

From initiative to impact: An assessment and evaluation of Genie@ACE, Chalmers

A report on the 4-year pilot project Genie@ACE at the
Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering,
Chalmers University of Technology

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Introduction and purpose

During the 2021-2024 period, the Genie@ACE pilot project was conducted at the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering (ACE), as part of the wider Genie – Gender Initiative for Excellence – at Chalmers University of Technology. Funded by the Chalmers Foundation with a substantial investment of 300 million SEK, Genie represents one of the largest commitments to gender equality made by any university. The broader Genie project spans from 2019 to 2028 and aims to make Chalmers ‘more attractive and successful’.

At the time of Genie’s launch, the ACE department had already undertaken various gender equality initiatives. These included an active gender student group, a course on architecture and gender, ongoing curriculum-related gender discussions, and research related to women and historiography. Furthermore, the school was already part of BauHow5 alliance, a network of five universities dedicated to issues on diversity and equality in architectural education. In other words, in the context of Chalmers University of Technology, ACE was rather advanced in its work on promoting gender equality.

The proposal submitted to Genie at Chalmers centrally by Professor Isabelle Doucet, who later became interim coordinator of Genie@ACE, and the head of department at the time, Professor Fredrik Nilsson, emphasized “an integrated and coordinated approach to Genie@ACE allowing to combine the organization of new activities with the effort of consolidating existing activities”.¹ In fact, ACE was put forth as a test case or a pilot of how to integrate gender-related issues structurally into the system (for example in the curricula, at the departmental level, in faculty meetings, and in the management group). The application further suggests that “ACE could in that sense serve also as a pilot for capitalizing on already existing gender actions, combined with targeted new actions, through processes of reinforcement, institutional adjustments and commitment, and through the careful coordination, communication, and integration of actions.”² The project was granted 4 541 000 SEK from Genie/Chalmers foundation, but an additional 2 000 000 SEK had already been allocated to ACE.

The purpose of this report is to *describe the various initiatives and methods used within Genie@ACE and to assess and evaluate them.*

Methodological commentary

The pilot project Genie@ACE has evolved over time. Hence, the report at hand does not aim to evaluate it against the initial project proposition. Nor does it intend to evaluate it in terms of measurable effects in the organization. Firstly, the project proposal did not establish quantifiable objectives. Secondly, measurable effects may be misleading; in a short-term perspective, the external recruitment of women, even for limited time periods, would have great effects on the numbers of women and men in high positions. In a long-term perspective, though, transformational change requires attention to power and addressing gendered relations of privilege and exclusion. Such efforts necessitate a multitude of different methods, where culture, processes and structures are exposed, reflected upon, and changed. In fact, in the short term, awareness of gender equality may lead to greater frustration as inequalities are made

¹ Citations from The Genie@ACE project proposition.

² Citations from The Genie@ACE project proposition.

visible to a larger group. Hence, the author of this report decided to discuss the methods and initiatives, and the reflections of the key informants, in light of research on gender equality work, primarily from the field of gender and organization, rather than trying to identify “effects”.

The descriptions of methods and initiatives draw from documents and files in a Sharepoint folder accessible to the author, which the Genie@ACE group utilized. As these documents are neither official nor public, direct references have been omitted throughout the text. One exception is the section on Strategy (p. 28), where one of the Genie@ACE coordination group members emailed the author a text, *The Strategic Story of ACE*.

The “Sharepoint folder method” has limitations, as the author’s understanding of the sequence, weight, and outcomes of initiatives is constrained. To address this gap, interviews with coordination group members and key collaborators were conducted (p. 30). Yet, many documents and files remain solely for reference. Sometimes they are referred to below, because they give the needed context in which Genie@ACE operated.

The numbers in the Sharepoint documents have been accepted as provided and incorporated into this report without additional validation. The interview study follows a qualitative research methodology, focusing on identifying patterns in the participant interviews to gain a better understanding of Genie@ACE's initiatives and their effects. With regards to the interviews, it is an interpretative study: interviews are negotiations of meaning between the research subjects and the researcher.

The method of using the document archive as the main source also implies that the level of detail varies between the initiatives, reflecting the available documentation. Additionally, since Genie@ACE also largely supported already ongoing initiatives, it is sometimes difficult to know the degree of contribution to various joint activities, for example workshops or trainings that were arranged together with the equality group or the department.

This report primarily focuses on the Genie@ACE pilot project, emphasizing the group’s actions and initiatives. Sometimes the group makes demands on others – for example Genie or management – to take action or to develop an analysis further. Examining whether such actions were undertaken is beyond the scope of this report. However, insights from the *Interview Study* (p. 30) offer some indications.

About the author

Jenny Lantz is an Associate Professor (docent) in Business Administration at Stockholm School of Economics. Her research expertise spans two primary domains: cultural production and diversity management/inclusion. Throughout her career, she has conducted several studies in the field of gender and organization, and analyzed various gender equality projects closely. She has also developed and delivered many educational programs on gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Additionally, she holds the title ‘docent’ in Fashion studies. Necessaire Stockholm AB is her company specialized in Diversity and inclusion.

Disposition

The report starts with an overview of the diverse methods and initiatives executed by Genie@ACE. A section based on interviews with key people involved in Genie@ACE follows. Here, they reflect on their work with and around Genie@ACE, give some examples of their main sources of pride, what they perceived as the key challenges, and what they consider as their main learnings. The report concludes with a discussion of the Genie@ACE pilot project within the broader context of research on gender equality work.

Brief background

Since there was an explicit ambition from the very beginning to integrate and coordinate new activities with existing ones, Genie@ACE involved a range of different people from the ACE department and from Chalmers centrally. For the sake of clarity, here is a brief presentation of the key actors. To begin with, there was the Genie@ACE coordination group which met every two weeks throughout the four years. Professor Isabelle Doucet was the interim coordinator when the project was initially launched but in April 2021, Bri Gauger took on the leadership as coordinator of Genie@ACE. The coordination group consisted of five to six members, but the members have varied slightly over the years. The members had different research backgrounds and academic titles. The interview study (on p. 30) covers some of the key figures from the coordination group. It is important to stress that the group included the equality representative (“jämställdhetsombud”) at ACE and the Dr. Genie representative (a PhD student). The equality representative in turn attended regular meetings with the ACE equality group, which also consisted of the head of department (“prefekt”), the Genie representative/coordinator of Genie@ACE, the HR partner, and the head of administration. The Genie@ACE coordinator also served as the Genie representative at ACE and attended meetings with Genie representatives across Chalmers, run by the Genie central coordinator. Moreover, the Dr. Genie representative also attended meetings with Dr. Genie representatives from other departments.

Methods and initiatives

Under the Genie@ACE umbrella, various methods and initiatives have been employed to advance gender equality within the organization. This section outlines the core ideas underpinning these efforts. Several initiatives, here listed as separate entities, naturally overlap. Sometimes a certain topic has been given a separate folder, but in reality remains a subset to another initiative (for example, a promotion analysis to understand the Rules of Procedure). Descriptions of methods and initiatives reflect the original sources. Sometimes the naming of concepts varies across documents. There are also differences in the level of detail available for each initiative/method. Such variations will inevitably be reflected in the following pages.

Gender aspects of the Rules of Procedure (Arbetsordningen)

Chalmers had decided to reformulate the Rules of Procedure – Chalmers University of Technology's Appointment Regulations for Teaching and Research Faculty Procedure – with the aim of making it clearer and more updated. Genie@ACE gave feedback on the draft before the revised Rules of Procedure were introduced on January 1, 2022. In retrospect, the structured work of analyzing the Rules of Procedure was a key event that not only mobilized the members of the Genie@ACE group but also made the group aware of the impact that it could make. It came to represent a key contribution by Genie@ACE for Chalmers at large.

A draft reformulation was distributed to the ACE department in early 2021. It was presented by two representatives, a professor and a recruitment specialist from the HR department, from central Chalmers, who joined the ACE Kollegiemöte in March. The initial discussions revolved around the need to make the Academic citizenship and Utilization clearer while still allowing for adjustment to each specific department's needs.

At the Kollegiemöte, the researchers at ACE asked for an evaluation from a gender perspective. They were told feedback of that kind had already been provided by the gender equality coordinator at Chalmers. However, the Genie@ACE group soon decided to commit to commenting on the draft reformulation in greater detail and ended up spending a considerable amount of time analyzing the Rules of Procedure, 'Academic Citizenship', and discussing ways to remove current barriers. The analyses and recommendations from Genie@ACE then provided a basis for discussion with Genie at large. Hence, over this period, Genie@ACE had numerous meetings with Genie at large where Genie@ACE, step by step, presented their findings and discussed issues further. The goal, on the part of Genie@ACE, was to, in due course, provide Chalmers with feedback on the Rules of Procedure in a joint statement from Genie at large.

Even after the introduction of the new Rules of Procedure, on January 1, 2022, Genie@ACE continued their work, and in September 2022 it made some final suggestions as to what issues Genie at large could take further action on.

The analysis and recommendation that Genie@ACE presented, bit by bit, to Genie at large often used case studies or specific data from ACE to illustrate various phenomena (for example, gender structures in terms of positions). For the sake of clarity, the description here will focus on the final analysis and recommendations. Nonetheless, the process was very important as it meant that the Genie@ACE members came together and built a common understanding of the gendered organizational environment of ACE (and Chalmers at large), and reflected upon ways to change it. According to Genie@ACE, much of their feedback was taken into account when the new Rules of Procedure were implemented in the beginning of 2022.

General observations

To begin with, Genie@ACE underlined that a more thorough analysis of the Rules of Procedure was needed from a gender equality perspective. Since the impact of the Rules of Procedure on researchers and teachers at Chalmers is considerable, and the group perceived the knowledge of the underlying mechanisms as very limited, Genie@ACE advised Chalmers

to conduct a “substantiated analysis of the document” and called for clear protocols and time frames, with consultation and accurate expertise. They urged leadership to allocate time and expertise to the work with the Rules of Procedure, to allow for a serious, transparent and structured process towards change.

One key observation was that different scientific disciplines within Chalmers vary in terms of traditions, contexts and funding environments. Thus, Genie@ACE put forth the idea of ‘a local scientific committee’ at each department, to which anyone wishing to be considered for promotion could turn. There would then be a preliminary assessment of the candidate before proceeding with the central evaluation committee (AK). The evaluation criteria for Assistant, Associate and Full professors were also discussed, and some benchmarking ideas – for example with ERC grants or with comparable universities – were suggested. It was argued that such a measure could clarify differences in criteria between these levels.

Genie@ACE encouraged the inclusion of ‘academic service’ into the evaluation criteria for appointments and promotions. Drawing on research that shows that women in particular lose out in their careers because activities labeled as ‘academic citizenship’ are undervalued or made invisible, they argued for clear criteria and a known methodology for substantiating and evaluating such experiences. Genie@ACE also raised some questions, such as whether ‘academic citizenship’ could offset deficient qualifications in other areas. In fact, the discussion around ‘Academic citizenship’ ignited a research project on the topic, conducted by Bri Gauger and described below under a separate heading (please see p. 12).

Much of the criticism centered on formulations around the evaluation criteria for academic titles.

Full professors

The criteria for full professors had the following wording: “Have demonstrated a good ability to supervise doctoral students and have supervised at least three doctoral students as primary supervisor from the start to the doctoral degree (an exception from this number may be made if the equivalent scope can be documented or if there are few doctoral students in the field of study).” Genie@ACE questioned it from several perspectives. First, they claimed that the requirement to be supervisor ‘from start to finish’ for three PhD students exceeds the expectations of all other technical universities in Sweden.

Second, they argued that Chalmers fails to recognize ‘de-facto main supervision’, i.e., when the greater part of supervision is performed by someone other than the person who is assigned the formal role as ‘main supervisor’. In fact, the Rules of Procedure of Chalmers allows main supervisors to pass on the day-to-day supervision to someone else, as long as he or she ensures that the PhD has access to supervision. According to the Genie@ACE group, there have been many examples at Chalmers of a senior person (often a man) assuming the role of ‘main supervisor’ and then handing over the day-to-day supervision to someone else (possibly a younger woman). Unfortunately, Genie@ACE concluded, this is still common today.

Third, they underlined that there is no required documentation of pedagogical competence (other than a PhD student passing their defense, which in turn could depend on the support of many other people).

Fourth, Genie@ACE stressed that professional advancement is unjustly dependent on employment conditions at the department and on the health and personal life choices of individual PhD students. For example, a PhD student who goes on parental leave delays the professional advancement of the supervisor.

Fifth, Genie@ACE then proposed a number of adjustments to the evaluation criteria, for example a reduction of supervision from three to two PhD students while also permitting ‘de-facto main supervision’ (as long as it is convincingly documented). Furthermore, they put forth a system of weighed forms of supervision. For example, assistant supervision in a supporting role from start to finish of a PhD could have a certain quantifiable merit, for example 0.25 x main supervision. The proposed Rules of Procedure did not mention the supervision of post-docs, which, at other universities, are often regarded as a pedagogical merit. Genie@ACE presented a table of all types of supervision efforts, with suggested conversion rates between them.

Student category	Role	conversion rate
PhD student	Official <u>main supervisor</u> with active role in day to day research supervision ($\geq 4y$)	1
PhD student	Official <u>main supervisor</u> with minor role in day to day research supervision	0.2
PhD student	Official <u>co-supervisor</u> with main role in day to day research supervision ($\geq 4y$)	1
PhD student	Official <u>co-supervisor</u> with supporting role ($\geq 4y$)	0.2
Postdoctoral fellow	Main supervisor ($\geq 2y$), unassisted	0.4
Masters project (1-2 students)	Main supervisor, unassisted (per 30 Hp),	0.1
Bachelor project (2-6 students)	Main supervisor, unassisted (per 15 Hp),	0.05

‘Biträdande professors’

Genie@ACE highlighted that the proportion of women in the group of ‘*biträdande professors*’ is significantly larger than in the group of full professors, while the salary of the former is considerably lower. Not only is the service level itself rare in an international context (and even a Swedish context), but it can also be seen as a women’s trap. Genie@ACE questioned the need for this level in the long run and suggested that those who currently hold the position should be promoted to full professors once they qualify under the new criteria. Furthermore, Genie@ACE questioned why senior specialists cannot apply for a ‘biträdande professor’ title if similarly qualified, arguing that a professor title should depend on merit and not on position.

