

# 1. Equal opportunities, gender parity and gender balance

## *The general context*

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The promotion of a gender equality policy does not only imply an explicit attention to women's needs, interests and perspectives. Equality between women and men is a human right issue as well as a precondition for sustainable people-centered development and decent working environment. It is important to underline that real actions accounting for gender differences, and generational gap questions, require structural and cultural changes even in Science (diversity management). The requirement of different mind sets can meet conscious and unconscious resistances, this being especially true in the scientific world considered neutral, meritocratic and objective.

## *The INF Situation*

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In Italy, equal opportunity laws require public institutions to establish Committees for Equal Opportunity and Gender Issues. According to the first Act, about twelve years ago, INFN established the first Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity (Comitato di Pari Opportunità, CPO), which has evolved (when Law 183/21010 became operational) into the actual Central Guarantee Committee (Comitato Unico di Garanzia, CUG).

During these years both Committees have been essential in proposing several specific actions and, as prescribed by the Italian law, Affirmative Action Plans, which were then adopted by the INFN Board.

Equal opportunity and gender equality issues are however still not embedded in the Institute development policy ("mainstreaming"). The achievement of this objective requires the development of a Human Resource recruitment and management system free from gender bias.

In this framework, CUG started its activity in 2011 working on several items, from gender statistics to organizational welfare trying to increment the collaborations with the whole INFN community and management. CUG proposed a new challenging three-year Affirmative Action Plan, which was approved by the INFN Directors Board at the end of 2011. The full document is available at: [http://www.infn.it/CUG/images/docs/doc\\_cug/ptap\\_2011\\_2013.pdf](http://www.infn.it/CUG/images/docs/doc_cug/ptap_2011_2013.pdf). The plan stresses the fact that an equality policy it is not only about the access to employment opportunities, but it has to take into account also different lifestyles, aspirations and needs of women and men. Those lifestyles, needs and aspirations must be featured and privileged on equal footing regardless of gender.

While we are conscious that the achievement of this kind of equality policy is difficult to put in action and may require further efforts, CUG realized that the new INFN management has demonstrated to pay more attention to gender questions increasing the number of women in decision making positions. For the first time in the INFN Executive Board (Giunta Esecutiva) a woman is present among the 6 components, moreover 4 women have already been appointed over the total number of 24 Directors of the National Laboratories and Divisions. The female presence inside the whole main board (Consiglio Direttivo) is now of 6 people over 34 total ( 18% ).

## 1.1 The Affirmative Action Plan

### *Generational and Gender Statistics*

In defining any specific policy, the diagnostic phase is important in order to detect whether gender inequalities are present and which are the priority areas of action. An effective way to integrate the gender perspective inside the INFN certainly requires a gender disaggregated breakdown of information for all the institute reports.

Following a CUG proposal, INFN introduced a working group (BILANCIO SOCIALE group) aiming to produce the social budget of the institute, including the analysis of the gender and generational gaps. Actually, generational and gender statistics are the result of the analysis of a CUG working group, performed on the database available at the moment.

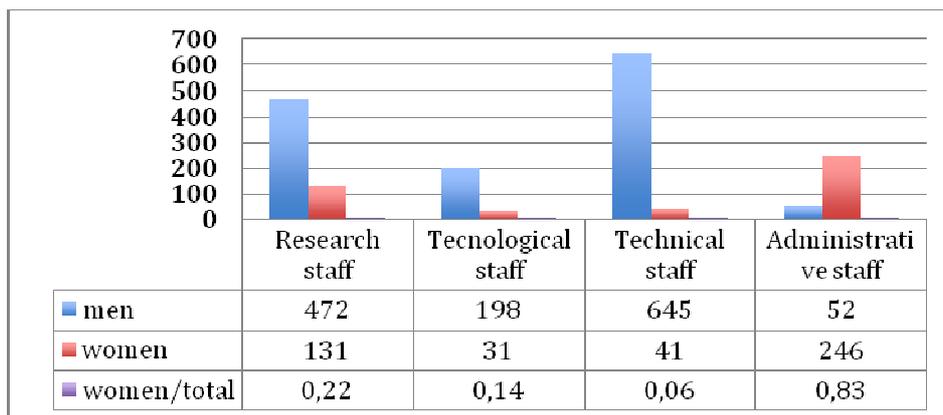


Fig. 1 Distribution of the INFN employees in 2011

While the total number of INFN employees is stable at least since 2003, the number of young people has decreased and is expected to decrease further in the next years, as the recruitments are connected to the retirements and currently the Italian laws limit the *turnover* to a fraction (today just 20%) of the retirees.

The small number of new positions is already affecting the INFN activities and

compromising the transmissions of skills and competences between the different generations.

