as advisors, counsellors, or investigators) who "can take an intervention and approach the perpetrator for a clarification meeting" or allow them "to respond to the allegations" (P5, P11). Perpetrators can also "ask other persons to join them for a disciplining discussion. This is not stated in the [institutional response] but this way it works in practice" (P5).

Furthermore, few cases develop a strong right-based approach, focusing also on support services and not only a punitive approach (e.g. P2, P11), especially when it comes to young boys in the early years of their careers, when they can most benefit from awareness-raising and counselling programs that may help them reflect on their masculinities and their own role within gender-based violence structures and mechanisms. The consultation services available to them are legal advice and counselling.

Besides this, there is an interesting coincidence among discourses at different institutions regarding alleged perpetrators' resistance through different mechanisms, from denial to attempts of playing down the importance of the act, undermining the authority of the [intervening actor] and questioning the competences or mandate of the disciplinary intervention (e.g. P1, P5). More subtle resistance may come in the form of registering for

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specific activities like training but then not showing up, which, in this particular case, was described as an attempt to “whitewash” men’s reputation.

4.2.5. Relations among actors

One of the lessons learnt of feminist institutionalism is how policy failures affecting the implementation of gender equality measures in universities are unlikely to be overcome through isolated efforts at each institution, thus building feminist strategic alliances may be needed in all the stages (Verge, 2021). Aligned with this, in a majority of cases, a good implementation of the institutional measure has been said to rely on the good and permanent relationships among the key actors (H1, P1, P2, P6, P7, P9), also as a way of ensuring that “there are no strong resistances” (P9). The shared weak point is the typically person-dependent character of these relations, that prevents proper institutionalisation and might hamper institutional collaboration, also opening the field to arbitrariness (P1, P2, P4, P7, P9, T1): “*it depends on who is in the equality committee, who is at HR and how these collaboration proceeds*” (T1); “The functioning of the unit largely depends on the personal relationships established by the coordinator. Insufficient institutionalisation and centrality of one person makes the unit vulnerable to further action against it” (P7).

In some cases, the strength and positive character of these personal relations vanishes as soon as it passes to a second level, where the connections are more commonly defined as weak or just occasional, even if it’s with key actors (e.g. P7).

The case studies’ reports generally mention relations among staff or with decision makers, but relations between staff and students are mentioned to a lesser extent. When they are mentioned, it is reported how in smaller institutions or in a context where they work on an individual basis, relations between students and faculty can be conflictual. On the one hand, these settings can facilitate approaching key actors like the rector. However, on the other hand, boundaries of interaction and communication can be “very blurred and unclear” (P6), creating the kind of relations where intimacy, power and control can overlap and have a negative impact on students’ integrity and dignity. During fieldwork, one national researcher even perceived an institutional atmosphere that could be characterised as a “distant relation with students” (P8).

From the student’s standpoint, good relations with staff are very positively and highly appreciated “due to open communication, respect and empathy” (P6). Formal relations with the students’ associations and unions exist in almost all cases, but seldom in a strong or sustainable collaborative way. Interestingly, in those cases where the national researchers have developed several maps of actors involving both staff and students, more symbolic differences in the perceptions of the two groups appear to arise through the different representations of the nets of relations. However, we lack a sufficient number of maps to extract univocal conclusions.

Some general reflections extracted from the reports and maps of actors are: Cases where no major obstacles are faced normally also display good relations between staff in top management positions. Relations become a success factor for implementation when there is constant contact with key stakeholders and decision makers to keep them both informed

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and engaged. Top leadership also has a vital role for mainstreaming the measures and in these cases, it has been highlighted the importance of the rector having strong allies in the administration. There is also an emphasis on the importance of generating good relations among administrative and professional staff, as well as among other key figures for implementation (like decision makers) with them.

Cases describing successful implementation also show the importance of close-knit relations of the gender equality director or manager with the top management: “being led by an experienced feminist scholar with strong ties to the government team can also be cited as a factor contributing to its success”. Networks with gender-sensitive academics, especially feminist scholars, are defined as essential in several cases, as well as with external feminist agents and women’s associations.

The different maps of actors show a significant gap between the gender equality director and the rest of the gender equality unit staff, except for those cases where the gender equality body is placed in the map not as an individual but as a whole structure, in which case it seems to have a relatively high level of influence. While the gender equality director typically holds higher authority, the staff (or day-to-day officers, implementing teams) are placed near to the bottom of the map, evidencing the low level of influence that correlates to their position and context (volunteer work, under-resourced, structurally isolated, etc.), in some cases lower than unions or academics. There is a parallel situation when there is a central gender equality officer and then representatives at faculty or unit’s level. In a few cases, staff are placed as holding a medium level of authority but, in any case, only above students. The exception to this only comes when the gender equality structure is already well established at the institution and with a longer trajectory of visible actions. Some participants have stated that “the Equality Committee should have more power in the decision-making regarding the organisation of the activities and other equality-related issues”.

In cases facing higher levels of resistance or obstacles, more conflictual relations with key decision makers have been reported, or a lack of communication between the Rector and the gender equality unit.

Formal & informal alliances & networks

According to Mills et al. (2010), entities always exist in networks of relations. This approach suggests that it is not possible to conceive actors as in some way separable from networks, and vice versa. When delving into which are the main **formal relations** described by the participants, we need to differentiate between external and internal relations. Regarding the former, it seems clear that in a majority of cases these are mainly focused around provision of services. Thus, several cases relate to the networks of NGOs and other specialised services, highlighted as essential (H1, H2, P7). “The gender-based violence network and the service providers accessed through this network also play a key role in the implementation as they compensate for the lack of resources within the university, significantly enhancing the capacity of the Unit” (*).

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In some cases, the external actor is the main implementer, so good relations with internal actors are crucial (which involves mixed formal and informal relations). It helps when "they share very similar aims and ideologies regarding gender-based violence, as well as good personal relations" (H2).

Regarding internal networks, it is noteworthy how relations between academic and administrative staff often depend on the nature of the measure or how it is designed, e.g., a case where there is an academic lead coordinated with day-to-day management and the connections and communication among the key actors was explicitly "framed as a unique feature of the programme and reported to be a success" (T2).

Last but not least, it needs to be highlighted the importance of existing or newly created working groups (both formal and informal) acting as network mobilisers or catalysers, as participatory networking tools and as a way for bringing together the different university groups, bridging the top-down with the bottom-up approach and contributing to mainstreaming gender-based violence and sexual harassment issues (P2, P4).

Besides these formal relations, **informal networks and interactions** emerge as the core success factors in contexts where, as already described, the success of the measure is still too person-dependent and relies on personal activism. Allyship of feminist scholars and activists have been highlighted. As described by Vergé (2021), these informal constellations or networks range from informal personal networks for communication exchange to coalitions aimed at achieving policy goals, where "the role of personal ties in the perception and resolution of potential problems" is key. (P8).

In several cases the gender equality coordinator/officer is singled out as "the centre of most of the internal and external networks" (P7). These actors network both formally and informally, seeking out and strategically using these alliances, activities that are not formally described as part of their implementing roles, which leads to the invisibilisation and underestimation of the relevance of gender equality officers have.

Last, the reports evidence how it is essential to establish informal networks with professors who can act as entry points, that are aware of or have noticed cases of violence among students and can "provide information about the measure, walk the students there or contact the responsible unit directly if they are aware of an incident" (H1, P1), taking into account that one of the main hindering factors reported is the lack of trust in the institution.

Main takeaways of the section on actors

- A majority of cases show that many of the main actors that are considered key for implementation work on a voluntary basis, unveiling the importance of personal activism and the crucial role of feminist scholars for successful implementation.
- Guaranteeing minimum levels of authority and institutional recognition works as a facilitating factor and can contribute to ensuring smooth implementation.
- Gender equality bodies and/or officers are the main actors both for the design and

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the implementation of the institutional responses, spanning all cases, but they still have to deal with a systemic lack of resources.

- The case studies confirm the crucial relevance of decision makers in granting a more seamless implementation and preventing resistances. However, their support still seems to rely on personal sensitivity to the issue.
- It appears to be a widespread pattern that relevant actors for implementation are not included in the design phase of the responses. This singularity affects providers of services.
- A large number of the institutions examined opted for creating working groups both for design and implementation (but mainly for the latter), which worked out very positively and contributed to smoother implementation, bridging a top-down and a bottom-up approach, and fostering networking and higher levels of ownership.
- External actors are revealed as fundamental in many cases, especially for a more specialised provision of services.
- The levels of involvement of the three university groups (students, faculty and administrative and professional staff) are uneven. Students, often the main target audiences and users of the measures, are generally the least involved both in design and implementation.
- There seems to be a growing understanding of the key role of bystanders, as they are addressed in almost all of the institutional responses.
- Despite the existing figures and studies that point to men as the main perpetrators, they are barely addressed by the measures, which hardly tackle the role of certain forms of masculinities in relation to gender-based violence.
- Good formal and informal relations among key actors, whether permanent or conjunctural, are named and crucial for an effective implementation. Informal relations with gender-sensitive scholars and external feminist agents have been particularly highlighted.

4.3. IDEAS

4.3.1. Theory of Change

As explained in the introduction, the Theory of Change of an institutional response consists of the assumptions underlying the response and what and how it is supposed to work. Therefore, in this section we analyse the theories of change by exploring the **strategies** for setting and implementing the institutional responses, specifically, focusing on the theory of implementation or action, that is, what is required to translate interventions' aims into service delivery or program operations. How the institutional responses are **framed**, and how the problem is defined and how the solutions respond to that problem also help us to understand the central processes or drivers by which change is supposed to come, that is the program theory behind the institutional responses analysed in the case studies. As part of the Theory of Change and the ideas section, we also include an analysis of some **beliefs** or ideas, which were mentioned as influencing the institutional responses.

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Strategies

Regarding the strategies, and the theory of implementation, that is, how the institutional response is supposed to work, and what should be the sequence of actions and by whom those different actions should be done, there is a clear lack of a well-planned and thought out implementation strategy in most of the institutional responses. While few institutional responses have a specific and dedicated action or implementation plan (P2, P5, and in part P1), others have no clear strategy for implementation beyond specifying the functions the response should serve or some general actions to be accomplished, with no specific time frame, identified resources, or defined expected results (H1, H2, P6). In other cases, the responses define responsibilities of different actors (P3, P4), add actions in different phases (P8, P9, P11), or provide instructions on how to act (P3), but without a specific implementation plan. In one case, keeping the general Gender Equality Plan "open" is perceived as a good strategy that leaves open possibilities for further definition and collaborations, including deciding to participate in UniSAFE's survey, case study and community of RPOs.

Related to the different degree of specification in concrete implementation action plans, differences can be noted between having a more **top-down or bottom-up approach**, or a combination of both, for implementing each institutional measure. Two of the institutional responses (P3, P4) point to a **mainstreaming** strategy in which the work related to gender equality issues is identified as coming from below, rather than a top-down directive. However, in one of them, the fact that different groups -including students- are supposed to have a role in the implementation of the institutional response is compatible with providing those groups with clear instructions on how to act. While in the other, the idea that the responsibility to implement the work extends to all staff results in the response not being directed at any particular part of the organisation, rather it is conceived as everyone's responsibility, thus, resulting in a dilution of responsibilities, implementation gaps and weaker responses. In contrast, the responses which are accompanied by a specific dedicated action plan (P1, P2, P5) use a combination of a top-down approach with clear specifications on what needs to be done and who should do it, as well as some inclusive and participatory approach to implementation.

As already discussed in section 4.1.4 of this report, several case study reports have also highlighted the importance of a coherent and harmonised response at the central RPO (rectoral/presidency) level, that is to have a **centralised** institutional response (P1, P8, P9), although there are other **decentralised** strategies, focused in some cases in concrete campuses, schools or faculties (P3, P6, P10). This is either because they have a bottom-up approach, and/or the want to reach out to the different schools, faculties or departments -especially in big RPOs-, maintaining their idiosyncrasy and autonomy (P4, P5, P11). It seems, then, that a proper combination of a centralised top-down approach for institutional coherence and mandate, and a bottom-up decentralised approach for reaching and including the whole RPO community, might facilitate effective implementation.

Also related to strategy, there are cases where **external partnerships** were brought into the institutional response design as the main solution to deal with the under-resourced responsible departments (H1, H2), or as an important source of support in the overall

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response (P1, P2, P7). Beyond framing the institutional responses in compliance to some sort of **national/regional** legislation in practically all cases, there are two cases in which there is a clear strategy which appeals to and mentions **European** legislation, approaches or projects, being important in framing and justifying the institutional response. There is also one case in which the **international** 2030 agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are mentioned, although this sustainability frame does not seem to translate into a clear operationalization in the institutional response implementation.

Training & the debate on mandatory versus voluntary training

Apart from the two cases where the institutional response is a training programme, almost all the other institutional responses mention training as a planned or already executed action which is part of the institutional response. An interesting debate and discussion has arisen, that is included in this section, as part of the theories of change and strategies. If training is necessary and needed for the RPO community, how should the training be?

All of the institutional responses that include different training measures or programmes for members of the university community, provide the training on a voluntary basis (apart from one of them where a brief initial training is required for all students). Many participants in the focus groups and interviews have discussed whether or not training should be made mandatory or voluntary.

This debate arises mainly for two reasons: on the one hand, in relation to the limited number of people attending the training in all groups (students, academic or administrative staff); on the other hand, in the case of training aimed at positions of responsibility within the RPO, in order to ensure a better understanding and implementation of the institutional responses.

Some participants in the case studies argued that the training should certainly be mandatory (H1, T1), although it may be difficult to implement mandatory training. In other cases, it is explicitly advocated that these training programmes should be voluntary.

One of the problems that arise when it comes to the voluntariness of the training is the perception about “preaching to the already converted”. In the sense that it can be a training that only people who are previously sensitised to these issues are attracted to attend, while the rest of the university community feels alien and distant and is therefore not interested in participating on a voluntary basis.

Framing & frames

It is important to refer here to the **general frames of reference** where the institutional response is located. Although frame differentiation is not always clear cut or precise, and there might be a mixture of general frames, the assignment to one or other general frame is driven by the structure/department mainly responsible for the institutional response, in other words, from where and by whom it was initiated. Therefore, we can talk of a “**Human Resources** Frame”, a “**Gender Equality** Frame”, and a “Diversity Frame”, that might be better considered as “**Gender Equality and Diversity** Frame”. There is only one case, which might be considered only “Diversity”, as the institutional response is a tailor-made implementation strategy of anti-discrimination legislation that covers equally all inequality

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grounds (including gender). But even in this case, it is mentioned that the responsible gender equality department is very much involved in the implementation (although not officially responsible).

Regarding the Gender Equality Frame (P1, P6, P7, P11, H1, H2, H3) and the Gender Equality and Diversity Frame (P2, P5, T2), the HR department has very little or nothing to say in the setting and implementation of the institutional response. In the cases assigned to a more general "Human Resources Frame" (P3, P4, P8, P9, P10, T1), in some of the cases the gender equality or the gender equality and diversity frame (P3, P4, P9) are also present, but the presence of the human resources department is significant, producing some tensions regarding different understandings of the issue from different structures involved in the response or tensions between academic and administrative staff.

Why does it seem important to identify this different framing? It has been found that depending on the explanation of the problem, that is, why gender-based violence occurs, we might find that the response under a gender equality (and diversity) frame is more focused towards structural inequality and unequal power relations and gender stereotypes, including hierarchical gender-related conditions and non-accepted diversity. However, under a human resources frame, the explanation tends to relate to a bad working environment which affects certain individuals; therefore, this framing might work as a way of "degenderizing" the problem and/or diminishing its structural character, even serving as an excuse to discipline the problem to an interpersonal/individual labour conflict, rather than an instance of discriminatory violence/or harassment.

There are several "only gender" frames among the cases studied (including P9), which can be considered under the intersection of the human resources and gender equality frames, and some others that have added diversity, including two other cases at the intersection of human resources and gender equality and diversity frames (P3, P4). The diversity framing might have been used to diminish the structural character of gender and other inequalities (by adding inequalities instead of looking at their intersectional construction and effects). However, on the positive side, in the cases where this framing has been present for a longer time, it has contributed to a higher sensitivity and identification of an intersectional perspective of the institutional response.

Related to this general framing, it is interesting to note that the onset of several of the RPO's responses analysed lies in a **concrete incident** which hit the media, or in a more general reaction to the #MeToo movement and the identification of related problems contributing to a perception of an increase in cases (P6, P7, P11, H2, H3, T1, T2). Therefore, the reason why the institutional response was put in place was either to be in line with or comply with a National or European legislation or because of commitment to European projects (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, H1) or the need to confront a concrete incident -or various as created by the #MeToo movement-, or a combination of both. The special sensitivity to gender equality issues of female top-level positions (rectors, deans) are also mentioned in several cases as an important factor (P1, P10, P11, H1).

As in many other institutional responses to gender-based violence outside higher education, whilst the reaction to incidents that hit the media is both logical and can be positive, it can

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also lead to **incident-driven approaches** that are often rather blind to proactive and comprehensive responses and prevention. As a result, tools may be developed that are more "reactive": **protocols, directives or guidelines**, whose principal function is to define or guide action as to what should be done when something happens. On the other hand, specific gender-based violence **action plans** might be more suitable for a more comprehensive approach to the problem. This path dependency created by reactive responses to incidents is related to the institutional need and efforts to solve concrete problems that the academic community has started to consider unacceptable -including efforts to identify and visualise the violence which has been traditionally normalised in academia- but that actually may make it harder to act to overcome a structural problem, both strategically and proactively.

The overall gender equality issues in higher education under which gender violence is based, have been framed in Europe within a structural approach. This approach has led to fruitful policies, resources, and recommendations, including considering the gender equality plans as the preferred tool for tackling the issue, along with an inclusive and innovative participatory methodology for implementing those gender equality plans. However, this does not seem to have extended to the gender-based violence issue, which is still predominantly framed within an incident-driven and reactive approach.

Beliefs

Related to the assumptions behind the institutional responses (the Theory of Change and how the institutional response is framed), the belief systems which maintain the normalisation of gender-based violence and that the institutional responses are trying to challenge for a cultural change to occur are considered. We highlight the main myths, beliefs, and perceptions that have been mentioned as affecting implementation and effectiveness of institutional responses in the case studies. In this respect, we identify the general conception of the problem as an individual issue, as opposed to a structural one. This is also related to the idea that gender-based violence is mediated by a generational change, occurring unequally between groups and conceived differently across generations; in particular, the belief that gender-based violence occurs principally amongst students and towards students, not so much amongst staff, was highlighted (in three out of 16), as well as the myth that gender-based violence does not occur so much among highly educated modern/progressive people in academia (in another two cases). Finally, and connected to resistances from anti-gender movements (claiming there is a "gender ideology"), the notion of "gender correctness" which leads to "excessive" attention to gender-based violence was mentioned in another case.

4.3.2. Intersectionality

Overall, the RPOs are inadequately addressing intersectional discrimination in their approach to tackle gender-based violence. This applies to both the policy design level (documents stating and regulating measures) and the implementation level.

Regarding the policy **design**, about half of the RPOs (H2, H3, P6, P8, P10, P11, T1, T2) - seven out of 16- do not implicitly or explicitly refer to intersectionality and mention only

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gender in gender-based violence or gender-based violence policy (single approach) in the documents stating and regulating measures. In three RPOs (H1, P7, P11), the documents mention discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity only as related to discrimination based on gender. The documents of four RPOs (P1, P3, P4, P5) acknowledge the existence of a larger set of systems of power or multiple grounds of inequality (multiple approach) but do not mention their combination (integrated approach) or relation to gender-based violence. Finally, the documents of only two RPOs (P2, P9) recognise that systems of power can work in a combined way (integrated approach) in gender-based violence, thus adopting an intersectional approach.

On the **implementation level**, five (H2, P4, P8, P10, P11, T1) out of 16 RPOs completely lack an intersectional approach to gender-based violence. In two cases, implementing actors declared that the measure adopts an intersectional approach, but no evidence to support their claim was found. Five RPOs (H1, H3, P6, P7, P11) refer to gender and sexual orientation and/or gender identity at the implementation level, and three others (P1, P3, P5) mention additional systems of power, but not their intersection (multiple approach). There seems to be some acknowledgment that an intersectional approach in gender-based violence policy is necessary, however perceptions of its irrelevance and incompetence on intersectionality place it as "difficult" and secondary. Only two RPOs (P2, P9) recognised the need for an intersectional approach, the lack of an intersectional approach in implementation, and reported taking steps towards building capacity on it. In only one RPO current measures to tackle gender-based violence adopt an intersectional approach.

