



2010
2019

Paving Ways for Gender
Equality in Academia

Evaluation of the perspektive promotion Project

**perspektive
promotion**

Programm für Geistes- und
Sozialwissenschaftlerinnen*

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Opening Remarks

Dear Readers,

perspektive promotion started nine years ago as a distinct program for women interested in or already pursuing a doctorate in the humanities and social sciences. The reason for the development and initiation of this human resource development program was the below-average proportion of women who had completed doctorates in comparison to the number of female students in these subject groups. Thanks to our success in Phases I and II of the Women Professors Program of the federal government and the federal states (2008–2018), the University of Bremen was able to build up a customized counseling and advanced training program.

The perspektive promotion program has been successfully implemented in recent years and has now been evaluated. The report, as well as the responses of the participants documented within it, convey a sophisticated image of the positive effects of this human resource development measure.

As such academic career development programs can contribute to gender equality in academia, they are also part of the latest gender equality concept ("geschlechtergerecht 2028") of the University of Bremen. We are pleased that the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has awarded us for our efforts with the "Excellence in Gender Equality!" distinction.

The present results of the evaluation of the perspektive promotion program encourage me to continue to strive towards gender-equitable and gender-competent academic human resource development at the university aided by a suitably profiled human resources development strategy and cleverly coordinated workshops, training, and programs tailored towards the target group.

On behalf of the University Executive Board, I would like to thank the project management in the Unit for Equal Opportunities / Anti-Discrimination Office and the perspektive promotion team for their expert and committed implementation of the perspektive promotion program.



Dr. Martin Mehrtens

Director of Finance and Administration
of the University of Bremen

Foreword

The Unit for Equal Opportunities developed the perspektive promotion program in 2010 to support female early-career researchers aspiring a doctorate. Our objective was – and remains – to provide support for women pursuing a doctoral degree in the humanities and social sciences according to their needs. The program focuses on gender- and diversity-related issues during the doctoral studies. Workshops, peer groups with regular meetings, and one-to-one counseling form the central pillars of the initiative. This combination along with the option to choose the components individually has proven successful. We are delighted that perspektive promotion has become an important part of the University of Bremen's work to support young talent and its gender equality strategies over the past nine years.

At present, the relatively high proportion of women in the undergraduate studies in the humanities and social sciences is not reflected at the more advanced career levels. This is where perspektive promotion sets in. The project team designed and constantly developed the perspektive promotion program to cater for the needs of female doctoral students. On the one hand, it incorporates trainings that address the writing skills, which play an important role in these

subjects. On the other hand, it offers networking opportunities that take into account the situation of women who are pursuing individual doctorates or who are scholarship grantees. These two aspects dominate the doctoral process in the humanities and social sciences. Furthermore, the program combines workshops and trainings on relevant skills for doctoral studies with process-oriented counseling. This strategy has proven immensely popular with the participants. The content and formats of perspektive promotion have also gained recognition beyond the University of Bremen. For instance, perspektive promotion was included in the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation, DFG) toolbox for research-oriented gender equality standards as an example of good practice.

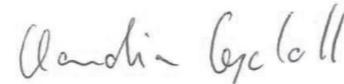
Our female coaches also play a major role in the success of perspektive promotion. Besides superbly teaching the content of their workshops, they are trained to incorporate gender perspectives into their various training sessions. Our special thanks go to Dr. Silke Betscher, who was largely responsible for designing perspektive promotion at the start of the initiative and continued to work for and enhance the program for a number of years.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the evaluators of the program, Marina Mayer-Tasch and Dr. Claudia Streit. With this evaluation and the preceding preparatory discussions, they have given us an even more detailed insight into the impact of and responses to perspektive promotion. In addition, we would like to thank all participants and coaches, all doctoral supervisors, and the Central Women's Representative. All of them not only made this evaluation possible with their active participation, but also enriched the program in many different ways with their involvement, feedback, and collegial dialog.



Anneliese Niehoff

Head of the Unit for Equal Opportunities



Claudia Czycholl

Project Coordinator



Dr. Lisa Spanka

Project Coordinator

Paving Ways for Gender Equality in Academia

Support for women aspiring to a doctorate – eight years after the initiative's launch, more than 800 early-career researchers have participated in the perspektive promotion program and it is time to take stock. perspektive promotion offers women interested in or women already pursuing a doctoral degree in the humanities and social sciences a continuous, needs-based range of support consisting of workshops, open groups with regular meetings, and counselling. An extensive evaluation took a 360-degree view of the project, which has developed from an innovative pilot program to a recognized case of good practice.

I. The Concept of perspektive promotion

Starting Point

There is plenty of evidence showing the striking difference between the proportion of female students and female professors at universities, across all faculties. To counteract this disparity in the short to medium term, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) initiated the Women Professors Program in 2008 that aims to increase the proportion of women at all qualification stages at German higher education institutions (HEI). Following the measurable success of Phases I and II of the Women Professors Program, Phase III was initiated in 2019. The University of Bremen successfully participated in the first two phases of the initiative, receiving funding for six professorships.¹

To qualify as participants, the HEIs had to submit a gender equality concept. In 2008, when the University of Bremen developed its first gender equality concept, 65 % of the students in the humanities and social sciences were women.