Assistant professors

For assistant professor, the Rules of Procedure stated as a requirement “postdoc stay or equivalent at another university, institute or activity other than the one in which the candidate was a doctoral student”. The Genie@ACE group had divergent opinions of this criterion. A majority argued along the following lines (extracted from presentation for the central Genie group):

“I am convinced that [this criterion] will force very successful newly graduated women and men to choose a well-paid job in industry instead of a research assistant position at Chalmers. In the case of a dissertation, the age is in to get a house and children and it should be very successful if two adults in the career with children can go to another place. Here, there is a great risk that Chalmers will lose those who could have become prominent researchers. Here it can also depend on social background and how inclined one is to leave for international work. For people from families with non-academic backgrounds, this is an even bigger barrier. Here we definitely have a leaking pipe in terms of both men and women.”

The other line of argument, to retain the criterion, was the following:

“For me this is a very important criterion that fights against a kind of nepotism that is rife in academic institutions. I think that relaxing this criterion does a disservice to young academics (who are discouraged from expanding their networks and will be less competitive on research grant applications) and leads to lower quality academics at Chalmers. The fact that grant agencies care about this criterion is itself a good reason to keep it. We are always in stiff competition with the industry for academic talent, but there are also many more talented academics on the global scene searching for jobs than there are positions to award them (especially right now in the wake of COVID-19 and global EiB).”

The Genie@ACE group conducted a case study in the ACE department, a gender and diversity analysis of the department’s assistant professors (16 respondents who were appointed Assistant Professor during the period 2014-2022). The group investigated “the condition and the fate” of these people, calling attention to how their employment conditions may have varied, for example if they had tenure track with future base funding, if they had financial assistance, if their package included PhD funding.

The result showed that during this period, 10 men and 6 women were assistant professors for two or more years. Three women (one tenure track and one specialist) still work at Chalmers today. Overall attrition was 50 percent for women compared to 30 percent for men. On the whole, and as recently as 2019, men were more likely to be appointed into tenure track positions and to receive institutional support packages than were women. The tenure track program shows even more striking numbers. During the period 2014-2019, 7 men and 1 woman were appointed to a tenure-track position. In 2019, three men and one woman were hired to tenured positions. Two of the men received support packages that included a PhD student. In 2022 (when the study was conducted) there was only one woman in the position of assistant professor on tenure-track. During the entire period, 2014-2022, four men and one woman received a support package including a PhD student and salary. Genie@ACE concluded that there is poor retention of assistant professors at ACE, not least women. Furthermore, they found the conditions for women disheartening, considering that Genie at Chalmers had been in existence for more than three years. Genie@ACE drew attention to the

“false economy”, arguing that all assistant professors require support packages and mentoring. To sum it up, Genie@ACE called for two main actions concerning the conditions surrounding the assistant professors.

- The need to redress the financial imbalance for today’s assistant professors
- The need to eliminate the systemic biases that continue to undervalue women

Senior researcher and Researcher

Genie@ACE then went on to suggest that the two positions ‘senior researcher’ and ‘researcher’ be removed from the Rules of Procedure, stating that these positions currently serve as a trap for female researchers that hinder them from advancing in their academic career. Genie@ACE wrote:

“At present, these positions are not used to carry out externally funded research as it was planned, but instead widely used to carry out normal academic duties as well as academic household work.³ Due to years of inaction at Chalmers regarding specialist positions, the number of people with delayed promotions (e.g. people who are qualified to apply for ‘Biträdande Professor’ but are not allowed) is large and increasing rapidly over time. Due to this inaction, successful researchers are taking matters into their own hands. One female senior specialist at ACE recently received a professor title at Lund University. This sent a very sad message to all female specialists at the department that the only way to get equal treatment is to leave Chalmers.

We believe that inaction on this issue is very wasteful of resources because it encourages the best people to leave. Also, because it is disproportionately affecting female researchers it is delaying Chalmers from reaching our goal of gender parity at senior levels. How many women have delayed promotions today? What are the consequences in terms of lost salary? These questions should be investigated, and appropriate action taken without further delay. Those who hold these positions yet meet the requirements for base-funded faculty should be moved without further delay.”

Moreover, Genie@ACE stressed that these positions are often held by women with a foreign background. While performing exactly the same tasks as their base-funded colleagues, they have fewer rights and opportunities for promotion, and less organizational support higher up in the hierarchies. According to Genie@ACE, young and talented female researchers are resigning from these positions; it is a leaking pipe that undermines gender equality efforts at Chalmers. They referred to some examples from ACE where excellent young female researchers left these positions, citing lack of support and opportunity, “creating a leaking pipe through which we have lost several of the next generations of female professors”.

³ <https://www.tidningencurie.se/nyheter/vem-star-for-hushallsarbetet-i-akademin> (in Swedish)

Call for action: presenting the work around the Rules of Procedure to Genie at central Chalmers

When Genie@ACE presented its work to Genie at central Chalmers, they asked the latter to take action on some key issues:

1. *Women's traps.* Here, central Genie was asked to make an inventory of how many women there were at the 'biträdande professor' and 'associate professor' positions at Chalmers. Moreover, Genie@ACE encouraged Genie central to conduct a series of interviews with these women to identify barriers and desired support, to reach the professor level faster. Genie central would then be expected to lobby upwards in the organization to make sure accurate measures and action plans to accelerate the career of female researchers were taken.
2. *Assistant professor.* Genie@ACE wanted to focus on the inventory of assistant professors at ACE and make sure that female assistant professors receive equal conditions as male assistant professors. Here, Genie@ACE raised the question of how female assistant professors could be further supported.
3. *Senior researcher and researcher.* Genie@ACE called for a survey on how many female senior specialists are delayed in their promotion schedule due to there being no position corresponding to 'docent' or 'biträdande professor'. Besides, Genie@ACE wanted to estimate what this is costing women at Chalmers.

Genie@ACE also put particular emphasis on certain aspects of the evaluation criteria where they saw a great need for further action:

Numbers supervision. They questioned the requirement of being the main supervisor for three PhD students (see above) and asked for a clarification of the exceptions from this criterion – especially the wording “if the equivalent scope can be documented”, which they would like to see illustrated by a list of examples and instructions as to how this should be documented.

Quality of supervision. According to the Genie@ACE group, action needs to be taken to either “broaden the supervision requirements for promotions or else to properly evaluate PhD supervision quality”. The group called for revising the ways to keep track of supervision and supervisory contributions during the PhD studies. One idea that they put forward was to develop and evaluate the supervision part in the pedagogical portfolio. Another suggestion was to gather co-supervisor testimonials and from other people who had followed the supervision closely (for example graduated PhD students, division leaders or directors of PhD studies).

Included was also a section on *Academic citizenship*, which will be elaborated on in the section below. Genie@ACE called for action to clarify how academic citizenship will be evaluated and weighted.

Despite the slightly divergent opinions within the group (described above), Genie@ACE asked for the *removal of the post-doc prerequisite for assistant professor positions*. They suspected this merit is being overvalued:

“It can be a merit to have worked abroad or at another Swedish university or institute, but it is also a privilege and is not equally available to everyone. Family or financial constraints can prevent overseas travel, while gender and diversity biases affect the availability of postdoc positions.”

Genie@ACE argued that other types of merits are equally important and should carry equal weight; in other words, nobody should be excluded for not having been on a post-doc.

Impact on the Rules of Procedure

The work on the Rules of Procedure on the part of Genie@ACE had a direct effect on the updated version of the Rules of Procedure that was launched in 2022. A ‘postdoc stay at another university’ is no longer a requirement for the position of Assistant Professor. Instead, the wording is broadened, with a call for ‘different activities’ which could also include work at RISE, IVL or any type of research-oriented institution, in addition to a postdoc. The Rules of Procedure are about to be revised again for 2025 and then, the title of ‘biträdande professor’ is about to be removed and most ‘biträdande professors’ are likely to become Full Professors.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that in the aforementioned Sharepoint folder (see p. 4), there is also a dataset on salaries, but they have been treated gingerly here, due to confidentiality reasons.

Academic citizenship

Building on the gender and diversity analysis of the Rules of Procedure described above, Bri Gauger began a postdoc research project in 2022 to analyze the academic citizenship criteria from the Rules of Procedure alongside people’s lived experiences in various roles at the ACE department. This action research study was finalized in a report titled *Valuable Labour: Academic Citizenship in Promotion and Tenure*. This study allowed Gauger to identify challenges and points of intervention, which she could then use to begin developing a ‘Academic Citizenship Recognition Strategy’ (see p. 14). In the report, she also outlined how the study design could be scaled up and how, together with existing research, it could further Chalmers’ vision of achieving the highest level of academic excellence.

In 2022, ‘academic citizenship’ was added as a competence category in the Rules of Procedure of Chalmers. This, according to Gauger, presented an opportunity to identify and reward activities which are essential to the functioning of the university but nonetheless often invisible or undervalued – and traditionally to a larger extent performed by women and minority groups in academia. The rather vague definition of ‘academic citizenship’ in the Rules of Procedure is “work that goes beyond ordinary teaching and research”. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What academic service-related tasks are being done, and by whom?
2. What are the tradeoffs involved in participating?
3. How can we make academic citizenship visible and valued?

The study design consisted of a literature review, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews (17 interviews at ACE). The conclusions drawn in the study are connected to

aspects such as the tasks performed, time spent, tradeoffs, motivations, and accountability for collegiality. Some key conclusions were the following:

Internal services are time-consuming but render very little visibility, normally they are not reported on a CV and one's participation is seldom tracked or recognized. At ACE, internal services include informal working groups, development projects, workshops and seminars for the department reorganization or for promoting gender equality. In addition, internal services may also encompass initiatives to improve the experience of students and to head informal research groups which, despite having no formal place in the departmental structure at the time, may still contribute considerably to enhancing the academic quality and atmosphere in the department.

External institutional service, on the other hand, such as reviewing or assessing academic work, serving as discussant/opponent, or on the grading committee, are more likely to be formalized and therefore valued more.

Academic citizenship activities that contribute to the organization in the long run, such as strategic visioning or implementation, are suffering because faculty time is insufficient to meaningfully participate in them, according to Gauger. This is especially true for those who are not base-funded faculty. Gauger writes:

“Most of the people I interviewed either do not know how their actual time spent tracks with their percentage breakdown or report that their percentage breakdown does not accurately reflect their time spent on various tasks. People already feel that they are working on their free time, and participation in development work comes on top of the hours they are already working for free.”

Interviewees experienced tradeoffs between doing academic citizenship tasks and performing activities that are highly valued or required for career advancement, such as publishing. These tradeoffs are more severe for those who are lower down in the hierarchy.

In general, ACE employees have a strong sense of duty in their jobs and feel responsible towards their colleagues and students. Considering the ubiquitous feeling of time poverty, this commitment can imply overwork at a high personal cost. Gauger exemplifies with some citations from the interviews: “If I don't do it, it won't get done,” and “Someone has to check that things are done efficiently, otherwise I will have even more to do.” The sense of responsibility triggers some people to take on leadership roles even though they will not advance their career. “We didn't have another solution” was one common sentiment. Gauger writes: “Motivation for participating in academic citizenship comes from a positive place that reflects a strong and laudable commitment to the organization, but which can take a toll on both individuals and the collective working environment.”

The notion of ‘collegiality’ is also key element of ‘academic citizenship’. According to the Rules of Procedure, all Chalmers employees must follow the collegiality requirements: “to work for a good internal work environment” and to “participate in change work”. Yet, the study showed that some people are doing far more than the required amount of work but are not rewarded in a way that equals someone who, for example, has overachieved in terms of research. When asked what happens if you are not collegial, Bri Gauger writes: “Almost without exception, interviewees responded that nothing happens when you are not collegial, and this perceived lack of consequences or mechanisms for accountability results in a high

level of frustration”. In other words, the Rules of Procedure regulate and shape outcomes in certain aspects of career development – for example, in terms of research outputs – much more effectively than others.

Other conclusions concern supervision, examination and administration – activities that should, if they were valued and made visible, be accounted for in other parts of the Rules of Procedure (i.e., in pedagogy or research). Yet, interviewees testified to serving as de facto examiners and de facto supervisors while someone else with the official qualifications is the examiner or supervisor on record. “These individuals are performing the work without being able to receive the credit, which compounds a vicious cycle”, writes Gauger. Similarly, administrative tasks require more time than allotted and are often made invisible. This could involve course organization, such as booking lecture halls, budgets, Canvas pages, and research project management, such as emailing external partners, monitoring their contributions, writing new applications. Many interviewees experienced lack of administrative support.

Gauger made the case that solely including “Academic citizenship” in the Rules of Procedure is insufficient to properly value and make visible academic service work. Hence, she proposed an ‘Academic citizenship recognition strategy’ for the whole of Chalmers, a piece of work that gradually became a large part of her project.

Academic citizenship recognition strategy

‘The academic citizenship recognition strategy’, which is an essential outcome of the research project, targets both academic culture and structures and is summarized in a document titled “Academic Citizenship Recognition Strategy ACE Pilot 2024”, by Bri Gauger. It is based on the idea of not only *measuring* academic service but also *valuing* it, i.e., give it status. While Chalmers 2022 strategy and vision gives a lot of weight to measuring ‘excellence’ in a very traditional way, for example through publication metrics, the ‘academic citizen recognition strategy’ is presented as a means to counteract an individualistic culture. “At ACE, we do not want to only attract individuals or ‘academic stars’ but to also support and foster people that we already have, and to create strong teams functioning in excellent environments”, writes Gauger.

The formal wording is the following:

“The recognition strategy contributes to the desired level of academic quality and achieving an excellent academic culture by valuing academic citizenship activities at the departmental and central university levels. The strategy is implemented as part of the ACE verksamhetsplan 2024.”