There is no necessary correspondence between the adoption of some degree of an intersectional approach at the policy design level and the implementation level. For instance, in RPOs where gender-based violence policy is part of a strategy to tackle several kinds of discrimination and address different systems of power, gender-based violence and "diversity" (discrimination based on systems of power other than gender) issues are mostly addressed separately and as unrelated problems. One institution lacking an intersectional approach at the policy design level integrates it to some degree at the implementation level, as it adopts a bottom-up strategy and incorporates actual cases that happened on campus. Nonetheless, the RPOs adopting an intersectional approach at the policy design level (P2, P9) are the ones taking steps towards building capacity to ensure it is implemented.

At both the policy and document levels, sexual orientation and/or gender identity is more frequently accepted as possibly combined with gender in gender-based violence (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, T2) than discrimination based on other systems of power (even though it is only minimally referred to and mostly not fully addressed in implementation). Furthermore, when systems of power other than gender are referred to, measures usually fail to recognise how they combine. Rather than an integrated approach (P2 and P9) -discrimination on different grounds regarded as compounded- a multiple approach (H1, H3, P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P11) is found that recognises the existence of discrimination on different grounds, but not their interaction. No institution adopts an integrated intersectionality approach at both policy design and implementation levels. Along with the lack of political will (the understanding that intersectionality in gender-based violence is secondary), a remarkable lack of expertise on how to adopt an intersectional approach in

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gender-based violence is clearly hindering progress in that direction. There also seems to be a lack of understanding on how intersectionality plays out in gender-based violence: when mentioned, the combination of gender and other systems of power is usually understood as aggravating vulnerability to gender-based violence, but forms of gender-based violence mostly or exclusively affecting minority groups are not at all visible or mentioned.

National legislation, students, partnerships with stakeholders addressing intersectionality and (scarce) actors seem to push for some degree of inclusion of an intersectional approach.

Concerning specific grounds of discrimination, discrimination against *LGBTQ+ people* is most frequently mentioned in the measures studied. In total, the policy documents of nine RPOs (H1, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P9, P11) mention “gender identity”, “gender expression”, “LGBTQ+" and/or “sexual diversity” in their response to gender-based violence, be it as a separate ground of discrimination, as intersecting gender-based discrimination or aggravating gender-based violence. For instance, in one of the institutions, the normative addressing discrimination explicitly states homophobic behaviour and discriminatory behaviour against transsexual or transgender people is within the range of punishable behaviour. At the implementation level, a few more institutions incorporate discrimination against LGBTQ+ people as impacting gender-based violence (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, T2). At the practical level, however, the institutional responses show insufficiencies. Mostly, participant institutions fail to raise awareness, encourage reporting, and collect data on gender-based violence affecting LGBTQ+ people, as well as to address gender-based violence and discrimination/violence based on gender identity as working in a simultaneous and combined way; only one of them establishes a partnership with a LGBTQ+ organisation; services do not incorporate awareness and sensibility to intersectional and homo/transphobic violence or do not know how to do it. This gap has not gone unnoticed: for instance, in one of the case studies, student representatives highlighted the absence of an intersectional approach that includes LGBTQ+ people (H2).

Five cases (P2, P1, P3, P4, P5) mention *disability* (also state of health, illness, or diverse ability) in documents stating their policy to address and prevent gender discrimination or gender-based violence. Implementing actors did not mention it at all. When referred to, disability appears among other grounds of discrimination (such as gender identity and ethnic origins), but, overall, it is not addressed specifically. Data collection on this form of intersectional violence is absent; awareness-raising actions do not mention it; no institution seems to have established partnerships with organisations dealing with discrimination based on disability; and existing services are not prepared to address this form of discrimination, particularly intersectional discrimination playing a role in gender-based violence.

Four RPOs (P2, P3, P4, P9) mention discrimination on the grounds of *ethnic and racial origins* in documents stating their policy to address and prevent gender discrimination or gender-based violence; only two of them (P2, P9) explicitly acknowledge the intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity regarding the measure studied. The recognition of race/ethnicity as a ground of discrimination did not necessarily unfold in

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institutional action. In some organisations (P2, P4, P5), implementing actors recognise the need for an intersectional approach. For instance, an informant in one of the case studies noted that the intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity showed up in services. In another of the RPOs, implementing actors sought to include the intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity in training and awareness-raising action themselves, even though there was no clear institutional directive to do so. In other two cases, implementing actors claim they lack the knowledge to adopt an intersectional approach. As a result, institutions do not collect data on the victims' racial or ethnic origins; the intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity is only minimally and unsystematically included in prevention actions and is absent in services addressing gender discrimination and gender-based violence; and institutions do not establish partnerships with organisations addressing the issue.

The intersectionality of gender and *age* was scarcely present in institutional responses to gender-based violence. Only three RPOs (P3, P4, P5) mention this form of discrimination in documents stating their policy to address and prevent gender discrimination or gender-based violence. Overall, implementing actors did not mention it. When referred to, age appears among other grounds of discrimination (such as gender identity and ethnic origins), and is not addressed separately. Data collection on this form of intersectional violence is absent; awareness-raising actions do not mention it; no institution seems to have established partnerships with organisations dealing with discrimination based on age; and existing services are not prepared to address this form of discrimination, particularly intersectional discrimination playing a role in gender-based violence.

Other points of concern:

- Gender-based violence measures that may rely on other systems of discrimination: partnerships with the police without attention to police brutality against particular racialised groups; other cultures as "not understanding" sexual harassment in the same way (as if nationals/Europeans do).
- Mechanisms/positions that address gender and "diversity": which professional profile is requested and recruited? Is this person an expert in intersectionality?
- Data collection (research on prevalence and reported cases) on multiple and intersectional discrimination and violence in gender-based violence and vulnerable groups.
- Inclusion and representation of vulnerable groups in awareness-raising campaigns, training and communication materials.

Vulnerable groups

The analysed measures seldom address or formally mention any vulnerable groups[7]. Still, there is quite a high level of consciousness regarding this gap and in a number of institutions participants have declared that, even though not on paper, there are some specific efforts

[7] It should be noted that there is a difference here between the RPOs that acknowledge intersecting inequalities and those that identify/tackle vulnerable groups. Explicitly acknowledging different grounds of discrimination does not necessarily correspond to identifying or naming the affected groups as vulnerable, nor targeting those groups with any specific (positive) measure.

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being done in practice, or intentions to improve the process in this regard. In some of them, informants did identify specific profiles as especially vulnerable, which at least shows an evolution in the discourse. In some institutions they recognise that "tackling intersectionality is in its early steps and it is out of their expertise, but they intend to improve the processes and raise awareness" (P9).

As for the specific vulnerable groups tackled by the measures -or pointed out by informants- the most frequently mentioned is LGBTQ+ staff and students (H1, H3, P1, P2, P6, P7, P10) confirming what was highlighted in UniSAFE Deliverables 3.1 (Strid et al., 2021) and 5.1 (Huck et al., 2022), followed by International and Erasmus exchange students together with students on internships or placements (H3, P1, P2, P4, P7, P9) or doing independent courses (P4). Also, PhD students were spotlighted in several cases, especially foreign women doctoral students (P2, P4, P9). It is also interesting to note that few institutions consider women as the main vulnerable group (H2, P1), while the conclusion of UniSAFE's research in Deliverable 5.3 suggests that in academic environments it is mostly women who experience diverse misconducts which manifest in various forms of gender-based violence (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič and Blažytė, 2022).

On the other hand, contrary to the findings of D3.1 (Strid et at., 2021) and D5.1 (Huck et al., 2022), staff members and students with disabilities were mentioned only in one case (P2), the same as staff members and students with migrant and/or ethnic minority backgrounds, which were hardly mentioned by the measures nor by participants. Likewise, only one out of the 16 cases mentioned groups like teaching assistants (P7) or employees of external companies, specifically cleaning workers (P1). Other groups mentioned less often in D3.1 (Strid et al., 2021) and D5.1 (Huck et al., 2022), like staff with temporary contracts or new and expectant mothers, were not mentioned in our cases.

However, it should be noted that recognising the vulnerability of a particular segment is not the same as having an intersectional institutional response. In this sense, there are more institutions that recognise certain groups as vulnerable than institutions that adopt an intersectional approach. Also, the notion of vulnerable groups remains unclear to many participants, and even in those cases in which the measure of policy formally mentions "vulnerable groups", they are not described, thus neither staff nor students were clear about who is to be included.

What informants did raise is that "there are certain groups of students who are more easily overlooked, which could hinder their help-seeking processes" (P4), and it was reported that "it is rare that cases coming up to the contact person/service concern multiple discrimination grounds" (P3). This raises the question of whether people experiencing intersecting discriminations might be less willing to report due to anxieties over further institutional inability and discrimination, posing a challenge to protection (P2). At the same time, the lack of an intersectional approach may result in prevention measures and communication initiatives that do not target those people experiencing intersectional discrimination, and do not cover expressions of violence that mostly or exclusively impact them.

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4.3.3. Gaps between paper & practice

The preceding sections cover a number of the gaps between what is on paper and what is actually implemented. This section describes the most notable gaps, with the exception of those belonging to the 7Ps (prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, service provision, partnership, and policies), which are described in the 7Ps section below (see section 4.6). Also, the gaps listed here are frequently associated with implementation challenges and obstacles (see section 4.4.2. Obstacles).

Firstly, there were few **general gaps** identified, each one mentioned only in one case out of the 16: An apparent lack of diagnosis or assessment done before designing the measure; measures that have not been implemented or a significant part of the designed actions on paper have not been yet fully developed (in both cases, the reasons offered for this are related to the relatively recent adoption of the institutional responses); the institutional response at faculty level partly overlaps with the provision of other services by the university, which entails a "difficulty of identifying a situation where a potential user would turn to the [institutional response] rather than use another available response mechanism".

Also, the vast majority of institutional responses do not foresee any evaluation process for their implementation in place (mechanism and timetable).

Regarding **actors**, the following gaps have been mentioned:

- Actors formally involved (on paper) but not relevant in the practical implementation process (H3, P1).
- Lack of expertise on gender-based violence among some actors involved in the implementation (H3, T1), and actors who have to handle and make decisions about gender-based violence cases yet are not trained for that (H3, P5).
- Insufficient institutional support for some actors involved in the implementation, e.g., "stable support systems have not been developed for all the people involved in dealing with complaints and supporting complainants. For example, it appears that trade unionists for both students and staff lack such support, despite the fact that they often act on the front line and deal with many complaints." (*)
- Unclear roles and responsibilities of actors who are members of the formal structures: "One of the key challenges at this stage is the lack of a dedicated subject responsible for interpreting the [institutional response] and clarifying any doubts the [implementers] have regarding it. Currently, even though all [implementers] have equal status and there is no hierarchy among them, they tend to pose questions to a person who was selected to be the [responsible for implementing the response in] the Rectorate because they often wrongly understand that this person is '*like the main [implementer] of them all*'" (*)
- Key missing actors (1 out of 16), that is, relevant actors for the implementation who are not sufficiently taken into account and actors who are directly not considered but should be taken into account. One example is the work on men and masculinities. "Absence of other key implementing actors, either as a group (like students) or in particular like heads of school, as well as not enough space for the voice of those involved in the day-to-day work, like counselling services. Men have also been

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pointed out as relevant missing actors, key for prevention, and it should be pointed out that there is no work on masculinities within the Plan" (*). "There are some gaps to be filled regarding identified missing key actors. The first one concerning academic staff would be the head of schools, particularly relevant when talking about protection measures, as they are the institutional figure to whom the complaints would filter up to in those cases taking place at their school" (*).

- Gaps related to students' participation (two out of 16): "Even though three out of six members of the [institutional response] are students, their actual role and impact on implementing this measure seem to be rather insubstantial." (*)

In terms of **users,** the following gaps have been pointed out**:**

- Measures are designed for the whole university community, but in fact, it is almost exclusively used by students (H1, H2, P1, P4, P6, P7).
- Proposals designed to encourage students to report by establishing anonymous reporting channels, but they fail to achieve their aims because students do not perceive them as safe mechanisms: "it seems to be considered by part of the staff as a reporting tool for students, and by students as a rather useless tool for them, given that it doesn't activate any protection mechanism, so there are some reluctances to using it from all sides, being this fact one of the first gaps emerged" (*). In relation to this, gaps also indicate that potential users are concerned about confidentiality if they report an incident (P1, P4, P10).
- Difficulties in reaching users. In the case of academic staff this seems to be the most challenging group (H1, H2, P1) for different reasons: "Academic staff may not identify with a support resource that is also designed for students due to their different status, which distinguishes them from the student body. As mentioned by some respondents, academic staff members appear to feel more connected when speaking with someone of their rank, such as the Director of the Equality body, who is also academic staff" (*). "The fact that it is much more difficult to guarantee the privacy of staff when accessing the (...) as they are much fewer and therefore more easily identifiable. As a result, they reach it much less" (H2).
- Related to hierarchical structures and the relations of dependency described, there is a gap in the lack of references to the situation of students and early career academics who face serious difficulties in reporting incidents of gender-based violence when the perpetrator is a tutoring teacher. For example, lack of addressing the specific circumstances of PhD students (in all institutional responses, but especially mentioned in P9, P4) or student-professor incidents: "there are still some issues that are not touched up on, including students'-teachers' relations" (T1).
- In the case of bystanders, the lack of consideration of their status as victims of second-order violence has been brought to light. In other words, a bystander who reports an incident may also become a victim of violence (P1).
- Regarding intersectionality, as it has been explained, on paper few measures include an intersectional approach. Within those the principal weakness would be that the intersectional approach is not implemented in practice.

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Concerning **institutions** these are the most significant gaps found:

- Gaps related to the composition or the structure of the committee in charge of the implementation (H3, P1, P10, P11), such as: gender imbalance; the procedure for shaping the formal structure specified on paper is not included in the institutional response and the member's requirements are not defined; the procedure for calling the formal commission remains unregulated, that is, the institutional response lacks the rules and timelines for notifying the formal commission in charge of investigating reported incidents. Furthermore, there is no time frame within which the commission must communicate its final decision to victims, bystanders and perpetrators; and formal structures that are insignificant in practice because the policy is not operating effectively: "Commission meetings are held infrequently, in specific due to the small number of reported cases" (*).
- Absence of formal links and information between university and faculty and department level and gap between what is on paper at the national/general level and what is done in practice at the local level within units (H3, P9).
- Structural change requires significant effort, time and involvement. In two cases, a gap has been highlighted in terms of failing in relation to the objectives of promoting structural change (P4, P9). "Several of the interviewees expressed that they experienced a legal preoccupation within the documents: that the documents were mainly aimed at achieving legally correct processes, rather than supporting cultural or behavioural change" (P4).
- Lack of institutionalisation of anti-gender-based violence institutional responses (P7).
- As it has been noted in the available resources section (4.1.5), one of the most common gaps in and obstacles to an effective implementation is the lack of resources, including budget and human resources.

With regard to the established **procedure** for reporting incidents and the system that must be implemented in response to a complaint:

- The ambiguous or unclear procedure may be leading to confusion among implementers and potential users (P2, P4, P9): "There is confusion around when one is obliged to report or not, and a gap with confidentiality respecting that not everyone wants to report. Not being able to investigate if no one is behind it by name, and action then becomes general, not something against perpetrators. The procedure then does not solve any practical problem" (*). "The problem stems from a lack of clarity about what an employee actually needs to do when they become aware of an exposure." (*). "Lack of a unified procedure gathering all the relevant information together, like entry points, steps, protection measures, sanctions, etc. Although this would rather be a contextual gap than a gap between design and implementation, as it should be a product of the Plan in the coming years)" (*).
- Absence of mechanism for following up on cases (P1, P3, P4).
- No incidents are reported (P4, P10): "During its first term, the [implementing body] dealt with about four cases; in the current term, (...), no cases have been submitted" (*). "Very few reports. Risk that the documents become more checklists than active measures" (*).

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Concerning **training** programmes and awareness-raising activities, the following gaps have been pointed out:

- The majority of the training is entirely voluntary, and the challenge they face is a low participation rate (P2, P5, T1). This relates to the discussion about whether training should be voluntary or mandatory: "Many interviewees were concerned with the attendance at the training and believed that the training should be mandatory to ensure that you reach those that most need the training" (*).
- Lack of specific work with men and masculinities (P2, T1, T2): "The main gap between the design and implementation of the men's group was the gap between hopes for the outcomes of the meetings, that is straightforward and long-term work, and the reality, that is the difficulties of a common ground" (*). "Another piece missing in the plan is that there are no actors identified as responsible for the problem, although some participants did point out the need to focus the work on men as the main responsible, highlighting the importance of specific campaigns and pinpointing its absence in the plan" (*). Training designed to raise awareness but not intended to reach out to potential perpetrators: "The course is not designed to target perpetrators" (*).
- Gaps found regarding training of key actors such as intermediaries between the victim and the unit, and positions of responsibility within each faculty and department (H3, P1). "No special necessary training for these actors who function as intermediaries between the victim and the unit" (*). "Lack of training in the responsible positions in the faculties and departments, since their role is vital in reporting incidents and also in executing measures/sanctions once the case has been settled. Implementers are aware of this gap and are already considering how to develop training for those in positions of responsibility" (*).
- When one of the training activities is required, it also presents gaps due to the fact that being online does not ensure that individuals are truly attending unless some kind of learning monitoring is included. "Feedback from the interviewed students indicates that some students don't actually participate in the online workshop. Due to the large number of students who have to participate in the session, it is easy turning off the camera and doing something else. There is no control or follow-up on active participation, other than an interactive quiz, and sanctions for students, who don't really actively participate do not exist" (*)
- Gaps in the material covered in the training: "Gap between the objectives and the implementation, and that the training needs to address gender inequalities more extensively to be successful" (T1).
- It is challenging to estimate the impact of training: "The main gap between design and implementation of the training is the question of impact. Many interviewees were worried that the training would not be sufficient to impact the organisational culture. They believe that the training must be repeated regularly" (T1).

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In terms of **communication and awareness,** the most notable gaps are described as follows:

- Institutional responses are unknown for a significant part of the university community (H1, H3, P2, P3, P5, P10, P11). The fact that some of these institutional responses are quite recent must also be considered to determine why they are unknown to the RPO community.
- The information disseminated is very limited and/or does not include details about the procedure (P5, P6, P10).
- Lack of consideration on how to communicate the measure to the various target audiences: "There is no attention on how to communicate effectively about the [institutional response] to different target groups or how to build ownership for work against inappropriate behaviour, harassment and bullying, which is a challenge in a large university" (P3).
- Only one of the institutional responses included a communication strategy, although it has not been implemented yet. In another case, it is noted that there are communication activities included on paper but also not implemented yet.
- It is unclear if the institution's response is communicated to new employees.

In relation to the **framework and the types of gender-based violence covered** by institutional responses, gaps between design and implementation have also been identified:

- There have been cases in which, despite being measures that cover many forms of gender-based violence, the university community interprets them as measures against harassment. "Implementers consider that all types of violence can be reported, but the word "harassment" in the name of the service can lead to misunderstandings for potential users" (H3).
- Measures where the definition and types of gender-based violence are unclear: "An important factor that might stop potential users from reporting cases to the [institutional response] seems to be the failure to specify the types of cases the [institutional response] tackles. Sexual harassment, discrimination and mobbing are not defined in the [institutional response] (...), and the [implementers] themselves do not seem to share a common understanding of these phenomena." (P10).

Main takeaways of the section on ideas

- Overall, the institutional responses do not develop an implementation strategy or dedicated specific action plans. In some cases, this absence of strategy is perceived as a form of flexibility. Nevertheless, a strategy is needed to focus on achieving the stated aims.
- A combination of top down - with clear specifications - and bottom-up - promoting active participation and appropriateness-strategies - as well as one which centralise and harmonise the response at the RPO level with one which decentralise the implementation for reaching out the different campuses, faculties

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or departments, seems to contribute to more effective implementation.

- External partnerships are used to different degrees either to allow for the provision of services on behalf of an under-resourced responsible unit, or as an important aid to it.
- The following frames have been identified: 1) Human Resources; 2) Gender Equality; 3) EDI frame (equality, diversity and inclusion). The Human Resources frame tends to explain the gender-based violence problem as something that occurs because of bad working environments which affects certain individuals, instead of structural inequalities and unequal power relations (more frequent under the gender equality and diversity frame).
- It seems necessary to overcome the incident driven approach and encourage RPOs to confront gender-based violence through a structural approach and the “action plan” tool and its associated methodology and resources.
- Some myths, beliefs, and wrong perceptions are perceived as affecting implementation and effectiveness of institutional responses. Conceiving the problem as an individual issue instead of a structural issue, or as a problem that does not occur so much among highly educated people, occurs only among students, or because of a pressure for “gender correctness”.
- When institutional responses provide training activities, a debate has arisen concerning whether this training should be mandatory or voluntary. Only one of the measures analysed includes mandatory online training for students, and its impact on individuals is difficult to assess.
- Generally, these institutional responses mention an intersectional approach, both in the design and in the implementation process. However, instead of intersectionality, institutional responses acknowledge the existence of discrimination based on different grounds but the interaction among factors is not tackled.
- Large gaps between what is on paper and what is actually implemented have been identified. This fact underscores the importance of monitoring and also establishing periodic evaluations of institutional responses.

