

UDC 316.34:8378.014

TOOLS FOR ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ACADEMIC SPHERE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS¹

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The article deals with the problem of ensuring gender equality in the academic sphere of the Republic of Belarus. Despite the absence of normative legal documents in Belarus specifically aimed at ensuring gender equality, there are three key tools that are aimed at establishing gender equality in the country's higher education institutions: gender education, gender audit, and gender plan. The article analyzes the results of the development and implementation of these tools in the framework of academic cooperation of the Raul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Sweden) and Belarusian universities. The purpose of this article is to systematize the experience of implementing gender plans and gender audits in life activities of higher education institutions, analyze the quality of development, adaptation and implementation of gender equality tools in Belarus. Implementation of the research goal was achieved through the integrated use of methods of system and comparative analysis, systematization and formalization, historical and statistical methods. Based on the analysis, a number of proposals were developed to improve the use of gender equality tools in Belarusian universities: implementation of the principles of active participation and transparency, introduction of relevant gender indicators in the regular reporting system, integration of the theory of chance and the theory of change.

Keywords: gender equality; gender equality tools; gender education; gender audit; gender plan.

¹Preparation of the article is organized by Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in the context of academic cooperation with the Belarusian State University and other Belarusian universities. This academic cooperation has been supported by the Government of Sweden represented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Opinion of the authors expressed in this article may not coincide with the viewpoint of the Institute or Sida.

Образец цитирования:

Кандричина ИН, Веремейчик ОВ. Инструменты обеспечения гендерного равенства в академической сфере Республики Беларусь. *Журнал Белорусского государственного университета. Международные отношения.* 2020;1:25–33 (на англ.).

For citation:

Kandrichina IN, Veremeychik OV. Tools for ensuring gender equality in the academic sphere of the Republic of Belarus. *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations.* 2020;1:25–33.

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ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ ГЕНДЕРНОГО РАВЕНСТВА В АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЙ СФЕРЕ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ

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Рассмотрена проблема обеспечения гендерного равенства в академической сфере Республики Беларусь. Несмотря на отсутствие в стране нормативных правовых документов, специально направленных на обеспечение гендерного равенства, можно выделить три ключевых инструмента, действие которых ориентировано на становление равенства полов в высших учебных заведениях страны: гендерное образование, гендерный аудит, гендерный план. Анализируются результаты разработки и внедрения данных инструментов в рамках академического сотрудничества Института прав человека и гуманитарного права имени Рауля Валленберга (Швеция) и белорусских университетов. Цель статьи – систематизация опыта имплементации гендерных планов и гендерных аудитов в жизнедеятельность учреждений высшего образования, анализ качества разработки, адаптации и внедрения инструментов обеспечения гендерного равенства в Беларуси. Цель исследования была достигнута посредством комплексного использования методов системного и сравнительного анализа, систематизации и формализации, исторического и статистического метода. На основе проведенного анализа был разработан ряд предложений по совершенствованию использования инструментов обеспечения гендерного равенства в белорусских высших учебных заведениях: реализация принципов активного участия и гласности, включение гендерных показателей в регулярную систему отчетности, интеграция теории случайности и теории изменений.

Ключевые слова: гендерное равенство; инструменты обеспечения гендерного равенства; гендерное образование; гендерный аудит; гендерный план.

Human rights protect the dignity and freedom of every individual (regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status) and collectively form the basis of the legal status of the individual. They are a complex object of research due to their multi-aspect nature, variability of ensuring standards and ethical significance of the problem field. The problem of human rights and freedoms in the modern world is not entirely new. Today, research in the field of human rights in the Republic of Belarus is primarily interdisciplinary in nature: from the interaction of legal disciplines in the process to the synthesis of human rights issues in the medical, economic, legal, political and technical sciences. Methodological issues of research in the field of human rights, the methodology for conducting comparative research on human rights, integrating the gender dimension into them, ensuring the quality of research in this area, and applying tools to ensure human rights and gender equality in all spheres of modern society remain debatable.