However, only 45 % of the successful doctoral candidates were women.² These figures showed a clear decrease even at the first academic career level after graduation. With this in mind, a part-time project position (0.5 FTE) was initially created at the Unit for Equal Opportunities in 2010 to develop a target group-specific concept: perspektive promotion.

New Concept in a Central Area of Activity

perspektive promotion focuses primarily on three key areas identified as relevant:

- Strengthening key skills needed by doctoral candidates via a program of workshops
- Networking opportunities and support for women during their doctoral studies in open groups with regular meetings
- Process-oriented one-to-one counselling for women interested in a doctorate or who are currently pursuing a doctoral degree

Design

The design of the program provided a new approach to supporting female early-career researchers:

Workshops

One- or two-day workshops, usually for up to 12 participants from various faculties within the humanities and social sciences, covering decision-making and embarking on doctoral studies, skills in academic research and writing, self-presentation, positioning in the academic world, professional goals and career planning, as well as time management.

Peer Coaching

Regular, supervised meetings of closed groups of doctoral students plus independent meetings of tandems arising from this group.

Writing Lab and Space for Feedback on Texts

Open groups with regular meetings.

Writing Retreat

Writing workshop lasting several days. It takes place every two years for up to 12 participants to work intensively on their dissertation.

Counselling

One-to-one counselling on issues relating to doctoral studies is available either as a one-off counselling or as process-oriented.

Specific Profile

perspektive promotion makes an independent contribution in the context of supporting early-career researchers at the University of Bremen. It is the only program that is aimed solely at women as participants and extensively integrates gender aspects into doctoral support via its workshops, training groups and counselling. The aim is to provide continuous support for women pursuing a doctorate, all the way from decision-making prior to starting their doctoral studies to career planning. The open groups with regular meetings and the workshops concentrate on the essentials of pursuing a doctorate but also cover every phase of the doctoral process. This establishes both continuity

Which of the following aspects of the perspektive promotion program appealed most to you?

(Multiple responses)



and structure. The specific needs and personal circumstances of female doctoral students and the challenges they consequently face when completing a doctorate are addressed and dealt with in the relevant context. Both the selection of female coaches and the design of the workshops and training take this into account. These two processes are subject to strict quality control. At the same time, the program team has succeeded in accumulating extensive expertise in the provision of one-to-one counselling to female early-career researchers. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that participants' childcare costs can be refunded while they are taking part in the program.

II. Evaluation

To find out the extent to which perspektive promotion was able to achieve its objective, various instruments were used to evaluate as many aspects and levels as possible. As internal assessments had already been completed for the first funding phase, the evaluation concentrated mainly on the second funding phase.

- > Qualitative expert interviews were conducted to compile the experiences and knowledge of the project team and perceptions of the project by other professionals from the field of gender equality at the university.
- > Qualitative interviews with the coaches to establish outcomes such as the perceived acceptance of the program content by participants, learning successes achieved, and the specific effects of the offered workshops aimed solely at women.
- > A quantitative online survey of previous and current participants served to specify the benefits of the individual workshops and regular training sessions and to assess the actual support contribution of each program component. It also explicitly asked for suggestions on expanding or improving the range of workshops, training and counselling.
- > Qualitative interviews with doctoral students who had participated in various perspektive promotion workshops and training sessions were

conducted to further explore the aspects covered in the quantitative survey.

- > Lastly, qualitative interviews with doctoral supervisors of all genders in various faculties revealed faculty-specific differences relevant to the program and offered further evaluations of the program.

1. Offered Program and Needs

During the evaluated second funding phase of perspektive promotion, 40 workshops and three regular peer coaching groups took place in total, as well as the regular group meetings "Raum zum Schreiben". The latter is an open writing lab that ran through the whole funding phase.³ 416 female doctoral students signed up for the 40 workshops being evaluated, meaning that there were 10.4 participants at each workshop on average. The exact number of participants attending the open groups with regular meetings fluctuated from meeting to meeting, but there was always at least two-thirds of the maximum number. As far as the open writing lab was concerned, the number of people wanting to attend often exceeded the number of spaces available. The capacity was limited by the size of the room. Around 43 doctoral students on average took advantage of the option of one-to-one counseling each year.

/// "The focus is on women's contentment. [...] We want to give women confidence throughout the process, clarity in defining roles, and provide information on options for action."

Equal opportunities expert at the University of Bremen in a qualitative interview

The demand for the workshops on decision-making and clarifying research topics was always on the high side. The same applies for the sessions covering topics such as working in an academic setting and self-presentation. There was a little less interest in the "Confident Performance for English Lectures" workshop given in English and the "Space Invaders! Empowerment-Workshop für Doktorandinnen of Color" (empowerment workshop for female doctoral students of color). These workshops were held for the first time in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Demand for workshops offering support with the writing process was at a constant high. In the case of the writing retreat spanning several days that is only held once every two years, the number of people wanting to attend exceeded the number of available spaces by far. Some workshops and regular meeting opportunities, however, were no longer offered when it came to the second funding phase. Examples include the informal networking gathering, which became less and less popular, and the regular group called "Ich krieg die Krise" (regular group for coping with stress, crises and conflicts during the doctoral process).