The goal of the strategy is to:

“To counteract individualistic academic culture by measuring excellence in a more inclusive manner. Excellence should include more than only taking account of publication metrics but also reward strong teams functioning in excellent environments that are able to communicate assessment context specific to department culture (e.g. funding situations, teaching loads, expectations).”

The ‘Academic citizen recognition strategy’ has been aligned with a number of key governing documents and bodies, such as the 2041 Chalmers strategy, the ‘Rules of Procedure’, the

Faculty model development, the ACE management, and the ACE Faculty Assembly. In order to move from strategy to action, Gauger and the Genie@ACE group propose the following foci and actions.

Identifying and addressing structural aspects – for example structures, templates, and routines

Line management

Focus:

- Appraisal talks, salary revisions

Actions:

- Train managers how to recognize and communicate Academic Citizenship merits with their employees. For example, the appraisal talks template asks employees to reflect on the division's work on gender equality and diversity and how they can contribute, but each manager must choose to linger on and/or highlight those aspects.
- Train managers how to communicate their employees' Academic Citizenship merits to key stakeholders.

The Departmental Review Panel (“Institutionens beredningsgrupp”)

Focus:

- CV development, communicating department context to hiring committee

Actions:

- Train IB members to see Academic Citizenship as part of promotion application, learn how to recognize and communicate Academic Citizenship merits.
- Promotion application template: clearly show what types of activities and merits should be assessed for Academic Citizenship.
- Coaching on providing proper documentation to back up claims.
- Communicating to the hiring committee: what is the relevant department and division context in which the person is being assessed.

All ACE employees

Focus:

- Document for salary review, appraisal talks, promotion applications

Actions:

- Provide everyone with a template for how to document, coaching on providing proper documentation to back up claims.

Chalmers Hiring Committee (“Anställningskommittén”)

Focus:

- CV development

Actions:

- CV template should address qualifications in Academic Citizenship and use this section for communicating merits.

N.B.: Further work is needed on how criteria for collegiality and “internal service” (those most directly contributing to a good internal work environment but hardest to demonstrate on CV) can be satisfactorily highlighted in promotion.

The Research Program Board/FUN ("Forskarutbildningsnämnden")

Focus:

- Credit for participating in EDI work

Actions:

- PhD students get course credit for participating in events contributing to EDI in the department
- Create a space in Individual Study Plan (ISP) template for Academic Citizenship activities.

Identifying and addressing cultural aspects

General awareness

- Seminar on Academic Citizenship and Rules of Procedure study results for all ACE employees held December 2022 and a follow up in autumn 2024
- Highlight Academic Citizenship contributions in monthly department info sessions
- ACE Faculty Assembly (FA) address topic as part of the cultural shift in how we think about this (taking the responsibility not only re managers but in the collective academic arena)

Research area leaders

- As academic leaders responsible for the culture of their research areas, academic citizenship will be a part of the strategic plans for research areas (how to develop and work with the research area)
- See points below in "division meetings" as research area structures are currently in development

Division meetings as a specific venue

- Many suggestions from the Faculty Assembly (FA) workshop revolved around division meetings as an important venue to encourage academic citizenship culture. Not only heads of division are responsible – all can and need to take part for normalizing this discourse, even if it is the line management's responsibility to select, encourage, nudge, etc.
- Use some division meetings to do "show and tell," inviting people to share, making space for sharing unfinished work, plans, aspirations
- Make it a natural part of division meetings to highlight what academic citizenship activities people are doing and/or what are the expectations for academic citizenship
- Recognize mentoring

Again, the full study and its conclusions can be read in the report:

Gauger, Bri. *Valuable Labour: Academic Citizenship in Promotion and Tenure*.

Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers University of Technology, June 2023.

Gender aspects in education

In parallel to the work on the Rules of Procedure, Genie@ACE launched several other initiatives. One concerned gender aspects of education. This tied very well in with the ongoing work to integrate gender equality, diversity and equal treatment at Chalmers, and Genie@ACE came to support this process in various ways.

Chalmers Strategy for integration of JML – gender equality, diversity and equal treatment – states that:

- A. All students must, during their studies, be given access to teaching that has been designed and implemented in a way that supports:
 - Equal conditions for learning and examination regardless of what social categories one belongs to.
 - Inclusion of all students. Teaching that doesn't reinforce stereotypes or is discriminatory.
- B. All students who graduate from Chalmers must bring awareness and competence to be able to contribute to gender equality, equal treatment and diversity in society. This is true both as a leader and a colleague in the workplace, but also as a developer, supplier and manager of products, processes and systems and services about leaders and colleagues in a workplace.

Bachelor level

In the educational year of 2022/23, a number of initiatives were taken to integrate JML in education at various levels at ACE. At the Bachelor level in engineering educations at ASAM such initiatives encompassed both pedagogical strategies and separate modules emphasizing JML/gender equality, diversity and equal treatment. Previously, in 2021, teachers, examiners and program administrators (PAs) had undergone a workshop focusing on the JML topics. Some examples of Bachelor level courses that started to implement JML content in 2022/23 are BOM205, 'Building, functions and design' (year 1), BOM210 'Urban space and functions' (year 1), BOM576 'Sustainable urban development' (year 2).

As an example, the course BOM205 involves an introductory lecture in JML, where gender inequality is highlighted both quantitatively (in statistics from the construction industry and from Chalmers) and qualitatively (for example, through the introduction of norm critical thinking). The examination comprises questions that were addressed in the introductory lecture. Students are asked to reflect on the interaction in their group work, especially considering issues of equality, inclusion and diversity. In BOM210 focus is shifted to social sustainability in urban planning processes. Students are asked to demonstrate insight into the possibilities and limitations of urban development and infrastructure from a sustainability perspective. Hence, social and equality aspects are key. Similarly, students are asked to reflect on teamwork in a diverse group. BOM576 casts light on equality, diversity and inclusion in sustainable urban development. Again, it also urges students to reflect on the group compositions and their interactional patterns.

Master level

In the spring of 2023, Caroline Inghammar, senior lecturer and pedagogical development leader at ACE, analyzed five out of six Master programs at ASAM, (MPDSD, MPIEE,

MPSEB, MPISOV and MPDCM) in terms of their integration of a JML (gender equality, diversity and equal conditions) perspective. This analysis showed that some of these programs already have JML-oriented courses, such as Norm critical thinking, Critical perspectives, Resistant architecture and feminist movements. Other programs and courses have elements where the dominant concepts and underlying notions are questioned in order to account for a more inclusive perspective. The remaining programs either have ongoing discussions or highlighted areas where they strive to include perspectives that account for the situation of minorities, or more critical perspectives towards decisionmakers and their biases.

PhD level

Furthermore, at the PhD level, a course called ‘KUF3020: Inequality and power hierarchies in academia and society’ was launched in 2022. This course was offered to all PhD students at Chalmers University, with the aim of providing them with an understanding of:

“how inequality and hierarchies which exist in society influence academia as a professional activity of scientific knowledge production and as an organization. The course problematizes the notion of academic knowledge as pure, objective, and detached from ideology and politics.”

The main building blocks of this course were 1) What does gender equality and diversity management do? A necessary reflection, 2) Gender and technology, 3) Using intersectionality: examples from Energy and Computer Studies, 4) (In)equality and Science – studies on pandemic as an example.

The contribution of Genie@ACE

It is worth mentioning that several members of Genie@ACE would later, in the interview study, talk about the initiatives on gender aspects in education as relatively ‘easy’: things were already moving in the right direction. The main contribution of Genie@ACE seems to have been to highlight and support ongoing work and to, where needed, provide additional workshops on key subjects relating to gender aspects of education or to get a better understanding of ongoing initiatives and their challenges.

In 2023, Genie@ACE ran several different meetings where gender aspects of education and the strategy for integrating JML at ACE were presented and discussed. In addition to integrating JML in their content, a few programs and courses also work actively with their students to create a more inclusive study environment. In October of 2023, Becky Bergman did a workshop with a research-based perspective on inter-cultural communications, within engineering education. The interviews with the MPAs (i.e., the program directors of the Master programs) and the workshop served to support teachers in developing new ideas and review the existing content of their courses. During 2024 and 2025, the plan is to implement learning outcomes and activities. One suggestion was to offer an introductory JML course for international students.

In meetings at ACE, for example when presenting the work of Caroline Inghammar (please see above), participants were urged to reflect on how they dealt with gender and diversity issues in their respective programs. What obstacles and opportunities did they see? What kind of support from ACE@Genie would they like to see? How could ACE@Genie support teachers in general?

‘Why does it take so long to implement this change’ was the heading of one discussion point, along with some suggestions to an eager but frustrated audience. Some possible answers were put forward by Genie@ACE: First of all, they argued that a lot of people are interested in these questions but lack time and resources. Secondly, they stressed that there is no need to change *a lot*. Thirdly, they emphasized that how course directors and teachers behave and present their content in courses is often the most critical. Fourth, they encouraged the audience to try out a different pedagogical style, to think about who is included and who is not. Fifth, they underlined that “the purpose of JML is to supplement with knowledge about destructive structures, so the students independently can relate objectively to gender equity and equality issues through increased norm awareness”.

In the fall of 2023, the head of program for Civil Engineering at TKSAM, Pär Johansson, gave a talk where he gave some background to DEI work at Chalmers, introduced some definitions and some examples of discriminatory practices in an educational setting, both in the courses and in the teaching organization at large. He then went on to give some examples of ongoing work at Chalmers in general and TKSAM in particular, for example by referring to the aforementioned courses at the Bachelor level. Moreover, he also brought up some examples from the Master level programs, some of which Caroline Inghammar had been analyzing earlier that same year. In the Master program Design and Construction Project Management, students are expected to gain an understanding of the complexity and opportunity offered by sustainable development to challenge existing structures, cultures and practices in the construction industry and contribute to equality, inclusion and diversity. In the Master program Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering, students will gain an ability to reflect on equality, inclusion and diversity in group work in connection to their future professional role. A similar aim can be found in the Master program Sound and Vibration. In the Master program Structural Engineering and Building Technology, students will work in diverse groups and reflect on diversity, inclusion and equality in teamwork. He also presented a variety of ways to include DEI in education, for example through requesting more knowledge through course evaluations, taking optional courses such as Gender and technology, getting involved in different change efforts through networks or institutional initiatives, listening to lectures by the Chalmers Equity Committee, and learning from the Chalmers ‘Safe at work’ platform. He finished off by presenting some thoughts and research on group dynamics.

Several other meetings with people involved in pedagogical development followed. A Pedagogical Developer informed the rest of the group that Chalmers has an agreement with a consultant specialized in JML-related training. Divisions in need of more training were encouraged to use her. Participants kept coming back to the problems of getting teachers on board, the lack of time among faculty and staff in the ACE institution. Yet others stressed the need for people involved to understand the equality in education strategy as an opportunity rather than as a burden.

In one meeting, the dean of education emphasized that at Chalmers, the Head of Programs are quite independent and any initiative to include gender and diversity aspects needs to be coordinated with them. The Dean of Education underscored that content-wise she is positive towards having gender and diversity aspects, formulated as learning outcomes, in all programs but not in all courses. Yet, she argued that all courses need to consider gender and equality from a pedagogical perspective, for example in teaching materials and language. The Head of Programs in Civil Engineering emphasized that equality and gender is being implemented in civil engineering programs, as part of social sustainability goals. He reported

that there are yearly meetings with students from all programs where the physical and the social working environment is discussed.

There were some discussions on whether the topic of JML should be taught centrally at Chalmers or decentralized, in individual, already established, courses. In the latter case, where JML was to be integrated in already existing courses, there were some concerns as to whether these teachers were equipped to do so. It was suggested that Genie@ACE could support those teachers. In these discussions, it was also agreed that examiners need more support on how they can relate JML to their specific topic.

It seems common that questions emerged along the way. One such area of interest that needed to be addressed by the Genie@ACE team was how to make the teaching environment more inclusive in terms of LGBTQIA+.

There were also some exchanges of ideas and methods of working with gender mainstreaming from other universities, for example Göteborg University.

Gender aspects in research

Genie@ACE wanted to promote research that integrated gender aspects into projects. Hence, a lot of its efforts around research served to facilitate and support researchers in that direction. Judging from the interview study, Genie@ACE members are very happy with the outcome of these efforts. Workshops and seminars were well-attended and reached researchers from all corners of the department, even those who had not shown a great interest in these topics before.

In 2022 and 2023, Genie@ACE arranged workshops which were facilitated by different coordination group members, both in the spring and the fall. These workshops were popular among researchers with varying degrees of prior knowledge in gender theory. They addressed researchers studying anything from “buildings, neighborhoods, cities and their inhabitants to acoustics, bridges, soil, concrete or wastewater”. The workshop targeted both those researchers who wanted to learn how to creatively and fruitfully include gender in their funding applications and those who just wanted to comply with the growing number of funders who require researchers to detail how they address gender in their proposals. Resources and examples were made available to all researchers afterwards, e.g. a one-hour long video on integrating sex, gender and intersectional analysis, invitations to online-training programs on how to build the capacity to integrate the gender dimension into research projects, tools from the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR).

In the spring of 2022 participants from ACE were encouraged to not only attend the workshop but also to explore their research ideas further by applying for development funding from Genie. There was also a follow-up workshop in the fall, where participants had the opportunity to develop their proposals further. In addition, Genie provided some examples of EU-funded research projects where gender and diversity aspects have been integrated.

In March 2023, Maxime Forest gave a talk on Integrating gender aspects in research at ACE. Maxime Forest is a researcher and senior lecturer at Sciences Po Paris University, and also a gender trainer, devoted to the integration of gender in research, especially in larger EU-funded projects. He has also conducted numerous studies on the mainstreaming of gender in various fields.

In 2024, yet another popular follow-up workshop was held addressing the question on how to incorporate gender aspects into a research project. Once more, examples and resources were posted online for further reading.