4.4. FACILITATING & HINDERING FACTORS

First, it is worth noting that several circumstances have been highlighted both as facilitating and hindering factors (H1, P4, T1, T2), specifically: being a small university and having informal pathways or short distance between actors, as it easily enables networking but also poses a challenge to confidentiality; being a private university, as it might have less bureaucratic rigidities but it also falls onto more mercantilist objectives; The COVID-19 pandemic has also been mentioned as having both positive and negative impacts (more uptake in online activities versus drop of personal relations and networks).

In addition to what was collected in each of the case study reports, a participatory session was facilitated by the UCM as part of one of the helpdesks for analysis in May 2022, to share and collectively discuss the national researchers’ perceptions regarding the facilitating and hindering factors (figures 10 and 14 below).

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4.4.1. Facilitators

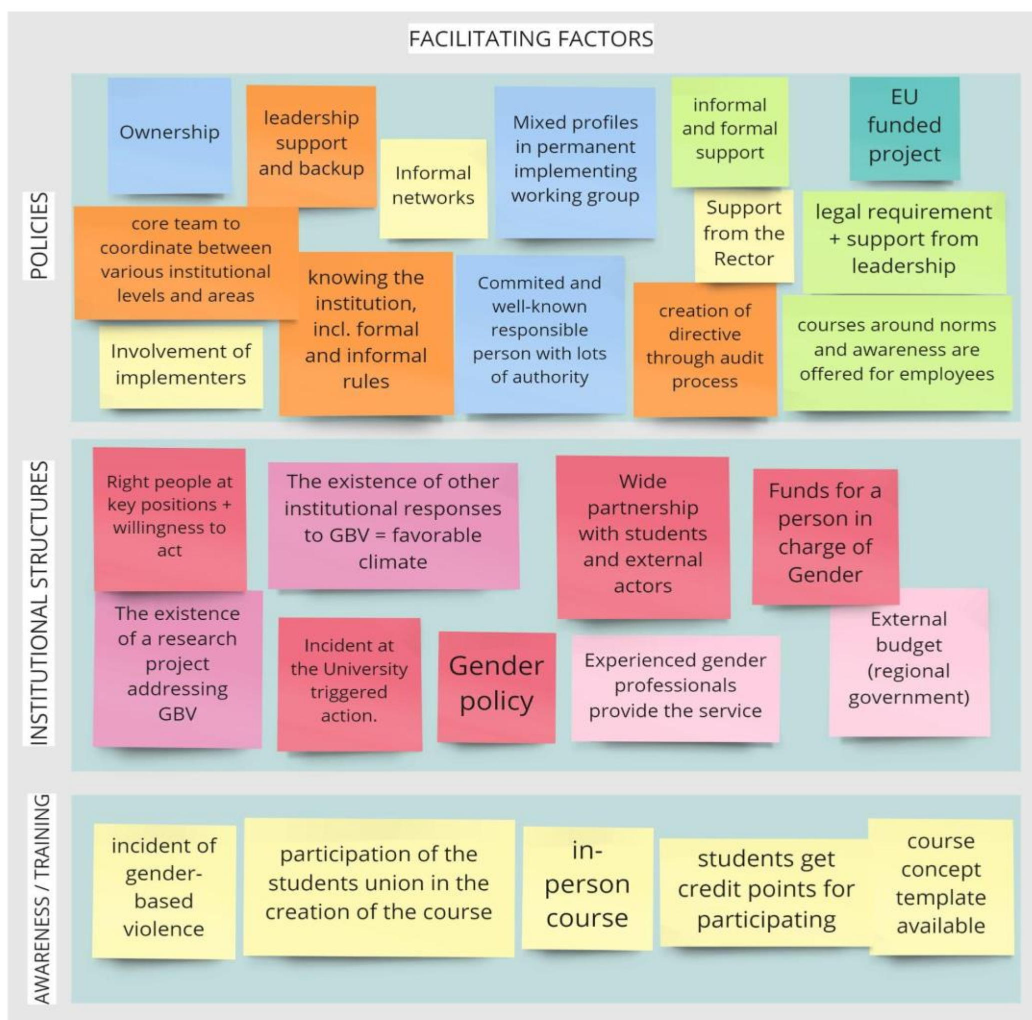

Figure 10. Miro board with results of participatory discussion on facilitating factors

Facilitating factors linked to external factors / general context

The most mentioned is the international, national or local **socio-political context and societal change** (H1, H2, H3, P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, T1), also named as "favourable momentum" and change of mentality. "Increased cultural sensitivity to the phenomenon, mainly in younger generations, has contributed to more frequent problematizations and reporting of incidents" and also facilitates developing activities "from below, (...) from the student positions" (P8); "public and open communication of real incidents in academia facilitated policy discussions" (P6). It seems clear that "the general societal atmosphere has been crucial (...) to take up these issues on the agenda" (P3) and helps to change the organisational culture (H3). In one institution this has been highlighted as being a shared perception of both staff and students: Perception that "people are ready for it, mentally prepared for it. People have started to realise that it's a problem, not only in academia but in general" (P8). Within these societal changes, the rise of feminist activism and the influence of #**MeToo** has been singled out as notably relevant (H1, P1, P6, P9, T1). It has

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been stated to make the role of the equality officers more accepted, put pressure on organisations to respond to gender-based violence and provide lessons learnt. There is also a particular mention of the role of younger generations (H3, P8) and strong local anti-violence network (H2).

The second one is the **support from national or regional government** (H1, P1, P2, P8, P9), mainly referred to financial support from the ministerial level or regional government, which fostered first steps, facilitated the signing of agreements, helped fighting the lack of institutional budget and served to dodge potential resource's conflicts. Related to this, having a **governmental mandate and guidelines** was also mentioned in two cases: "Detailed legal requirements with structure, topics to address: no negotiation needed so it makes the drafting easier" (*).

The **EU instruments and projects** have been mentioned in four cases (H3, P7, P8, P9), linked to national and international instruments, EU instruments and Science and HE policies and Plans, including the HR Excellence in Research award. Within this, it has been mentioned: Adaptation to the EU framework with respect to gender-based violence, mentioned in different ways in two cases, as measures necessary to meet EU requirements for applying for projects, or as measures that are embedded in European research projects; involvement with EU projects like UniSAFE or others "reinforces the signal that action is needed"; requirement to have a GEP for accessing funds from Horizon Europe programme.

The Covid-19-related context was also mentioned as facilitator, as more students attended the online training (T2).

Facilitating factors linked to the institutional set-up and culture

The **institutional support and political willingness** and endorsement of governing bodies, authorities, decision makers, top management / administration was the most frequently mentioned factor (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P11). This confirms the idea that governing bodies are seen to play a decisive role in steering the agenda, paving the way for the institutional acceptance that gender inequalities must be tackled (Palmén and Kalpazidou, 2019). As seen in a majority of cases, this has a number of advantages, such as that it can be easily communicated to all decision makers, that it facilitates accountability, it gets gender equality and diversity "anchored" in the highest leadership (P9), and consolidates the "institutional readiness (...), will of faculties and other organisational units" (P11).

Having a **favourable environment** or "enabling institutional environment" (H1, H2, H3, P2, P4, P6, P10, T1), is also key, if it is a "favourable environment with formal and informal external and internal partnerships" (H3). The favourable environment can be linked to the existence of other institutional responses to gender-based violence or to structural features such as: a) Being a young institution, which might be a "beneficial aspect in terms of gender issues" (*), or having a new organisational design and set-up, seen as an "opportunity for building a whole new organisational culture" (*); b) Being a small institution, because it is easier to weave informal networks and alliances, because of "the sense of community and closeness that allows networking" (*) (although this is also mentioned as hindering), or

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because of the short communication channels and the non-hierarchical (informal) communication between actors that "facilitates the implementation of value-based practices like gender equality, open communication, democracy and respect" (P6); and c) Being a private university, as decisions can be taken quickly, with less bureaucracy.

Also, when talking about the favourable environment, **partnership** is one of the two Ps (together with policies) that has been pointed out as an enabling factor in itself, mentioned as such in half of the cases (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P7, P9, T2). "Widening and strengthening institutional relations and partnership was stressed out as a facilitating factor", particularly: partnerships with specialised services/resources; exchange with actors and formal and informal networks -external and internal-, with key departments (although "not important on paper"); networks among universities against gender-based violence, defined as "vital"; Student Union as an active partner reaching numerous student associations; or agreement with a governmental body.

Informal settings and processes were pointed out in three cases (H2, P5, P7), related to: informal processes that allow quick reactions and light-weight actions, giving a low profile to the case but still properly covering protection; informal settings, like having the response as an experiment within a project. This allowed "sidestepping the administrative hurdles that officially establishing such an institutional would have confronted" (*); Informal set-up and internal collaborations are seen to sustain implementation when there is no top management support.

Having a **long history of gender equality** in institutional documents and agenda was mentioned in two cases (P3, P9). Other facilitating factors mentioned here are: having a "close" space "not as institutional as the gender equality structure" (H1); multiple entry points to report an incident (P9); trust in the institution (P4). In addition, during the participatory helpdesk session, two national researchers mentioned how having had an incident of gender-based violence at the institution served as a trigger for action.

Facilitating factors linked to actors

The most mentioned (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P7, P9, P10, T1) are the three intertwined essential aspects described in the actor's section: **volunteering, personal activism and feminist beliefs**, defined as "crucial". These volunteer actors and proactive feminist faculty, especially early career scientists, have been described as "eye-openers" or "influencers" leading change. During the participatory helpdesk session, this factor was also generally described as "involvement of implementers". This covers a wide range of people and status, such as: having a feminist director, which was singled out as the main facilitating factor in two cases ("The fact that the Equality Unit is led by an experienced feminist scholar with strong ties to the government team can also be cited as a factor contributing to its success" [*]); having feminist and volunteer students, which puts pressure on faculty to devise a solution; having a student union self-defined as feminist.

Having knowledgeable actors with **gender expertise** was the second most mentioned (H1, P1, P2, P3, P9), confirming what other studies show regarding how integrating gender experts into the project is seen to have an effect on their quality (Palmén and Kalpazidou,

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2019). The general expertise also includes having good knowledge of: actors and institutional functioning, including formal and informal rules, as it “helps define how ambitious they can be” (*); the research and the higher education sector, “to convince stakeholders to comply with the requirements” (*).

Given that facilitators -as any contextual factor- are never isolated but rather interacting factors, a clear link between the previous two arises: “Many interviewees stressed **the importance of having the right people in the right places**. People working in the field attributed the scheme’s successful design and implementation to the willingness and competence of a few key people. Is the system’s sustainability threatened if the dedicated personnel change? In this respect, one should recall that deans and rectors only hold their posts for a limited number of years” (H3). With respect to intersectional aspects concerning this, having hired a Black advisor made the number of complaints about racism increase in one case.

Informal networks (H2, P1, T1) are defined as an encouraging factor, “not just facilitating but indispensable”, mentioning the importance of having “good relations” with key actors, and networks with professors and aware agents.

Having **working groups** was also mentioned in three cases (P2, P5, P9) as a “sounding board for different voices (...). The cooperation and exchange of the different groups of people is a strong facilitating factor for the implementation” and contributes to engaging actors to be “involved at different levels”, fostering ownership (P9).

Two other factors were highlighted here (P1, P6): having an external actor for implementation, which avoids power conflicts and excessive bureaucracy; and the role of an engaged communication department to disseminate information.

Facilitating factors linked to ideas and strategies

Having a general and settled frame of **policies** was emphasised in three cases (H3, P3, P7), related to: having the measure / response enshrined in the institutional gender policy, “which provides a framework for action and a space for annual reporting”; progressive frames “upholding the [institutional] ideals (...) enables other actors than feminists (...) to relate to the mission and the aims of the [institutional response]”. Having a policy frame “not focused only on gender and women was taken up by some interviewees as a facilitating factor”.

Other facilitating factors mentioned here are: upholding a **participatory approach** and being inclusive (P2, P5); having the measure linked to evidence-based research (T2); or having official accreditation of training (T2). Linked to prosecution, the acknowledgement of guilt and accountability for misconduct facilitated disclosure of other cases as well as self-observation of own behaviour (P6).

The figures below show the total number of times that these factors have been mentioned.

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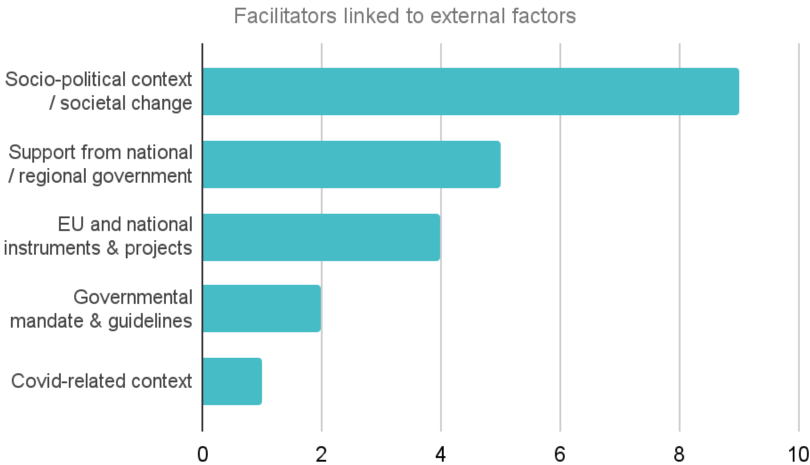

Figure 11. Main facilitators regarding external factors

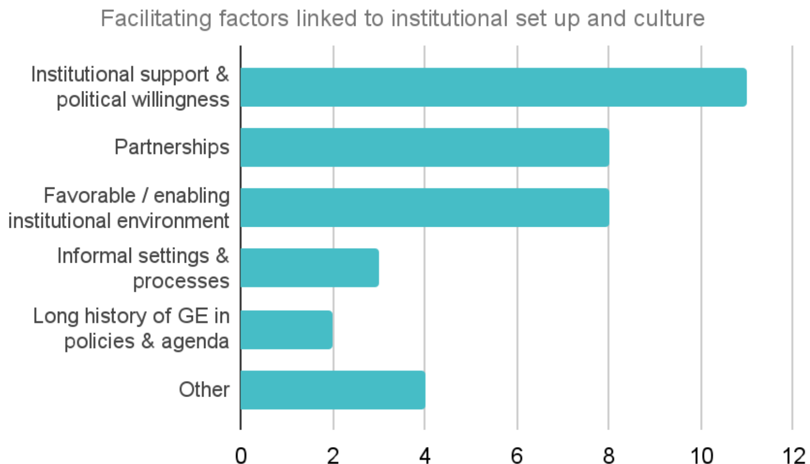

Figure 12. Main facilitators regarding institutional set up and culture

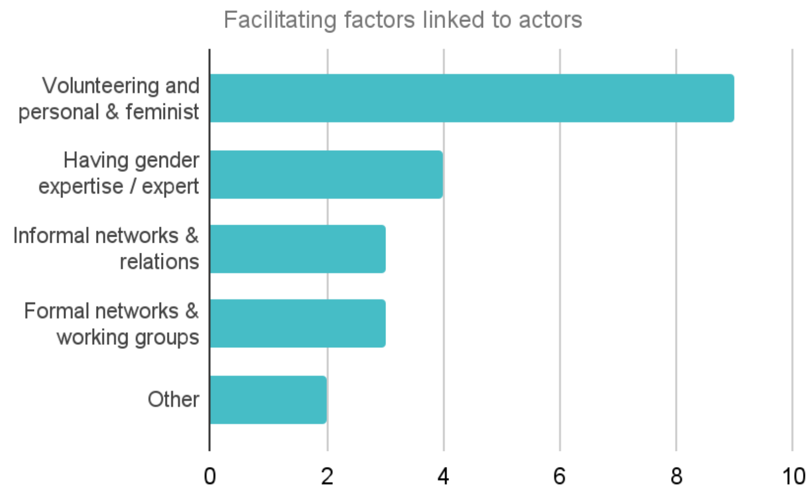

Figure 13. Main facilitators regarding actors

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4.4.2. Obstacles

Different obstacles to the implementation of the designed measures have been identified in the report as well as in the participatory session with national researchers (figure 14). All these hindering factors, as well as the remaining issues mentioned in this report, must be understood within the different contexts of each country and the organisational culture of universities. Some of the identified obstacles are highly particular to their contexts, while others have been observed in a variety of cases, indicating that some of the barriers to the implementation of measures against gender-based violence are of a common and generalised character.

At the end of this section there is a special subsection on factors that make it difficult for victims to disclose incidents of gender-based violence within the academy, although it should be made clear that all hindering factors have a detrimental effect on victims' and survivors' potential to speak out and/or fill complaints. In that subpart, we present the hindering factors identified in the case study reports that are obviously associated with victims' refusal to disclose incidents.

Hindering factors linked to the context

In countries where **anti-feminist and anti-gender narratives** are gaining popularity, the political atmosphere at the national level is cited as the primary hindrance. This affects implementation even more negatively when the top management of the university is aligned with anti-gender views. In this sense, it can be asserted that insufficient institutionalisation of equality and anti gender-based violence policies make them vulnerable to fluctuations in political trends, most notably in light of the growing anti-feminist and anti-gender discourses around Europe.

Noteworthy is the impact of the pandemic caused by **COVID-19**, as a factor that has hindered both the design and drafting processes of some measures and the implementation itself, especially given that regulations around health have forced the entire procedure to be conducted in virtual surroundings. Thus, COVID-19 has been highlighted as a hindering factor due to preventing discussions and engagement of participants (P9, T2) and making it more difficult to assist victims in an online setting (H2, T2).

Hindering factors regarding actors

As has been emphasised, implementation is frequently dependent on the **voluntarism** of staff members. This is both a feature that helps implementation due to the high level of dedication of these actors, and a factor that hinders implementation due to the fact that these individuals participate in their spare time and without economic or academic incentives: "Dedicated or voluntary work against harassment and bullying is seldom considered a merit in career progression" (P3).

In terms of actors who are directly involved in the implementation, in some cases, it has been observed as a significant hindering factor the insufficient or lack of expertise in gender-based violence within actors involved in the implementation or lack of proper involvement among members of commission or groups established (e.g., P9, P10).

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Other obstacles identified are: The temporary presence of the **students** in the university, which makes it challenging to engage them further (H1, P3, P4). In some cases studied, it was emphasised the passivity in the face of gender-based violence among RPO's community or the lack of interest of the community (e.g., P6, P7). The latter can be related to the competitive atmosphere, where non-academic subjects are unappealing. Lack of ownership by the university community could also be considered a hindering factor that prevents broader participation.

Hindering factors concerning institutions

Within the institutional features, the **lack of sufficient resources** allocated has been noted as one of the major hindering factors (H1, P1, P2, P5, P7, P9, P11, T1). For proper implementation, sufficient financial, human, temporal, and spatial resources must be available. It is worth noting that in some cases, when the institutional responses to gender-based violence are implemented relatively effectively, the number of incidents reported might increase (e.g., P1, T1) and therefore it is important to allocate adequate resources to cope with this increase in the number of reported cases. As described in the section on available resources, there are some measures for which no resources have been allocated or the budget is insufficient for the duties they have to perform. Therefore, one of the main hindering factors is related to the limited or not budget at all and/or limited personnel devoted to the implementation and provision of services. In terms of human resources, the providers, when there is someone specifically hired for this task, often have a heavy overload of work. Time is also a scarce resource, and this hinders implementation too: "Processing complex cases properly demands time, and time is a limited resource in academia" (P3).

Implementation may also be hindered based on the position or department in which the institutional responses are embedded. This may make the implementation process more difficult. For instance, due to a lack of or a limitation in the competencies required to carry out specific activities and to integrate features into the measure which would strengthen its sustainability (e.g., P7, T2). "The location under professional services can be a hindering factor, e.g., for the academic accreditation of the course or by the fact that the content is not protected by academic freedom." (T2)

It is noteworthy that the **hierarchical structure** hinders the involvement of different groups among the university community: "One of the gender equality specialists interviewed (…) explained that it could also be challenging to raise gender equality issues as a civil servant around academics, as academia is characterised by power differences. When asked to elaborate on this, [they] answered: *'certain groups in the academic hierarchy have more space to speak up, so it is really a norm, who gets to sit at the top of some kind of norm pyramid here and who gets to speak out, who speaks out and who speaks out very critically against this so (they) both take and get that space*'" (P4).

In some cases, potential contradictions and overlaps arise from different institutional levels (H2, P4, P5, P8, P10). Contradictions come from university-wide measures and faculty-level responses: "Another factor that can potentially hinder the implementation of university measures is the existence of the aforementioned measures at individual faculties. However,

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this factor was not explicitly mentioned by the interviewed actors." (P8). In other cases, the institutional response somehow overlaps other institutional responses and projects addressing gender-based violence. Moreover, different involvement among departments and faculties results in different support and assistance to victims depending on who and where they ask for help within the same institution.