Gender equality is not only one of the fundamental human rights, but also a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable development. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and participation in political and economic decision-making processes will contribute to the sustainability of the economy and benefit society and humanity as a whole. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require increased efforts, including strengthening the legal framework to combat the deep-rooted practice of gender discrimination, which is often the result of patriarchal attitudes and related social norms.

The issue of gender equality has been on the agenda of the world community many times since the adoption of such documents as the Universal declaration of human rights (1948) and the International treaty on civil and political rights (1976). These documents contain the idea that all people are equal and have the same rights in all spheres of society. In 1967, the UN adopted the Declaration on the elimination of discrimination against women, and in 1979 the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Currently, 189 out of 193 countries have ratified this convention, the Republic of Belarus ratified it on 2 April 1981. In order to ensure gender equality the 1995 4th World conference on women established gender mainstreaming, a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is commonly interpreted as “... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” [1, p. 1].

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution on “Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development”. The document defined 17 main goals of humanity in the field of sustainable development of the world community, whose tasks are complex and indivisible. Along with such goals as eliminating poverty and hunger everywhere,

and promoting healthy lifestyles, goal 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls [2].

In our country, the National action plan on gender equality in the Republic of Belarus for 2017–2020 has been approved in order to develop mechanisms for introducing a gender approach in the process of developing and implementing state policy measures in various spheres of society's life. This is the 5th policy document aimed at ensuring equal participation of men and women in all spheres of life. There is also a National Council for Gender Policy under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, which coordinates the ongoing gender policy in the country and develops coordinated actions aimed at ensuring compliance with the provisions of this Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and its Optional protocol. The chairman of the council is the Minister of Labor and Social Protection².

In the academic sphere of the Republic of Belarus, there are no normative legal documents specifically aimed at ensuring gender equality. The formation of a strategy for working with staff is generally based on the legislative framework and reflects the social policy of the Belarusian state. However, there are three key tools that are aimed at ensuring gender equality in higher educational establishments of the country: gender education, gender audit, and gender plan. In the context of the stated problem we consider the essence of each of these mechanisms.

The study of international experience in the use of gender equality tools in higher education was made possible by the academic cooperation of a number of higher education institutions in Belarus with the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian (Sweden), which makes a significant contribution to a broader understanding of and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. The academic cooperation is based on the following four objectives: education (increasing the number of quality courses on human rights (or where human rights and gender equality are integrated), which are supported and provided by targeted academic institutions in Belarus), research (improving the quality and accessibility of relevant research results in the field of human rights (including gender equality), which will be used for public policy dialogue, formal and non-formal education, etc.), institutional development (more active interaction and involvement of academic institutions with social actors on topical issues of human rights and gender equality), and increased access to education and research in the field of human rights and gender equality among European, regional and Belarusian scientists and students.

In this context gender in the academic collaboration, being considered as a cross-cutting issue in the

framework of cooperation and the gender mainstreaming strategy, plays a key role in all of the work done in respect of the four main areas. Each area has its own gender mainstreaming task:

1) education (to ensure that the educational opportunities created and supported by the cooperation lead and contribute to the goal of achieving gender equality in Belarus);

2) research (to ensure that research carried out within the framework of the cooperation takes into account gender aspects and addresses gender issues that are relevant to Belarus);

3) institutional development (to promote and support the development of institutional capacity of organizations to address gender inequalities at the work place and interaction with students);

4) information and educational activities (to raise awareness about the gender equality in society and disseminate results of the cooperation to a broader public).

In the context of the stated problem we consider in more detail the experience of developing and implementing tools for ensuring gender equality in the life activities of universities of the Republic of Belarus. It is important to clarify that this study does not address the evaluation of the results, impact, effectiveness and efficiency of gender education, gender audit and gender plan. It focuses on the methodology, quality of development and implementation of these tools in Belarus.