2. Supporting Women during Their Doctoral Studies

How exactly did the workshops and training support the participants during their doctoral studies? Which formats and content catered to their needs particularly effectively? And which formats and content did participants perhaps miss out on? The online survey conducted as part of the evaluation process tackled these questions in depth.

A Profile of the Participants in the Online Survey

An email was sent to more or less 450 current and former participants in the perspektive promotion program to invite them to complete an online survey. A total of 123 of those asked did fill in the questionnaire, 86 were completed in full. Only the questionnaires completed in full were used for the evaluation.

A majority of almost two-thirds of those who completed the online survey were pursuing a doctorate at the time. The majority had also started on their doctoral project in or after 2015. Around a fifth of those who completed the survey aimed to complete their studies within the following six months. Most of those who completed the survey had last participated in a perspektive promotion workshop or training session within the past two years (62%). The majority of them had

also taken advantage of more than one of these.

The majority of those who completed the survey were aged between 29 and 39. Almost 56% of those who completed the survey were working in academia and 21% were not. This means that the number of women surveyed who were not working in academia was much higher than the national average for all graduate students of all genders across all faculties.⁴ In turn, 16% of those completing the survey stated that they had received a doctoral scholarship.

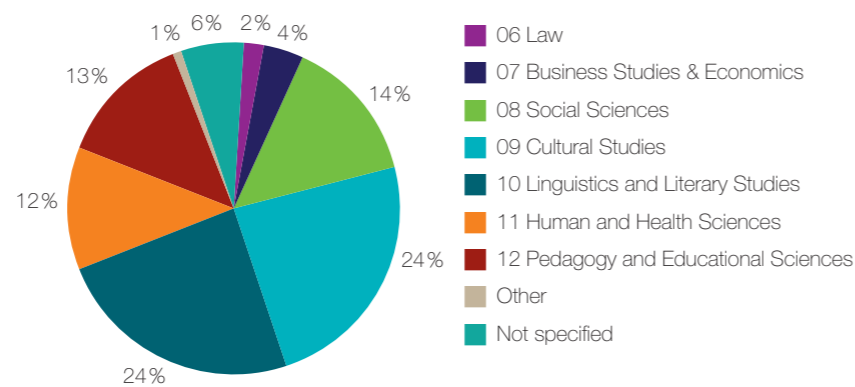
In line with this, the number of female doctoral students who were able to dedicate 30 hours or more a week to their studies was also low. In fact, this applied to just ten of the ones we surveyed. A quarter of those completing the survey

worked on their dissertation for ten to 19 hours a week, while this time dropped to less than ten hours a week for another quarter.

The proportion of those completing the online survey whose aim was to pursue a career in academia after their doctoral studies was 30% – the same as the proportion of those who were looking to gain the qualification for work outside of academia. Almost exactly a quarter (25.5%) said that their reasoning for completing a doctorate was purely based on an interest in studying a topic from an academic perspective and a desire to deepen their own knowledge.

Almost half of the doctoral projects being worked on by those who completed the survey were based in Faculties 09 (Cultural Studies) and 10 (Linguistics and Literary Studies).

In which faculty are you completing your doctoral studies?



Which Workshops and Training Sessions Catered to the Requirements Particularly Effectively?

In order to precisely assess how effective specific content and formats were for the participants, the online survey included a multiple-choice question and an open-ended question determining just how well the workshops and training sessions catered to the participant's requirements.

The standardized question revealed that the workshops on decision-making and embarking on doctoral studies as well as the workshops on skills in academic research and writing ranked very highly, being selected by more than a third of those completing the survey. The workshops and open groups with regular meetings with a focus on practical work on text production and the workshops on self-presentation in the academic world were popular too, with around a third of those completing the survey selecting them. The peer coaching and time management workshops followed closely behind.

However, when participants of more than one workshop were asked which one helped them most in their doctoral studies, the results were rather different. Peer coaching was the clear winner here, having been mentioned by most participants. This was followed by the "Raum zum Schreiben" writing lab, the writing retreat, and the workshop on writing a doctoral proposal.

Support Provided Through the Workshops

Virtually all of the participants in the program had had some experience with the workshop format. Almost everyone who completed the survey (94%) had attended a workshop and the majority of them (65%) had attended more than one. In terms of the numbers, the workshops on skills for academic research and writing attracted the highest number of participants (68% of those completing the survey). These were followed by the workshops on decision-making and embarking on doctoral studies (41%) and the workshops on self-presentation in the academic world (32%). Looking at the number of workshops that were offered on certain topics, time management was strongly represented (almost 35%

of those completing the survey). Only a small proportion of those completing the survey had attended the reflective and empowerment workshops as well as the workshops on career goals and planning.

Almost 64% of the workshop participants completing the survey stated that they found attending workshops helped them a great deal in their doctoral studies. A further 26% felt that attending workshops helped them a little. When it came to specifying how exactly they helped, some answers clearly came out on top: personal growth, motivation and perseverance, clarity regarding one's own situation in pursuing a doctorate, and networking with other female graduate students were each selected by more than 50% of the participants completing the survey.