Training seminars and workshops

The Genie representative at ACE has attended and reported back from the workshops arranged by Genie at Chalmers central. These workshops have dealt with topics such as:

- *Genie representatives training on culture work* – support by Carl-Johan Lillieroth, Kvadrat (2021)
- *Ambassador Course for Genie Representatives* – focus on cultural development work (2021)
- *Gender equality in academia crash course* – by Professor Lisa Husu, Professor of Sociology, Örebro University (2021)
- *Genie Culture Change course* (2022)
- *Genie Representative and Gender Equality Representatives Network meeting (GR/JO)* (2022)
- *Enhance. Guideline for Bias-Aware Selection* (2022)
- Professor Paul Walton, advisor for Genie at central Chalmers, held a workshop on leadership and culture (2022)

Genie@ACE organized a number of seminars and workshops on topics pertinent to the project, but they have to a large extent already been covered elsewhere, for example under ‘Gender aspects in education’ or ‘Gender aspects in Research’. However, Genie@ACE hosted and/or supported a series of seminars and workshops on DEI in the spring of 2023, sometimes together with the Equality Representative at ACE:

ACE – Inkluderande och inkluderande ledarskap, a workshop for the ACE management team on the topic of Inclusion and Inclusive Leadership, held by Johanna Lorén, HR partner, and Frida Stjernholm, DEI Manager (2023).

Tools for Inclusion, training for all divisions at ACE, by Teller Agency/Sanna Lilie (2023). After the workshop, Sanna Lilie put together a list of *Master suppression techniques*. How can you detect them? How can you respond to them and how can you counteract them?

Bystander intervention. Training to end gender-based harassment. Workshop addressing all Dr Genie (the PhD Genie representatives) led by Asgeir Persson, Tutum (2023). What should you do if someone tells you that they were harassed? A similar workshop later addressed managers and supervisors at ACE.

Sexual harassment

A national study on sexual harassment in higher education was conducted in 2021 in a joint effort by 38 Swedish higher education institutions. A total of 39 000 employees and students participated in the survey. The report ‘Survey on Gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the Swedish higher education sector’ was launched in 2022 and showed that in general young people, women and students face great risks of sexual harassment. At Chalmers, these figures were particularly alarming. Female students, female PhD students, and, to some extent, female employees, are subjected to more sexual harassment than their average peers. In addition, the differences, in terms of prevalence, between the genders are often larger at Chalmers than in the average institution. Furthermore, the survey showed that while Bachelor and Master students report the occurrences of sexual harassment, PhD students do not. ‘The prevalence study’, which it is commonly referred to at Chalmers, ignited discussions across several divisions and forums at Chalmers. The survey was presented in the Network meeting *Equality work at Chalmers* in the fall of 2022, where Genie@ACE was represented, and then in the spring of 2023, in a seminar titled “Gender-based vulnerability in academia, data from the whole sector and Chalmers in particular”, to ACE.

Genie@ACE took part of reports that delved even deeper into the topic of gender-based violence (from KTH) and on the prevention of sexual harassment at work (from the Nordic Council of Ministers), respectively.

In June 2023, Genie@ACE contributed extensively to formulating a response to the Vice Chancellor at Chalmers, and also sent to the Research Program Board (FUN), detailing what ACE is doing to address gender inequalities and harassment. The response was divided into three parts: 1) Ways of working, 2) Actions, and 3) Long-term strategies. The *Ways of working* part highlighted that

“...many of these issues are being addressed as part of broader discussions regarding work environment and gender and equality issues, notably within the Genie@ACE Coordination group (meeting every two weeks). This group includes also the jämställdhetsombud and Dr. Genie rep, and provides input to regular meetings with the ACE Equality Group (Prefekt, Genie representative, jämställdhetsombud, HR partner, and head of administration).”

Of course, the response also stressed discussions more specific to PhD education.

Under *Actions*, many initiatives that were highlighted were organized or co-organized by Genie@ACE and have already been mentioned elsewhere in the report, under trainings and workshops. For example:

- The presentation “Gender-based vulnerability in academia, data from the whole sector and Chalmers in particular” in the spring of 2023.
- Meetings with the ACE PhD Council. Responding to the sexual harassment survey results was considered a priority for the PhD Council, and this was largely organized together with Genie@ACE. They also worked specifically with the PhD Council, promoting and supporting activities including seminars and annual meetings.

- *Bystander intervention. Training to end gender-based harassment.* Workshops addressing all Dr Genie (the PhD Genie representatives), led by Asgeir Persson, Tutum (2023). A similar workshop addressed managers and supervisors at ACE.
- *A Master Suppression Techniques* workshop was coordinated by the jämställdhetsombud and Genie@ACE but hosted by the Department, with the aim to address all the faculty and staff at ACE (2023).
- *Mentoring.* A mentorship scheme with a ‘Phadder system’ had been decided and implemented in 2021 and was followed up in the fall of 2023. All new PhD students are assigned a ‘Phadder’ (Study Directors and Heads of Divisions are responsible for identifying appropriate ‘Phadders’). Genie@ACE discussed complementary actions, such as mentor lunches and check-in meetings on PhD students’ wellbeing.

Networks

Four networking initiatives were funded by Genie@ACE during the period 2021-2022: *The Gender and Pedagogy working group*, *Women in Tech Gothenburg network*, *PhD network*, and *Plurality and Diversity network for sustainable, built environments*.

The Gender and Pedagogy working group integrated JML (gender equality, diversity, and equal treatment) in several courses. They have worked together with Anna Grzelec, affiliated researcher at Technology Management and Economics, at Chalmers University, who at the time was conducting the Genie financed project ‘Gender education at Chalmers: How, when and where?’. Grzelec has led several workshops on the Bachelor level. Tailored support for Heads of Program and teachers have also been made available at this level. JML has been integrated in the Bachelor program ‘Affärsutveckling och Entreprenörskap’, in the courses Buildings Function and Design, and Urban Space and Functions, respectively. This network also promoted gender-inclusive teamwork within ACE. An emphasis on inclusive and equal leadership, along with norm-critical thinking, has been added to a number of mandatory and elective leadership courses across ACE. As a result of this network, two additional questions were included in all course surveys, concerning DEI in course design and course material, respectively.

Women in Tech Gothenburg (WITGBG) network ran a project called ‘Building a long-term sustainable network of ACE’, specifically aimed at women and non-binary people in the ACE sector. Part of the project was a study highlighting rooms for improvement at the ACE department in their work towards an inclusive and gender equal department. The departure point was the idea that by identifying these needs, WITGBG and ACE could jointly build a community that supports ACE in implementing the necessary changes. Based on a study on the ACE department, WITGBG then suggested that ACE build “one general network for the whole department that includes everyone”. A need to anonymously report gender issues was identified, as well as a need to report back and bring up gender topics in meetings on a continuous basis. Mental well-being seminars were suggested. Two new networks with only women and non-binary people were also proposed: A PhD network and a Post-doc network. These networks would serve as safe spaces for the respective groups. It was also suggested that a funding advisory committee was to be initiated, supporting the whole department in grant applications.

A PhD network was initiated. Its aim was to inspire interventions that could improve the academic and personal satisfaction for PhD students at ACE, and especially for vulnerable individuals and groups. All PhD students were welcomed to the network (i.e., not only women or non-binary people). Genie@ACE co-sponsored and co-hosted several events with the ACE PhD Student Council to get buy-in from the PhD student body, and Bri Gauger attended PhD Council meetings to facilitate information sharing.

The Plurality and Diversity network for sustainable, built environments centered on two main areas: 1) Promoting, supporting and valorizing teaching and research subjects/activities that are less visible and often gendered female. For example, by adding social and cultural perspectives to sustainable development. 2) Discussing and promoting equality, plurality and diversity in teaching to prepare future professionals to work with challenges for sustainable development. For example, by initiating discussions on how to attract, receive and teach a more heterogenic group of students at ACE through collaborations with Kärnan, a meeting place in Hjällbo.

Communications

Already from the outset, Genie@ACE identified communications as a key asset for leveraging their initiatives. In 2022, the communications strategy was formulated with the following mission statement: "Promote diversity through a focus on women and nonbinary people, to foster equality and opportunity throughout ACE." In the same communications strategy document, the core values for Genie@ACE were defined as:

- Improve equal opportunity
- Immediate benefits and long-term strategy
- Advocate for faculty

The aim of the communications strategy was:

- Reaching all people within ACE with continuous stream of communication
- Give people a sense of
 - the different projects and initiatives Genie@ACE is conducting
 - what's changing, what's developing, what results are being achieved through those projects/initiatives
- Give people opportunities to be involved/engage, including men

In order to achieve these aims, the communications strategy stressed three framing priorities formulated as follows:

- 1) Everything is an equality issue: If we get this to work then we have a better situation for all (changing orientation/perspective on the subject of gender equality).
- 2) Equality issues are multi-dimensional
- 3) Combine long-term strategy taking immediate action where needed (both short-term interventions and long-term strategy)

The communications strategy listed the following regular outputs:

1. Updates in the ACE newsletter, focused on progress/showcasing results from projects and opportunities to be involved
2. Monthly PPT slide focused on general updates and visibility. Distributed to
 - a. “Torsdagfika” (held the first Thursday of each month)
 - b. ILG and disseminated to Division meetings
 - c. Faculty Assembly
3. Explainer regarding focus (e.g. 2021 laying the groundwork, 2022 focus on research, 2023 focus on education; diagnostics and then developing strategy to achieve)
4. Short report produced at the end of each term

In the communications strategy document from April 2022 it says that the communications strategy will be revised for the fall of the same year. However, it remains unclear whether it was subject to any more revisions.

The interview study demonstrates that efforts put on communications paid off. The awareness of what Genie@ACE was up to, how to get involved and who to contact was generally very high. One of the most consistently used and well-documented output that was used throughout the project were the *monthly update slides*. The slide usually covered topics currently under discussion and pointed out in what forum these were being discussed, for example in the Genie@ACE coordination group or in the equality group or at Genie at Chalmers central. Moreover, recent activities and initiatives, such as analyses, were mentioned, and upcoming activities were announced, such as seminars and visiting researchers. These monthly update slides are documented from April 2022 until May 2024 and were shown by Bri Gauger at the department-wide Torsdagfika. Each slide contains contact details for Bri Gauger, should there be any questions.

Employee surveys

Over the course of the pilot project Genie@ACE, at least four employee surveys that included gender equality questions were conducted at ACE (possibly five, but 2023 is missing). These surveys have varied greatly in design – with different companies providing the survey service – which means that they are not always comparable with each other on a year-to-year basis. In the interview study, a few members of Genie@ACE downplay the significance of these surveys as tools for analysis due to their somewhat deficient design, while still stressing their agenda-setting power. The employee surveys are often referred to in processes and routines, and a recurring topic in the gender equality action plans (see p. 26) – where they are often used to justify specific actions. Hence, Genie@ACE kept coming back to the employee surveys.

It is beyond the scope of this report to summarize these four employee surveys, since they were not the product of Genie@ACE. However, because of their strategic significance, below is an example of the type of data that is presented in the employee surveys, on the significance of gender in research at ACE.

2021

38 percent of female researchers stated that they believe their gender affects their chances to become a good researcher, whereas 28 percent of male researchers claimed that their gender affects their chances to become a good researcher. 78 percent of the male respondents stated that they have female role models, whereas 72 percent of female researchers stated the same.

Conversely, 66 percent of male researchers and 72 percent of female researchers, respectively, claimed that female role models have been important in their careers.

2022

This year, 39 percent of female researcher stated that they believe their gender affects their chances to become a good researcher, whereas 25 percent of male researchers claimed that their gender affects their chances to become a good researcher. 82 percent of the male respondents stated that they have female role models, whereas 78 percent of female researchers stated the same. Conversely, 64 percent of male researchers and 68 percent of female researchers, respectively, claimed that female role models have been important in their careers.

These questions do not appear in the following surveys but the responses seem kind of stable, although there is a slight increase in the number of female role models. One could argue that the first question above, 'I believe my gender affects my chances to become a good researcher', is somewhat ambiguous. Some respondents may have interpreted it along the lines that gender affects one's career opportunities, others whether gender is intrinsically linked to competency. Even the ones that believe gender has an impact on one's career opportunities may hold dissimilar views: some may think of it as a structural issue, leaving women at a disadvantage, others may see gender equality initiatives as a threat, suggesting women are given unfair advantages (cf. Höök 2001). Hence, it is somewhat difficult to draw any conclusions from that statement without a broader context.

The data on co-authorship that is included in both surveys indicate that in 2021 and 2022, female researchers' co-authors are generally skewed towards men. 33 percent of the female researchers in 2021 answer that their co-authors are 'only men' or 'mostly men' (only 8 percent respond 'mostly women' and none 'only women'). 37 percent of female researchers respond that their co-authors are gender balanced. A similar pattern is found among men's co-authors; they are also dominated by men, to an even higher degree. 42 percent of male researchers respond that their co-authors are 'only male' or 'mostly male' (only 9 percent respond 'mostly women' and none 'only women'). 31 percent of male researchers answer that their co-authors are gender balanced. This in and of itself shows the significance of gender in academic publishing. The survey from 2022 exhibits a similar pattern.

On PhD students at ACE

In 2023, a survey on the PhD students was conducted. This survey spans quite a variety of topics. Although there are generally few PhD students who indicate that 'harassment' is a problem, 46 percent indicate that there is discrimination in their workplace. Another graph demonstrates that it is relatively common among PhD students to have experienced 'master suppression techniques' in their workplace at ACE.

The action/operational plan (Verksamhetsplanen)

A section of the action/operational plan concerns gender equality. All departments from Chalmers are to contribute with their specific activities and goals. Based on the interview study, the significance of the action/operational plan gradually became evident to the members of the Genie@ACE coordination group. Adding their activities and objectives here was key to integrating their work in the routines and processes of Chalmers.

In the Gender Equality action plans for 2023-2025, Genie@ACE contributed with their input in several internal rounds at the department that preceded the final document in 2022.

The plan starts out with a call for continuous work in gender equality, as it offers an “opportunity to influence both the work environment and employee engagement and strengthen Chalmers as a brand where our current and future employees and students see the department as an attractive workplace for everyone.” It emphasizes that previous activities around equal recruitment and equal pay are part of the department’s gender mainstreaming in the future. The plan describes how the department works closely with the student groups Equal Students of Architecture and V equality, to include the student perspectives into the work on equality in education. Then it briefly presents how the work for equality at ACE is organized – the gender equality group, Genie@ACE and the equality representative/JÄMO are mentioned. The plan stresses that the aim has been to develop a “living gender equality plan” with a “focus on how the faculty model, promotion processes and staffing can affect equality”.