In a narrow sense, gender education is educational programs on gender issues that are taught in various versions to students, usually majoring in social sciences and the humanities. In a broader sense, gender refers to education that promotes gender equality and helps overcome negative gender stereotypes. In this sense, gender education does not necessarily have to be expressed in any specific educational programs, it seems to be present in the processes of training and education and is part of the ideology of higher education [3].

Gender education is recognized by researchers as an educational model that considers gender interests, takes into account the presence of gender problems in the social development of society and the education system, and a search for ways to solve them is being made.

Gender education involves mastering the system of knowledge and skills and their use not only in everyday life, but also in the process of professional activity. At the same time biological differences are not crucial for shaping the psychological and social characteristics of women and men. It is based on the principles of gender equality and the rejection of harmful stereotypes that characterize the role of men and women

²The provision on the National Council for Gender Policy under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus : approved by the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus 30 of June 2012 No. 613 // ETALON. Legislation of the Repub. of Belarus / Natl. center of the legal information of the Repub. of Belarus. Minsk, 2017.

in society. This means that everyone, regardless of gender, can choose a profession, passion and life priorities. Gender-oriented development of the education system will contribute to the elimination of gender stereotypes at the level of society and the establishment of gender equality.

The system of gender education and enlightenment in Belarus began to take shape in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, at the moment, it can be argued that this work requires systematization and improvement.

The history of the formation and development of gender education in higher education is represented by four stages [4].

The first stage can be called organizational and educational. This is the emergence of gender studies in the education system.

The second stage is the period of institutionalizing gender in education: gender knowledge, gender course, gender discourse. This is the period of the creation of a gender-sensitive and anti-discrimination regulatory framework that regulates relations in the higher education system (including regulations on ensuring equal rights of women and men in the fundamental laws: the Constitution, the Education Code, etc.).

The third stage involves the recognition of clear professional standards and criteria in the field of gender research and gender discourse, and the consolidation of scientists and teachers around gender issues. This is the adoption of special laws on gender equality and gender-oriented strategic documents (concepts, strategies, programs and action plans for the promotion of gender equality) where the long-term gender policy of the state in the field of gender education is defined.

The fourth stage is related to the process of legitimization and dissemination of gender education in higher education.

The period of systematization of the main principles, goals, tasks and directions of state policy on the issue of equality of women and men in the educational sphere provides for the introduction of gender knowledge at all levels of the education system, raising public awareness on gender issues and the formation of egalitarian gender perceptions on gender relations, while at the same time orienting educational institutions to develop new didactic materials and curricula in accordance with the principles of gender equality.

The National action plan on gender equality for 2017–2020 in the Republic of Belarus highlights the need to include gender education in the component of

the knowledge system, to conduct gender expertise of textbooks, to disseminate gender knowledge and improve the level of gender culture³.

Today, the main policy document binding to form a gender culture in educational institutions is the Concept of continuous education of children and young students in the Republic of Belarus (2016–2020), the first version of which was approved by the Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus in December 2006. According to this program document, educational work was carried out in educational institutions of the Republic of Belarus from 2007 to August 2015. Under this document gender education, aimed at the formation of students' ideas about the role and life purpose of men and women in modern society, was recognized as one of the components of education⁴.

On 1 September 2015, on the basis of para 1 of Art. 95 of the Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education, the Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus on approving the Concept of continuous education of children and young students (Concept) entered into force⁵. In the new document, family and gender education are united by a common goal of forming, first and foremost, a responsible attitude to the family, marriage, upbringing of children, and only then conscious ideas about the role and life purpose of men and women in modern society. Nevertheless, gender education, according to the Concept, involves mastering the essence and content of the concepts “gender”, “gender stereotypes”, “gender roles”, as well as forming a non-discriminatory attitude to representatives of both sexes.

The gender situation in educational institutions, according to the results of the study, enrollment in primary school among boys (76.2 %) is more timely than among girls (65.7 %).

