

WOMEN AND SCIENCE: Review of the situation in Denmark

The present report concentrates on the most recent initiatives. This means that measures taken before 1996 are not included in the paper.

Situation/policy framework

Women are not sufficiently represented in research and science while the majority of university students are women.

Public research institutions are, generally speaking, the universities and the government research institutions. There are 11 independent universities in Denmark. They are presently all governed by elected bodies at all levels. The law regulating the universities gives them the right to internally allocate funds, as well as personnel. There are approximately 45 government research institutions in Denmark. They vary much in size and field of research. The management of government research institutions is professional employees. The recruitment of personnel is regulated by a Ministerial Order on the appointment of teaching and research staff at universities and other institutions of higher education under the Ministry of Research and Information Technology. The selection committees are requested to have a balanced number of men and women represented. Moreover, previously the selection committees were to prioritise the applicants for scientific positions at the universities, and the management would appoint the best qualified. In 2000 this has been changed. The selection committees are now to determine if the applicants are qualified for the position or not. The selection committee is no longer to give a priority. This permits the management of the research institutions to actively employ the candidate that fits into their actual needs. This includes a more equal balance of men and women.

The Danish Research Councils distributes research funds. The councils have adopted an equal opportunities policy they are committed to work for. This policy ensures a constant focus on gender aspects. Moreover, each year the Councils publish gender statistics of the yearly distribution of funds.

Initiatives/measures taken

Initiatives to improve the situation of women in research:

Development Contracts with the Universities

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology has signed development contracts with the 10 of the Danish Universities, which are connected, to the Ministry of Research and Information Technology. All universities were encouraged to include a focus area working for equal opportunities. The following is a summary of the development contracts regarding equal opportunities.

The universities all share the focus area of equal opportunity to the benefit of research and study programmes and in furtherance of gender equality and ethnic equality in society. The universities are committed to pursuing an active policy (supported by an equal opportunity action plan) for

recruitment and staff development, thus securing that non-utilised potential is developed and better utilised.

For instance, the universities will:

- enrol more female PhD students
- consider employing an equal opportunity advisor
- anchor clear responsibility for the equal opportunity task at all levels of management
- carry out surveys and analyses of the initial situation and the development in the area.

The University of Aarhus will consider employing an equal opportunity advisor.

The University of Copenhagen will, as a first step towards a more efficient equal opportunity policy, map out gender distribution in all appointment areas. In this context it is necessary to examine to what extent barriers which the University can eliminate cause unequal distribution by gender. Furthermore, the University will examine whether barriers exist, and if so, which barriers impair equal opportunities for all regardless of ethnic origin. A special home page is to be collecting and disseminating information on barriers, equal opportunity initiatives and results.

The University of Southern Denmark will pursue an active recruitment policy to ensure well-qualified applicants of both sexes, and to reinforce its efforts to recruit more women for permanent academic positions.

Aalborg University will work towards a better balance in areas with an unequal distribution by gender by working out plans for redressing gender imbalances in the various groups of staff. The Faculty of Engineering and Science will make a special effort to attract women to academic positions.

In order to achieve a higher proportion of female employees, the Copenhagen Business School will launch a number of initiatives in order to put focus on female role models when recruiting and retaining employees.

The Technical University of Denmark wants to create an environment, which is attractive to students and staff of both sexes by means of an action plan for equal opportunity.

The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University will analyse the equal opportunity situation and, if necessary, revise its action plan for equal opportunity.

Roskilde University will continue focusing on how to achieve a more suitable distribution between the number of female and male staff. Roskilde University will improve the balance between men and women in connection with new appointments. If this is not achieved within certain organisational units, such units must propose initiatives which can further the appointment of more women to academic positions.

During the 1990s increasing focus has been given to the gender issues within the field of research in Denmark. A first concern has been to define the actual situation; this implies the development of

good gender specific statistics, which also applies to e.g. distribution of research funds, members of research policy- and administration committees, selection committees, etc.

Moreover, there has been a demand for increasing knowledge about why women are not sufficiently represented in academia, as well as special initiatives has been taken to improve the number of women in science.

The FREJA programme

In 1998 the Minister of Research and Information Technology allocated 78 million D.kr. on the Finance Bill for the so-called FREJA-projects (**F**emale **R**esearchers in **J**oint **A**ction).

The aim of the FREJA-programme is to get more good female researchers into Danish research, to make them more visible, and to ensure more role models for female university students. Hence the projects were to be given to small groups instead of individual researchers. The frame of the FREJA-programme is very broad. Researchers from all areas of research were given the possibility to apply. The programme was open to both men and women, but a dispensation from the law on equality of the sexes was granted. This meant that the Danish Research Councils who distributed the FREJA grants could give priority to a female applicant if two applicants were equally qualified. Moreover, the FREJA grant was given to a senior researcher who then received sufficient funding for a research group related to the project.

The FREJA projects are presently running until 2002, hence they have not yet been evaluated. But the interest for the programme was immense. The Research Councils received 327 applications who applied for 2.2 billion D.kr. 307 applicants were women. 16 researchers, all female, have received grants for research projects.

Research programme “Gender barriers in higher education and research”

This programme was launched in 1996 for a period of 5 years, with a total amount of 10 million D.kr. The aim of the programme is to analyse possible barriers for female researchers. The programme is ending in 2001.

The new Law of Equal Treatment

In May 2000 the Danish Parliament adopted a new law of equal treatment of men and women. The main change in relation to former laws is the introduction of “mainstreaming” in public administration. It is now stated by law that public authorities within their field of work must incorporate an equal opportunities perspective and work for the progress of equal opportunities between women and men. Moreover, public institutions must submit a yearly progress report on equality between the sexes to the relevant ministry. This applies to all public research institutions with more than 50 employees.

The organisational structure of the work related to equality between the sexes has changed and a specific Government Institute has been set up “The Government Knowledge Centre on Equal Opportunities” (*Videnscenter for ligestilling*).

The co-ordination of Women's and Gender Studies

The co-ordination of Women's and Gender Studies has recently been evaluated, and the financing of the position will be continued for the next five years. In the future the co-ordination will focus on the gender perspectives rather than equal opportunities.

“Gender Age and Recruitment to the Danish Universities”

A study has been conducted of the recruitment to all academic positions at the Danish Universities during a three-year period. Each academic position has been analysed regarding how many women and men were applying, how many of these were qualified, who were offered the position, who were appointed to the selection committee, how long time the recruitment process took. One main conclusion from this study is that women not to the same extent as their male counterparts apply for scientific positions. It has been agreed that this study will continue in the future. From 2001 the universities as well as the government research institutions will be asked to electronically submit information concerning each appointed position.

Conference on Gender Research

In February 2001 the Ministry of Research and Information Technology will, in corporation with the Co-ordinator of women and gender studies in Denmark and representatives from the Danish Research Councils, conduct a conference concerning Danish gender studies and research within the field of humanities and social sciences. A conference for the science field is planned to follow in April 2001.

The private sector

The private sector in Denmark has no specific strategies for the improvement of women in Research and Development.

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