Bureaucratisation has been mentioned in three cases (H1, P3, P6): Some procedures become excessively bureaucratic, making implementation problematic and, in some cases, functioning as an institutional resistance as illustrated hereafter. "*Too much paperwork does not protect persons rather creates aimless process*" (*). In relation to this, the language used in the policy document was identified as one of the hindering factors because excessive bureaucratic language hinders understanding and implementation.

Informal rules and procedures also arise here. As it has been mentioned, informal rules and structures might contribute to a faster response to victims. Nevertheless, in some cases, informal rules could be hindering implementation for different reasons. On The one hand, informal procedures could be more person-dependent; on the other hand, it is also important to highlight that informal procedures might become undocumented, leading to information loss and hindering the exchange of best practices. It has been observed that informal rules leave the institutional response vulnerable to personnel changes: "while the small pathways and informal networks are good for facilitating change and seeking support in management it is also a fragile system as it is very person-dependent and vulnerable for personnel changes in the organisation" (P4).

In terms of training, as reflected in figure 14 below, there is a discussion regarding whether training should be voluntary or mandatory for university groups, with a focus on students in most cases. Only one of the examples includes a mandatory training requirement. In the remaining institutional responses that include training, **low training attendance** is one of the obstacles to implementation. Therefore, numerous arguments have surfaced in various contexts proposing that the training be mandatory. In any case, it is considered that providers and implementers should receive gender-based violence training.

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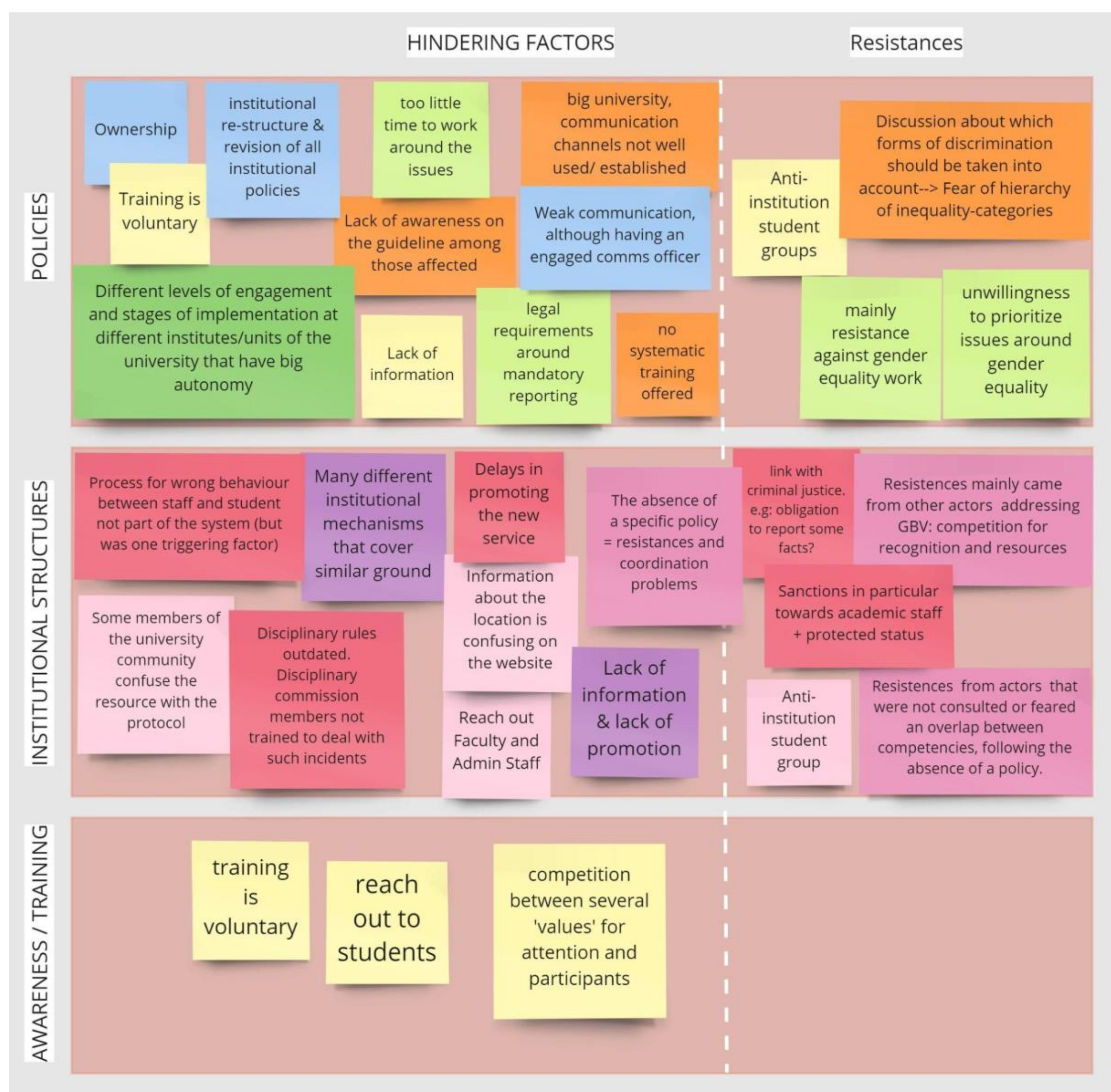

Figure 14. Miro board with results of the participatory discussion on hindering factors.

As mentioned in the section on communication (4.1.6), there are cases when the information being distributed about the institutional response is insufficient or even unclear, or is perceived as difficult to find (e.g., H1, P3, P10). This feature presents a significant hindering factor affecting different types of measures, as shown in figure 14, because effective implementation of institutional responses is related to the dissemination of information about the measure. That is, implementation requires that the institutional responses are known by the university community. And in the majority of the cases, the **institutional responses remain unknown to a significant part of the RPO community**.

Only a few measures have a transparent **monitoring** mechanism, but none of them include an evaluation procedure. It is critical to evaluate institutional responses in order to determine their level of efficiency and to address unanticipated problems or failures. As a result, one of the factors hindering implementation is the absence of mechanisms for evaluating the

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analysed institutional responses. Inadequate monitoring or lack of planned evaluations is also a hindrance because it limits the accumulation of knowledge about the measure.

Moreover, a **lack of strategy in implementation** is a hindering factor shared by many of the institutional responses analysed.

Finally, it is worth noting that in some cases, the public controversies mentioned in the various reports were identified as a factor that facilitated the design and approval of the measures, whereas in others, they were referenced -by implementers- as a factor that hindered the implementation of the measures by diminishing the credibility of the institution and the institutional responses under analysis.

Hindering factors in reporting: why victims/survivors do not report?

Most of the institutional responses analysed attempt to break the **culture of silence** regarding gender-based violence within academia. Despite #MeToo and institutional responses, gender-based violence and especially sexual harassment are considered as sensitive topics[8] within academia.

> "Sexual harassment was described by some of the interviewees as a taboo within academia. The previously quoted gender equality specialist used the following terms to describe "the culture of silence" around these issues: '*I think that sexual harassment is one of the most sensitive issues, and I find it much more difficult to talk about sexual harassment in certain places than talking about equal opportunities from a more intersectional perspective, based on the different grounds of discrimination. I don't find that as sensitive as talking about vulnerability, harassment, who is vulnerable to what kind of sexual harassment and violations in academia'"* (P4).

Findings from the UniSAFE survey (Lipinsky et al., 2022) in 46 participating universities and research organisations in 15 countries in Europe, show the main reasons why victims do not report incidents of gender-based violence:

[8] "Sensitive topic" is taken from Lee and Renzetti (1990).

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Figure 15: UniSAFE survey: Reasons for not reporting incidents of gender-based violence. Source of this graph: Lipinsky et al. (2022)

Concerning the case studies analysed, in spite of the institutional responses that have been put into place, it is important to underline and understand the following factors that make it challenging for victims to report incidents. Some of them could be considered structural factors in academia, while others are clearly related to gaps or failures in the measures adopted and implemented:

First, **mistrust and fear of reprisals** have been mentioned in different case studies as hindering factors for reporting incidents (P1, P3, P4, P8, P10): “Among other things, fear of reprisals and negative consequences for one's work and study situation prevent victims from reporting” (*); “Lack of trust in the system and fear of consequences if alleged harassment and bullying is reported, leading to underreporting of harassment and bullying. What actually will happen after reporting experiences of harassment and bullying is not very clear” (*).

As mentioned before, **academic hierarchical structures and power relations** operate as a hindering factor because victims/survivors of gender-based violence find it especially difficult to report when the perpetrator is in a position of authority over them, and they believe that reporting will negatively affect their studies or academic career. Therefore, these relationships of dependency work as obstacles to implementing any measure to address gender-based violence within academia.

> “A fundamental obstacle to solving various problems students face is the fear of possible undesirable consequences (bullying by teachers, interruption of studies)” (P8)

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> "[Power relations] as hindering implementation in any sense, but for one participant who explained how it is still preventing people from disclosing or reporting incidents. *They just feel their voice wouldn't be heard or the other person who is invariably in a more powerful position would be believed, which is sad, you know, it's kind of sad. But unfortunately, that culture still exists*" (P2)

> "When it comes to violence perpetrated by professors, it is more difficult for them [students] to reach the [institutional response], except when incidents are matters considered 'serious' or complaints presented collectively by groups of female students (...): *It is very difficult for an individual student to denounce a professor, it has to be something very serious already*'" (P1).

In relation to this last comment, it should be noted that the lack of trust or protection that students may feel makes it significantly more difficult to report incidents considered "minor", and only a small proportion of "severe" cases are ever disclosed.

Moreover, another issue to consider is the lack of protection that **vulnerable groups** may feel within the university. As illustrated in the research carried out within UniSAFE including in-depth interviews with researchers (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič & Blažytė, 2022) the intersection in terms of gender, race/ethnicity/migrant status, and sexual orientation considerably increases the risks of gender-based violence due to the dependence on a supervisor or manager, powerlessness, sexist and racist attitudes and prejudices, mistrust in testimonies, and a lack of knowledge regarding instruments and opportunities to report gender-based violence. Likewise, employment on temporary or short-term contracts indicates vulnerability and unsafety related to the precarious status within the RPO. In terms of intersectionality, the **failure to apply intersectionality** is one of the variables that hinders the possibility of reporting incidences of various forms of violence.

Another potential hindering factor is related to the possibility of **second-level victimisation processes,** that is, fear of suffering (more) violence after reporting an incident: "fear that others might use that at some point as an attack or a threat" (H1).

Regarding students, it is also worth considering when academic staff are a part of the investigative units or commissions. In these cases, concerns may arise regarding the academic **staff's impartiality** if the perpetrator is another professor (e.g., P10).

As noted in the section on gaps, the **unclear or ambiguous reporting procedure** (P2, P4) is one of the factors that could hinder victims from filling a complaint.

It is worth mentioning the **fear of information disclosure**, that is, fear that confidential information will not be completely protected or being concerned about the number of actors involved in the investigation (or the formal procedure) and therefore, that others within the organisation will know the identity of the person/s reporting (P4, P7). **Re-victimization** may result through procedures that include multiple units or departments in the investigation of incidents (e.g., P9)

In addition to mistrust and re-victimization, there is also the possibility of having to deal with **victim-blaming** narratives (P6).

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In one of the cases, it was highlighted the fact that the information about the types of gender-based violence that the institutional response tackles is not clear or even not included in the documents and information available. In relation to that, undoubtedly, one of the elements to make it challenging for victims to disclose gender-based violence is the **difficulty in identifying** and characterising it (P4). Consequently, training and awareness programmes are required.

Regarding targeted audiences, the fact that academic staff members do not consider themselves to be potential users is one of the factors that contributes to the complexity of the implementation process: "lack of identification by academic staff as users of the resource and, to a lesser extent, by administrative staff." (H1)

It is also important to note the **challenges for bystanders** or actors who could act as a link between the victim and the service established.

> "The main challenge expressed concerned how to both comply with the duty to notify management upon suspicion of abuse without undermining the confidentiality of the person who may have confided in them. This uncertainty, which many of the interviewees addressed can lead to unintended passive academic leadership despite expression of a strong commitment to gender equality issues and a zero-tolerance politics against sexual harassment" (P4).

Furthermore, reasons why victims/survivors do not report are in many cases deeply connected to the level of implementation of different Ps, especially protection and prosecution. On the latter, **concerns regarding perpetrators** arise as hindering factors for reporting. In this sense, when it comes to dealing with student offenders, it is simpler to undertake disciplinary and sanctioning actions than when dealing with academic or administrative employees, since it can lead to legal labour disputes. In the case of academic staff, moreover, certain institutional resistance to deal with incidents (or apply sanctions) could arise when the perpetrator is a professor with a high reputation or great ability to procure funds (related to projects or agreements) for the RPO.

> "How difficult it is to implement certain measures due to the university structure, especially when it comes to disciplinary measures towards perpetrators and/or measures to protect victims of violence in a university institution" (H1).

> "With professors who have a lot of money and power as the head of department and who are the subject of a complaint, it is difficult to enforce sanctions. In this case, the policy is not sufficient as it is '*just a paper*'" (P5).

> "It is worth mentioning how difficult it is to implement certain measures due to the university structure, especially when it comes to disciplinary measures towards perpetrators and/or measures to protect victims of violence in a university institution." (P1)

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4.4.3. Resistances

Resistances, defined as the efforts aimed at maintaining the status quo and opposing change (Lombardo and Mergaert 2013; Tildesley et al. 2021) are one of the most challenging aspects of implementation. As such, they deserve a specific section, being one of the main hindering factors for the implementation of institutional measures aiming at counteracting gender-based violence and sexual harassment, referred in all of the cases.

Identifying the actors that resist the implementation of institutional responses to gender-based violence is less straightforward than identifying the key actors in charge of it, given that resistance can be deployed by administrative or faculty staff, students, top managers, or members of the governing team (Tildesley, Lombardo and Vergé, 2021). This is confirmed by our analysis, spanning all RPOs: As seen in the map of concurrent analytical codes below (see figure 16), resistances **come from all groups of actors** (students, administrative and professional staff or academics) and can be directed either to the political core of the measure (political frames and ideas) or -when that might not be politically correct- towards the people, channels, means and structures serving the measure. Even in one case where there is a long history of work on equality issues, it was explicitly pointed out how resistances arose "when the work against sexual harassment became politicised" (*).

However, several national researchers have reported this section to be one of the most challenging to research and analyse. There were cases where the questions about resistances were left unanswered or responded to be not pertinent, found "most challenging", or responded with ambiguous answers or reticence (e.g., H1, H3), or just quickly skipped arguing difficulties to identify resistances or specific resistant actors (e.g., H1, T1).

In a majority of cases, it is stated by some informants that the implementation of the measure is not facing many resistances (H1, H2, H3, P2, P3, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11, T1). Nevertheless, this can be nuanced, given the final list of resistances compiled hereafter. Also, it should be taken into account that in some cases this is because it might be too soon to grasp their presence, as implementation is just starting, or some measures have not even started or are implemented "to a minimal extent", or just because it is a legal requirement (P2, P8, P9, P10, P11). Also, there are cases where participants mentioned to be expecting more pressure or counter-pressure than what actually happened (P8), to have some resistances but minor and easily overcome (H2), or to face general resistances to gender issues but not so much to the measure (H1).

Interestingly, in virtually all cases there was no resistance at the time of the measure's adoption, but they rather surfaced at the time of its implementation, taking several forms as described below, comprising both **passive and active resistances.** Among the former, we find examples like "not coming forward, not doing anything", being indifferent or not participating (e.g., P6, P9, T1), or even, "openly manifesting anti-gender convictions, latently appearing in the attitudes of the resistant persons" (P11). On the flip side, active ones include dissent, opposition, obstruction and non-compliance.

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An argument that cuts across several of the cases is that resistance is a "generational issue" (P1, P7, P8, P10), sustained by a group of "conservative old structures" that are highly resistant, or by some male-dominated units. These perceptions coincide in locating violence and resistance to a greater extent in senior faculty and those with higher positions within the university structure (P1, P7) while stating that younger generations are more "gender aware" (P7). They perceive that overcoming resistances comes hand in hand with a generational change, as seen in the concurrent analytical codes depicted in figure 15.

Resistances from students are notably focused on the insufficient scope of the measures (which in some cases are perceived as a box-ticking or window-dressing exercise), or on its flaws, like lacking an intersectional approach, hence not so much classifiable as resistances, but rather as criticisms and demands (e.g., H1, H2, P1).

The concurrent codes that emerge with the cross-analysis of the coding of the different cases show how resistances affect all instances of the organisations (actors, structures, organisational culture), as depicted in figure 16 below. This figure displays the codes grouped by colours: orange for those related to institutions, green for those related to actors, pink for those related to ideas and purple for those regarding the 7Ps. The yellow ones are context-related, while other colours are assigned to those codes that were not part of the original matrix and code tree. The figure also shows that, when talking about the 7Ps framework, resistances mostly arise around prevalence, protection, prosecution and partnership.

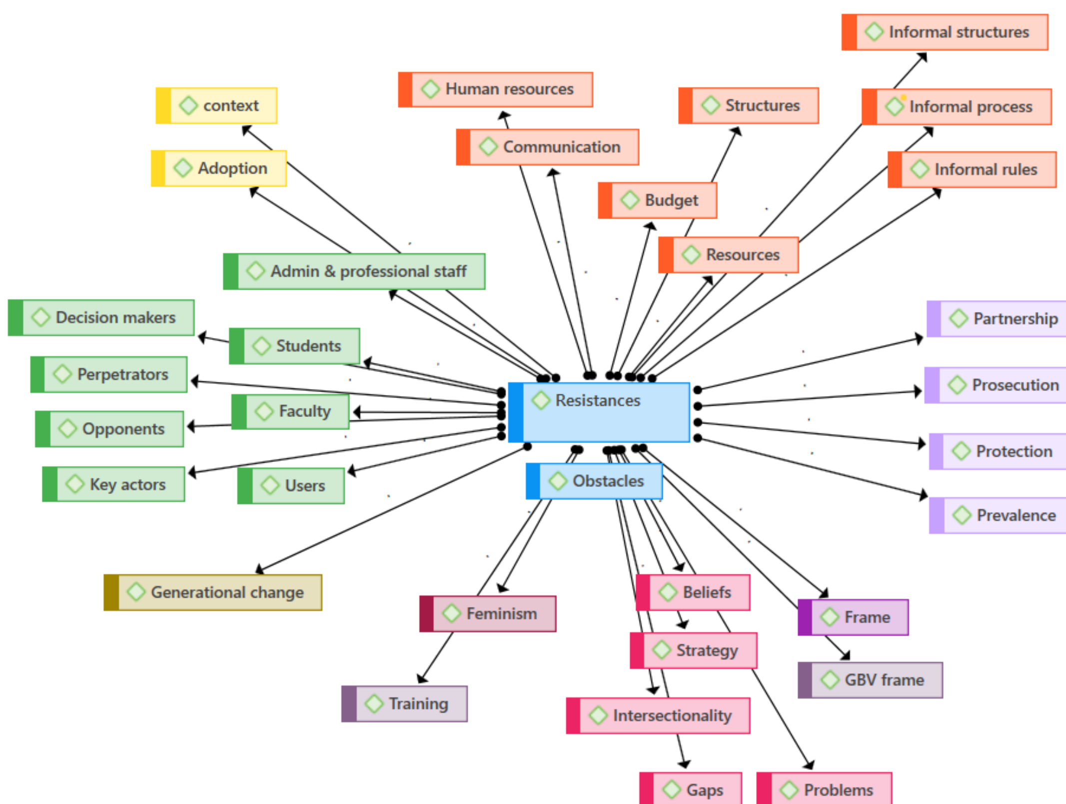

Figure 16. Map of concurring analytical codes with the code 'resistances'.

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Being aware that the distinction between individual and institutional resistance is somewhat fuzzy (Tildesley et al., 2021), we have tried to catalogue the different examples of resistances described in the case studies according to this primary division, as follows.

Institutional resistances

Starting from where the resistances are located or coming from, it is of interest to note that, in a few cases, participants described criticisms and resistances coming mainly from the rectorate or top management instances (e.g., P3, P5, P7) alleging different reasons, ranging from ownership issues to criticism to its scope, but in the end all of it leading to the avoidance of a more proactive approach.

On the next tier, one case reports to have resistances at departmental and faculty level that evade to notify cases when it affects their centres. Also, some measures seem to trigger more resistances than others at this level, for example, while demanding a public apology might be supported, proposals impacting organisational issues like changing teaching schedules would be opposed.