At the present, the age distribution for the entire personnel has a peak in the cohort 45-54 years. People under 45 years of age decreased from 958 in 2003 to 576 in 2011 (-40%), in particular researchers under 45 years decreased from 278 in 2003 to 145 in 2011 (-48%).

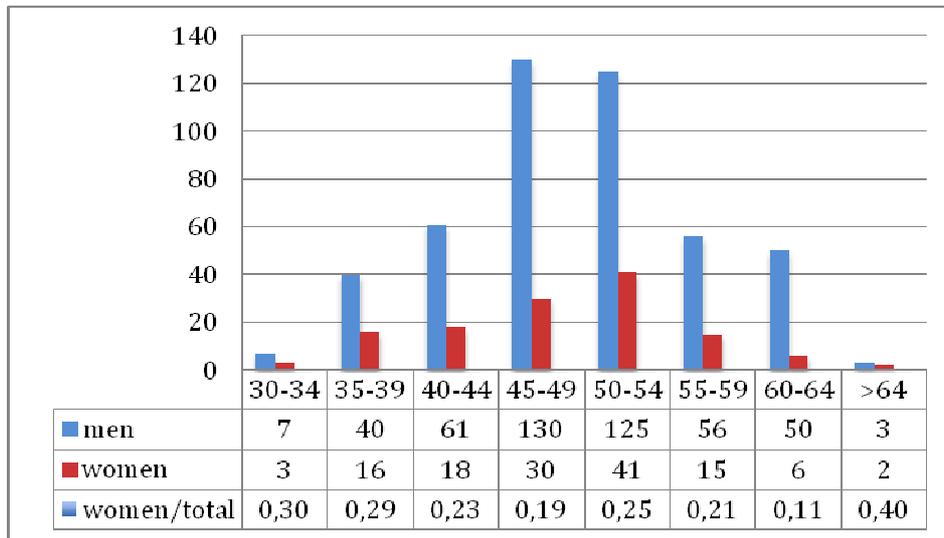


Fig. 2 Age distribution of INFN researchers in 2011.

The gap between women and men is not improving with time. For instance, the INFN researcher component under 50 years consists of 67 women and 238 men, similar numbers are found for the researchers above 50 years (64 women and 234 men, with a ratio of 3.6 men for each woman). Actually, this low female percentage does not reflect the high number of women involved in the early stage research training.

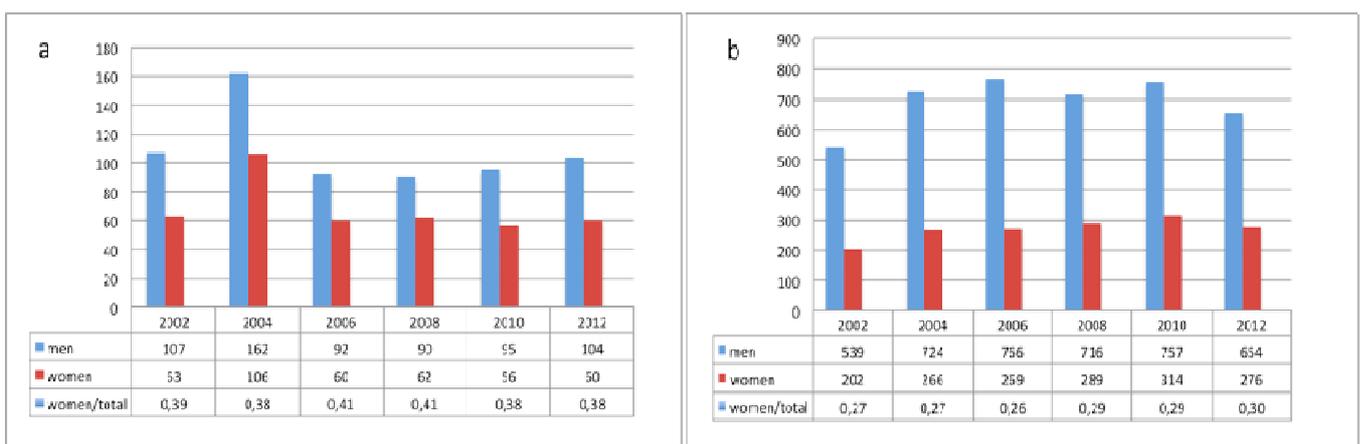


Fig. 3 – Gender distribution of (a) undergraduated students (laureandi magistrali) and (b) early stage reserachers (dottorandi, borse non INFN, assegni) associated to Scientific Research of INFN. Numbers refer to the first trimester of the corresponding year

This clearly appears from figure 3a, where we show the gender distribution of the

undergraduate students associated to the Scientific Research of INFN from 2002 to 2012. We see that the fraction of women (38-41%) is almost constant, and significantly larger than that among researchers (22%). When PhD students and post-doc grants with a scientific association (see figure 3b) are considered, this fraction lowers to 27-30%, corresponding to about 25% decrease, which means one out of 4 women is lost. Anyway, at this stage we still have one woman every two men. These data well represent the trend of the distributions, but cannot be used as absolute numbers because some database are still evolving.