How did you personally benefit from the workshops?



Support in the Form of Open Groups with Regular Meetings

Almost a third of those completing the survey took advantage of peer coaching and the writing lab. Both groups received positive feedback when it came to the support they had offered for participants (78 % and 93 % respectively felt the groups had helped them a great deal or a little). In both cases, most participants thought that their motivation and perseverance had been boosted. In the ranking of benefiting factors motivation and perseverance were followed by the categories clarity about one's own doctoral studies situation, the topic and structure of one's dissertation, and giving structure to one's way of working. Networking with other women pursuing a doctorate was mainly stated as being a crucial factor in the support offered by peer coaching.

Support in the Form of One-to-One Counselling for Female Doctoral Students

A quarter of those completing the online survey took advantage of process-oriented one-to-one counselling for women interested in pursuing a doctorate and those already pursuing one. Two-thirds of those participants did so once, while the remaining third used this service on more than one occasion. Here the focus was clearly on getting support and advice surrounding one's own personal situation rather than purely getting information.

With only one exception, those who had been in need of advice gave the service excellent feedback, with four-fifths rating it as very helpful and one-fifth rating it as somewhat helpful. It is therefore possible to say that perspektive promotion has succeeded in solving the issue of a lack of decent counselling, which was frequently the subject of complaints raised in discussions with female doctoral students and doctoral supervisors. This has benefited the target group. The expertise input by the project staff from the outset, which has been built upon further by many years of experience, is an incredibly valuable asset for the university.

3. Supporting Women in the Academic World

The following section looks at the extent to which perspektive promotion helps more women to become established in the academic world.

Workshops and Training Program Combined with Expert Knowledge

Most of those completing the survey also consider the perspektive promotion workshops and training program to be helpful in terms of their own positioning in the academic world. This effect, however, was not so clearly linked to specific workshops and trainings, with one very clear exception. Peer coaching was again included most often in the open-ended answers, meaning it took the top spot as a regular group and a means of participants receiving support for their doctorate and ascertaining their own position in the academic world. The following workshops were also named several times: "Warum denn nicht Frau Doktor?", a workshop that provides information about the doctoral process, "Promoviert und dann?" (career planning workshop), and "Gut lehren und trotzdem promovieren" (workshop on combining efforts in teaching and doctoral studies). Having said all that, many answers indicated that it was primarily the combination of the workshops and training and the opportunity to talk to experts and other women pursuing a doctorate that helped participants gain some clarity with regard to their own position in the academic world and then reinforce it.

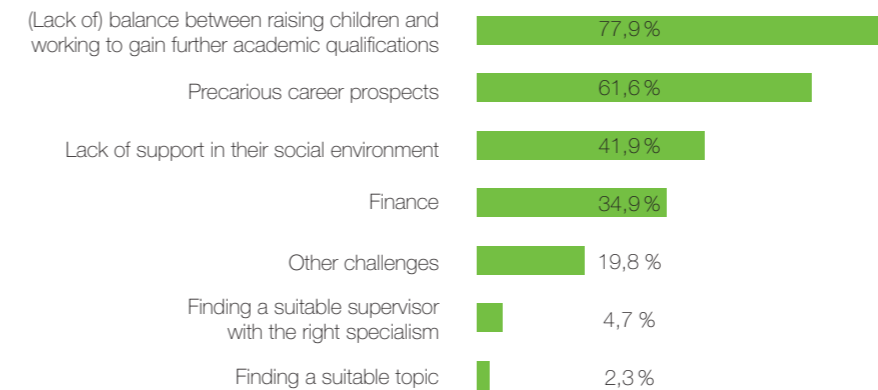
Aiming for a Career in Academia?

The positive responses given by the participants when asked about the perspektive promotion program do not, however, make it possible to predict whether or not there is any effect on whether female doctoral students do actually stay in academia. Although over half of those completing the online survey said that they are currently employed in academia, only just under a third of them are/were completing their doctoral studies with the objective to pursuing an academic career. This still means that the number of women taking part in the workshops and training provided by perspektive promotion and who are aiming or have aimed for an academic career is significantly above the national figures for the number of people with doctorates working in academia (19%).⁵

Identifying the Challenges

What is interesting here is the participant's own view of their career prospects in academia as a woman. The vast majority of those who stated that they were pursuing an academic career said that they believed it would be harder for them to achieve this goal because of their gender. For one thing, this view is based on the fact that they believe they are affected more by a number of challenges throughout their doctoral studies because they are women. Their main concern here was the difficulty faced in balancing family life and their work to gain further academic qualifications.

Which of the following challenges do you think affect women more than men?

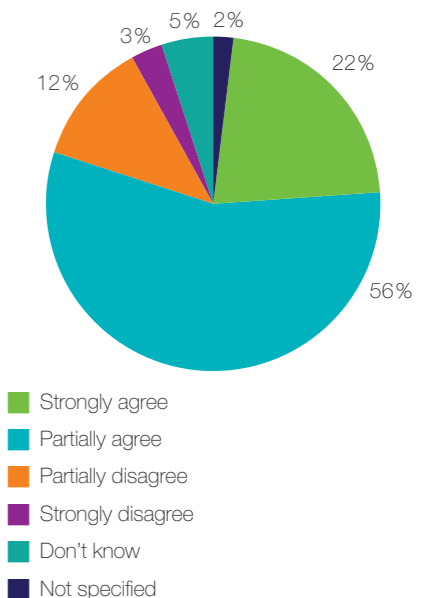


/// "I find that it's only male colleagues who get permanent contracts. [...] Women leave their best years behind them at university and find themselves in a precarious situation when they enter their 40s."