Besides this, other organisational resistances identified by participants are:

- **Not allocating sufficient resources** (H1, P1, P2, P7), as explained in section 4.1.5. Remarkably, when the measures do get some support, even scarce resources, some personal resistances arise through suspicious attitudes towards the reasons for that support.
- **Fear for the reputation** of the institution (as described in section 4.1.2. on societal context) (P2, P3, P8, P9) which might lead to leaving the issue unaddressed (particularly affecting prevalence). These fears are manifested regarding the uncertainty of what the measure could bring along, like an unexpected increase in the number of cases or having people “labelled”, and not knowing how to deal with that (P3, P8). They are also linked to the general human resistance to change, together with the general fear of the unknown -entrenched by the lack of awareness-, making people stick to the status quo and the known ways of doing things, avoiding taking in new ones (P2).
- Refusal or **reluctance to implement** from specific units or groups (H3, P3, P4) or delivering a superficial implementation. This is remarkably noted in training activities, which is a typical example of organisational resistance according to Lombardo & Mergaert (2013).
- **Non-prioritisation** (P4, P9). “Overall lack of prioritisation of gender equality and gender-based violence issues even though there is no resistance and things will get done” (P9), which creates delays and leads to failed implementation.
- **Excessive bureaucracy** as a structural element of the public university’s system impeding the implementation (H1, P6), hence serving the “patriarchal pot” within the organisation and leading to the evaporation of the measure (Longwe, 1997).
- **Non-collaboration** in partnerships that were believed “would go smoother” (H2).

One of the organisational aspects that demonstrates the thin line between the institutional and the personal resistances are the **hierarchical power structures**. Some of the

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interviewees who had worked on gender equality issues described that they were at times met with resistance when raising the issue of gender-based violence at different parts of the university: "*It's not that popular and the academy is a huge colossus and so much has been built up for so long that just seems obvious (...). Well, some people feel that you're just crazy if you think you're going to change it and you can't*" (P4).

Individual resistances

Looking at from who or from where are the individual resistances coming from -beyond the general remark pointed out above about how they might come from any university's group-, it has been highlighted in different cases that they mainly come from academic and administrative staff rather than students (H1, P1, P3, P4, P6, P8, P9, T1). Within these, we must especially stress out:

- Some decision makers or actors at top management level, showing both passive resistances such as not showing up to training (e.g.,T1) and active resistances like denying administrative workers access to the measure's presentation sessions, refusing to implement certain actions (e.g.,P1) or being arbitrarily resistant to some actions but not to others (e.g., P9). In one case, those who were outspokenly critical towards the measure had a higher position of influence on the matter than those who were more in favour of it (P4).
- Mid-level implementers (e.g., H1, P9), whose resistances in one case have been justified due to lack of recognition and lack of time and means that leads them to resist taking on more responsibilities. A relation can be made here between the typical institutional resistance to value and endorse gender equality work (although not mentioned as such in the case studies) and how this might lead to personal resistances to implement it to avoid overburdening.
- Heads of schools: These actors were particularly pointed out as more resistant in three cases (P2, P6, P8) especially more senior ones.
- Last, resistances posed by perpetrators (e.g., P1, P5, P6), denying the facts or rejecting and/or challenging the procedures and disciplinary decisions, or by the perpetrator's circle who also reject the case or are opposed to dismissal.

As for the **types of resistances** identified by interviewees, they can be grouped into two general categories, namely *(anti)political resistances,* which unfold through individual statements and attitudes that depoliticise gender or deny inequalities, and *(anti)intellectual resistances*, unfolded through manifestations of ignorance disregarding gender knowledge and feminist critical thinking (Pajares, 2018). Amongst the first, we can list:

- Statements that characterise equality issues as "superfluous" or "unnecessary" (H1, P1, P4, P7) and discourses that consider gender mainstreaming as "too political" (P4).
- Believing that the attention paid by the institution to gender-based violence issues is "excessive" or that "the problem is being magnified" (H1, P1, P8), claiming that the institution overstates the cases of violence. Even an interviewee of one case study claimed that the attention paid to the topic by UniSAFE's project (and by the institution) is somehow exaggerated. "[The interviewee] pointed out that this is just

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one of the many types of problems that the [institutional structure] is dealing with" (*).

- Considering the measures as a bureaucratic step towards correctness, where gender is considered as a "new fashion" (e.g., H1, P8). In this sense, the institutional response would be a reaction to a perceived pressure for "gender correctness", hence assessed as "exaggerated, even misguided".
- Mirage of equality and arguments around how "there is already gender equality" at the institution (e.g., P7).
- Politicising the discourse in a totally different direction, claiming that the measure is foreign or contrary to national values or identity (e.g., P11).

This type of resistances also encompasses the cases in which feminist activists are the target of the resistances (e.g., P3, P11) as the source of oppositional knowledge (Mackay, 2021), which is related to the credibility of the key actors and the "resistance to learn something from a feminist" (Lombardo & Mergaert, 2013:303). This can also be linked to a very different type of resistances that deals with the phenomenon known as "friendly fire" and that constitutes a cluster of resistances in itself (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022; Tildesley et al. , 2021). It is defined as the unintentional targeting of allies by "feminist academics and students who due to institutional mistrust, or lack of knowledge about the Unit's equality actions (…), express criticism about implementation and the Equality Unit", this is, "well-intentioned allies that nevertheless cause tensions or "friendly fire" (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022).

Regarding the *(anti)intellectual resistances*, the subtlest ones would be silence, disinterest, indifference and lack of involvement or participation, including passive engagement (P1, P4, P6, T1), even among actors that could be considered in principle like-minded. "Passive engagement could be noticed among the academic staff and in particular in the [group of implementers]" (P6). Others that have also been described (P2, P4, P8, T1, T2) are:

- Actors "paying lip service", this is, supporting in words but not in action, which can be referred to as "appeasement manoeuvres" (Pajares, 2018) or "procedures for diversionary action" (Longwe, 1997).
- Defensive attitudes of certain actors that deny their own lack of awareness or need of information, winding the debate through statements like "I'm not somebody who would be sexually violent towards other people".
- Active verbal disapproval during training or informative sessions.
- Signs of mistrust towards the institution under arguments of natural justice defence (concerns that natural justice will not be guaranteed).
- Fear of positive discrimination.

Other utterances of resistances come to the fore in more explicit and active ways through direct opposition (P1, P2, P9), like: individuals that "feel that the policy is forced on them" so they do not endorse the legal requirements, structure or topics to address; unwillingness to streamline the process, justified through procedural quibbles, or direct opposition or unwillingness to implement the disciplinary or protective measures advised; or hindering the investigation process of reported cases, for example by resisting the provision of documentation.

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Last, it should be noted that whenever the resistances have not been identified, it does not necessarily mean that there are not resistances, but that sometimes resistances may not become known to the implementers (especially resistances based on non-action), or whereby "those that were against the activities 'were sensible enough to keep it to themselves'" (T1).

How resistances are managed

Very few case studies reports included information on how these obstacles and resistances were managed by the institutions or the informants, so there is little information regarding possible counter-resistances to be deployed to counteract obstructing forces and drive the fight against gender-based violence. However, the following few insights were shared (P5, P7, P9):

- Using the "deep organisational knowledge to assert their interests and at the same time avoid potential conflicts in the process".
- Make "reference to existing legal framework was used as a strategy to fend off potential resistance".
- In unsupportive environments, subtler strategies are sought, like keeping a low profile, although this is depriving the key actors and services of visibility.
- Fostering an informal set up to sustain implementation, including both internal and external collaborations and partnerships.

Main takeaways of the section on facilitating and hindering factors:

- The facilitating factors are relatively even among helpdesks, policies and training programs, with slight differences in the emphasis put on specific factors, such as relying on expert professionals or partnerships in the case of helpdesks, or the special emphasis on formal and informal support when it comes to policies.
- There is a principal external facilitating factor spanning almost all cases related to the general socio-political context and the influence of feminist ideas and activism, very much contrasting with specific cases where the anti-gender backlash is acting as an important hindering factor.
- The most often mentioned internal facilitating factor is counting on the institutional support and political willingness of decision makers, followed by benefitting from the volunteer work and personal and feminist activism of committed actors.
- Regarding the 7Ps, partnerships have been pointed out as being a factor remarkably beneficial for implementation.
- Having informal settings and processes, as well as fluent informal relations among actors, are both facilitating factors allowing quick reactions (hence sometimes better ensuring protection) and better networking.
- Regarding obstacles and institutional resistances, the most common factor among the institutional responses analysed is the insufficient allocation of resources (budget, human resources, time, and space).
- In a number of cases, the institutional response was not yet widely disseminated,

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thus still unknown to part of the RPO community, and this fact becomes an additional hindering factor.
- Other factors that may hinder implementation are power relationships, especially regarding reporting incidents.
- Participants seem to struggle to identify resistances, probably because many of the responses are in the early stages of implementation, however,in the end, all reports show that resistances are present in one way or another at all instances and may be coming from all actors and institutional levels.
- Individual resistances come mainly from staff and focus on denying the need of gender equality related measures, either disregarding the facts or attempting to depoliticise the phenomenon of gender-based violence or the response to it. Either way, this leads to disengagement and denial of responsibility.

4.5. EFFECTS & CONSEQUENCES OF THE INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

Consequences and effects of gender-based violence for individuals have been analysed in-depth in the interview study by Pilinkaitė Sotirovič & Blažytė (2022), within UniSAFE. This section is focused on exploring the effects and consequences of the institutional responses for the RPOs in a structural way, but it must be interpreted in light of the findings of the aforementioned report, which presents the results of in-depth interviews with researchers who have experienced or witnessed gender-based violence. Also, the UniSAFE survey that aimed to determine the extent to which incidents of violence affect survivors' feeling of social exclusion, sense of safety, physical and mental well-being and whether it had consequences for their work or study (Schredl et al., 2022). As a result of the analysis of the case studies, both favourable and negative effects have been recognised. First of all, there is evidence of positive effects throughout the many aspects covered in this report to this point. In this section, the most notable and positive effects resulting from the implementation of the institutional responses analysed, are detailed:

Raising awareness about gender-based violence within academia: The existence of institutional responses to gender-based violence has brought to light the need to reflect on and address these problems inside academia, which is one of the most significant effects in driving structural change. This is crucial because, in certain situations, academia is often perceived as a place where such incidents cannot take place and, when incidents occur, the culture of silence prevails. Therefore, one of the most significant intangible impacts is that the mere approval of these measures dispels these erroneous beliefs and myths about the institution and puts the spotlight on the violence that exists within it, as part of society (H2, P6, P7, P11). For this effect to be accomplished, measures must be communicated to the university community; otherwise, the effect will be diminished. These effects have been expressed in different ways referring to visibility, awareness raising or the mere fact of generating debate and reflection:

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> "In terms of intangible impact, the fieldwork respondents agreed on the positive effect of the existence of the [institutional response] in making gender-based violence visible at the university, providing a basis to prevent it, and also standing as a source of solidarity with those exposed to various forms of gender-based violence and concerned about gender equality." (P7)

> "Participants stressed that the adoption of the [institutional responses] has already resulted in more discussions about sexual harassment in the university community: '*Well, we definitely raise awareness*'" (P11)

> "The [institutional response] and discussions about the document served as an education process to better understand the issue of sexual harassment." (P6)

> "Very important improvement that students can now recognise and explain their gender-based violence experiences with the correct terminology and they seek help." (P7)

The impact and effects of **training as a space to spur organisational culture change** and raise awareness have been pointed out in different cases, strongly associated with the effect described above:

> "An interviewee has experiences with regular and mandatory training in one department, [they] believe that this has influenced the organisational culture positively and that the staff members are reaping the benefits of their hard work." (T1)

> "Training for academic and admin staff as the preventive measure provided in-depth information to help recognise sexual harassment and learn about the support available" (P6)

> "The course had an impact on their sense of responsibility, their confidence to intervene in difficult situations and enhanced their knowledge on methods, how to best and safely respond as a bystander." (T2)

Another significant positive effect is having a formal framework in place, which **provides certainty and legitimacy** to the measures against gender-based violence and, consequently, implementers and providers of services can rely on rules in the face of potential resistance and opposition. That is, given the complexity of RPOs structures, institutional responses (particularly policies) provide some legal certainty when dealing with gender-based violence within the institution. Especially in the face of resistance that may be encountered when carrying out investigation of gender-based violence cases, or the resistance of the alleged perpetrators to the proposed measures or sanctions (e.g., P1, P5).

> "The interviewees, who put the [institutional response] into practice on a day-to-day basis mention that they use the document itself as legitimation. Unintentionally, the guideline serves to legitimise an intervention if the offender remains unreceptive to their misconduct and questions the intervention, e.g., a disciplining meeting about appropriate and non-discriminatory behaviour at the workplace." (P5)

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In some case studies (H1, P1, P2, P6), it was mentioned -by implementers and some potential users- that the implementation of institutional responses against gender-based violence increased the **sense of safety and protection among the respective RPO community**. Therefore, the institutional responses, specifically when they are effectively implemented, can convey the perception of the university as a safe space.

In some cases (P7, T1), measures have been related to a process of **empowerment** of gender-based violence victims and also implementers. That is, institutional responses themselves empower potential users, bystanders, and implementers, and it can be argued that this has the potential to be a strong influence in overcoming the culture of silence and the normalisation of gender-based violence within academia:

> "The training was also an empowerment initiative, that is, to empower victims to step up and complain, to empower the middle managers to act on gender-based violence cases and to empower the staff members to influence their working environment and take an active part in changing the culture." (*)

> "Empowerment is also a salient theme that was used to describe the implementation of the [institutional response]. Respondents unanimously mentioned in all the interviews that gender-based violence has gained visibility and has become identifiable due to the efforts of the Unit. This in itself is seen as empowering because not all universities (…) in the current climate can afford to have such a unit operating in their institutions." (P7)

Additionally, the favourable effects of anti gender-based violence policies are visible when incidents are reported and when the reporting prevalence increases with time. In other words, a measure is most effective when it encourages victims to access services and **report incidents, whether formally or informally** (e.g., H2, P1). **The absence of reported incidents does not indicate that gender-based violence has disappeared, but would rather indicate that the measure may be ineffective.**

> "The progressive growth in the number of cases reported is considered one of the successes of the [institutional response]." (P1)

> The institution "did not hide the cases of sexual harassment but recognised the overlooked problems openly. This helped to renew the institution, its leadership, management and make the procedures more transparent." (P6)

Another positive effect: if implementation is relatively effective, the measure can serve as an inspiration and guidance for other RPOs, that is, a way to exchange best practices with other institutions (e.g., H2, P1).

On the other hand, the **negative or undesirable consequences and effects** are closely correlated with actors' involvement and expertise, resources available, implementation gaps and hindering factors described above. The most significant negative effects allude to re-victimisation or even victim-blaming; lack of clear procedures that causes confusion for victims, implementers, and providers of services; the workload of those involved in implementation on a voluntary basis and the impact this has on these individuals; and the

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gaps that may result in victims' identities being exposed or known by too many actors involved. These main negative effects are listed below: inadequate implementation of protection and prosecution measures can have the impact of undermining the credibility of the institutional response and can also result in insecurity and **re-victimisation**. Possibilities of re-victimisation have been noted in a variety of ways in the different cases studies studied: including victims feeling that they are not being taken seriously, victims having to report their case to multiple actors, or the risk of the victim's name becoming widely known.

The fact that the majority of measures are under-resourced has a detrimental **impact on the effectiveness of implementation itself and on the actors who participate voluntarily** due to the time investment and emotional cost. As expressed in one of the cases: “Those interviewees that took part in organising the ‘grassroots’ meetings discussed how this work was time-consuming, as well as taking an emotional toll on them” (T1).

Procedures that are not sufficiently clear or involve many actors in dealing with a reported incident, have the effect of potentially **undermining the confidentiality of victim/s** and perpetrator/s information: “in the current setting a case file goes through too many individuals, undermining the anonymity of the complainant. It also runs the risk of deterring potential complainers who would feel insecure. An additional concern of the potential complainers is that once a legal process starts, the [institutional response] will no longer be able to provide support because the case will become beyond their jurisdiction” (P7).

Main takeaways of the section on effects and consequences

- The main positive effects of the institutional responses analysed are making visible and raising awareness about gender-based violence within academia.
- Institutional responses against gender-based violence could have a positive effect as a powerful tool to promote organisational culture change and empower individuals.
- The main undesirable effect is related to re-victimisation. Poor implementation of protection and prosecution actions might diminish the institution's credibility and lead to insecurity and re-victimisation.

4.6. 7PS FRAMEWORK

We close the presentation of results with a specific chapter on the 7Ps as the main UniSAFE analytical framework on institutional responses, despite being a cross-cutting frame and references having been made to the different Ps throughout the whole report. In this section, information around each P is organised as follows: First we provide an overview of what is officially or formally on paper, and then to go into what is actually implemented (or not) in general terms, as well as some general reflections on specific points that we think could be key for the analysis or for further reflection.

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4.6.1. Prevalence

Prevalence refers to data and data collection estimating the extent of gender-based violence, and ideally providing information on different forms of gender-based violence.

What we find **on paper,** or formally contemplated as part of the institutional responses analysed, is that four out of 16 cases (H3, P4, P6, P8) include regular surveys and/or incident estimate mechanisms, according to the case studies reports. Seven institutions set procedures for the recording of incidents or services provided, as well as regular or annual reports (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P5, P9). In one of these cases, the measure has promoted the creation of specific recording software. There are no other measures in place to monitor prevalence, and in almost half of the institutional responses (P3, P4, P7, P10, P11, T1, T2) this P is not addressed.

When going into what is actually **implemented**, we see that besides the above-mentioned surveys, in one case a large survey was conducted and published when the institution initiated sexual harassment responses in the mid-1990s, and today gender-based violence related issues are included as a specific section in institutional surveys that cover multiple topics, providing some indication of prevalence. The survey results are used as background data for addressing gender-based violence. Two other similar examples show that the responsible unit gathers some data on incidents, therefore measuring prevalence to a certain, but not full, extent (P6, P10). In two further cases, again some data are included in other related reports but not directly linked to the measure, like the institutional gender equality diagnosis or the general report of the Equality body (H1, P1).

We also find that in a couple of cases where survey results are being discussed internally, but the data are not widely shared or published yet, neither at the institutional level nor externally. This connects to what has been reported in some institutions regarding a gap in dissemination.

There are no assessments (or monitoring and evaluation results) on the implementation of those measures that address prevalence which were made available to our research.

Main insights in relation to prevalence:

- This seems to be **one of the Ps less covered in a systematic way**. Only very recently can we find surveys (with the exception of one case where a survey was carried out when the RPO initiated actions in this area). Surprisingly, there are not many consistent and regular statistics available nor ad hoc or specific recording mechanisms.
- The related measures are not connected with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms or reports on implementation, when they would help with datasets/baseline assessments.
- There is no clear mention or explicit information about the types of violence / types of cases addressed in those measures where surveys or other data collection mechanisms are in place.
- It would be interesting to delve into the symbolic and media use of data when they are scarce: If they are not consistent or well explained or communicated, they may

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be more easily used for "rumour-mongering" and inform resistant discourses, as they may, for example, over-visibilize those cases where there are female harassers to discredit gender power relations.

4.6.2. Prevention

Prevention refers to measures to promote changes in social and cultural patterns of behaviour and attitudes and may include, among other things, awareness-raising initiatives, the development of educational materials, and the training of professionals.

Considering what is **on paper**, prevention is covered in all institutional responses analysed. Formal and informal documents pay attention to prevention in different ways, either by pointing out that gender-based violence prevention is one of the main aims of the measure, by mentioning specific preventive actions or by assessing the importance of gender-based violence prevention in general.

If we focus on cases where preventive measures are included, it is worth noting that awareness-raising activities are the most frequently mentioned measures -in 15 of the 16 cases (all but one)- followed by training and seminars (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P11, T1, T2) and dissemination of information or other activities or elements related to communication (H2, P2, P3, P4, P7, P9, P11).

In terms of the **implementation** of the institutional responses, the following insights can be highlighted:

- The most widely implemented preventive measures are training activities. 13 out of 16 institutional responses analysed (H1, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11, T1, T2) included training targeting different groups in the university (mainly students). Although in some cases it is not included on paper, different trainings are developed in the implementation, albeit not always directly linked to the response itself but to other measures, like HRS4R related activities.
- Dissemination of information or other activities related to communication are mentioned in 11 case study reports (H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10). These activities include passive dissemination, that is, information about the institutional response has been disseminated on the official website or intranet; and/or active dissemination, information about the institutional response has been actively disseminated through other channels, including training and awareness-raising activities.
- Awareness-raising activities[9] have been implemented in six of the 16 cases (H2, H3, P1, P3, P8, P10), although in quite uneven ways. In one of the institutions this has been described as "rarely" taking place (P10), while other institutions seem to have

[9] The difference between awareness-raising activities and training activities is that "awareness-raising efforts aim to generate and stimulate sensitivity to issues related to gender (in)equality, while (gender) capacity building aims to strengthen people's knowledge and skills to engage with gender equality issues" (EIGE, 2022).

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quite a smooth implementation (e.g., H2, H3). In large organisations, there may be some very active departments in this respect (P3).

- The creation of educational materials has only been referred to in two cases (H1, H2).