Note that, in figure 3, for each year the data refers to the number of associations relative to the first trimester of the corresponding year.

The analysis of the career also reveals a gender gap: only 14 women out of 131 women researchers (11%) are “dirigenti di ricerca”, compared to 103 men out of 472 (22%). Data show that the probability to become “dirigente di ricerca” or “primo ricercatore” is similar for men and women, even if the career starts later for women. The impact of such career delay on the salary has not been yet evaluated. We have to underline that a comparison between the salary of administrative staff (mainly women) and technicians (mainly men) reveals a salary gap: for the same contractual level. Indeed the salary of an administrative is lower by one step than the one of a technician. This is due, of course, not specifically to INFN characteristics or policies but rather to the National Contract which is signed by Labour Unions.

For the sake of completeness, we also report some data for university researcher associated to INFN. Their number decreased from 955 in 2004 to 791 in 2012 (-17%). Among them, researchers with less than 45 years are 137 (229 in 2004) showing a decrease of 40%. It should be mentioned, however, that in the same group of young recruited the percentage of women slightly increased from 19.2% in 2004 to 21.9% in 2012.

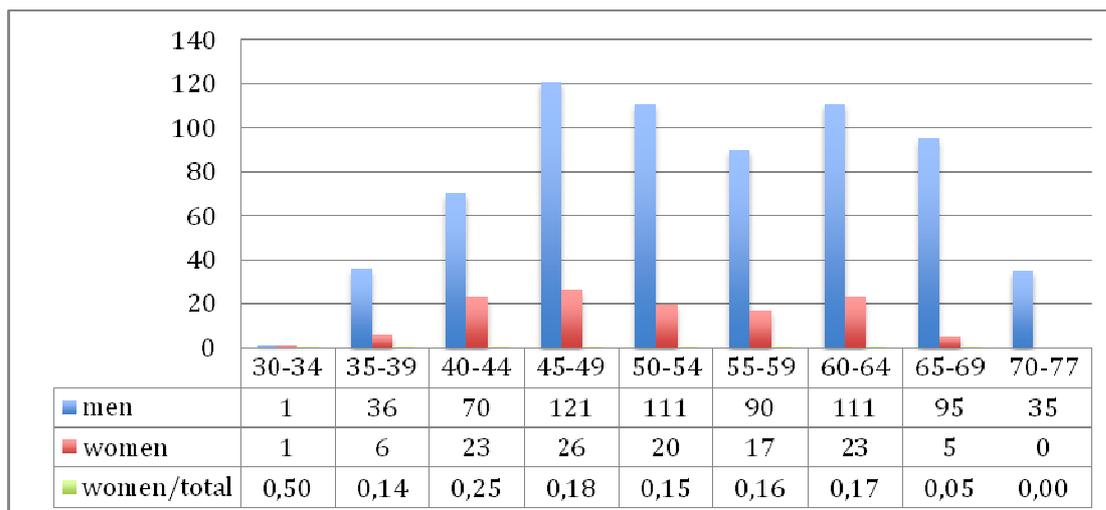


Fig. 4 – Age and gender distribution of University staff associated to Scientific Research of INFN (incarico di ricerca scientifica) in 2012

Policies that [pretend to be](#) gender-neutral may, on closer investigation, turn out to affect women and men differently.

LANGUAGE: it could be an important [tool](#) for a cultural transformation. Language should be gender-sensitive in order to counteract sexist terminology, as for example masculine terms for professions or the constant use of masculine pronouns. CUG is [asking for the use of a gender aware language](#) in all INFN documents.

HEALTH, stress factors and safety: CUG started to [introduce a gender approach in these](#) items organizing two courses for INFN employees for 2012 on Gender and Health, mainly devoted to safety and health people (RSPP). Collaboration is started with the INFN Safety, Health and Environment Committee (CNPISA) on stress questions.

### *Development of Human Resources*

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IMPROVE the women participation in political decision-making: a BEST Practice has been introduced. It was decided to have at least 1/3 of women in all recruitment committees for both temporary and permanent positions. This request was accepted by our President that sent a formal letter to all Directors asking a full commitment.