Participant in a qualitative interview

A large number of those completing the survey are also aware of mechanisms of exclusion in force against women in the academic world:

To what extent would you agree with the following statement: "Generally speaking, there are certain mechanisms of exclusion in the academic world/at universities that make it more difficult for women to pursue a career in academia."



/// "I took advantage of the one-to-one counselling offered by perspektive promotion too. It makes sense. Everyone I spoke to was skilled and honest. [...] It's not easy to get advice at the university."

Participant in a qualitative interview

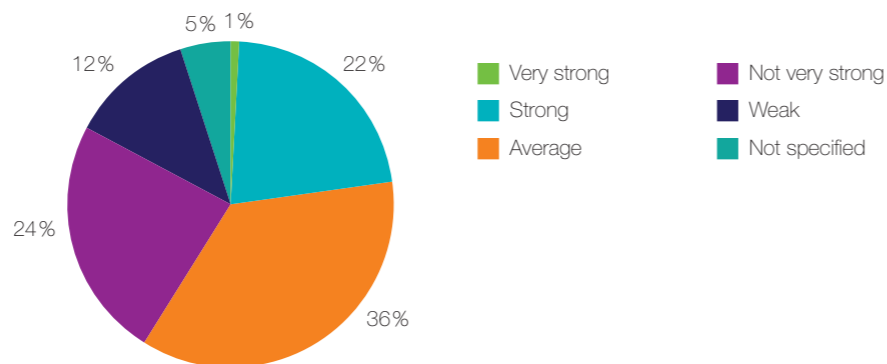
/// “The sessions made me more determined to complete my doctoral studies. This was down to the topics covered and the opportunities to network with other female participants.”

Participant in the online survey

Skeptical Assessment of Own Networking Skills

This view is linked to the participants' own skeptical assessment of their networking skills within the academic world. 87% of those completing the online survey considered personal networks as very important when it comes to successfully progressing within the academic world, with the remaining 13% rating them as important. Yet only one participant in the survey claimed to have a very strong network within the academic world, while 19 of the other participants said they had a strong network. More than three-quarters of the participants in the program surveyed rated their network as average, not very strong, and even weak.

How would you rate your own network within the academic world?

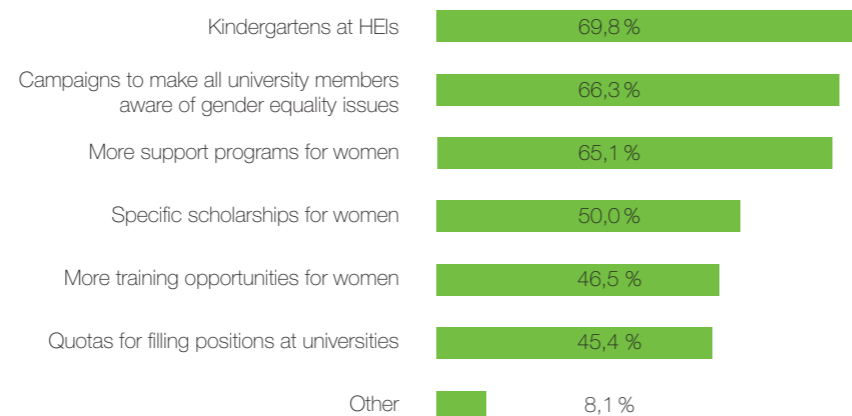


The positive and negative responses to the question as to whether perspective promotion had helped with networking in the academic world were more or less balanced, coming in at 36% and 37% respectively. An unusually high proportion of those completing the survey (17%) found it impossible to answer this question and said: “Don't know.”

Endorsed Measures

Almost everyone who completed the survey believed that specific measures could be taken to make it easier for women pursuing a career in academia. The most popular solutions were kindergartens at HEIs, campaigns to make academics at universities more aware of gender equality issues and specific support programs for women, which around two-thirds of those completing the survey agreed would be a good idea.

In your view, which measures would make it easier for women to pursue a career in academia? (Multiple responses)



/// “It was important to me that perspective promotion always encouraged us to think critically even about the system.”

Participant in a qualitative interview

A Closer Look: The Effects of Special Doctoral Support Programs for Women

So what exactly are the benefits of offering support specifically to women pursuing a doctorate? The responses given across the different groups of respondents draw an incredibly varied image.

For the experts from the project team and other agents promoting gender equality at the University of Bremen surveyed, there is no doubt that the measures in place are necessary. Their perspective focuses primarily on the long list of structural barriers for women. The aim is to reduce such barriers at least to a certain extent through specific projects for female early-career researchers:

- > Women have fewer role models within their faculties who they can look up to for having a successful career in academia and they often face committees and boards consisting predominantly of men.
- > Women's networks are not yet at the same standard as men's networks.
- > There are still subconscious reservations in relation to the achievements of women and this is more or less obvious depending on the subject area in question.