Some **general reflections** and insights about prevention:

- In general, the institutional responses under analysis tend to be more focused on responding to incidents after they have occurred than on preventing them. The emphasis on prevention is more symbolic, but in practice the measures may not have a significant preventive effect. This could be related to the fact that the preventive measures lack a structural approach to tackle gender-based violence, tending to focus mainly on individual behaviours.
- While awareness-raising activities seem to be the most accepted or important ones when planned, they are the least implemented so far (see figure 17), which raises a question on the barriers they might be facing when they are being put in motion. Other activities, like training, are the most frequently implemented, at least at earlier stages of implementation (where several of the analysed responses still are).

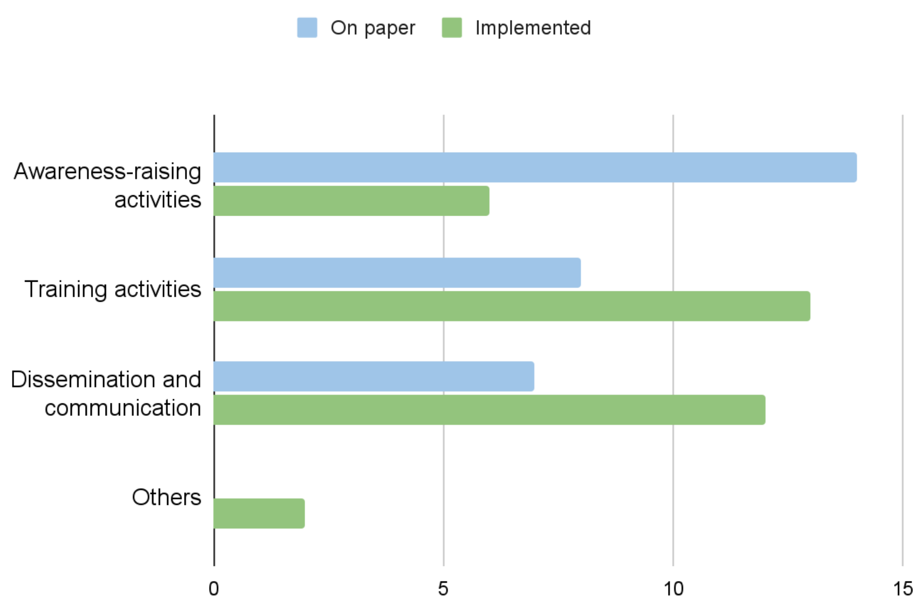

Figure 17. Type of preventive measures on paper and actually implemented

- Another point already stressed is that training is offered on a voluntary basis, with the exception of one case in which mandatory training is provided for students. As addressed in the section 4.3 on ideas, in some cases, participants suggested that training on how to respond to gender-based violence should be mandatory in order to promote a better awareness of RPOs' responses to combat gender-based violence and to involve the entire university community. It should also be noted that different reports describe training attendance levels as still low, on account of "extremely boring" content (P6) or seeming too patronising in its approach (P2).

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- Taking into account that most violence is committed by men, it is worth pointing out that only one of the institutional responses includes a specific preventive measure to work on alternative masculinities and involve men in combating gender-based violence.
- Although there are institutional responses that involve people in leadership roles in combating gender-based violence, there are no mentions of structural measures that seek to promote alternative leadership models in academic institutions. From the analysis it can be argued that the hierarchies and power relations within universities are elements that "enable" certain abuses by those in higher positions. Also, only in one case it has been reported that the top management has received training.
- There is no reference to any preventive measure with focused attention to specific situations common in academia such as: long-term dependency relations in doctoral supervision, conferences, field trips, etc.

4.6.3. Protection

Protection aims at ensuring the safety and meeting the needs of (potential) victims. Regarding the protective measures as they are **on paper**, we first find that there are four cases in which protection is not at all or barely addressed (4 out of 16). In the rest of the cases, protection is tackled to different extents. Particularly in seven cases, protection is part of the specific goals of the measure (H2, H3, P1, P3, P7, P8, P11), one of which employs an explicitly victim-centred working methodology.

- The specific actions that the institutions have reported to protect victims encompass measures like: relocation (in one case including transfer to another dormitory), prohibition of reprisal and protection against lay-off and retaliation for people reporting, covering security needs (including developing safe rooms during events in case of incidents or private rooms during interviews) and other precautionary measures[10] (not specified).
- With respect to clear processes, procedures and infrastructure for reporting and supporting (potential) victims, almost all of the institutional responses (H1, H2, H3, P2, P3, P4, P9, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11) include either establishing new structures or procedures or reinforcing existing ones. We find measures like: establishing an ombudsperson, providing advisory procedures and instructions on how to act, having the referral person and reporting procedure reinforced, putting in motion anonymous complaint mechanisms or other reporting mechanisms, ensuring information on available support, or enhanced and clear appointment of contact persons. In at least three cases investigation procedures are mentioned by the institutions as linked to protection, when procedures are more closely connected to prosecution (and a greater number of institutions mentioned having these procedures in place when talking about prosecution).

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[10] Precautionary measures, also known as interim measures or injunctive relief, are protective measures that can be taken once an incident has been reported and until there is a final decision regarding other disciplinary measures, in order to prevent further harm during the process and with the main aim of protecting the victim.

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- Only one institution has mentioned the importance of having both formal and informal processes and is actually working on their development.
- Only two institutions have mentioned having trained and/or required expertise of those responsible for designing and implementing these processes, procedures, and infrastructure, and for those acting as contact support points. This training/expertise refers to methodological support, training and guidelines to properly ensure victims' protection, and, in one case, it refers to specific training programs like disclosure training or bystander program.

Last, in other cases, institutional responses frame other activities as protection (that is, they are named as protection measures on paper by the RPO itself), such as: a communication platform, communication measures and guidelines on possible sanctions and other information, and the establishment of an institutional working group on reporting and recording and another one on policies and procedures, although all these examples can be linked to other Ps like prevention or policies.

As regards the **implementation** of the measures, we can differentiate between:

- Those actions that have been already (or are being) implemented, like guaranteeing safe spaces for reporting or during the investigative process (3 out of 16), setting up reporting units/mechanisms (2 out of 16) -although in one case it is not working because of lack of communication/information about it-, production of resources/guidelines and training (2/16), "conciliation procedures" (1/16), and preventative measures (unspecified, 1 out of 16),
- Those actions that seem more difficult to implement, are reported to be inconsistent, or are not yet implemented: some specific training (1/16), establishing a communication platform (1/16), revising procedures and processes (in one case just because it is currently on the process of being implemented, in another because it is facing difficulties), establishing complaints mechanisms and disciplinary processes (1/16) or one case in which it is reported that implementation depends on the personal attitudes of the actors involved (1/16).
- Besides this, we found cases in which, even though it is not formally addressed on paper, there is an actual coverage of this P. One example would be when the issue of protection and services available is addressed in the training that constitutes the measure itself, or when protection is unintentionally covered during training/ tutorial sessions (3 out of 16). In these three cases, it has been mentioned that in training sessions some participants have disclosed gender-based violence incidents and protection mechanisms are put in place.

Finally, some **general reflections** regarding protection:

- The key aspect of avoidance/prevention of further victimisation is barely addressed nor reflected upon, though without it, protection cannot be guaranteed. There are only two cases in which double-victimisation is expressly mentioned or measures have been taken to prevent it. At the same time, there is at least one case in which actual further re-victimisation probably occurs (as mentioned by the national researcher, not the institution), and there are presumably more.

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- We find very different approaches regarding the protection of perpetrators: From provision of services to protect their personal development and maturity process when they are still students, to resisting discourses based on the protection of their privacy. It is interesting how protection is sometimes named in sexual harassment cases to argue for protecting the accused person instead of the victims, linking it to rights, like protection of honour or protection of privacy (major concern in these cases).
- We need to raise concern regarding some measures like having "joint meetings to clarify the situation" with both parties, or having external mediation and "conciliation proceedings between the parties" (2/16) included as protection measures, when specialised agencies and the main literature on gender-based violence discourage and advise against the use of this kind of solutions (Rioseco Ortega, 2005; Field, 2006). Mediation is discouraged because its grounds[11] are not fulfilled in incidents of gender-based violence.
- There is also a debate around having a "warning" message to the victim to highlight that false accusations are punishable under criminal law, which, depending on how it is stated, might be discouraging when filing a complaint. As an example, one of the institutional responses analysed explicitly mentions that individuals who make false accusations will be subject to sanctions. This might not be necessary at all, as punishable false accusations are implicit in any other types of crimes, and the effect of an explicit mentioning can be dissuasive and provoke fear of reporting from victims. The recommendation would be to include this information, if necessary, but focusing on the protection of all parties involved and ensuring all justice-related principles, instead of focusing on the responsibility of the complainants.
- Last, we found a general lack of knowledge among the interviewees about the protection measures in some institutions, such as communication about the measure/services, awareness raising activities, leadership and staff training and monitoring at the university level. This lack of awareness is problematic for ensuring protection.

4.6.4. Prosecution

Prosecution and disciplinary measures cover legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators, and related investigative measures and judicial proceedings, including court cases, criminal and civil offences, as well as internal disciplinary grievance procedures.

Regarding what is **on paper**, 9 out of 16 cases include some kind of mechanism to investigate incidents when they are formally reported (H3, P1, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11). Once incidents have been investigated, the possibility of implementing sanctions against perpetrators, if deemed necessary by the person/s or committee responsible for this task in each institution, has been clearly identified in five out of the 16 cases studies (P1, P3, P6, P5, P9).

[11] Mediation requires a fairly equal balance of power between the parties and the idea that no blame is assigned and therefore, the role of victim and offender are blurred.

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As it has been described in the structures & set up section (4.1.4), some measures include the creation of a specific committee for investigating incidents (P1, P6, P7, P10, P11), although in two cases, committees are not specific for gender-based violence incidents. In total, five cases establish that a committee will be responsible (one of the cases specifies that this committee will be composed of a gender balanced team); one specifies that one person will be responsible (it is not defined who); a further case states that the legal department is accountable for this task; and in another case the responsibility to investigate is mainstreamed.

Regarding **implementation**, it must be underlined that the implementation of prosecution measures is very limited in the cases analysed. The data reveals that only six RPOs have implemented incident investigation mechanisms within the studied institutional response. And the actual adoption of sanctions or disciplinary proceedings against perpetrator/s has been mentioned in four cases (P1, P3, P5, P9).

As **general reflections**, the following can be highlighted:

- Prosecution is the P that, in the cases where it is covered on paper, has the least implementation. In general terms, informants noted that ineffective prosecution strategies can result in victims not feeling secure and protected or producing an increase in their fear of reprisal. In other words, the lack of commitment to prosecution could be identified as one of the factors that keep gender-based violence within universities underreported.
- It is worth mentioning that the initiation of investigations in most cases is contingent upon the filling of a formal complaint by the affected person. Thus, investigation is subject to the active role of the victims of violence.
- With regard to the bodies responsible for carrying out investigations and proposing prosecution measures, the analysis of the results do not allow us to conclude that the persons responsible have the required training and experience to perform this task. There are institutional responses involving experts with a high level of knowledge of gender-based violence and other cases where this cannot be clearly stated.
- It is not clarified, among the institutional responses that include the possibility of sanctions, what types of penalties would be applicable to the types of violence perpetrated. This renders the procedure in this regard ambiguous, and sanctions may be susceptible to the subjectivity of the individuals in charge usually case by case.
- From this analysis, it can be stated that in general, there seems to be institutional resistance to the implementation of prosecution and disciplinary measures on different grounds. When implementers are able to suggest disciplinary actions, they could face opposition when trying to implement them. It has been pointed out that this opposition, in some cases, comes from other actors or departments within the RPO. Also, in certain situations, the notion that the implementers of anti gender-based violence measures "magnified" the problem could surface. In one of the cases, it was highlighted that there is a greater acceptance of informal disciplinary

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measures, but resistance to formal disciplinary measures that are written down on paper prevails.

- Prosecution has an important impact on other Ps when it is properly implemented: It promotes the disclosure of incidents and enhances prevention, even if it is just by triggering "self-observation" of one's own behaviour as reported in one case (see chapter on facilitating factors 4.4.1.). That is, it can encourage individuals to play a more active role in identifying gender-based violence.
- Lastly, concerning the intersection between protection and prosecution, **restorative justice**[12] and the right for reparation for victims was mentioned in only one of the institutional responses analysed (mentions made by implementers, this is not explicitly included on paper). Restorative justice is dependent on the perpetrator's admission that an incident has been committed (McGlynn et. al. 2012) and actions focus on compensating victims for harm by holding offenders accountable for their offence. In the case study in question, it was stated by implementers that victims sometimes ask for restorative measures, such as a public apology by the perpetrator.

4.6.5. Provision of services

Provision of services refers to the services offered to support victims, families, and perpetrators and bystanders of gender-based violence.

If we focus on what we can find **on paper**, we see that almost all cases except T2 mention some kind of provision of services, although in two of the cases this P is not part of the response, being awareness-raising and training programmes mainly focused on prevention[13] (although in one of them it is confirmed that the training informed about the available services). In one other case, the measure does not create any specific service, but it does reinforce existing ones. On the other hand, provision of services is explicitly mentioned as the main component of the measure in four cases (H1, H2, H3, P9).

Regarding the type of services offered (as mentioned in the reports, which means that we probably lack information on some of the available services), we can find:

- Ten of the institutional responses (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P9) mention general support/counselling services (also named as social support) which might include a myriad of services (including providing information on supporting services) not always detailing the type of support they actually offer. They encompass general counselling units, helplines or information services. Some of them just mention the different responsible units/persons, having the responsibility dispersed among actors like HR, trade unions, occupational health, health and safety, official contact

[12] Restorative justice should not be mistaken for mediation: "Mediation necessarily involves mediating facts between individuals seeking to resolve a 'dispute', with the implication that no blame is apportioned. In contrast, restorative justice is predicated on an acknowledgement by the offender that a criminal offence has taken place. The roles of 'victim' and 'offender' are, therefore, clearly established: there is no fact-finding" (McGlynn et al. 2012: 216).

[13] In these cases, awareness-raising and training programmes are located in the intersection of two Ps: provision of services and prevention.

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persons, several contact/entry points for initiating formal or informal procedures, etc. Interestingly, in one case they set up specific contact points for vulnerable groups/intersectional cases.

- One of the services most widely mentioned is psychological counselling and support (at least nine out of sixteen), followed by medical aid/health care (explicitly mentioned in at least seven cases).
- More difficult to find are the legal counselling services (4/16), at least expressly named as such -although these can be part of the general/social counselling described in the first point- and the training's related services, including providing guidelines (4/16), where we find that only three cases comprise specialised training to frontline staff.
- Other measures that can be found under this P to a lesser extent are: a conflict mediation tool or "conciliation"/mediation services, pastoral services, creation of the role of the ombudsperson and residential support (which can also fall under protection). Although mediation is considered a service by certain RPOs, it should be noted that mediation is discouraged, in specific the mandatory mediation, and, in some cases, forbidden (e.g., mediation is forbidden in the Spanish legal framework) in cases of gender-based violence.

Concerning the targeted groups, it is worth noting that five out of the 16 cases include specific measures for bystanders, while very few explicitly mention specific services for perpetrators (3/16), two of which recognise that it is to a very small extent.

When we check the level of **implementation** of the institutional responses, we see that there is a similar number of cases with services implemented and the not implemented ones, although in both scenarios some limitations are mentioned. We have information on currently working services on 9 out of the 15 cases in which provision of services is mentioned (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P5, P10, T1). It seems that those more consistently implemented are the responses which are services or structures themselves, which report the provision of personalised (or more holistic or better coordinated) support in all the cases reaching the services. In contrast to this last fact, we find some cases where the threshold for getting support is unclear, or dependent on having to formalise a report, meaning that the implemented services do not reach all potential victims.

On the other hand, the institutional responses that are not yet implemented or that reported to be facing difficulties for implementation (6/16) mentioned different limiting factors, like delays problems (in signing agreements, in communication), scarce/limited services and limited information available, lack of resources, or the fact that other institutional services exist but are not coordinated. In one case, the measure is not implemented only because it is still being developed.

Some **general reflections** that can be drawn concerning provision of services:

- Very few institutions highlight within the text of their policies and measures the need to ensure quality services with specialised trained staff. It would be worth exploring how these basic requirements of being trauma-informed and knowledgeable in

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gender-based violence issues are addressed or guaranteed across the different institutions and their provision of services.

- Also, there is a clear lack of an intersectional approach and appropriate coverage of especially vulnerable groups among the services provided. Only two of the 16 institutions explicitly envisage specific actions in this regard: In one case by establishing the positions of referral counsellors for students/staff with special needs, for LGBTQ+ students and for international students, and in another case by engaging external specialist agencies to provide appropriate support and guidance should the reporting individual be a member of a minority / vulnerable/ protected characteristic group.
- This is the P more directly linked to partnership for its coverage. Quite a range of the services provided (at least five out of 16) rely on partnerships or support from external services and/or NGOs. In one of the cases, the institutional measure explicitly promotes liaising with specialist external agencies and with other RPOs, and in another one, they rely on partner associations to deal with additional forms of violence related to intersecting discriminations. However, it is important to point out how the link between provision of services and partnerships needs to be well settled and also balanced, as this can affect institutionalisation (and thus weaken the provision of services).
- There is also an interesting reflection around the pros and cons of having a more centralised vs a diversified pathway from recording of incidents (prevalence) to provision of services, through to protection, in terms of which is better for reducing vulnerability, avoiding further victimisation and ultimately enhancing protection.
- In two cases, religious services are included within the provision of services (in one, interviewees mentioned the option of approaching the priest; in another, interviewees listed the pastoral services and chaplaincy as part of the general available support services). How this might be potentially harmful for victims needs to be considered, as well as whether or not this religious staff are properly trained and coordinated with the rest of the services, and the approach and discourses they promote.
- It would also be worth delving further into the difference between availability and accessibility, as having an available service and guaranteeing access to it are not the same. The latter still depends on aspects like filing or not a complaint or reaching certain requirements. In this sense, there are imbalances among the different cases and we find unclear requirements in some cases for guaranteeing free and equal access to the services for all.
- This P clearly shows the importance of informal networks for effective implementation.

4.6.6. Partnerships

Partnerships relate to the involvement of relevant actors at international, national, and regional levels, including governmental agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, staff and student associations, etc., working in collaboration on concerted actions to combat gender-based violence in universities.

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Regarding what is included **on paper**, seven of the 16 institutional responses analysed mention partnership with different actors within the university (H2, H3, P1, P2, P3, P6, T2). Four of these specifically mention Student Unions and one of them also considers Trade Unions. In terms of partnerships with external actors, eight institutional responses make reference to these (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P7, P8, P9) and five of these explicitly mention the importance of collaboration with NGOs or/and specialised external agencies.

As for **implementation**, this P is covered in ten of the 16 measures (in addition in P10, P11), although some of them do not foresee it on paper. Seven institutional responses build actual partnerships with different actors within the university, underlining in six of them the importance of the Student Unions (H3, P2, P3, P4, P7, T2), in another three the importance of Unions (P1, P3, P4) and in two cases the relevance of the Ombudsperson was also mentioned. In one case, partnership was pointed out as a relevant factor not just for the implementation, but also for the design (P8).

With regard to partnerships with external actors, they are implemented by eight of the 16 institutional responses, all of which emphasise the crucial role of developing formal and informal networks with NGOs and specialised agencies. One of the most frequent collaborations is related to victim support, as many of the RPOs establish alliances with specialised external services to refer victims who need care and support.

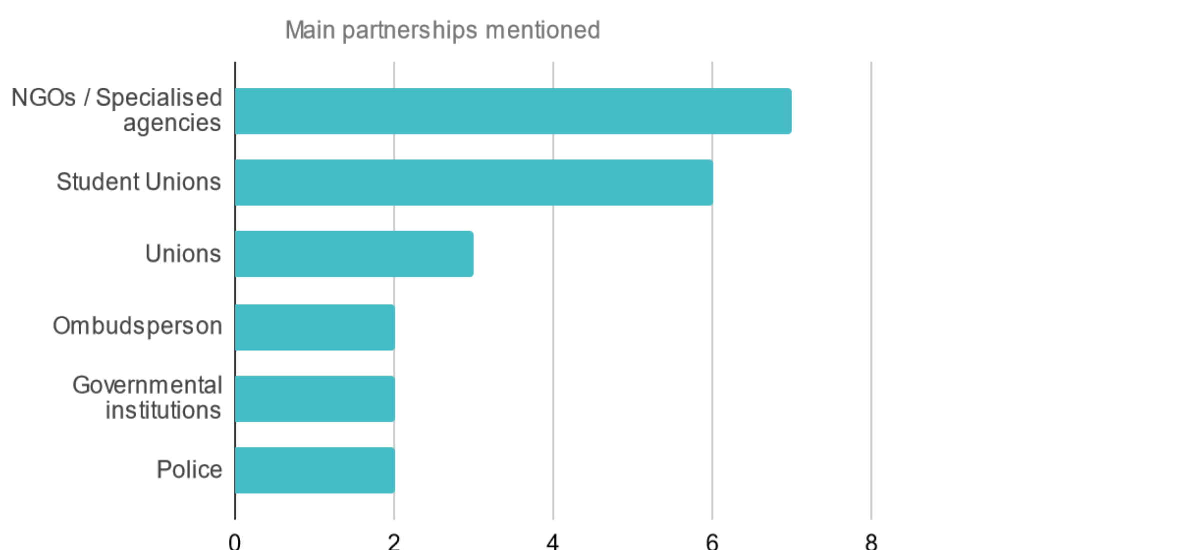

Figure 18. Main partnerships for implementation.

