

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The work life balance practices present successful aspects that stimulate an enabling working environment in which all individuals, independent on their gender, can thrive in their jobs and enjoy equal opportunities to develop their careers and have fulfilling lives. This thematic area covers issues such as: maternity / paternity / leave provisions, childcare provisions, gender-sensitive communication, etc.

Below is a list of successful practices relating to Work/life balance, according to R&I peers research.

PRACTICE 1: Work/life balance at Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

General information

Title	The work/life balance policies and practices at the research centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU).
Organisation	Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language at ZRC SAZU (SHH department) and the Department of Agronomy at the Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana (STEM department).
Type of organisation	University
Country	Slovenia

Specific information

Aim of practice	Analysing the success of implemented policies related to work-life balance, with a sensitivity to gender issues at the subject organisations.
Time Frame	Ongoing
Beneficiaries	Researchers/faculty at the organisations, including both stayers and leavers.
Tools used	Main tools used for the study of the effectiveness of implemented policies were examination of policies and interviews to affected faculty members and researchers to gather their experiences and perceptions.
Steps and procedures followed to implement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analysing main policy documents related to work-life balance at national and organisational level, including collective agreements, working hour regulations, regulations regarding maternity leave, paid annual leave, and trade union initiatives and adding data from institutional accounting offices.Analysing the interviews of faculty members and researchers.
Description, benefits, comments	Interviews are revealing differences in the impact of the measures in place on the various interviewees, depending upon whether they were SSH or STEM, in a permanent and stable position or not, whether they had to take care of others, and of course gender. Clearly, there were

	differences depending upon the status of the interviewee and that interviewee's internalised expectations and implicit beliefs, which were usually gender oriented.
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Evaluation

Works well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, the various policies that were in place worked well subject to what appears to be a normal insecurity of employees in taking advantage of these benefits. For example, regarding parental leaves, males were much less likely to take advantage of the policy than females, and females felt that that leaving impacted negatively in their career. • In taking flexible forms of work, males did not use the service, and females did it so primarily because they have more home-related and caring responsibilities than males. The same applies with regard to flexible working hours and part-time work. There are also differences between temporary researchers and those with permanent jobs, as job insecurity affects the former. • Unbalanced career progression of females continues to appear, since their production at work is less as a result of their responsibilities at home.
Transferability	The results of this study seem to be very much in line with other studies that were evaluated, and the lessons learned are certainly something that can be passed along and incorporated into other studies going forward.
Learning potential	This program shows that although policies are successful, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality.
Gender perspective	The stereotype that females must take care of their families, leaving career aside persists. Conversely, males must give priority to their research and work. This approach creates a professional inequity.
Sustainability	The policies implemented are very sustainable, however they require adjustments to alleviate some of the inequalities in the workplace that exist as a result of the inequalities that exist at home. Education will be the key to promote the cultural change.

PRACTICE 2: Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Award

General information

Title	Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Award
Organisation	Imperial College London
Type of organisation	University
Country	United Kingdom

Specific information

Aim of practice	The purpose of the Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Award is to allow female academics to concentrate fully on their research work upon returning from parental leave. The award allows the Department / Division to release the academics from any teaching or admin duties in order to concentrate fully on research.
Time Frame	1998 - Present
Beneficiaries	Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Reader, and Professor
Tools used	Financial award/ fellowship Releasing the academics from teaching and admin duties to focus on research
Steps and procedures followed to implement tools	The Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Award is an important component of the College's family-friendly policies and is open to eligible female and male staff by relieving the academics from any teaching or admin duties in order to facilitate them concentrating fully on research.
Description / benefits/ comments	The Award provides central funding for 50% of the salary costs for a period of 12 months, so there is no financial loss for the department.

Evaluation

Works well	The Elsie Widdowson Fellowship creates the space and time for females and males to starting/ or continuing work on major research grants, by focusing on supervising existing PhD students, journal paper production, proposal writing, etc. Facilitating the advancement of their research career and future opportunities.
Transferability	Since the practice is a financial award, the case is highly transferable to any department or faculty.
Learning potential	The practice opens the door for conciliation of both genderst which could be difficult, otherwise.
Gender perspective	Overall, the fellowship is critical for providing support and flexibility needed that enables parents to balance an academic career with family life.
Sustainability	This program is sustainable as long as there is a funding source. In this case, the highest level of the University is endorsing it.