The plan lists some activities from the previous year, 2022:

- The establishment of a structure for the participation of JÄMO and Genie to participate in the department’s management team and planning processes.
- The analysis of how the order of work, the faculty model, promotion processes and staffing can affect equality.
- Research that assesses structural issues from a gender perspective
- Regular introduction day for new employees to orient themselves towards existing structures and resources.

For the then upcoming year, 2023, the main goal is to develop a gender equality plan, aligned with the strategy of Chalmers and ACE, respectively. It is stressed that this plan will include goals, activities and follow-up to ensure accountability. Activities that are prioritized in the plan are:

- The implementation of routines for the participation of Genie@ACE in management team and planning processes
- Lecture and workshops on master suppression techniques (härskartekniker), with different groups within the department.
- Workshops and funding to consider gender aspects in ongoing research projects
- Continuous work on the implementation of gender and gender aspects in the ACE education, with a focus on supporting teachers for compliance with Chalmers regulations.
- Analysis of the employee survey, from a gender perspective, and create a greater understanding of the questions and answers.

For some action points, for example, the workshop on Master suppression techniques, Genie@ACE could demonstrate the need for it based on its listening sessions in the department and through needs assessment that were conducted together with the Women in Tech Göteborg network.

In 2024, new activities were added (this is taken from a document named “VP items 2024”):

1. Follow up on the "Härskarteknik" introduction with more in-depth diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) competence training and workshops for appropriate groups.
2. Implement academic citizenship recognition strategy via training and raising awareness.
3. Assess practices in relation to career progression and promotions processes, particularly in the context of the research area development and with the aim to retain early career talent.
4. Clarify the reporting and escalation pathways related to bullying and sexual harassment for ACE employees.
5. Work further with the implementation of gender and DEI aspects in the ACE education.
6. Promote open discussions among faculty about DEI issues, for example via roundtable series.
7. Evaluate the Genie@ACE pilot project and develop plans for continuing DEI work at ACE after 2024.
8. Analyze the employee survey, based on gender and other fairness and inclusion factors.

Internally, Genie@ACE continuously followed up on these activities. Each item had one or two persons responsible, and they reported on its progress on a regular basis.

Strategy

More recently, in June 2024, Genie@ACE contributed to the new ACE strategy, which can be found in a document called The Strategic Story of ACE. The ACE strategy was discussed at several meetings and, in particular, at a start of the semester meeting in the fall of 2023. Here, they discussed, among other things, ‘Academic Culture and Excellence at ACE’.

Many ideas that have been discussed under various headlines in this report re-appear in the final ACE Strategy, which is a testament to the impact of Genie@ACE. For example, inclusivity is one of four core values:

“Cultivating an inclusive workplace encouraging diverse perspectives and valuing the contributions of every member of the department. Creating an environment where everyone can thrive and contribute to the excellence of our academic community.”

In the description of the research portfolio, ACE states: “We believe in achieving academic excellence through teamwork and collaboration. Both collaborations between research areas inside ACE as well as with external organizations leverage synergies and help us reach the forefront in our research and maximize our impact.”. This stressing of teamwork and collaboration is also discussed in the interview study, as a reflection on how Genie@ACE eventually embraced Chalmers’ emphasis on “academic excellence”, made it their own, and communicated this new construction of “academic excellence” across the department.

Another obvious contribution by Genie@ACE is a large section on Academic Citizenship, with the following subheadings:

- Pursuit of academic leadership missions
- Institutional service, internal and external
- Fostering collegiality
- Engagement in activities contributing to research quality
- Promoting diversity, inclusion, and equality

The text is a concentrate of many of the arguments and recommendations described in the section on *Academic Citizenship* in this report (p. 12). Especially the last section, on fostering collegiality, clearly resonates with the research study by Gauger. Here is an extract:

Within collegiality, our employees actively commit to creating a lively, inspiring environment marked by inclusiveness, diversity, and mutual support. In our academic discussions, we encourage openness to new ideas, free exchange of thought, and a high level of commitment to facilitate mutual collegial support of the highest quality. As colleagues, we engage in seminars and collective knowledge exchange activities, such as the ACE Talks, Research Area presentations, Department Information Meetings, and regular teambuilding events twice a year, namely the ACE academic year kick-off and the ACE end-of-the-academic-year celebration. As individuals, our ambition is to seize opportunities for academic mentorship for colleagues at various stages of their academic careers, from the PhD onwards.

Interview study

Eight people involved in the Genie@ACE project were interviewed for this report in December 2024-January 2025. The interviews were semi-structured, recorded and transcribed and lasted for 40-60 minutes. Some of the interviewees have been part of the Genie@ACE coordination group, others have collaborated and interacted with Genie@ACE on a regular basis. The interviewees were:

Genie coordination group at ACE

- Bri Gauger, coordinator
- Leon Müller, Dr Genie representative at ACE
- Isabelle Doucet, founder of Genie@ACE, interim coordinator and member
- Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall, member
- Dilek Ulutas Duman, member

Other informants

- Maria Saline, Genie coordinator at Chalmers central
- Henriette Söderberg, head of ACE department
- Martine Buser, gender equality representative/jämställdhetsombud at ACE

Isabelle Doucet was relatively new at the ACE department when Genie central was launched. She had taken on a position as Professor in Theory and History of Architecture in October 2018. She understood that early talks were often about increasing the proportion of women in faculty, predominantly on senior levels.

“In many fields they struggled. I felt architecture was different to these other areas. Architecture in general, and our school as well, was already relatively gender diverse compared to other degrees, especially looking at students. [...] Feminist writings on architecture have said it so many times: the numbers are not the only issue. I mean many schools of architecture now have equal numbers, or even more, self-identified women compared to self-identified men in the degrees. The issue is how you progress to more senior roles in faculty, and in the professional practice. This is something that was well known. We were wondering, once you have the numbers already relatively in place, as well as initiatives focusing on equity, such as by student groups, what other work needs to be done? We felt that our department could potentially become [...] a pilot project. To look at the structural and institutional work, and cultural work, that still needs to be done in order to achieve more inclusive and diverse environment.”

*Isabelle Doucet, interim coordinator
and member of Genie@ACE*

Hence, Doucet wrote the application and the head of department at the time, Fredrik Nilsson, co-signed it. It was approved in September 2019.

Bri Gauger took over the leadership role as coordinator in April 2021. To become a member of the Genie@ACE coordination group, candidates had to apply. Eventually, the group was formed, consisting of seven to eight members (it varied slightly over the years). Everyone in the coordination group were paid at least five percent from Genie money. At times, someone

wanted to take charge of a certain initiative and then that person's pay could increase to ten percent Genie money. As a leader, Bri Gauger had ten percent for coordination. The coordination group members had very different backgrounds and research interests, but Bri Gauger and Isabelle Doucet both had research backgrounds in feminist research: Gauger in intellectual and social movement history, feminist methodology and pedagogy, and social and community planning. Doucet in the relationship between architecture, urban politics and social responsibility. Both Doucet and Gauger have, for example, researched women architecture graduates after 1968. Still, everyone in the coordination group had experienced the significance of gender in the academic world – and wanted to change it. The Genie@ACE group had a two-hour long meeting every other week throughout the project period.

Maria Saline was the Genie coordinator at Chalmers at large and met with the different Genie representatives from the 13 departments once per month. The wider Genie project at Chalmers will run until the end of 2028.

Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömwall, Professor in Urban Water and Environmental Engineering, who was one of the original members of Genie@ACE, explains that one of the benefits with Genie was its character of a 'bottom-up' initiative. The Chalmers foundation made an announcement that they wanted ideas for new initiatives.

“Everyone at Chalmers was welcome to send in suggestions. We were a few women in my division who handed in an application about wanting to work on gender equality issues. [...] That application got accepted to the next level, and then it turned out that Mary Sheeran, professor from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, had written a similar application. [The foundation] asked us to write a joint application. Mary is very much alone as a woman in computer science and very knowledgeable about gender equality and gender theories. So she took the lead in the next application round. Then, we got accepted to the next level after that, and then we were asked to write a final application together with Pernilla Wittung, Professor in Chemical Biology. She later became the head of Genie for several years. So the application was really extensive and very good. So we were many people across Chalmers who wanted similar things. The foundation said ‘Yes!’ and made this huge investment. It’s an interesting backdrop to the project.”

*Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömwall, member
of Genie@ACE coordination group*

The interview study, presented below, will give a better understanding of *why* certain initiatives were taken. Hence, it starts off with the interviewees reflecting on the various methods used throughout the pilot project. In addition, the interviews also offered the participants an opportunity to reflect on the change work itself: What are they most proud of? What had been most challenging? What were their own key learnings?

Reflections on the methods and initiatives

“I think all our [methods and initiatives] happened quite organically”, recalls Bri Gauger. “But I think part of the reason is that we were all in a room together for two hours every two weeks.” Others in the group confirm this.

“We were a group, many creative people, with lots of ideas and many different experiences. There wasn’t any strategy. We have only talked about action, action, action. [...] What can we do?”

*Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall, member
of Genie@ACE Coordination group*

When Isabelle Doucet, Genie@ACE group member, describes how the initiatives came about she talks about the group as a meeting place for two sets of approaches. On one hand, there were the well-known methods and approaches of organizing and taking transformative action, and on the other hand, there were the concerns and situations that presented themselves via their own knowledge of the department and of the funding structures.

When asked to reflect on various methods and initiatives the members of the Genie@ACE coordination group seem particularly happy with the work around the Rules of Procedure (Arbetsordningen), the Academic Citizen research project (conducted by Bri Gauger), and the seminars and workshops on gender in research.

One year was focused on gender aspects of research, another year on gender aspects of education. For the coordination group members, this was an opportunity to make people who do not think gender plays a role in research and education, respectively, to change their mind. Different initiatives required different approaches. For example, the seminars and workshops on gender in research could be designed in a way that hooked people in: ‘You will need this for your grant application’. The initiatives on gender aspects in teaching, on the other hand, took the form of simple monthly challenges, published in the ACE newsletter, that tied to existing work on gender equality. “To what extent we created an impact? We don’t know and it’s impossible to measure, but I hope we managed to raise some awareness in people”, says one member.

The employee surveys are generally not viewed as very constructive to their work. Bri Gauger says:

“At Chalmers, the employee survey is an institutionalized thing that everyone must pay attention to, and a lot of decisions are based on the employee survey results. I think that there are a lot of flaws, a lot of unclear language. In the actual surveys, they changed companies (i.e. survey suppliers) partway through. You can’t really compare them. So I don’t take a lot of stock in the surveys.”

Yet, she found a way to use the surveys strategically:

“What I used them for was messaging. Like ‘we know that there’s a lot of problems already’. If people, especially the department management, are forced to pay attention to surveys, I would then use this survey result as a reason why we have to do this initiative. I wasn’t doing it just because it said it in the survey, but I would use it as a kind of bargaining chip. When we would go to Equality Group Meetings and when we would talk within our Genie@ACE coordination group, we would say ‘this is something we’ve been seeing as a problem that we want to do something

about. Here's an employee survey result that will allow us to say: 'The employee survey shows this' and then take it forward as something that has high priority".

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

For example, there are a lot of international, non-Swedish people in the university. Gauger admits to using the employee survey to push an intersectional analysis. "The people who do the worst in the employee survey are always female PhD students that are not Swedish", says Bri Gauger.

According to Isabelle Doucet they also analyzed the surveys when they were published:

"But we also had discussions around how reliable the surveys were. Because even me doing the surveys as an employee, I felt many of these questions were ambiguous. I felt that by answering [in a certain way] it may lead to a suggestion that I don't want to suggest. So we had discussions around how the surveys are constructed, how conclusions and statistics and graphs can be drawn from them."

*Isabelle Doucet, Interim Coordinator
and member of Genie@ACE
Coordination Group*

Gradually, the Genie@ACE coordination group understood the importance of the Operational plan/Verksamhetsplan. This happened in the last few years, as their head of department would then turn to the Genie@ACE group and ask what they would like to put in the 'Equality section'. "I think that us gaining trust in the management group was an important thing", says Bri Gauger. She goes on to say that this listing of activities under the heading of 'equality' was done at all departments. The coordination group and the rest of the department would sometimes see what other departments were doing.

"What I saw, and what we saw from the group, is that 'let's put in there all of the stuff that we're going to make happen.' We'll make it happen because it's in the plan. That was a place where you could put stuff about the employee survey results because we would be able to do that. This is what we're going to do about the employee survey results because it is related to a particular issue we care about. So again, it's about leveraging. [...] I was maybe rolling my eyes whenever the employee survey was brought up but it was still useful. If this is the thing that people care about or have to care about in this structure, how do we use that to our advantage?"

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

When asked whether they addressed HR through the Genie@ACE work, Gauger says that HR is a member of the Equality Group and, hence, they were regularly interfacing with them. It was important because they could provide information about upcoming trainings and workshops. There was a very high turnover of HR staff. Generally there is one HR person in the whole department, but they shifted over and over, and there were often temporary HR partners. "So they were not always here", Bri Gauger concludes.

The head of department, Henriette Söderberg, recalls an episode in 2022 when she and the Genie@ACE Coordinator, Bri Gauger, had a discussion on how to deal with the notion of ‘academic excellence’, a dominant part of the management rhetoric at Chalmers. Traditionally, there has been some skepticism towards this concept at the ACE department, something that Söderberg opposed herself to:

“We can’t just sit here and say that we are against ‘academic excellence’, just because we don’t want to calculate the same way as the chemists. I wanted to stress that ‘academic excellence’ also includes us and that we can contribute to how it is interpreted. Together with the heads of divisions, we soon clarified that for us [‘academic excellence’] means that we work together, that we emphasize the significance of the work environment. I talked with Bri about this, that we could perhaps find good examples of how to link work on systemic inclusion with creativity, innovation and outputs of high quality. So we have done some searching.”