> As a result of this, women are harsher critics when it comes to their own achievements than men working at the same level and they often do not believe they have a chance of facing the fierce competition in the academic world.

> The issue of balancing a career and family still proves to be problematic. A solution is not in sight neither from a subjective nor from a structural perspective. Although men do sometimes take on more responsibility here, this burden still weighs down more heavily on women.

> Despite all of the efforts to the contrary, sexual violence is still a problem.

The interviewed experts' experiences with the program show that the opportunity to undertake specific training relating to doctoral studies is the main reason women initially take advantage of the perspective promotion program. As people continue to become more aware of the issues of gender equality – another result of participation – having the option of choosing between workshops and training for anyone of any gender and those aimed exclusively at women is becoming increasingly important.

/// “Many female academics live their lives as though it is a high-performance sport. But these demands can make a person feel inferior.”

Coach in a qualitative interview

The Coaches involved in perspective promotion are carefully selected regarding their gender expertise. They too are aware of the aforementioned barriers and yet they mostly notice extremely high (and sometimes unrealistic) standards and demands for perfection women apply to their own work. They speak of feelings of insufficiency. These result from the exceedingly high set goals as well as from the tendency of people socialized as women to accept all tasks and duties assigned to them without ever questioning the situation. It is rather obvious that attempts to juggle everything to the best of one's ability is never going to end well. It is on this basis that most of the coaches focus on delivering their content while also helping participants to maintain a realistic view of what is actually possible so they can have some real experiences of success.

/// “Clarification on job and career paths within and outside the academic world. This was something I could never get any information, tips, and experience on within the university or through my supervisor. But the perspektive promotion program provided me with plenty of relevant information as well as addressed my own personal circumstances and questions, which is something that all doctoral students urgently need.”

Participant in the online survey

/// “What I found surprising was my realization that sessions aimed exclusively at women are extremely effective and provide a relaxed atmosphere. I hope that these amazing sessions will continue.”

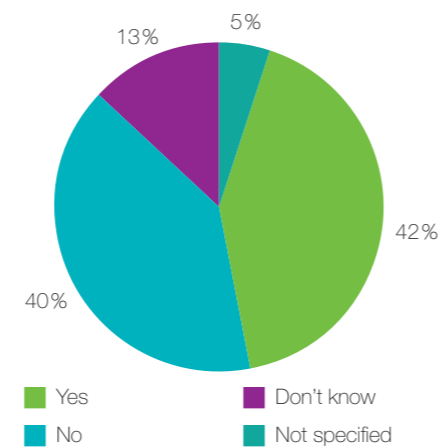
Participant in the online survey

The doctoral supervisors spoken to as part of the process of evaluating perspektive promotion mainly considered workshops and trainings aimed exclusively at women to be a good idea. However, some were not as familiar with the perspektive promotion program as others were. On top of that, the amount of attention they dedicated to issues of gender equality differed hugely. One thing all supervisors did agree on was their experience that female students are harsher critics of their own achievements and are generally less confident than their fellow male students.

60% of the participants in perspektive promotion surveyed did at least feel they had been addressed directly because the program was aimed exclusively at women. 42% of those completing the online survey also stated that their perception of gender equality within the academic world had changed since they participated in perspektive promotion. The exceptional quality of the workshops aimed exclusively at women was also frequently mentioned in the comments section of the online survey. Only a very small minority were in favor of opening up the workshops and training sessions to men too.

The qualitative interviews with participants back up this conclusion: all the women spoken to without exception stated that the unique atmosphere in the sessions, which was more open and less competitive, had created a more constructive and effective learning environment. Some explained that this had made them consciously decide against mixed gender sessions on the same topics on a number of occasions.

Has participating in perspektive promotion changed your view on gender equality within the academic world?



4. How Well-Known Is perspektive promotion?

The perspektive promotion program is well known among the women pursuing a doctorate at the University of Bremen. The steady number of participants is proof of this as is the fact that most of those completing the online survey had heard about the various workshops, training and counselling via a number of channels. Printed materials (posters and flyers) were named as the top source of information, followed by recommendations by fellow doctoral students and the e-mail newsletter sent out to doctoral students. The recommendation rate is extremely high, with 86% of those completing the online survey stating that they had told fellow female doctoral students about the perspektive promotion program.

By contrast, the level of awareness among doctoral supervisors across the different faculties was more mixed. While some of those spoken to knew a lot about perspektive promotion, others only had a vague idea of what it was. Some did not even think it was worth having a further discussion because they did not know about the program at all. This matches up with the fact that only 18% of the participants in the program who completed the online survey heard about perspektive promotion through a recommendation from a professor.

5. What Has perspektive promotion Achieved?

Doctorate Development in Faculties 06 to 12

Looking back at the most recent doctorate statistics available at the time of going to print (from 2017) is reassuring. The proportion of women completing doctorates in Faculties 06 to 12 has increased significantly, with the figure currently standing at 54%.⁶ However, looking at the progression over the past ten years reveals that the increase in the numbers on the proportion of women completing doctorates is somewhat more ambiguous.