PRACTICE 3: Fathers time off

General information

Title	Encouraging SMEs to give fathers time off with their kids
Organisation	Abz* Austria
Type of organisation	Non-profit Organisation
Country	Austria

Specific information

Aim of practice	“Develop a new company culture that enables and encourages males to take paternal leave” to increase awareness of the existence of the permit and the involvement of males in the process of achieving gender equality.
Time Frame	2011-2012 (one year)
Beneficiaries	Management staff, parents, SMEs
Tools used	Workshops Income based childcare allowance Creating network and group work opportunities Small discussion groups
Steps and procedures followed to implement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops providing important information about legal framework and fields in which companies can act and where to get additional information, providing examples and new perspectives.• Discussion groups involving management staff as stakeholders to spread message, while involving male participants interested in paternal leave and offering positive attitudes on fatherhood. The discussion groups are tailored to requested information and solving needs of one specific group, namely SME decision makers and employees.• Involve male employees and management in hopes to change workplace culture and educating participants about the advantage/responsibility of taking paternal leave.
Description / benefits / comments	This program was positive for creating a better life-balance between work and family. It also had a direct effect on conciliation of work/life for females thanks to a greater involvement of the fathers.

Evaluation

Works well	The practice is efficient as it is promoting changes to conciliate home/work by involving all the employers and creating a culture that encourages males taking paternal leave.
Transferability	Yes, transferable. Other businesses can learn from the successes and the mistakes of the project.
Learning potential	Can be used as an example of how institutions, companies and governmental organisations can conduct programs to promote a greater

	life/work balance through education, which will bring cultural change.
Gender perspective	The feedback revealed the need of many changes to promote paternity leave – which should serve to improve also maternity leave. Companies will need to maintain continuing programs, devote resources, and use experts to attain their goals. The fathers should shift their mind-sets to take paternity leaves.
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High sustainability if well implemented. • The article is silent regarding additional allocated funds but makes it clear that investment will be required to continue devoting human resources to the project and to adjust for the expenses created by more employees taking paternal leave. • The cooperation between the stakeholders (governmental agencies) and employers as well as male managers agreed upon can ensure continuity of the measure over time. • The tools used to encourage paternal leave were workshops, networking groups, and dedicated human resources personnel that allowed the end users to obtain assistance and information.

PRACTICE 4: Promoting gender-neutral solutions as part-time productive scheme

General information

Title	Promoting gender neutral solutions as part-time productive scheme
Organisation	Small and medium sized enterprises based in Italy
Type of organisation	Various
Country	Italy

Specific information

Aim of practice	To introduce solutions that integrate the needs of people (in terms of their family life, with their professional life) with the company's production needs (workflows, delivery times, etc.) designed by direct participation of workers in the organization.
Beneficiaries	SMEs, management staff and employees
Description / benefits / comments	The solution would be characterized by a dual nature, work flexible scheme and benefits arrangements. Gender-neutral practices tend to favor above all the participation of women at work, but they are not addressed to women. It is important to provide a range of different solutions that can meet different needs while simultaneously being suitable for organizational functioning and efficiency. These practices would be ratified in a trade union agreement and can be applied to the whole workforce (they are not solutions for specific cases) and allow

	access to fiscal benefits.
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PRACTICE 5: Gender sensitive surveys (e.g. ASSET) about researchers

General information

Title	Gender sensitive surveys (e.g. ASSET) about researchers
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Specific information

Aim of practice	Introduce gender sensitive surveys, which would show in more quality, the often-invisible differences between positions in which male and female researchers find themselves. These results would not only concern the number of women in higher positions, but also the access to social care and health care services for instance.
Beneficiaries	Management staff, employees
Description / benefits / comments	This program was positive for creating a better life-balance between work and family. It also had a direct effect on conciliation of work/life for females thanks to a greater involvement of the fathers. The ASSET survey it promotes the use of one survey for all institutions in a specific country, allowing for easier comparison of the different institutions across the country. However, it is worth noting that not all surveys fit perfectly to every institution.