In the Republic of Belarus, in 2019, the attendance of primary and secondary schools by boys and girls was almost the same: the indices of gender equality in the primary and secondary education system are close to one. After completing the compulsory level of education, boys are more likely than girls to leave general educational establishments to receive vocational or specialized secondary education, so the number of girls enrolled in general secondary education exceeds the number of boys. Gender differences in attendance of educational institutions are particularly pronounced among young people aged 20 and over: the proportion of girls aged 20–24 receiving education is 1.5 times higher than that of boys.

³Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 17 Feb. 2017 No. 149 on approval of the National action plan for ensuring gender equality in the Republic of Belarus for 2017–2020 [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.government.by/ru/solutions/2816> (date of access: 14.01.2020).

⁴The concept of continuous education of children and students in the Republic of Belarus : approved by the Resolution of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus on 14 Dec. 2006. No. 125 [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.adu.by/wp-content/uploads/2006/umodos/koncept-vospit-detej-i-molodioji> (date of access: 14.01.2020).

⁵Idem.

The high educational level contributed to Belarus becoming one of the top 16 countries in terms of the women's development index. So, the number of female students in the 2017/2018 academic year was 56.9 %. Among employed in the economy, the share of working women with higher education is 33.9 %, while the same indicator among men is 24.4 %. Among the teaching staff of universities women make up 55.7 % [5]. However, the post of rector of a higher educational establishment is taken only by 3 women, which is 5.8 % of the total. The share of women among vice-rectors and directors of branches is 25 %, deans of faculties and deputy deans – 36.5 %, heads of departments – 34.3 % [6].

The second tool for ensuring gender equality in the academic field is gender audit. Gender audit is a tool and a process that identifies problem areas and difficulties in establishing gender equality, recommends methods for solving these problems, and records positive experience in achieving gender equality.

By its nature, gender audit is a “social audit” and belongs to the category of quality checks. It creates prerequisites for identifying key problems, recommends ways to solve them, offers possible improvements and innovations, and increases collective potential. It evaluates the progress made in gender issues, helps organize initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality, and provides training for the team on gender issues through teamwork and information exchange. An important component of gender audit is the development of recommendations on its results, the list of which corresponds to the peculiarities of implementing gender approaches in a particular environment [7].

In 1919, the International Labor Organization (ILO) was founded, the activity of which is aimed at implementing the fundamental principles and rights of women and men in the field of work. At the same time, gender equality is an integral part of the program to ensure decent working conditions and poverty reduction.

The first gender audits were conducted in 2001 in accordance with the Integrated gender policy of the ILO. In 2007, the ILO published a guide on gender audit, which detailed the planning, preparation and implementation of gender audits. Since 2009, gender audits have been conducted at enterprises and organizations of post-Soviet societies.

According to the gender audit guide the ILO identifies 12 main topics for analysis in the course of a gender audit:

1) current gender issues at the national and international level, discussions on gender issues affecting the organization where the audit is being conducted, the relationships of this organization with the national mechanism for gender equality and women's organizations;

2) the main strategy of the organization in the field of gender equality and its reflection in the objectives of the organization or unit, its programs and budget;

3) the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of various programmes and projects;

4) availability of gender experts and a gender strategy aimed at increasing competence in this area;

5) information, knowledge and experience management;

6) monitoring and evaluation systems and methods used;

7) the choice of partner organizations;

8) outcomes and reputation in the public eye;

9) decision-making in the field of promoting gender equality;

10) personnel policy and human resources;

11) organizational culture;

12) representation of achievements in the field of gender equality.

For each of the topics, a list of key issues is developed, the main function of which is to raise awareness and identify existing problems.

The integration of gender audit in the activities of universities will serve as a tool and process based on the principles of active participation. It will contribute to the organization's self-learning process by methods of effective implementation of an integrated gender approach in practice. The results of gender audit can determine the effectiveness of implementing gender mainstreaming, assess the relative progress in advancing gender equality and the effectiveness of the implementation of the gender plan, identify the main problems related to the integration of gender education and gender-oriented approach in the higher education system of the Republic of Belarus, develop practical recommendations to address possible issues and improve strategies for gender equality in the academic field, record positive experiences in achieving gender equality [8].