While the proportion of female students has remained more or less the same across the individual faculties over the past decade, some faculties have seen a rise in the proportion of women completing doctorates and others have seen a drop. As the absolute numbers for doctoral studies and the proportion of women fluctuates hugely in some years, the ten-year average is used here as a benchmark for evaluating the effect based on the evaluation model of the Women Professors Program. This is mostly above 50% (with the exception of Faculty 07).

/// “During my studies, I wasn’t given the tools required for academic work. I picked up everything I needed to know about research and presentations in the perspektive promotion seminars offered for women starting their doctoral research.”

Participant in a qualitative interview

Compared to the ten-year average, Faculties 09 (Cultural Studies) and 10 (Linguistics and Literary Studies) are showing the biggest upward trend, with the figures from the last three years sitting way above that average. The greatest downward trend can be seen in Faculty 07 (Business Studies & Economics). Despite the fact that it already has a lower ten-year average of 28% (with the proportion of female students sitting at 43%), the figures for the past two years were well below the average (by 6% and even 11%). All of the other faculties are more or less in the region of the ten-year average when it comes to the proportion of women completing doctorates.

High Scholarship Rate among Participants at “Exposé Workshop”

Generally, there is no way of directly measuring how successful individual perspektive promotion sessions are other than asking the participants for their subjective opinions. One exception here is the “Von der Idee zum Exposé” workshop (workshop on writing a dissertation proposal) since reports from the participants revealed an extremely high acceptance rate when applying for scholarships.

Inclusion in the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft Toolbox

perspektive promotion has been included in the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation – DFG) toolbox “Gleichstellung in der Wissenschaft” (gender equality in academia). The toolbox is a freely accessible online information system that provides an overview of the potential range of gender equality measures within research and teaching. The examples of successful practice given in this toolbox are selected through a strict process to guarantee high quality.⁷

/// “Programs aimed exclusively at women are extremely important as they allow for networks to be built up, ideas to be exchanged, and fellow female doctoral students to make each other stronger.”

Equality expert in a qualitative interview

A Closer Look: Indicators of Success in the Qualitative Interviews

What impact has participating in perspektive promotion had on the individual participants? Analyzing the qualitative interviews reveals that the participants gained key skills to help them in their own research work as well as developed the ability to manage the day-to-day aspects of their doctoral studies in a more focused, efficient, and empowered way.

Effective Process Support

Almost all of the interviewed participants had taken advantage of several components of the perspektive promotion program. These were selected very carefully along the timeline of their doctoral studies. All of the participants interviewed were keen to point out that they could put the content covered to direct use, making it a huge help for them.

Learning that Lasts

Many of the participants interviewed said that they still made effective use of what they had learned. This applies to the general support with finding their way in the academic world as well as the practical tools and strategies for use during their working day.

Networking in Peer Groups

For the participants interviewed, one of the most important ways perspektive

promotion helped them was by providing opportunities to network with other women working towards a doctorate and thereby eliminating the risk of feeling isolated. Interdisciplinary exchange and discussion with other female early-career researchers is considered very useful and worth continuing over the years. In fact, perspektive promotion has given rise to networks that realized their own workshops and training with funds from the university.

More Realistic Self-Assessment

The aim of the coaches to encourage more realistic self-assessment worked out for many of the participants. A better understanding of the academic system as a whole and a clearer awareness of the limits to what can actually be achieved by each individual lead to realistic goals being set and then achieved.

Step by Step towards a Doctorate

Some of those completing the online survey had already mentioned in their open-ended answers that perspektive promotion played a crucial part in the progression of their doctoral project. The qualitative interviews expanded on this element. The interviewees identified the following main factors that encouraged them to keep going: motivation unleashed by discussions with other women pursuing a doctorate, energy released by working with others, and ongoing support through their doctoral studies.

III. The Future

Continuation Worthwhile

The results of the evaluation are unequivocal: perspektive promotion has been hugely successful in its aim of supporting female early-career researchers at the University of Bremen. The program caters to the apparently ongoing needs of women pursuing a doctorate in a wide variety of ways. This level of tailored support is not available in any other form throughout the university. The results achieved for the benefit of the participants are tangible and their feedback when reviewing the program was also extremely positive.

/// “The program has made me more aware of gender issues, especially as really active individuals met through it and the selection process for trainers was as high-quality as you would expect.”

Participant in the online survey

perspektive promotion has set its own quality standards – many of those completing the online survey agreed with this as did all of the interviewees in the qualitative interviews. Both the qualifications and skills demonstrated by the coaches and the scope and quality of the advice offered were rated as excellent.