Gender equality work: sources of pride

When asked about what they are most proud of, interviewees mention a range of different topics: the overall impact, the emphasis on communications, the work with the Rules of Procedure and Academic Citizenship, the gender aspects of research seminars. Yet, the most striking is the significance placed on the Genie@ACE coordination group itself. All interviewees talk incredibly positively about the group.

The group

In these descriptions they stress both the team spirit and the group’s accomplishments.

“I’m really proud of how the members of the group worked together. We really were a team. Each person brought something different. We came from different academic positions, different ages of our careers, totally different research fields. That allowed us to speak to the department as a whole. Because what I think I’m the most proud of is that I think people in the department trust us. They recognize that we’re working for everyone. This is my feeling, but I think there is evidence for that. People came to our events, they knew that something was going to be done. We’re not just talking. [...] I think that people trusted us as a provider of information that is useful.”

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

For Gauger, a major source of pride is that Genie@ACE was able to accomplish so much. Described by others and by herself as a very optimistic person, Gauger laughs and says: “when you ask someone like me what are the challenges? I’m like, I don’t know, we just did it”. She says others in the group and related to the group had other perspectives. She also enjoyed working with the people who see the glass as half-empty. “I think we had very different takes, which I think is very important for building trust within the group”. They were able to distribute responsibility well among the members. “I don’t think that I over-asked of people, that this became a burden feeling”, says Gauger. “I think it felt good to participate”.

Everyone in the group has very positive things to say about the group itself and about Bri Gauger's leadership:

"We've been a group made up by very different people. With different backgrounds. This has been a great strength to this group. The group members have continuously supported each other. If one had been alone in this job and constantly worked to highlight inequalities while relying on others, higher up in the hierarchies, to take measures, one could easily have given up. But this group had such a good and positive atmosphere. I think a lot of it has to do with Bri – she has a really positive and energetic personality. I think her leadership has given the group energy too. [...] And I think just being a group, rather than alone, when addressing these questions has been great."

*Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall, member
of Genie@ACE Coordination group*

Although Dilek Ulutas Duman joined the Genie@ACE coordination group recently she says she still felt a great sense of belonging to it. With no prior knowledge in feminist or gender studies, she learned a lot. Hence, she is proud of having had a role in that group, she liked the mood in the group and felt great attachment. "We were meeting every other Friday and I was always going there with great motivation", she says.

The Ph.D. representative, Leon Müller, was likewise struck by the Genie@ACE atmosphere:

"When I joined I was really positively surprised by the vibe or the energy that we had in this group. First of all, Bri is a very inspiring and motivated person, I would say. She does this because we want to change stuff – and we had very good ideas. We're not doing this to tick boxes. She's really interested in this topic and the same goes for the others. [...]"

Isabelle Doucet who was the interim coordinator in the early days of Genie@ACE explains that she and Fredrik Nilsson (the head of department at ACE at the time) made a call for applications for being part of the Genie@ACE coordination group.

"Most of the people who applied had not necessarily a lot of experience with this kind of work. But we made a group based on broad representation. We wanted different seniorities, and we wanted people who have different anchoring in the department. I think that has worked quite nicely in the sense that this group – I think – has been a positive group within the department. That shines back through these individuals into their own groups and settings. I also think that the dynamic in the group itself and having that place every week to do this work... the solidarity aspect of that has been important to the individuals in the group. [...] Then, you are also a more enthusiastic agent promoting these ideas."

*Isabelle Doucet, interim coordinator
and member of Genie@ACE
coordination group*

Talking about Genie@ACE makes one of the interviewees with an outsider perspective, Maria Saline, the coordinator of Genie at Chalmers central, reflect and linger on what it means to not be part of a team when conducting this kind of change work. When I tell her that ‘group’ seems to be a key word, she agrees, even if she had not given it much thought earlier – “but I hear it when I talk and it’s absolutely true”.

Maria Saline took over as coordinator after the former project leaders, Pernilla Stafshede and Mary Sheeran, left prematurely. She misses being part of a team: “My own core group hasn’t been there. I’ve been able to chat with people here and there in the organization, and I’ve been going places, both internationally and nationally, talking about the Genie project. But it’s always so much nicer to come home to a group of one’s own, who asks ‘How did it go? What happened? Oh no, that’s a bit of a pain, here’s a hug. Let’s continue. Or, high-five!’”

In the meetings she held with all the Genie representatives from various departments at Chalmers, she could also tell being part of a group made a difference. Genie representatives from across the university often had plenty of ideas. For example, they said that they would design and distribute a survey. However, they just never got started. There was always some problem. ‘I don’t know who could do the questionnaire’ or ‘it’s too big’ or they were heads of department who found everything interesting but who didn’t have the time. Or the projects failed because people wanted management to give them direction. Yet, Saline reckons, “as a group you can work out a plan and you don’t need a manager telling you what to do”.

The overall impact

Isabelle Doucet stresses that as a group they should be proud of the impact that they have had on the department:

“I think the work we’ve done in the department has really made a difference. [...] Sometimes in ways that may look small, like for example, a particular workshop that was organized. But when you speak with colleagues it actually did make people reflect differently about questions. So there was a sort of a ripple effect, I think, of some of the events. This kind of work may have immediate impact but its impact can also be delayed. But I do feel that we have put things in motion and we’ve done initiatives that already show an effect and will continue to show effect as we’re moving forward. [...]”

Another reason for its impact, ponders Doucet, might be that Genie@ACE went beyond general workshops and seminars on gender equality and focused on specific topics, for example, on gender aspects in research. She calls the latter workshops “quite successful” and expands: “I think we can be proud of the fact that our events have been so successful seminars, people did come to these events in large numbers – or large enough numbers. In the very harsh time management system we work in, I think that’s quite amazing.”

While reflecting on the work and organizing of Genie@ACE, Isabelle Doucet describes how they gradually became more embedded in the department itself:

“It became, for me at least, a question of how deep you embed yourself and how much you stay ‘outside’? It’s an old question of agency, right? [Towards the end] we had degrees of embedding that I think are super important to structurally make changes. [It happened] through very simple things like the fact that a core group,

mostly Bri as the coordinator and Martine as the gender equality representative, had these regular meetings with the head of department and HR. So there was a strong routine in place. We were not outside and against the department, [...] I feel now the question almost becomes: Is there a need to step a bit more outside again, to some extent? That's always the interesting question."

The latter point ties in with what other interviewees have described as the group's freedom to take on any topic that they felt was relevant.

The efficiency of the coordination group is also brought up by several interviewees. "We actually achieved a lot of things and really got the topic up on the agenda without spending much money", says Leon Müller, the PhD student representative. He describes how, at the Genie meetings (i.e., with Genie at Chalmers central), he often got very positive comments from other departments on how much Genie@ACE was doing for Chalmers at large. The work on the Rules of Procedure and the Academic Citizenship were prime examples of initiatives whose impact that stretched far beyond the department of ACE.

Communications

Another source of pride is the excellent communication of Genie@ACE:

"If you ask anyone who is an employee at ACE what Genie@ACE is, they can answer your question immediately. Because in addition to Bri having been part of the larger Genie group and the Equality group, we have also been given time at our bi-weekly departmental Thursday coffee breaks ('torsdagsfika'). Each meeting, we've shown a slide and told them what we're doing. And we've had many workshops. [...] So I feel we have reached out to the employees. They know who we are and what kind of stuff we're doing. They also know that we're not a closed group, but rather that we work closely with various employees. [...] I think I'm most proud of not having been sitting in a closed room, but rather, having launched activities and workshops. We have been the organizers and they've been really popular. Men and women from different divisions who want to join the discussion, bring up various topics. And I think this is something important for the long-term, how we behave in our daily work. [...] I think that having reached out with our message to such a wide audience beyond our group is what I'm most proud of."

*Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall, member
of Genie@ACE Coordination group*

Other group members reiterate the importance of communications, noticing that it made people at ACE generally more aware and, on top of that, more interested in activities, such as workshops and trainings, offered by Genie@ACE. Also, the head of department, Henriette Söderberg, mentions the methodical work with communications as a key contribution. Through the recurring departmental meetings, the group managed to raise the awareness of the systematic aspects of gender inequality, while demonstrating a vast array of activities through which one can drive change, for example by conducting workshops, providing knowledge reviews, and committing to internal work at the department.

Gauger goes on to say that she believes that Genie@ACE had an excellent messaging strategy. It was clear to most people in the department why Genie@ACE was there. Although they focused a lot on the needs of the most marginalized groups, they also made sure to have relevant information for people who were perhaps not particularly marginalized themselves. “I just think that’s a good organizing strategy”, Gauger explains.

The Rules of Procedure and Academic Citizenship

Two projects that are frequently named as primary sources of pride are the work on Rules of Procedure and on Academic Citizenship, respectively. When asked to name a few things she is particularly proud of, on Genie@ACE’s behalf, the coordinator of Genie central, Maria Saline, says:

“What I really have embraced is how they have addressed the larger Chalmers issues. I think it’s how they took ‘one for the team’, that they said ‘we’ll look at it first’, and did all this work with the Rules of Procedure. It was a very structured work. This is what is difficult with this kind of work: it’s easy to let anger drive you, it’s easy to get energy this way, to stand on the barricade, but you won’t get the buy-in from management that way. [Genie@ACE] has been great in being able to channel that energy and scrutinize what processes need to be changed, what the message is, and democratically work for change. [...] No one else was so successful at this. And this is how I would like to see Genie work.”

Besides, she mentions that Genie@ACE has been an excellent speaking partner: “We haven’t been able to implement everything, but it has been a very good group for us to speak to.”

She applauds the work that Genie@ACE did on the Rules of Procedure. “It was a superb work, led by them but with all of Genie as sender. They had the time and the energy to lead this, no one else had. It really helped that they were an organized group already. It was an exemplary work [...] That they took it so seriously. It’s a key document.”

A couple of coordination group members mention specifically the work on Academic Citizenship, which they regard as a big success. The head of department, Henriette Söderberg, also highlights the Academic Citizenship project as one of the most valuable contributions.

The Genie perspective

Genie@ACE is depicted as a role model and as a source of inspiration by Maria Saline, the coordinator of Genie at Chalmers central. When talking about the remainder of the Genie project she says:

“The Genie project will prioritize ‘network-based’ work efforts, rather than leaders standing on the barricades. And try to get the work out into the organization. Also, it will prioritize projects which, a bit like Genie@ACE, consists of a group of people working, and which could run initiatives such as mentorship programs and networks – and which could make all this visible everywhere. This is where things are going right now.”

Maria Saline, coordinator, Genie Chalmers

The new management, with Maria Elmquist as deputy president, wants people with ideas in the organization to apply for funding from Genie rather than give institutions upfront monetary support. “So Genie@ACE could apply for more money if they have a specific idea. For example, if they want to work with the culture”, continues Maria. But one thing has changed drastically: “much more is required from the institution”, says Maria Saline, “the initial generosity is not there anymore”.

When reflecting on the Genie@ACE pilot project, Maria Saline highlights the broad approach to gender equality work that characterized the project from the very beginning.

“Isabelle was very brave. She took on the leadership role in a good way. We wanted a contact person at each institution. The head of department was often chosen, but that person rarely has the time to be operational. In some departments they really had troubles finding anyone at all. But ACE chose Isabelle, who is knowledgeable in the subject area and knows how to lead this kind of change process. She was probably the person best suited for the job. So, she wrote an application, proposing ACE to be a Genie pilot project, a forerunner. A pilot for Chalmers. This is what we want Genie projects to do – test it somewhere and then, if it’s successful, scale it up across Chalmers.

[Isabelle] stressed a number of things that ACE was already good at and made it clear that we need to work with many different aspects. You see, Chalmers is a technological university, and I often hear stuff like: ‘So, what are your three priorities? Go ahead with them!’, ‘A strategy must be simple, focus on these things, that’s it.’ So being all over the place, fidgeting a little here and there, like we have to do – and which is what our advisors and the literature recommend us to do – can’t be easily explained. It can’t be boiled down into a simple mathematical formula. This is frustrating to many. So many institutions had strategies like: ‘We are only focused on recruitment’, ‘We are focusing on the PhD students.’ ‘Our institution should be family-friendly’, period. Then everything else will be solved. Isabelle saw that this is not the case. So ACE could be a frontrunner in addressing issues like how to integrate [knowledge about gender equality] into the curriculum, how to integrate it in research, in... It was an excellent application.”

Maria Saline, coordinator, Genie Chalmers

She describes the first five years with Genie at Chalmers as very generous. It was a deliberate strategy; the people leading Genie knew that perhaps half of the projects would not succeed entirely, but “what works will work”, as Saline puts it. Since all the Genie projects were initiatives ‘out of the ordinary’, there was a need to reduce bureaucracy and to maintain flexibility in terms of funding. The funding from the foundation – in some ways ‘internal’ money – allowed such generous terms. Now, for the second half, things are tightened. However, Saline stresses how happy they are with the work of Genie@ACE, under both Isabelle’s and Bri’s leadership. Maria Saline says:

“Trust and generosity have been our guiding principles in this relationship. Everything [Genie@ACE] has done has been great and at every meeting we’ve had [with all the Genie representatives from different departments] they have informed about their ongoing and upcoming activities and if anyone wanted to know more, they have been happy to share details.”

Despite the tremendously positive feelings about the project, the gender equality work conducted by Genie@ACE has had its share of challenges.

Gender equality work: Challenges

The main challenges center around the relationship between Genie@ACE and Genie at Chalmers centrally, and between Genie@ACE and Chalmers management. Similarly, a lot of challenges concern the implementation and execution, but also conceptions of ‘activism’, hidden power structures, mobilization, and cultural change. Furthermore, some interviewees look towards the future and anticipate potential challenges.

Relationship with Genie at Chalmers centrally and with Chalmers management

In the coordination group, several people claim that the relationship between Genie@ACE and Genie at Chalmers centrally has been the most challenging throughout the project. Bri Gauger met with Genie representatives regularly and exchanged ideas, but Gauger noticed: “There wasn’t so much going on elsewhere. At times, I felt I was leading the agenda”. Gauger and her coordination group came to address the Genie Chalmers central group, for example, when they analyzed the proposed revisions of the Rules of Procedure project from a gender perspective and offered to help with recommendations.