TRASPARENCY: the availability of public information about the Institute responsibility structures would spot possible anomalies, like a poor presence of women in leadership positions or an excess of responsibilities hold by the same few persons.

CUG is [systematically requiring the inclusion of](#) gender and generational disaggregated information in all the data-base regarding the INFN personnel (staff and associate) and to explicitly quote them. Indeed in this report, when discussing the different CNS, it was possible to introduce a subset of those information.

On the base of the European Charter for Researchers and of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the INFN new regulation for recruitment and promotion procedures [has been asked to require the publication of](#) the curricula of the participants and of the commissioners.

PARENTAL LEAVE AND MATERNITY: [the Italian current](#) system of work evaluation does not take into account parental leave and maternity period. CUG, together with other institutions, wrote a letter to the [Ministry for Labour and the one for Research and Education about](#) this problem. [This document ended in the formal Question Time in the Italian Parliament.](#)

Inside the [Institute work is still ongoing in order to include the maternity and parental leaves in](#) the career track system. Inside the Italian law, there are some challenge for INFN to extend a protection to people holding non-permanent position and to evaluate parental leave in a fair way in the access to permanent position.

These activities are the results of a very fruitful collaboration with the Ombudswoman (i.e. the “Consigliera di Fiducia”) and with the CNPISA.

- Protection of dignity: a new Regulation Code for sexual and moral harassment for people working inside and with INFN, elaborated by the CPO and CUG, has been approved by the INFN board of Directors on December 2011, (Delibera C. D. 12145 22/12/2011) ([http://www.infn.it/CUG/images/docs/regolamenti/codice\\_di\\_comportamento\\_2011.pdf](http://www.infn.it/CUG/images/docs/regolamenti/codice_di_comportamento_2011.pdf))  
A pamphlet is in preparation (pdf version).
- Organizational welfare: according to the work programme proposed by the Ombudswoman, a research project on the perceived organizational wellbeing is under way by means of a questionnaire submitted to all the INFN employees. A final analysis document will be produced for the end of 2012 and presented to the INFN main board. This document could be the base for CNPISA Committee to elaborate guidelines on stress factor and organizational wellbeing.
- Gender safety: a new document on safety and risk assessment during the pregnancy period has been completed and added to INFN risk assessment document.

### **1.1.2 An European gender project: GENIS-LAB**

INFN participate to the GENIS-LAB project, funded by the European Commission 7FP, together with other 6 scientific EU organizations: CSIC (Spanish Higher Council for Scientific Research) Institute for Polymer Science and Technology, Spain; IPF, Leibniz Institute of Polymer Research Dresden, Germany; FTM UB, Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade, Serbia; NIC, National Institute of Chemistry, Slovenia; BTH, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden, and three technical partners, Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, project coordinator, Associazione Donna e Scienza, and the International Training Centre of the ILO (more info at <http://www.genislab-fp7.eu/index.php/>).

The project, started in 2011, will last for 48 months. Its goal is to implement structural changes in the six scientific organizations in order to overcome factors that limit the participation of women in research. These factors appear to be linked to organisational systems and to the relation between individuals and the organisations, Thus, to have an effective impact on the conditions of women and men in research organisations, GenisLab adopted a complex intervention focused on three main areas: Human Resources and Management; Organizational Culture and Stereotypes, Organisational Financial dimension and Gender Budgeting.

The first phase of the project took place over 2011 and engaged all the six

organisations by means of a “participatory gender audit” (PGA), i.e. a well-tested ILO methodology based on qualitative self-assessment.

For INFN it was decided to focus the participatory activities on a sample Section, and analyse it against the general “gender background” of the institution at national level. The “PGA” of INFN was facilitated by ITC/ILO experts, in collaboration with experts of FGB. INFN provided insider expertise and facilitated the collection of documents, helped adapting the methodology to INFN context, and supported the organisation of audit visits in Frascati (administrative headquarters) and Trieste Section. Trieste was selected as it was deemed to be representative of all categories of staff and because the Director of the Section expressed full support to the initiative.

The PGA output are recommendation which offer to INFN management and all the staff involved with ideas on how to capitalize on the richness of already existing resources and experiences, and contribute to the practical implementation of its existing gender equality policies and strategies. The recommendations can be summarized as follows:

*Policy dialogue and reinforcing accountability frameworks; Reinforce the monitoring systems; Align human resource strategies and management tools to EU policies; Promote a gender transformative culture in internal information and external communication; Staff development: targeted action and promoting collaborative behaviours; Work-life balance.*

The Audit recommendation should evolve in Action Plan, which could be implemented with the help of CUG and which require clarifying responsibilities among a much larger set of internal actors (e.g. Human Resources Services, the Directors, members of Selection Panels).