Moreover, concerning external networks, a partnership with the police is mentioned in two cases. And in one of the cases, a partnership with an insurance company is cited as useful as it provides well-being surveys that include questions about harassment and bullying.

As **general reflections** of this analysis on partnerships, the following can be highlighted:

- Even though partnerships may not be expressly mentioned on paper in some cases, they are nonetheless essential to the implementation of these measures. Thus, in

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order to implement institutional responses to combat gender-based violence, it seems vital to build networks, formal and informal, with actors and associations within and outside the RPOs. Therefore, it could be argued that partnerships are a key element for implementing institutional responses and they have been highlighted as facilitating factors (H1, H3, P9, T2): "not important on paper, but in practice they are essential" (T2).

- With regard to networks with internal actors and associations, these can promote higher involvement of the university community and operate as a facilitating factor for the implementation of the measure. In addition, internal partnerships could be seen as key in order to confront internal resistance to the measure.
- The role of partnerships with student unions should be stressed because it can also help to disseminate information among students. The difficulty in getting information to students has been noted in a significant number of cases.
- On the other hand, partnerships with NGOs and specialised agencies sometimes serve to mitigate the lack of sufficient resources of the university's equality or anti-discrimination structures. In such cases, the P of partnership is strongly associated with the provision of services.
- Furthermore, regarding partnerships with external agencies it is worth noting that: in one of the cases, this type of partnership is essential for implementation because it is an NGO that directly implements the measure; In two cases, the engagement and partnership with regional governmental institutions were pointed out as crucial because they allow the RPO to get funding that enables the implementation of the measures analysed.

4.6.7. Policies

Policy frameworks refer to a) the existence of a coherent set of measures with a clear vision and comprehensive strategy that respond to the problems of gender-based violence in an integral and structural way, and b) to policy documents (which explicitly formalise the organisation's commitment to fight gender-based violence). It refers to the dominant or primary discourse framing the measures, rather than the implementation of these same measures in relation to prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services or partnerships, and with the stated aim to combat gender-based violence.

Six out of 16 cases (P1, P2, P4, P3, P5, P9) show a more or less coherent set of measures with a clear vision and comprehensive strategy which respond to the problems of gender-based violence in an integral and structural way, although the degree of comprehensiveness and strategical view differs somewhat depending on the degree of implementation. In this regard, it is interesting to note that there are two cases (P2, P5), and to a lesser extent another one, where the overall policy turns into an **action plan** where implementation is foreseen and carefully planned, and this seems to create a difference. Other three cases deal with more recent policies which might be classified as **first intents to put a policy in place** in more general and abstract terms (P6, P8, P11). In the other seven cases, the institutional responses selected and analysed are **partial responses** which are not necessarily accompanied by a comprehensive policy (H1, H2, H3, P7, P10, T1, T2).

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Regarding the **policy frames** where the institutional responses are inserted, they can be classified as being mainly under a Gender Equality frame (H1, H2, H3, P1, P2, P7, P9, P11, T1), a more general diversity frame which includes Gender Equality (P5, P3, P4, P6, T2), and a Human Resources approach (P8, P9, P10).

As **general reflections**:

- It is the P where we can see the least differences between what is on paper and what it is actually implemented. We have already seen the importance of action-oriented policies. But we must also say that the evidence suggests that the experience of actual implementation is the best way to identify lacking or weak aspects for inclusion or areas where institutional policies need further reform. In other words, all of the institutional responses analysed have certainly influenced (or are potentially influencing) the development of policies at the institutions.
- Considering the importance of experience in implementing any specific institutional response, we find a tendency of the most experienced institutions (the ones already tackling some kind of gender-based violence for several years or decades) being better prepared for comprehensive and structural gender-based violence policies. Other important factors are: top management leadership and political will, a political institutional context favourable to the recognition of gender-based violence and a political willingness to confront the problem, as well as specific gender and gender-based violence expertise among the units responsible for the policies' implementation.

Main takeaways of the section on 7Ps framework

- Prevalence, being the first step for reasoned, comprehensive and tailor-made policymaking, seems to be the least covered P and when it is addressed, it is still done in a non-systematic way.
- By contrast, prevention seems to be a common feature within the institutional responses, but there remain some shortfalls, such as the gap between the main awareness-raising actions designed and approved and their weak implementation in some cases. Seemingly, despite the widely agreed need for preventive measures as the tool to transform cultural patterns and behaviours, the main implemented actions are those with little obvious transformative impact or lacking a structural approach to the problems they seek to address.
- Protection seems to be covered in a fragmented way rather than with a more coordinated and victim-centred approach. However, concern for victim-safety is demonstrated by the fact that all institutional responses provide some kind of protection, regardless of whether or not they are integrated in the response's design. Re-victimisation is a key element, further developed as a standalone conclusion in the next section.
- Prosecution is the second-least covered aspect by the interventions and one which is highly resisted. When asked about prosecution, institutions tend to explain their investigative procedures rather than focus on disciplinary procedures

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or sanctions. This shows a limited and ambiguous implementation that indicates a level of mistrust towards the institutions, potentially contributing to the under-reporting of cases of gender-based violence.

- Provision of services is the third most covered aspect. The majority of cases analysed offer some kind of support service, mainly psychological support and counselling. They mostly target victims/survivors and to a lesser extent bystanders. A few institutions also offer legal and counselling services to perpetrators. There are important gaps to be overcome here, such as the threshold to access these services, or the lack of specialised training available to the providers.
- Partnerships seem to be positively linked to the successful coverage of other aspects and are highlighted as a key facilitating factor in the case study reports. It contributes to: expertise in implementation, prevention of resistances, enhancement of formal and informal relations between actors, fostering ownership, or ensuring well-being and protection.
- Lastly, policies seem to represent the third P less consistently covered, although it is the P with a lower gap between what is designed and implemented. Implementation very much depends on both, that the institutional response is a policy itself and on its levels of comprehensiveness and detailed strategy and workplan.

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5. CONCLUSIONS

One of the first conclusions to be drawn is how the case studies demonstrate, through all the different approaches, contexts, failures and successes, small wins and nuances that are reported, that there is no **linear movement towards progress** against gender-based violence including sexual harassment**.**

Regarding the 7Ps framework, the case studies analysis showcases how the different institutions understand and cover the 7Ps and, moreover, serves to explore whether institutional approaches covering more Ps are indeed more successful in counteracting gender-based violence or not. Although it should be noticed that not all the institutional responses under study are supposed to cover all the 7Ps, some might be conceived as partial and combined with other measures in the same RPO. In the analysis, only three out of the 16 case studies adopt a holistic coverage of the 7Ps. Figure 17 shows how the analysed responses cover the 7Ps from two different points of view: Firstly, what is **formally covered** (either because it is on paper or because it is consistently covered despite not being on paper) and secondly, what is **informally covered** because it is not on paper (or is barely or inconsistently covered). The figure also shows the number of cases where the P is not covered. All in all, the first conclusion is that there is an uneven coverage of the 7Ps, with prevalence the least systematically covered P, while prevention, on the opposite, is consistently covered by all the analysed measures.

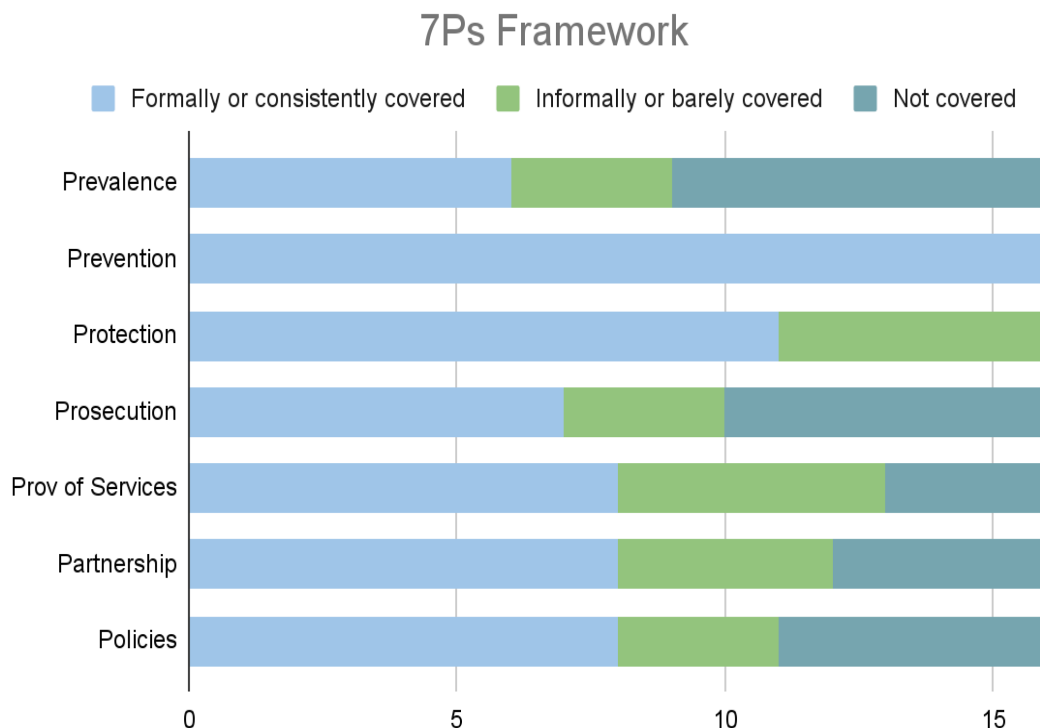

Figure 19. Coverage of the 7Ps framework in the case studies

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Not having a consolidated holistic approach to the 7Ps does not necessarily mean the institutional response is less effective. Equally, taking into account all 7Ps in the design of the institutional measures does not automatically imply a more successful institutional response. This is because much of the effectiveness of institutional responses hinges on practical aspects of implementation. These practical aspects have to do with the particular contexts of the institutions, their organisational cultures and the way they name and tackle power relations, as well as how the relations amongst key actors are facilitated, supported, recognised or otherwise hindered.

Regarding **intersectionality**, institutions seem to be increasingly convinced of the need to integrate an intersectional approach and are aware that people subjected to multiple and compounded discrimination -particularly based on gender, race and ethnicity, migratory status, sexual orientation and disability- experience higher prevalence of gender-based violence (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič and Blažytė, 2022; Schredl et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the case studies reveal that the institutional responses usually fail to recognise the existence of different grounds of discrimination, other than gender, playing out in gender-based violence incidents. They also fail to recognise how these multiple grounds of inequalities intersect and tend to employ a multiple rather than an integrated approach. Additionally, when mentioned, the combination of gender and other systems of power is usually understood as aggravating vulnerability to gender-based violence, but forms of gender-based violence mostly or exclusively affecting minority groups are not at all visible or mentioned. As such, institutional responses are not able to address intersectional impacts of gender-based violence. A widely described lack of experience, knowledge, political will and engagement in partnerships with activists and experts in the operationalisation of intersectionality in the 7Ps appears to be the root cause of this.

The analysis confirms the key role of **personal activism and volunteering and/or unpaid work** on the part of implementers, which reveals itself as a non-written but widespread institutional strategy to sustain the work against gender-based violence including sexual harassment. The fact that RPOs massively rely on the personal engagement of staff raises further questions:

- It is unclear whether initiatives which rely on voluntary work by employees or students should be labelled as "institutional" responses at all, as the institutions are not really taking responsibility for the response provided, nor getting fully or structurally engaged in the struggle against gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the institution, thus not allowing or encouraging a professional and systemic approach to the interventions.
- At the same time, it shows the crucial relevance of **feminist activism** and strategies, albeit putting these actors in an ambivalent and often uncomfortable position as "outsiders within" and "tempered radicals"[14] (Mackay, 2021; Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

[14] This term refers to "individuals who are committed both to their organisations and to a cause, identity or ideology that is at odds with the dominant institutional culture", as described by Meyerson & Scully (1995: 586).

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- This is very much related to the **lack of institutional recognition** faced by the feminist, activist and volunteer actors across the case studies. This fact calls into question the viability of talking about the sustainability of the responses against sexual harassment without tackling the sustainability of activism. As described by Barry & Đorđević, where "sustainability is about being able to do the work you love and still feeling full and happy in every part of your life. Feeling safe, recognised, respected and valued" (2007: 4).

These issues seem to be entangled with the fact that the majority of the analysed institutional responses **lack or have insufficient resources (budget, human resources, proper space and time).** Therefore, their implementation is to a large extent dependent on the volunteer work of those individuals who are actively involved in combating gender-based violence. Thus, it can be argued that existing institutional responses are intended to address a problem as systemic and structural as gender-based violence yet allocate minimum resources. This is one of the major contradictions in the implementation of the measures analysed and demonstrates the lack of institutionalisation. This dearth of resources and person-dependency endangers the sustainability of a more in-depth and structural change process towards safer institutions.

Another potential perverse effect of institutionalisation found in the case studies, is when the responses become institutionalised in a manner that is too managerial and procedure-based. This can involve instances where language and **processes become excessively bureaucratic**, failing to provide protection in an efficient way. A victim-centred approach often demands a less bureaucratic approach. When organisational cultures are materialised through rigid bureaucratic procedures and norms (themselves also gendered), they lead to the depoliticisation of the transformative intentions of the measures and, in the end, to the re-establishment and maintenance of patriarchal norms (Longwe, 1997).

We can conclude that there is an overarching and intense **pressure on Gender Equality bodies** or units. These bodies are singled out as the main key structure for both design and implementation of institutional measures, and this in virtually all cases, though, they remain particularly under-resourced and reliant on personal activism in most cases. Furthermore, in some cases these bodies are also the main target of criticisms and resistances. They navigate the shifting sands of those opposing the measures because they perceive them as challenging the status quo, and those generating "friendly fire" (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022, Tildesley et al., 2021) because they perceive the measures as insufficiently transformative of the status quo.

The case studies display a wide variety of strategies regarding how to **assign responsibilities** for designing and implementing the measures, many times involving different actors for each phase. This shows that there is no univocal strategy for ensuring an effective implementation by establishing one main implementing actor. The nuances and diverse levels of achievements among institutions with respect to implementation show that institutions tailor their responses to their given context, and that what is key, rather than a universal strategy, is how ownership and fluent communication is accomplished among actors within a selected strategy. Also, that whoever the actor or structure, gender expertise and/or competence are appreciated and utilised as key and necessary components.

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The case studies therefore demonstrate the crucial importance of the **gender equality (and diversity) officers** (or related figures) or, in general, of counting on providers and implementers with specialised gender expertise (Cacace et al., 2015). But the decisive fact here would not only be appointing them but endorsing them with visible support and granting both the epistemic and the managerial authority to actually be able to implement the measures in a successful and transformative way. For, as Ahmed explains, "to be appointed as a diversity practitioner (…) is to be put into an oblique relation to the institution. You are appointed by an institution to transform the institution. To this extent, an appointment can signify that an institution is willing to be transformed. However, (…) being appointed to transform an institution does not necessarily mean the institution is willing to be transformed" (2017:94).

A relevant fact to be highlighted is the outstanding number of **female rectors** within the RPOs implementing the measure analysed, a fact that was not part of the selection criteria. Looking at the proportion of women among the heads of the institutions (this includes cases of Boards with several members within the higher governing position) there is an overall proportion of 36.9% women. At European level, the proportion of women among heads of universities or assimilated institutions is 23.6% (She Figures, 2021:198). Counting only the positions as rectors, there are nine out of the 16 analysed RPOs that currently have a female rector (56.2%). Moreover, a great number of these female rectors in the cases under study are recognised as gender-sensitive or active feminists and their initiatives and support have been flagged as essential for securing the effective approval and implementation of the responses. This seems to be a step up from the already known facilitating factor of having the top management's commitment and support (Palmén & Kalpazidou, 2019). Yet, few studies focus directly on feminists as academic managers, and fewer still provide first-person accounts, despite some studies suggest feminist academic leaders and managers do appear to have the potential to transform their institutions in feminist-inspired ways using their "outsider within" status to act as change agents (Mackay, 2021).

This said, **decision makers are not being specifically targeted** by virtually any measure despite being singled out as key actors. This means that their support depends on personal engagement, while it has been stated across the case studies that there is a general lack of gender knowledge amongst them. As Palmén and Kalpazidou state, there is a need to change the management culture as well as to develop key gender competences. If the managing directors are not convinced of the relevance of equality measures, their implementation will be hindered, unsustainable and mobilisation of staff not achieved. (2019: 4). With this aim, the case studies show the particular importance of middle management, like heads of schools and departments.

Both formal and informal relations amongst the responsible structures or leading figures and other key actors (both ways) are important for the effective implementation of institutional measures. Much institutional work, especially that seeking cultural or organisational change, relies on leading through influence and the gaining of commitment and "buy-in" from colleagues and more senior manager-leaders (Mackay, 2021). The case studies demonstrate how informal relations can be more effective and functional for these purposes, given that the more formal and managerial relationships are hierarchical,

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transactional and based on authority (Lunenburg, 2011). This sometimes leaves little space for feminist leadership and transformative aims like those needed for the implementation of this kind of institutional responses.

In the design and implementation of measures a unified and clear response is needed, requiring some degree of centralisation inside the organisation. However, a dialogue between centralised and decentralised approaches is recommended to involve the various centres and campuses, and to generate commitment from the largest possible number of actors. However, the level of success may not be as dependent on the level of centralisation or decentralisation as much as it is on the smooth relations between the key actors. Furthermore, institutions that have established a design or implementation **working group** and also invested institutional efforts to keep them operative (providing them with tools and resources but also with the necessary levels of legitimacy and authority) experience higher levels of ownership.

Although the existence of **formal structures** and norms gives implementers and providers security and legitimacy, it sometimes seems that these formal structures make implementation challenging. Therefore, a dialogue between formal and informal structures needs to be developed in the implementation of the measures. In some cases, informal structures and rules are put in place to avoid prolonged procedural processes and as an attempt to provide a quick response to victims, whenever this is possible. Nevertheless, informal methods might also result in uncovered gaps, such as the difficulties for monitoring incidents.

There is a general **lack of monitoring and, specifically, evaluation mechanisms** foreseen in the institutional responses analysed in this report. In addition to the evaluation of the effects and consequences of the institutional responses, there is also a need to further the understanding of the problem of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, its effects and consequences in higher education. Therefore, monitoring and evaluations should play a role in light of the institutional responses and the effects those responses create, and in checking impacts and new emerging needs which should be covered. But also, prevalence studies such as surveys, if repeated periodically in RPOs, are useful to understand the scope and size of the issues, point to the new needs (e.g. online violence), which help developing existing measures or creating new ones. In general, there is a need to push forward an evidence-based research agenda on gender-based violence in higher education, and RPOs are in the privileged position for taking action on researching a phenomenon that still remains under researched.

Though the importance of taking a **victim-centred approach** is recognised, more commitment is required to prevent **re-victimisation**. There are gaps between design and implementation, which emphasise the necessity to evaluate institutional responses in order to improve their relevance and applicability, and the possibility of addressing unintended consequences, such as re-victimisation. In addition, another deficiency in all the measures studied is the absence of a protocol for informing victims of the status of their case. In other words, feedback for victims or bystanders is not foreseen. This is a relevant issue that should be considered when designing and implementing measures to ensure a victim-

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centred approach in which victims receive information about the process of their reported case.

Effective **communication seems to be** one of the main gaps in implementation. Only two of the analysed RPOs have an effective communication strategy in place, and communication efforts seem to be insufficient or ineffective in informing and reaching the RPO community, an observation spanning across all the cases. Disseminating information about the measure is essential to raise awareness about gender-based violence and to ensure that the university community is aware of the services provided and the procedures to be followed. In addition, communication is critical to ensure ownership of the measure by all target groups, because measures that have been designed targeting all groups (academic and administrative staff and students and, in some cases, also external staff working on campus) may end up being used by only one group, usually students.

Regarding **training** activities, interestingly it has been observed that more training sessions have been implemented than have been planned. However, training also seems to be done in *ad-hoc* ways and are not designed as permanent and cross-cutting training programs, hence they may have a diminished transformative capacity on the institution. A further relevant issue related to training is the negotiation over its possible mandatory nature, as all the examined institutional responses (with the exception of one) define training participation on a voluntary basis, which tends to imply low engagement rates by the targeted groups.