The main objective of gender auditing is to promote self-training of the organization in the effective application of an integrated gender approach in the organization's policies, programs and functioning, as well as to assess the extent to which the adopted policy is reflected in the work of individual employees, structural divisions and higher education institutions as a whole.

The first gender audit in the field of higher education of the Republic of Belarus was conducted in 2017 at the faculty of international relations of the Belarusian State University (FIR BSU). The activities of the gender audit covered 115 employees of the FIR BSU (29.7 % of the total staff), including 49 men (42.6 %) and 66 women (57.4 %). 354 students participated in the surveys and discussions (19.1 % of the total number of students in the 2017/2018 academic year), including 137 men (38.7 %) and 217 women (61.3 %) [9].

The second experience of conducting gender audit in the Republic of Belarus was the gender audit of the faculty of management technologies and humanitization of the Belarusian National Technical University (FMTH BNTU) in 2019. Its objective was to assess the quality of implementation of the BNTU's gender plan for 2017–2019, and the main areas of audit were education, science, public relations and management. The audit covered 115 employees of both sexes of the FMTH BNTU (49 men and 66 women), 354 students of both sexes of the FMTH BNTU (137 men and 217 women), 83 local regulations were analyzed as well as 2105 publications of teaching staff and students.

In the framework of the implementation of the gender audit of the FMTH BNTU the following methods were used: quantitative and qualitative analysis of statistical data and documents, questionnaire survey, comparative and gender analysis.

In order to implement audit activities, the following tools were developed and used: instructions for analyzing documents, tables for a quantitative (statistical) analysis of areas of audit, a table for (qualitative) analysis of a document, questionnaires for a sociological survey of employees (men and women) of the faculty, questionnaires for a sociological survey of students of the faculty, questionnaires-assessment forms of events, tables for quantitative (statistical) analysis of students of the faculty.

In the course of the gender audit, the effectiveness of implementing the gender plan of the FMTH BNTU, administrative system for supporting the implementation of the gender plan, gender policy and an integrated gender approach, gender equality promotion was evaluated. Also, gender audit contributed to team building and stimulated the development of inter-faculty communication.

Gender audit extended collective capacity of gender analysis of various aspects of professional activity of employees (men and women) of the faculty. It revealed the strengths and weaknesses of FMTH BNTU to promote gender equality, contributed to the development of practical recommendations for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and strengthened team spirit, stimulate the analysis and exchange of information.

The results obtained suggest that the experience of gender audit proved to be a valuable opportunity for organizational training of both institutions. These two studies improved the collective capacity of both institutions to collect statistics and data on gender issues within the country, which had not previously received such structured attention. In the course of the study, each institution tested a method for collecting data and exchanging information between all departments and units. If these methods are further developed, and if a regular monitoring system to collect at least basic statistics from across the organization on a periodic basis is installed in each faculty (preferably

in the form of an online internal database), it will enable an assessment of progress and tracking the changing trends overtime and deepening the organizational learning not only on gender but in general terms.

In addition, the research process itself, as well as the data collection process, contributed to raising awareness of gender issues. Through data collection, efforts to ensure gender equality in institutions have become more visible. Both studies paved the way for fruitful conversations, dialogues, and reflections on gender issues and increased gender awareness among students and teachers.

In respect of inclusiveness (stakeholder involvement), the model for creating a Gender Audit Organizing Committee, consisting of representatives of various departments and units, various working groups operating in close cooperation, was satisfactory. The model presents the following strengths: the diversity of actors, units and departments; separation of duties (data collection, analysis and reporting) between working groups; meetings enabling collective planning and implementation; and strong support from the senior staff.