The Rules of Procedure work came with several recommendations for action and for further analysis (please see p. 11). Bri Gauger comments:

“This was another example of how Genie@ACE was trying to say something to the central organization. That’s where one of those challenges comes from: we were not staying just in our own department. We were also taking it seriously that Genie centrally would have some clout or would be able to make movement at this central level.”

In addition, Genie@ACE presented their analysis and recommendations to the ACE department. They wanted to show people in the department what they were working on and get them involved. Genie@ACE even arranged special workshops on the Rules of Procedure addressing both the department and all Genie representatives across Chalmers.

A lot of the work leading up to the final recommendations on the Rules of Procedure took place during the Genie@ACE meetings. The coordination group members made comments on the draft and involved HR to learn about what they were proposing. At the outset, the coordination group had some positive experiences of the central administration at Chalmers, for example when the people doing the revisions of the Rules of the Procedure reached out and showed interest in Genie@ACE’s early work on academic citizenship. On one hand, Bri Gauger says she felt ‘Oh, my God, I’m brand new here and the people at the university are

contacting me – that’s very good”. On the other hand, it also made her realize that “there were not that many people with that competence at the university.”

Many interviewees are certain that Genie@ACE had a great impact on the general awareness of gender equality issues at ACE, but doubt it had much influence on Chalmers at large. The interviewees ask themselves: Did Chalmers really want to see a long-term change? Some coordination group members are slightly irritated by the fact that, in the beginning, they had felt privileged and “lucky” to have dedicated resources to improve the gender equality situation at the department. By combining the 5-10% of a full-time position that each of them got, they had, in total, up to 60-80 percent of a full-time position. Later it turned out that many departments were focusing on hiring women: a doubling of positions (often for limited periods of time). This was clearly a very costly strategy and surprised several Genie@ACE members; the amount of money central Genie spent on Genie@ACE was much lower relative to some of these other departments. “The coordination group members felt: ‘Wow, we did so much with relatively so little’”, says Bri Gauger. Some interviewees also questioned whether this focus on recruitment would really help improve gender equality in the long run, as it is not concerned with changing the culture and the processes.

Although this report is focused on Genie@ACE, the greater context of Genie at Chalmers is important, not only because several initiatives from Genie@ACE reached beyond the ACE department, but also because all Genie projects shared experiences with each other. However, Maria Saline, the coordinator of Genie at Chalmers central, recognizes knowledge sharing between the different Genie projects and departments as a main challenge. Saline describes how she eventually opened a Canvas course page for the Genie where she posted all the material. “It worked out ok”, says Maria Saline. They also still have a Teams channel, but “researchers are unruly, they don’t want to use it”, she continues. Hence, meetings have been the main forum for exchange. “In these meetings, ACE has often taken the lead. They have often had more things to present, they have been generous in sharing their work and they have inspired – and pushed – others to go further.” She remembers numerous times when people from other departments have lingered with Bri afterwards, asking how Genie@ACE organized different initiatives and how they worked with communications.

Talking about Genie projects in general, Maria Saline reflects on the difficulties of evaluating gender equality projects and what consequences that may have:

“It’s difficult work because it’s looking at the long-term. It’s not followed up. It’s difficult to follow up. Management doesn’t know how to follow up, so they don’t follow up. And then people might feel, ‘why should I even bother doing this work?’”

Implementation and execution

Although the coordination group members all agree that it has been an incredibly positive experience to conduct the work – the analyses, the workshops, the trainings, etc – at ACE, it has been far more difficult to get the required changes implemented and executed.

“We’re missing someone with power who could take the lead and say ‘let’s go’. There is some kind of gap. There are plenty of excellent suggestions and great ideas. But those in decision-making power... there is not much action there”, says one coordination group member, Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall. She goes on to say that when Chalmers identifies inequalities or sexual harassment, not much happens. The situation for Assistant Professors,

for example, is very unequal – some have a lot of resources and their own PhD candidates, others are struggling badly without any support and don't have the time to publish themselves. She has heard one example of an Assistant Professor whose situation might improve, through some added resources, thanks to the efforts of Genie@ACE. This makes her happy of course, but such examples are still too rare. "Everybody says: 'that's fantastic, great suggestions', but no one in executive power takes it further, to the higher Chalmers level."

Having made gender inequalities in the organization visible, the members of the Genie@ACE coordination group would like to see more measures taken on the systematic level: asking the women directly, coaching them, broadening the evaluation criteria etc. Naturally, it's also a question of resources, as one interviewee points out; improving the conditions for the female assistant professors most likely requires money for PhD students.

It is easy to look at the separate academic levels at ACE and consider them gender equal, in terms of the number of men and women and in terms of salaries. Yet, women tend to get stuck at certain levels, especially at the 'Docent' or 'Biträdande Professor' level. Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall would have liked to delve deeper into this issue:

"I think all women who get stuck at 'Docent' or 'Biträdande Professor' level should be interviewed and asked what resources and assistance they need to move on in their career. [...] But it seems like no one has dealt with it. [...] Besides, I'm currently looking into statistics and so far we only have preliminary numbers, but the first indicator shows that the gap between men and women when it comes to how long it takes to become a professor is five years. [...] If a man has a professor's salary for five years more than a woman, it's going to be less pension money for her."

*Ann-Margret Hvitt Strömvall, member
of Genie@ACE Coordination group*

Along similar lines, but from an educational angle, Leon Müller, the Dr Genie representative, contemplates the degree of commitment: "Making a workshop costs a bit of money but it doesn't require the head of department to sign off anything, it doesn't mean that the Master program schedule needs to be changed or that the learning outcomes must be revised. All these formal things are more challenging."

According to the head of department, Henriette Söderberg, one of the challenges has been that the Genie@ACE has not had someone from management in the group. Since the group existed next to the management structure, the group was not as updated as it could have been regarding how the management of Chalmers works and if the ideas would be feasible to implement.

The unresponsiveness of Chalmers management to the university's problems with high incidences of sexual harassment against younger females is another source of great frustration.

Mobilization

The equality representative, Martine Buser, believes that the most challenging was to create a mobilization among those people who are not genuinely interested in the questions of gender equality. She points out that when employees at the department could see a direct benefit for themselves, for example in how to include gender aspects in research grant applications, more people turned up. The PhD student representative in Genie@ACE, Leon Müller, concurs: “it’s often the same people, who are already interested in the topic, who come to the workshops. It’s really difficult to reach those people who, in our opinion, ought to hear something but don’t want to.” One way in which Genie@ACE tried to address this was by introducing monthly challenges related to gender and diversity aspects of education in the department newsletter, that were also highlighted at the department meetings. Müller gives one example: “Try and go through your sources and see if you have any sources from outside Europe or the U.S. or any sources that are not male.” He is unsure how many people really joined the challenges though.

The member of the Genie@ACE coordination group, Isabelle Doucet, says that for her, personally, one of the biggest challenges has been the small percentages of time allocated to many of the people involved in this group:

“It was important from the start that members of this group would get allocated time, but of course the allocations were relatively small [...] Within the Swedish system (and for sure at ACE) everything you do gets a percentage of time. If you get just 5 percent of time and have to fit that within all the other time allocations, that’s not a lot. These are the percentages of time that often get squeezed when things get busy elsewhere. I would say that’s a special challenge that I see in the broader academic system here in Sweden, that to do anything that is not strictly speaking covered by a percentage of time and task connected to your role, you actually can’t take it on because there is little to no breathing space. If you then organize activities, you always have to be aware that your colleagues across the department have to do this in their own time – so it helps if it is immediately relevant for them. [...] People are probably bored of hearing me talk about it – I’m such a defender of higher faculty time.”

Cultural change and hidden power structures

Although, it’s generally understood that the work of Genie@ACE raised the awareness around gender at the department, some interviewees are hesitant as to what extent organizational culture was impacted. Leon Müller, the PhD student representative says:

“I do think we contributed to a bit of cultural change, especially among those who wanted to change. We ran workshops and presented a slide on Genie@ACE at the torsdagsfika – the department meetings – so I think the topic got more into people’s minds and awareness. I don’t think that necessarily means that we changed the culture, but at least people will consider these aspects of equality a bit more than before.”

Some interviewees keep coming back to the fact that the issues at hand are extremely difficult. The equality representative, Martine Buser, with a background from Switzerland, is used to hierarchical power structures. She has noted that here, at Chalmers and in Sweden in general, everything looks rather equal on paper. “But the mechanisms of segregation are very

subtle, and I think that goes for both foreigners and for gender. This is much more difficult to tackle. They are soft. [...] I used to think I was coming from the Middle Ages to the place of light. Now I think the opposite. I think that it's much easier if there are clear power structures, because at least you know what you are fighting against", she says, adding: "here people never disagree with you that you should be doing something". That's why a lot of efforts need to go into making the inequalities visible and to create awareness. She often sees how people tend to individualize structural issues that they face. Her own motivation is to provide structural answers to those problems.

The Genie coordinator, Maria Saline, reflects on the fact that ACE was originally made up by two separate departments and there has been an ongoing struggle to get those two organizational cultures to fit together. On top of that, there have been several reorganizations. Thus, she thinks perhaps culture could have been its main challenge: how to get everyone engaged and voice their opinion. Yet, she thinks Genie@ACE has worked very cleverly and used statistics to show patterns. "Because they've been a group, they've also been much stronger than the individuals who are alone at their departments. [...] This has made it easier for [Genie@ACE] to talk to management as well."

Activism

Several interviewees bring up the topic of certain forms of equality work being dismissed as 'activism' as a major challenge. It seems obvious to many that, recently, the Chalmers management would like to see less of activities and behaviors that could be labeled 'activist'.

"We have seen ourselves as an advocacy group. I think advocacy is a very touchy term in Chalmers. Then, if you're an advocacy group, you have to say: 'Who are you advocating for?' [...] And we've come at this from...advocating for the most marginalized."

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

The equality representative, Martine Buser, is concerned about both the continuity of the equality work and its space within the institutional structures of Chalmers. To engage in equality work pays off in very little institutional visibility, which is also reflected in very low percentages of dedicated work time offered to people who get involved. She and others committed to equality work are being told that 'Chalmers is not doing activist work' and the word 'activist' should not be used.

The future

Some interviewees tend to focus on the future when they address challenges. No one is particularly enthusiastic about the direction in which Genie is heading. As for Genie@ACE, the group will be dissolved (which is in accordance with the application and the granted project proposal). When asked to reflect on the challenges of Genie@ACE, the equality representative, Martine Buser, says: "The creation of the DEI office is maybe what is left of it". She goes on to say that Genie, at Chalmers central, for the five past years has become more like a discussion forum for people who are interested. She finds the faculty senate at Chalmers very passive and thinks it lacks power in relation to the management of the university. "What they're creating now with Genie is a group of people who can meet six

times a year and they can decide what they want to work with and then they have ten percent to do that. It probably looks very good on paper when you describe the gender initiative at the university.”

She calls for more preventive work, analyses and measures to be taken pre-emptively, so that problems do not get ‘out of hand’. In her current position she is asked to report when she sees discrimination. At that point, it is already too late and the problem may be ‘out of hand’, in her view. “Something should have been done much earlier to prevent that from happening.”

Gender equality work: key learnings

The interviewees bring up a range of topics when they reflect on what they learned from the pilot project: the importance of dedicated resources, the difficulty of change and the need to be bold, and, ultimately, to embrace new knowledge.

The importance of dedicated resources

Bri Gauger says that one of the key learnings for her was the importance of having dedicated resources.

“I don’t mean dedicated from a personal standpoint – as in having dedication in your heart – but rather having dedicated time and resources put towards working on this because the only reason that we were able to do all of these initiatives and get results is because I, as the coordinator, could ask of everyone to join a meeting every two weeks for two hours. I wasn’t asking them to do something extra. This was in their job description and of course they wanted to do it but that makes a complete difference as far as being able to make strategy and follow through.”

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

Tying this to what the group accomplished, Gauger emphasizes that because they had dedicated resources and time, they could plan ahead. “I mean, we were planning for four years. But we were able to strategize it, short term, medium term, and long term. It was baked into how I coordinated things”. The dedicated time, even if it was only between five and ten percent, meant:

“Having a person who was able to direct things and put in the time to make an agenda beforehand, to send out the meeting notes afterwards. Those kinds of things allowed people to feel secure and like we had a plan. I think we used our meeting times super efficiently. [...] I think people felt like we were actually going somewhere.”

Bri Gauger, Coordinator Genie@ACE

She also admits to working “quite a bit more” than her ten percent for coordination. The fact that she was conducting a research project that sprang out of the Genie@ACE project allowed her to have flexibility to put her time into what she found relevant. She adds: “The drawback to that of course is that I’m not a permanent employee”.

Isabelle Doucet, initiator and member of Genie@ACE coordination group, describes how she when looking back at the application from 2019, realizes: “We had no precise idea yet about what we really wanted or needed to do, as in, we did not have a definitive list of planned activities or something like that. But we knew we had to do something, and that our department would offer a very valuable pilot case. The granted application meant that we could start that work. We began with forming a group and we then also hired Bri.”

The difficulty of change

”It’s more difficult than I initially thought to make things happen”, says one coordination group member, and her sentiment is echoed by others. Reflecting on this learning, she ponders if they would not have benefitted from a closer collaboration with Genie at Chalmers central. She asks herself if they should not have been a bit bolder: invited them to more of their events, been in closer contact with them. In that way, perhaps, she reflects, Genie at Chalmers central would have understood and learned more from Genie@ACE. Perhaps they would feel a greater responsibility or accountability. Genie@ACE started to invite Genie at Chalmers central when the leadership changed. Genie@ACE could also have demanded to present their work more often, not only sending slides and reports.