RPOs seem to be increasingly motivated to adopt **participatory processes** for putting in place institutional responses against gender-based violence. What the case studies show is that, so far, the participatory approach is preferred when dealing with policies rather than with other types of responses. None of the analysed measures related to helpdesks and training have adopted overall participatory strategies, despite having promoted certain levels of consultations and occasional participation at different moments.

Resistances stand out as one of the main hindering factors of the efforts to combat gender-based violence including sexual harassment (Lombardo & Bustelo, 2022; Tildesley et al., 2021; Palmén & Kalpazidou, 2019), as identified throughout the case studies. But they are very much intertwined with contextual factors of respective institutions. Resistances will not be successfully overcome unless institutions take the lead, assign sufficient resources and actively endorse change agents so that gender equality is not perceived as a matter of particular actors or units but as a strategic issue directly linked to the institution's governing bodies (Palmén and Kalpazidou, 2019). Not only is further research needed to assess how gender equality actors seek to counteract resistances and push for feminist institutional transformation, but the power struggles underpinning the implementation processes of the measures need to be examined (Verge, 2021; Engeli and Mazur, 2018).

Researchers and experts on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in academia (Hearn, 2022; O'Connor et al., 2021, Bondestam & Lundqvist, 2020), highlight the necessity to tackle harmful and abusive **masculinities** as one of the factors which is at the root of this problem's persistence. Moreover, UniSAFE's research results confirm that most perpetrators are men (Pilinkaitė Sotirovič & Blažytė, 2022; Schredl et al., 2022). Several

international documents such as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (known as Istanbul Convention, 2011) or the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, call for targeting men in measures to prevent and combat gender-based violence. As Hearn (2022) argues, analysis and policies must pay attention to the place and impact of men, both as perpetrators and bystanders, and what is to be done by, and with, different groups of men. This point needs to be considered, especially in contexts of the rise of feminist activism and beliefs, where dominant forms of masculinity tend to respond in a defensive way, including dissemination of anti-feminist discourses and denial of gender-based violence (Ranea-Triviño, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to specifically target men in institutional responses against gender-based violence (Alonso et al., 2021), in order to focus on power relations, harmful masculinities and male-dominated organisational cultures in academia. Nonetheless, our findings in this regard show an important gap, with hardly any measures targeting men or working on masculinities.

On the effects of the institutional responses analysed, the potential impact of **naming the problem should be highlighted.** Even though in several cases it has been stated that significant sectors of the RPO community are still unaware of the institutional responses analysed, the very existence of the measures has raised some degree of visibility to a normalised and invisible issue: gender-based violence in academia. Nevertheless, as Ahmed (2021) points out, these measures do not always perform what they name. That is, the design and approval of institutional responses to combat gender-based violence is not always followed by a real institutional commitment and/or an actual possibility to implement the measures and the structural change required. In this sense, the involvement and persistence of **key actors** must be positively valued, as they are the **driving force of change**.

Regarding frames, it seems necessary to overcome the individualising, incident-driven approach, and encourage RPOs to approach the gender-based violence issue through a structural approach, with associated methodologies and resources. The fact that gender-based violence has been considered as an “area” to tackle in Gender Equality Plans proposed by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 and the Horizon Europe Framework Programmes, has had the positive effect of a broader and primarily more **structural framing** under gender equality and diversity issues (as compared to a Human Resources framing). However, it might also have the negative effect of not tackling the issue as a complex and structural problem by itself.

In the light of the analysis, it is essential to consistently address and underline the structural nature of gender-based violence and accordingly, it is essential that more efforts should be made to facilitate **structural changes** in research performing organisations. Institutional measures to combat gender-based violence must also give special attention to power relations related to organisational and academic logics. Otherwise, it will be impossible to eradicate the culture of silence towards gender-based violence and especially sexual harassment within academia. Academic hierarchical organisations and uneven power relations among actors have been identified across the case studies as one of the most significant hindering factors for implementing these measures and, also, for reporting

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incidents. O'Connor et al. (2021) outline three **power-related aspects** of academic organisations that facilitated gender-based violence: their male-dominated hierarchical structure, the neoliberal competitiveness, and their lack of a gender and intersectional leadership approach that reinforces men's dominance and harmful masculinities. These authors also assert that these factors hinder tackling gender-based violence within academia by portraying it as an individual problem, promoting informal reporting and inhibiting the prosecution of perpetrators. To ensure that these institutional responses are implemented in the most effective way, each of these factors must be taken into consideration.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I. ANALYSIS MATRIX

Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
Description of the institutional response	**Background and context**	**Background**	Reasons for adoption	Adoption	Explanations about reasons for adoption
			External factors	External factor	National / regional context, legal context, external constraints and leverages
			Institutional history	Institutional history	Information about the institutional history relevant to the adoption and/or the implementation of the institutional response
Actors	**Key actors for implementation and position**	**Key actors**	Decision-makers / Top management	Decision makers	Person(s) or group(s) involved in the decision-making procedure, including de design of the measure, and/or in top management positions
			Supporters	Supporters	Person(s) or group(s) who supports in any way the institutional response under analysis.
			Opponents	Opponents	Person(s) or group(s) who opposes in any way the institutional response under analysis (including personal resistances either by action or by non-action).
			Implementers	Implementers	Person(s) or group(s) responsible for the implementation or involved in any step of the implementation process, either permanently or sporadically (including those not explicitly mentioned in the formal procedures and documents).
			Stakeholder involvement	Involvement	References to the level of Key actors and stakeholder involvement in the drafting, design, approval or/and implementation of the measure under analysis. (Stakeholder as any actor that could either affect or be affected by the measure)
	Users and target audiences	**Users**	Users	Users	Target audiences (to whom is the measure intended to benefit) and actual users of the institutional response.
			Vulnerable groups	Vulnerable groups	Focus on vulnerable groups targeted by the measure, e.g international students or staff, early-career researchers, students or staff with disabilities, students or staff with migrant and/or ethnic minority background, LGBTQ+ students or staff, staff with temporary contracts, new and expectant

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Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
					mothers, other.
			Bystanders	Bystander	Any person witnessing or having direct knowledge of any act of harassment/violence but not taking part in it
		Perpetrators	Perpetrators	Perpetrators	Information on suspected abusers or harassers and/or actions taken against them
	Groups (within university community)	**Groups**	Faculty / Academic staff	Faculty	Academic teaching and research staff
			Administrative staff	Admin staff	Non-academic staff, administrative, technical and professional staff
			Students	Students	Students, including unions or groups
	Relations among them	**Relations**	Alliances and formal networks	Formal networks	Any alliances and formal networks created with internal or external actors / stakeholders in order to implement the institutional response. It also includes the formal hierarchical relations involving power dynamics.
			Informal networks and interactions	Informal networks	Any informal networks created with internal or external actors and/or any information about relevant interactions and power relations. E.g. if it is commented that the development of the institutional response is influenced by getting along with a person who runs a certain service but not formally appointed as part of the procedure; or if the power relations and/or negative relationship with any actor has impacted on the development of the measure.
Institutions	**Policies/Programmes/ Actions**	**Policies**	Decision-making	decision-making	Any significant aspect related to the decision-making procedure to approve or adopt any policy, protocol or related document relevant for the implementation of the measure
			Design	Design	Any significant aspect related to the design procedure of the policy and/or the measure's related policies and documents
			Approval	Approval	Any significant aspect regarding the approval procedure of the policy/measure
			Monitoring & evaluation	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and procedures, if any.
	Structures and set up	**Structures**	Budget	Budget	Economic aspects and budget allocated to the implementation of the measure/response

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Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
			Human resources	Human resources	Information on human resources directly or indirectly involved in the institutional response.
			Time	Time	Information on the time specifically reserved and actually dedicated to the measure
			Spaces	Space	If there are physical resources dedicated to the implementation of the institutional response, e.g. specific spaces, offices etc. within the university (even if it's shared with other structures/services)
			Communication & dissemination	Communication	Reference to passive (when information about the institutional response have been disseminated on the official website or intranet) or active dissemination (when information about the institutional response have been actively disseminated through other channels, trainings, awareness-raising activities, and so on)
			Formal structures	Formal structures	Specific formal structures within the institution relevant for the implementation of the response (either already existing or specifically created)
			Informal structures	Informal structures	Informal organisational structures that are relevant for the implementation of the response. It can include personal or group and departamental relations, interactions among people in the institution, informal communication channels, etc. created informally and unofficially. Informal structures take place outside the framework of formal organisational structure
	Organisational culture	**Culture**	Formal rules	Formal rules	Specific formal rules, processes and procedures within the institution
			Informal rules	Informal rules	Unwritten rules and "ways of doing things" related with the organisational culture, covering informal interacting processes, norms, behaviours and beliefs shaping the day to day basis of the organisation. It includes aspects like the division of labours and locations, the construction of symbols and images, the underlying assumptions and practices, the interactions and language used or the conceptualisation of social structures within the institutional structure (Acker,

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Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
					1990). Also, it is related to ideas and notions of Gender Equality and gender-based violence held by the university community and implementing actors; and unconscious bias that lends unspoken support to harassment practices.
Ideas	**Theory of change**	**ToC**	Strategy	Strategy	Information about the implementation strategy; what steps or phases were planned for a successful implementation and how to achieve goals. What the organisation and implementers think are the necessary steps to be taken or actions to be carried out to achieve the response's objectives
			Problems (diagnosis)	Problems	References about how the problem(s) was/were identified, assesses and/or defined
			Solutions (Prognosis)	Solutions	Solution(s) proposed to solve the problem(s): What to do? Hierarchy/priority of goals
			Procedures & responsibilities in diagnosis (role attribution)	Role attribution Dx	Problem holders (whose problem is it seen to be?); Responsibility (who is seen as responsible for the problem?; causality (who is seen as responsible for the problem?); active/passive roles (for ex: perpetrators/victims)
			Procedures & responsibilities in prognosis (role attribution)	Role attribution Px	Target groups (who is acted upon?); call for action and non-action (who should [not] do what?); legitimization of (non)action; who has a voice in suggesting a suitable course of action?
			Gaps between theory and practice	Gaps	Gaps and inconsistencies between what was designed and foreseen and the actual implementation, and gaps between theory and practice. Inconsistencies and unexpected aids. Potential negative effects. Gaps and inconsistencies between problems and solutions.
			Achievements and successes	Successes	Foreseen or unforeseen achievements and successes (including "small wins")
			Lessons learnt	Lessons learnt	Lessons learnt through the implementation
	Intersectional approach	**Intersectionality**	Intersectionality	Intersectionality	How intersectionality is theoretically and/or practically framed in general, or how the response addresses or mentions specific axes of inequality, e.g. sexual orientation, gender

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Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
					identity, gender expression, race, disability, age, religion and other beliefs, class, other.
			Vulnerable groups	Vulnerable groups	Mention to vulnerable groups e.g international students or staff, early-career researchers, students or staff with disabilities, students or staff with migrant and/or ethnic minority background, LGBTQ+ students or staff, staff with temporary contracts, new and expectant mothers, others.
	Belief systems	**Beliefs**	--	--	Open coding on the underlying meanings, beliefs and assumptions regarding what has been said. The researcher has to look for implicit or explicit values that discloses the system of beliefs of the speaker.
7P model	**7ps**	**7p**	Prevalence	Prevalence	Prevalence, incidence estimates and data collection (quantitative and qualitative)
			Prevention	Prevention	Prevention refers to measures to promote changes in social and cultural patterns of behaviour and attitudes and may include, among other things, awareness-raising initiatives, the development of educational materials, and the training of professionals.
			Protection	Protection	Protection's primary objective is to ensure the safety of (potential) victims and to meet their needs. Protection involves developing (cooperative) actions designed to protect (potential) victims from any form of gender-based violence. Protection also includes reporting the occurrence of or potential for abuse or harassment.
			Prosecution	Prosecution	Prosecution and disciplinary measures refer to legal action taken against suspected abusers or harassers, and to related investigative measures and judicial proceedings. This includes (taking legal action in the case of) criminal and civil offences, as well as disciplinary/internal grievance procedures.
			Provision of services	Provision of services	Provision of services refers to the services offered to victims, families, and perpetrators of gender-based violence in universities and research organisations. It also relates to the professionals who provide these services (e.g. those involved in specialised training) and the

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Dimension	Categories	Code	Subcategories	Code	Description
					existing tools (e.g. guidelines, learning materials) they can use to better address the needs of both target groups.
			Partnerships	Partnership	Partnership relates to the involvement of relevant actors at international, national, and regional level, including governmental agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, staff and student associations, etc., working in collaboration on concerted actions to combat gender-based violence in universities.
			Policies	Policies	Policies refers to the existence of a coherent set of 7P measures that have been formulated with a clear vision and a comprehensive strategy to respond to the problems of gender-based violence in an integral and structural way. It refers to declared intentions and also to specific written down plans, strategies and regulations, not necessarily per se or only about implementation.
Cross-cutting aspects	**Facilitating factors for implementation**	**Facilitating factors**	Facilitators	Facilitators	Any relevant information on what makes implementation successful or facilitates any implementing aspect or step
	Hindering factors for implementation	**Hindering factors**	Resistances and reactions	Resistances	Explicit or implicit opposing strategies and resistances oriented to maintaining the status quo or to hinder the implementation of the measure (either personal and/or institutional, either active or passive) and reactions that have arisen as a result of the implementation of the institutional response
			Obstacles	Obstacles	Constraints/limits to the implementation negatively affecting it, obstacles faced (either related to internal or external factors)

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ANNEX II. CASE STUDY FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

T.5.2. CASE STUDIES: CASE STUDY FINAL REPORT

Country:
RPO:
Institutional measure:
Researcher:
Date:

[INSTRUCTIONS:

Please write between 4.000 and 7.500 words describing and explaining the institutional response under analysis, following the structure below. Please cite/link the document(s) in which the information can be found. Please document and justify your conclusions with direct quotations from the documents analysed and, importantly, direct verbatim form the interviews and focus groups. The report must be written in clear and professional English.

Format:

- *Font style for headlines: Arial Nova Cond, bold, 12*
- *Font style for body: Arial Nova Cond, 12*
- *Line spacing: 1.15*
- *Line spacing below titles: 6pt below*
- *Line spacing between sections: 12pt below*

(Please remove these instructions and tips in the final version).]

Tips:

- Describe your own narrative configuration process for arriving at your statements and conclusions.
- Explain which discourses were more saturated, but do not forget about those minority ones that might shed light into hidden narrative, semantic, or symbolic spaces.
- Zoom in and out every once in a while. Remember that the 7Ps is our general frame and a cross-cutting aspect

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1. Methodology

[Please resume very briefly the number of visits to the RPO, number of documents revised and number of interviews, focus groups and map of actors conducted, how many of them were online and how many face to face. How many women and men participated from which university groups (students, academic staff, admin staff) and if you faced any particular limiting factor for conducting fieldwork (beyond the difficulty of scheduling interviews and focus groups or obtaining responses from potential informants].

2. Main features of the institutional response

[Please outline the main features of the institutional response under analysis in no more than 1000 words. The following topics are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive].

- When was the institutional response adopted, why and by whom?
- What is the budget and time frame for it?
- What are its main aims and objectives?
- What actions does it entail in terms of activities performed, services provided etc.?
- Which of the 7P does it address?
- Which forms of gender-based violence does it address?
- Does it adopt an intersectional approach?
- Are monitoring and/or evaluation mechanisms foreseen?
- Has the response had any observable impact?

2.1. Theory of change

[Please outline the main features of the theory of change underpinning the institutional response under analysis in no more than 1000 words. The following topics are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive].

- What is the main problem that the institutional response seeks to offer a response to?
- Who is identified as problem holder (Whose problem is it seen to be?) and as responsible for the problem? (Whose responsibility is it to manage it?)
- How is the institutional response thought to offer a solution to such problem?
- Who is identified as responsible for bringing about such solution? (Who should do/not do what?)
- Who has a voice in suggesting a suitable course of action?
- What concrete processes are foreseen for its implementation?
- What are the expected results?
- Have there been any unexpected results?

3. Actors

[Please summarise your findings in relation to the main actors involved in the implementation of the institutional response in around 1200 words, making an overall assessment of the role of actors

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and networks for the implementation of the measure. The following questions are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive].

- Who is/was responsible for designing the institutional response?
- Who is/are the institutional responsible person(s) for its implementation?
- Who is responsible for its actual development in practice? do they count on enough authority, support and resources to successfully implement it?
- Who is responsible for its monitoring and evaluation?
- Who does it target? Does the action address specific vulnerable groups?
- Who actually uses it?
- Is any information available regarding the number/characteristics of users?
- How do the key actors' positions and the relations among them impact the implementation and use of the measure? Impact and relevance of power relations.
- What are the different levels of involvement of the relevant stakeholders/ actors and how do they affect implementation?
- Are there people opposing or offering active or passive resistance to the implementation of the measure or the way it is done?
- How are bystanders and perpetrators addressed and/or participating?

[Please describe as well the persons that were identified/targeted as interesting for the fieldwork, based on (Raymond, 1975):

- *Who are the key players?*
- *Who has the information?*
- *Who is more accessible (physically/socially)?*
- *Who are more willing to talk?*
- *Who are more capable…?]*

4. Institutions

[*Please summarise your findings in relation to the questions from the Interview & Focus Group Script regarding the role of formal and informal set-up and institutional structures, the institutional policies and the organisational culture in the implementation of the institutional response under analysis that are relevant to it. The following questions are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive]:*

- What are the main policies and related documents (protocols, circulars, etc.)
- Relevant aspects regarding budget and available resources (in terms of time, spaces, human resources, etc.)
- Has there been formal top management endorsement?
- Main collaboration and communication channels within the institution affecting (positively or negatively) the measure
- Partnerships, formal and informal networks or groups, etc.

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- Any other relevant insights regarding the organisational culture (i.e. unwritten rules, personal or groups behaviours and beliefs, taboos, symbols and images, etc.)

5. Ideas

[*Please summarise your findings in relation to the questions from the Interview & Focus Group Script regarding the role of ideas and discourses in the implementation of the institutional response under analysis that are relevant to it. The following questions are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive]:*

- How is the institutional response framed?
- How is gender-based violence and harassment framed?
- How were the problem(s) assessed and identified?
- How was the strategy to achieve the proposed solution(s) designed?
- How is intersectionality theoretically and/or practically framed and applied? How does the response address or mention specific vulnerable groups and axes of inequality?
- Existence of resistances and how they are managed, reasons provided by the different actors regarding its success/failure, etc.]

5.1. Gaps between design and implementation

[*Please summarise which are the main gaps and inconsistencies between the theory of the institutional response under analysis and its implementation in practice, if relevant for your case study. Please specify what gaps exist, why, and whether relevant actors are aware of them and have or have not adopted measures to solve it.The following questions are just a guide and therefore optional, based on the nature of the institutional response and the availability of information, as well as non-exclusive]:*

- What are the gaps and inconsistencies between what was designed and foreseen and the actual implementation?
- What are the gaps and inconsistencies between the theory/ political frames and the practice?
- Main inconsistencies between the context, what is said and what is done.
- Unexpected aids.
- Potential and/or actual negative effects,
- Unexpected negative or positive impacts.
- Gaps and inconsistencies between problems and solutions.

6. Facilitating and hindering factors

[*Please summarise your main findings in relation to which are the main factors facilitating and hindering the implementation of the institutional response under analysis, including both internal and external aspects and information on how specific obstacles and/or resistances were managed and overcome, if relevant.*]

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7. Conclusions

[Please use this final section to explain your main conclusions regarding the implementation of the measure, after a systemic and inter relational analysis of all the above mentioned sections, including:

- *An overall assessment of the implementation of the measure, taking into account the relationship/connection between each one of the previous aspects (include an explanation about this relationship if not explained yet: what and how are the connections between ideas, institutions and actors. Main inconsistencies among them).*
- *An overall assessment on the coverage of the **7Ps** and any specific relevant link between the previous sections (actors, institution, ideas) and this coverage (whether successful or failed)*

Base your interpretations on the descriptions offered throughout the report.
The following aspects can be also included in this section]:

- Unexpected aspects / new categories emerged during fieldwork/analysis. Overlaps and nuances.
- Potentialities identified based on specific institutional aspects/features or on the relationship between actors, institutions and ideas. Opportunities and lessons learned.
- What were your theoretical pre-assumptions?
- Any recommendation you might have.

Appendices

Please send as annexes the provided templates, already filled in:

A. documents analysis

Please include the template with the FULL LIST and description of the documents you have analysed (including documents provided by UniSAFE Tasks: 3.1. & 5.1.).

B. Field diary

Please include the template with the FULL LIST and description of onsite visits / online connections and the interviews and focus groups conducted.

C. Maps of Actors

Please include the template with the FULL LIST, description (including pictures) and main insights of the maps of actors you have developed.

D. Codebook

Please export your codebook including the original code tree and the emergent / new codes and upload it to Sharepoint.

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