It was found that the development and implementation of gender audit in two universities meet the goal of analyzing the institutional gender situation. Both studies reflect strong intentions and relevant approaches. However, their scope, evidence base, and coverage of key research areas are not broad enough to understand the overall institutional state and best practices at the university.

The next tool for ensuring gender equality in higher educational establishments is a gender plan. The gender plan is a document that contains the main goals of the organization in the field of gender equality and determines the order of implementation of the work planned in this direction, indicating its goals, content, scope, methods, sequence and timing. The gender plan is drawn up for a specific time period and is aimed at ensuring gender equality in a particular structural unit and (or) university as a whole [7].

The goal of the gender plan is to coordinate actions aimed at preventing gender discrimination, creating conditions that ensure full implementation of the personal potential of women and men in all spheres of life and gender equality in the workplace.

Gender action plan is a set of short, medium and long-term actions that outlines the steps by which an institution plans to implement its gender equality policy and achieve its gender goals. It can also be called a gender equality action plan or a gender plan. The gender action plan tool is commonly used in international organizations, government institutions, higher education institutions, civil society organizations, international financial institutions, and other kind of organizations. Institutions develop gender action plans to identify specific actions, tactics, or results targets

for the practical implementation of their gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming strategies (i. e., gender mainstreaming in all areas of activity).

These plans are flexible and adaptable strategic plans for long-term change through short, medium and long-term actions including specific targets; with a collective focus rather than on single unrelated interventions. They are usually formed using a holistic and general institutional approach that covers the entire range of operations and activities, including all programs, projects, policies, institutional practices, rules, procedures, structures, organizational culture, daily routines, management, finance, communications, human resources, and so on. In the plans the steps by which the institution will integrate gender perspectives in all these areas are also determined.

In the context of higher education, the gender action plan sets out a road map that leads to institutional changes to achieve internal equality between men and women and promotes gender equality in the production, dissemination and exchange of knowledge (research, education, information and educational activities). It usually outlines a sequence of systematic actions and steps that are expected to gradually transform a higher education institution into:

1) a workplace free from any gender prejudice or discrimination, where all employees can work safely, with dignity and have access to equal remuneration, resources and opportunities regardless of gender;

2) inclusive, emotionally-comfortable learning and teaching environment in which students can improve their knowledge, skills and competencies using pedagogical methods and techniques that are consistent with the principles and values of gender equality in relation to the gender aspects of their disciplines;

3) personality-oriented educational space for the production, exchange and transfer of knowledge.

The first gender action plan in the framework of higher education in Belarus was developed by the FIR BSU in 2014. The gender plan of the FIR BSU had a three-year implementation period from January 2015 until the end of 2017. The second initiative to adopt a gender plan was undertaken by the FMTH BNTU. The gender plan of the FMTH BNTU, designed for 2 years, was adopted in 2016 and entered into force in January 2017.

The purpose of the gender plan of the FIR BSU was to coordinate actions aimed at preventing gender discrimination and creating conditions that ensure a more complete implementation of the personal potential of women and men in all areas of the faculty's life.

The objectives of the FIR BSU gender plan were the following:

1) promotion gender parity at all levels of government;

2) introduction gender knowledge into the education system;

3) formation in the public consciousness the need for social equality of men and women in all spheres of public life;

4) transformation of the public consciousness, elimination of gender stereotypes associated with the idea of superiority and dominance of one sex over the other.

The main activities within the framework of this document, were advisory and were aimed at disseminating knowledge about the gender equality policy, developing and implementing a gender audit system and a gender-oriented development program, developing gender-neutral behavior and attracting the attention of as many supporters as possible to this problem field.

The implementation of the adopted plan showed an increase in the awareness of FIR BSU employees and students about gender education, gender culture and gender issues in Belarusian society. The gender equality issues began to be actively discussed, and in the faculty's public opinion the belief that achieving gender balance and gender equality leads to the establishment of more harmonious and fair relations in the team, creates a more favorable internal atmosphere, and improves the quality of professional activity was significantly strengthen [9].