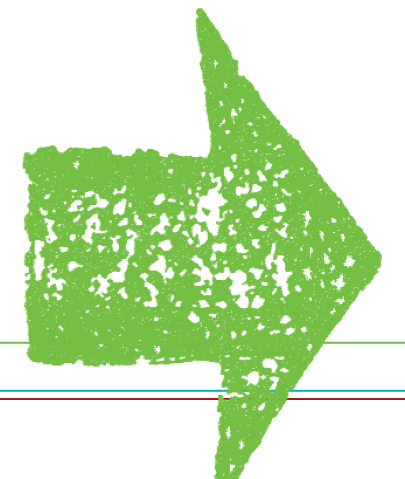
Numerous studies show that structural aspects are mainly to blame for female academics being underrepresented in management positions. This is why there are serious doubts as to how effective the approach of “fixing the women” (aimed at women as a target group) is an alternative to bringing about change at the organizational and institutional level (“fixing the system”).⁸ The benefits for participants, as identified by the evaluation of perspektive promotion, clearly point towards a dual approach to paving the way for gender equality in the academic world.

Balancing an academic career with duties of care and precarious employment situations remain the main issues in supporting female early-career researchers. perspektive promotion effectively supports the University of Bremen in

/// “I was strategic when choosing which sessions to attend. I really thought about what would be most useful for me. [...] Writing, time management, and teaching were all areas I thought would be useful in my future career. And I opted for these sessions in particular because it was important to me that they had been explicitly designed for women.”

Participant in a qualitative interview

promoting gender equality in times with somewhat more favorable conditions for a career in academia compared to previous years. At the very least, the funding to continue has been secured thanks to the fact that the University of Bremen is taking part in the third phase of the Women Professors Program.



Challenges Identified

A number of challenges were also identified during the evaluation phase and these can be tackled as perspective promotion carries on:

- > The program did not reach all the faculties being targeted equally. The Faculties of Law (06) and Business Studies & Economics (07) in particular could be targeted more effectively by means of formats tailored better to the subjects in question.
- > The capacity for some of the workshops and training sessions was not at all close to meeting the demand. This was the case for the regular writing lab in particular. Not only were there often not enough places, but many of the participants also thought that it should be held at least once a week.

- > By contrast, not all of the topics listed as important by the participants received the same level of response. This means that distributing the limited resources adequately remains a task in the future.
- > The interviewed experts and coaches noticed a drop in commitment among the participants that needs to be counteracted.
- > The evaluative interviews revealed that some of the supervisors and professors noticed content being repeated across the various workshops and training sessions offered for doctoral students at the university, which they considered to be confusing and potentially inefficient. Furthermore, the fact that some faculties knew about the perspective promotion program while others did not suggests that the strategy for communicating with doctoral supervisors needs to be optimized.

Potential for Further Development

The project team is aware that the scope is no longer limited to the humanities and social sciences as in these faculties the gender gap in the context of completed doctorates has shrunk during the course of the program. Discussions about extending the program to the STEM subjects are underway. Having said that, the current capacity will not allow all faculties to be catered to in equal measure.

Workshops and training conducted in English need to be built upon for a number of reasons. For one thing, the number of foreign early-career researchers is increasing at an astounding rate in Germany.⁹ Boosting the presence of German female early-career researchers at international conferences and seminars is just as important. Developing the program in this way is also expedient considering that the “Gleichstellungszukunftskonzept” (future concept of gender equality) at the University of Bremen links together the issues of gender equality and internationalization. The evaluation has also raised a large number of suggestions put forward by the participants. It will be worthwhile following up on these too.

Notes and References

- 1 In Phase II of the Women Professors Program, an average of 1.7 professorships filled by women were funded per HEI.
Löther, A.; Glanz, S. (2017): Evaluation des Professorinnenprogramms des Bundes und der Länder: zweite Programmphase und Gesamtevaluation; Erweiterter Bericht. (Evaluation of the Program for Women Professors: second phase of the program and overall evaluation.) Edited by GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Cologne, page 21.
Available online at: nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ss0ar-54112-9 (as at 01/2020).
- 2 These figures include Business Studies and Economics as well as Law. The number of women pursuing a doctorate differs widely between subjects.
- 3 Three further workshops held in 2019 were not included in the evaluation.
- 4 Around 69% finance their doctorate by working within academia, while only 6.6% work outside of academia.
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- 5 Konsortium Bundesbericht Wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs (federal report on early career researchers syndicate), 2018: Bundesbericht Wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs 2017 (federal report on early career researchers 2017). Statistische Daten und Forschungsbefunde zu Promovierenden und Promovierten in Deutschland (statistical data and research findings on doctoral students and post graduates in Germany), Bielefeld, page 33.
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- 6 President's Report, Uni in Zahlen 2017 (university in numbers 2017), Bremen, page 53.
Available online at: <https://www.uni-bremen.de/chancengleichheit/hochschul-und-geschlechterpolitik/statistiken-materialien/> (as at 01/2020).
- 7 Available online at: https://www.dfg.de/foerderung/grundlagen_rahmenbedingungen/chancengleichheit/berichte/151102_instrumentenkasten/ (as at 01/2020).
- 8 Reference as per footnote 1, page 7.
- 9 Between 2006 and 2014, the number of foreign early-career researchers almost doubled, increasing from 10,970 people to 21,513 people.
Reference as per footnote 5, page 35.

Legal Information

Evaluation and text (German): 4 / 2019

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Translation (English): 1 / 2020

WIENERS+WIENERS GmbH

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/// “perspektive promotion was crucial in helping me to carry on with my doctoral studies. I wouldn’t have persisted were it not for this support.”
Participant in a qualitative interview



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