As for the gender plan of FMTH BNTU, it focused primarily on improving the level of gender culture and gender education of faculty members and students. The starting point for the development of the gender plan was a comprehensive study of the initial situation at the faculty, which included the analysis of documents, statistical analysis of the number and composition of employees and students of FMTH BNTU, and a questionnaire survey of employees and students of the faculty.

The goal of the FMTH BNTU gender plan was to coordinate the promotion of gender education and research in the field of gender equality among employees and students of the FMTH BNTU, as well as to promote the development of a gender culture at the faculty. The tasks reflected the problem field of this particular faculty and were a kind of steps that contribute to the establishment of gender equality in the specified structural unit. The developed specific recommendations and corrective measures aimed at the smooth, step-by-step implementation of the system for ensuring gender equality at the FMTH BNTU.

There are many similarities between the two gender plans of universities. Both plans have twenty types of activities, listed in four categories: education, research, informational and educational activities or public relations and management.

A relevant integrated approach to gender mainstreaming in education can be seen in both gender plans. It was revealed that in both plans, a number of activities were developed to improve the gender competence of teaching staff. Some materials and guide-

lines for integrating gender issues into the educational process have been developed and implemented.

The implementation of the gender plan showed that measures to build the capacity of the teaching staff and develop materials are not enough to ensure the systematic and sustainable integration of gender aspects in education. Institutional policies made by senior managers and central government authorities are needed. For example, the creation of a methodological commission to promote the agenda of gender integration in education and disseminate it throughout institutions. Among other examples of the development of institutional policies to systematize gender integration in education are the following:

- 1) the introduction of compulsory gender courses in the curriculum so that each student takes at least one gender course for the entire duration of the study;
- 2) making gender modules obligatory in certain core courses;
- 3) adoption of mandatory rules and standards for gender-sensitive teaching, creating inclusive and gender-sensitive classrooms, etc.;
- 4) creating incentives for teaching staff to integrate gender issues in the curriculum.

In two gender plans education is a priority area as a key area of intervention and is broadly covered by a structured and relevant approach. Thus, both universities were careful not to be very ambitious in their first initiative to develop a gender plan and limited the scope of their pilot plans to only a few areas.

The analysis of the results obtained makes it possible to propose a number of initiatives to improve the use of gender audit and the gender plan as the tools for ensuring gender audit in Belarusian universities:

- to ensure more active participation of all stakeholders (faculty, research staff, students, administrative staff, management, etc.) in the development of

subsequent gender plans and gender audit programs. This process should include representatives of different categories (students, teachers, administrative staff, trade union representatives, management, etc.) from different departments and units;

- to introduce relevant gender indicators in the regular reporting system of universities and(or) faculties. This will enable the institution to regularly monitor relevant indicators. For example, when conducting research related to statistics (publications, research grants, funding, etc.), information can also be provided by disaggregating researchers or authors by gender, as well as by disaggregating research results according to the degree of gender integration. Other gender indicators can also be developed for other areas of reporting, such as participation in conferences, training and other scientific events, recruitment, promotion, etc.;

- to introduce the theory of randomness in the gender planning procedure, which is a clear description of how and why the desired changes should occur at the university, as well as the theory of change (a logical chain of results). The theory of change describes how and why an expected change should occur in a particular context, and relates input data to actions, actions to short-term, medium-term, and long-term results (outputs, results, and impacts). It displays what the project, program, or plan is doing (its activities or actions) and how they lead to the desired goal. When the bridge between the actions and the goal is not exactly connected, the goal is unlikely to be achieved, since the project or plan does not have good planning.

The results of the implementation of gender education tools, gender audit and gender plan confirm the importance of international academic cooperation aimed at strengthening the capacity of Belarusian higher education institutions in the field of human rights and gender equality.

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Received by editorial board 02.03.2020.