Another member says: “I’d like to see it as an attempt to drive cultural change, but to be honest, changing culture isn’t easy. However, if [Genie@ACE] has managed to raise someone’s awareness, I consider that a success because awareness is a key part of cultural change. [...] These small steps matter – when people try, think twice, like how they set up the teams with gender balance in mind, for example. These are meaningful achievements. But I think it’s important to understand that we cannot change [the culture] completely at once.”

Despite knowing how slow cultural change can be, Isabelle Doucet has great faith in seemingly small one-off events. She emphasizes that one is never entirely in control of the impact one has with the work one does:

“I take a lot of hope and positive energy from the initiatives and trust that these will continue to have ripple effects longer than you think. [...] We have to promote the sort of work that is both direct, immediate and impactful, but also sometimes slow and may need time to land in different places.”

Isabelle Doucet also mentions the role of funding and the need for open-ended proposals as key learnings. She believes that gender equality work often requires this kind of liberty and openness, that can only be achieved through trust from the funding institution. “I think it is a challenge to find institutions willing to invest in these initiatives without having already a [very detailed plan]. If you apply for money for five years, very often in a funding context, you have to say exactly what the outcome will be, for example, how much publications and what policy-oriented work you will do. And in this sort of work I think you need a bit of freedom to not have to pinpoint everything at the start.”

“So I think in that sense, the fact that we had this internal Genie funding, which I think gave us more freedom than if we would apply from an external funding body, was really important.”

*Isabelle Doucet, Interim Coordinator
and member of Genie@ACE
Coordination Group*

New knowledge

Prior knowledge on gender in general or gender in organizations or academia was not evenly distributed in the department. Hence, a few interviewees reflect on the knowledge gap. Leon Müller, the PhD student representative, says that one learning for him was the value of being diplomatic.

“We had some people who could get really upset about certain topics.[...] People with a completely different background than you or your group. It’s easy to get upset and make them feel bad, but you could also try to be a bit more diplomatic and try to understand the other side, even if you don’t share their view. To handle it differently. People have very different backgrounds and different levels of exposure to this topic. That was a learning for me.”

However, most interviewees stress that they had a very inclusive approach from the outset, making the activities open for anyone, regardless of knowledge level. Some reflect on learning to see things from a new perspective. Henriette Söderberg, the head of department, says:

“It’s been really constructive and very good to reflect a bit more and to draw on theories and the existing knowledge field around [gender inequality]. I found that very rewarding and good. Another positive thing is that there has been more time to work thoroughly with these issues. It’s so important to base one’s understanding on knowledge, this is the academic world, after all.”

Discussion

The report concludes with a discussion of the Genie@ACE project in light of research on gender equality work. This is a sprawling research field, spanning from studies that *characterize* gender equality work (and closely related diversity and inclusion work) in both descriptive and normative terms, to research that *problematizes* gender equality work and highlights the gendered power relations underpinning this work (Wahl et al 2018).

Focus of change

Various Genie@ACE coordination group members note that the ACE department seems relatively advanced compared to other Chalmers departments in terms of ‘numbers’ – quantitative representation. A common belief prevails that ACE’s primary gender equality issues stem from gendered culture, structures and processes rather than from representation on various levels (see Isabelle Doucet’s quote on p. 30, for example). Still, comprehensive descriptions of organizational gender structures (Wahl 1992), encompassing numbers, segregation and their influence, are not immediately accessible. Bypassing the “mapping” stage and leveraging existing knowledge and experiences is undoubtedly easier when working from within the organization.

Methods

According to the interviewees, the group had considerable autonomy in launching initiatives. The overall success of a gender equality project typically does not hinge on a single method or approach; instead, it reflects far more intricate processes (Wahl 1994, Callerstig et al 2011). For instance, altering a structure does not inherently lead to changes in processes (Phillips 2005, Woodward and Winter 2006, Eriksson-Zetterquist and Renmark 2016).

Undoubtedly, within its timeframe and budget, Genie@ACE has executed significant gender equality work, encompassing numerous initiatives and methods. Given the methodological considerations (p. 3), evaluating each method separately proves unfeasible. However, the pilot project can be holistically examined against the backdrop of typical gender equality methods (cf. Wahl et al 2018, Molefi et al 2021). Researchers have rebuked practitioners’ fixation on prescriptive and universalist ‘best practices’ (e.g., Boxall and Purcell 2011). Nevertheless, they serve merely as a reference point to explore the *breadth* of Genie@ACE’s initiatives in this context.

A classic method in gender equality work is *recruitment* (Wahl et al 2018). Rather than concentrating on hiring women, efforts have centered on scrutinizing recruitment and promotion processes, rendering them more inclusive through initiatives such as Rules of Procedure and Academic Citizenship. The heightened emphasis on promotion stems from the unequal career progression trajectories among men and women.

Another significant method in gender equality work involves examining pay, work hours, and assignments (*arbetsuppgifter*) (Löfström 1997, Gonäs et al 2006). Genie@ACE has dedicated substantial resources to these analyses within the Academic Citizenship project, the Rules of Procedure, and by utilizing salary data sets.

A third notable approach involves conducting *training and workshops* on various topics for different stakeholders (cf. Callerstig 2014), an area in which Genie@ACE have been extensively involved. Although such initiatives often aim to raise awareness, as many interviewees attest, the broader impact of this comprehensive series of seminars and workshops could be substantial, potentially influencing organizational culture (Utoft 2020). According to Benschop et al (2015), a multi-dimensional power perspective addressing structural discrimination and reconciling competing interests is essential for any diversity training aiming to achieve transformative impact. A power perspective has permeated the trainings offered by Genie@ACE.

Mentorship is another common method in gender equality work (Avotie 2008). While Genie@ACE have not implemented a dedicated mentorship program, the group has advocated for its adoption in multiple settings, such as proposing it as a resource for all Assistant Professors and incoming PhD students.

Genie@ACE's methodological repertoire also encompassed *communications*, a frequently highlighted component within best practices (Molefi et al 2021). Notably, Genie@ACE implemented a meticulous communications strategy throughout the project duration. Research indicates that strategic communications play a pivotal role in fostering a more inclusive organizational culture (Lorber 1994, Utoft 2020).

Genie@ACE's focus on networks, gender aspects in teaching and PhD student support aligns with the *external* gender equality domain (Molefi et al 2021.).

Additionally, gender equality initiatives occasionally strive to integrate and harmonize various efforts with the organization's customary practices or operations (Callerstig et al 2011), a strategy commonly known as *gender mainstreaming* (Walby 2005). Numerous Genie@ACE initiatives focused on incorporating analyses and recommendations into prevailing management processes. Examples include leveraging the action/operational plan (verksamhetsplanen), and presenting the Academic Citizenship recognition strategy, aligned with key governing bodies and documents. Regular meetings between the Genie coordinator and the ACE management team further demonstrate this commitment to integration. In fact, integrating "gender-related issues structurally into the system (curricula, department level, faculty meetings, management group)" was a core ambition in the 2019 project proposal.

Sexism and gender discrimination manifest in numerous ways, with subtle discrimination frequently occurring as "non-events", not least within the academic world (Husu 2001). These "non-events" include instances of silence, omission, absence, exclusion, disregard, invisibility, lack of support, and lack of encouragement. In such cases, "nothing happens"; individuals may be overlooked, unheard, disregarded, left out, or not taken into account. Responding to these non-events can be challenging, and at times, almost impossible. Recognizing the significance of an inclusive organizational culture, Genie@ACE actively worked to counter the 'non-events' that perpetuate subtle discrimination. The interviewees' accounts of Genie@ACE's impact on the department indicate its success in fostering a more inclusive environment that challenged the status quo.

Extensive literature on gender equality work highlights the crucial role of leadership in driving organizational action and fostering inclusive cultures (Wahl and Holgersson 2003, Benschop and Verloo 2011). Select workshops and seminars have centered around Inclusive leadership, while Genie central has hosted a session specifically addressing Leadership and

culture. The relative absence of explicit references to “leadership” might erroneously imply a lack of focus on leaders, often central figures in gender equality work within organizations. However, considering the unique context of an academic institution, it becomes clear that leaders are often addressed in their specific leadership role: as teachers, as professors, as supervisors, as heads of departments, as program directors.

The methodological liberty embraced by the Genie@ACE coordination group can be attributed to the project’s funding structure, which facilitated an exploratory approach. The breadth of methods and initiatives used by Genie@ACE is nothing short of impressive.

Assimilation vs. separation

Genie@ACE operated outside of the standard ACE department management structures and processes. The pilot project can be conceptualized as a *micro-level change agent*, focusing on change from within the structure (see Dahmen-Adkins and Peterson 2021). This contrasts with *macro change agents*, typically organizational leaders and managers leveraging their positional power to drive gender equality (Kelan and Wratil 2018). Even the wider Central Genie appears to prioritize micro-level change agents over macro-level ditto.

As Isabelle Doucet observed (p. 44), Genie@ACE’s autonomy and institutional embeddedness within the department fluctuated over time. This is characteristic of change agents attempting to transform their organization from within, often labeled “tempered radical” (Meyerson and Scully 1995, Meyerson and Tompkins 2007). “Tempered radicals” are dedicated to both their organizations and causes that may challenge the dominant culture. Unlike traditional activists, “tempered radicals” don’t seek to tear down the system. Instead, they tend to work persistently to bring about change from within. They utilize their insider knowledge and connections to promote transformation and mobilize others. “Steering a course between assimilation and separation is a central and defining issue for the tempered radical” (Meyerson and Scully 1995, p. 594).

A small wins strategy

Genie@ACE pilot project appears to have circumvented common challenges faced by “tempered radicals” – perceived hypocrisy, isolation, cooptation pressures, and emotional burdens (Meyerson and Scully 1995) – possibly due to the legitimacy and autonomy provided by their funding and strong team cohesion. However, their change strategies align closely with two of those identified by Meyerson and Scully (1995) as typical of tempered radicals, specifically *Small Wins* and *Local, Spontaneous, Authentic Action*. “Small wins” involves identifying achievable, manageable goals instead of attempting large-scale changes. With numerous concurrent initiatives, Genie@ACE could frequently “celebrate” small wins like seminars, analyses, presentations. These small wins contributed to the group’s shared sense of accomplishment, even though the wins were not overtly acknowledged with cake and sparkling wine. Karl Weick (1984, p. 43) describes ‘small wins’ in the following terms: “A small win is a concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance. By itself, one small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals. Small wins are controllable opportunities that produce visible results.”

Drawing on Meyerson and Scully's (1995) emphasis, small wins can build upon each other, creating additional opportunities and momentum for further change. Seen as experiments or explorations, they often emerge from unforeseen opportunities, a recurring theme among the coordination group members: they did not anticipate the project's trajectory at its inception.

Another change strategy highlighted by Meyerson and Scully (1995) is the *Local, Spontaneous, Authentic Action*. This occurs when tempered radicals directly express their beliefs, emotions and identities. By demonstrating an alternative professional identity, tempered radicals can, little by little, transform their work environment. In the case of Genie@ACE, coordination group members behaved authentically with pride, determination, and positivity, which likely created ripple effects.

Activism

Several interviewees discuss "activism". In order to fully dissect the discourse surrounding "activism" and to understand the construction of "activism" within the Chalmers University of Technology context – one would need a research project addressing this issue specifically. However, the rejection of "activism" might reflect pressure to lean toward "assimilation" rather than "separation", to use the Meyerson and Scully (1995) framework. This aligns with the growing focus on gender mainstreaming in academia (Walby 2005, Callerstig 2022). The dismissal of "activism" can also be contextualized more broadly. Flood et al (2021) argue that feminist advocacy is waning as more individuals consider feminism unnecessary. The "post-feminist" narrative posits that women have achieved equal rights, that gender inequality and women's oppression are history (Anderson 2014). Thus, feminist activism is perceived as irrelevant. While such interpretations may seem exaggerated in this context, given the substantial investment in gender equality work, the rise of neoliberalism has undeniably intensified the focus on individual rights and the primacy of the free market (Rottenberg 2014). This shift undermines feminists' and activists' efforts to expose systemic disparities and champion societal solutions.

Recognizing gender as a social construct is crucial for comprehending its embeddedness on individual, interactional and organizational/institutional levels (Risman 2004). Classifying change agents as "activists" or avoiding such labels can affect the scope and quality of possible analyses and resulting changes.

The group and its leadership

One of the most salient features of Genie@ACE was its team-oriented approach. The team functioned as a platform for pursuing numerous initiatives. Strong cohesion and mutual trust enabled the group to establish and maintain various networks within and outside the department. Comments from interviewees, notably the Genie central coordinator, underscore the significant benefits of working collectively in driving gender equality efforts. Beyond serving as a platform for a substantial amount of work, regular coordination group meetings also provided a "backstage" (Goffman 1959) space where participants could evaluate past actions, discuss resistance and support, and refine strategies to address current challenges.

Undoubtedly, the members felt "energized" by being part of the Genie@ACE coordination group. Frequent mentions of action-orientation, efficiency, mutual trust, and cultural impact echo findings on factors that invigorate individuals in organizations (Cross et al 2004). Key

energizing aspects include: 1) interactions in which a compelling vision is created, 2) interactions in which one can contribute meaningfully, 3) when everyone is fully engaged in the interaction, 4) when interactions demonstrate forward momentum, 5) interactions where hope is integrated into the scenario.

The group's autonomy appears to have significantly contributed to its achievements and influence. Comments highlighting the team spirit, a sense of belonging, and a positive and energetic atmosphere likely reflect the freedom they experienced in their work. This autonomy was a direct result of the Genie funding.

The Genie@ACE team's camaraderie notably distinguishes this change project from others, where change agents often report feelings of isolation (Hearn et al 2015). Several interviewees emphasize that Bri Gauger's leadership was crucial in establishing and maintaining this positive atmosphere throughout the entire project period. Gauger effectively blended structured work with a supportive and collaborative environment, fostering both productivity and team unity.

As a group, Genie@ACE effectively integrated and supported ongoing initiatives, made comprehensive analyses of structures and processes, and connected with existing departmental management structures. The team capitalized on their diverse research backgrounds, different knowledge of the departmental processes, and interpersonal connections within the department.

Resistance and support

Overall, Genie@ACE received substantial support at the departmental level, with resistance primarily encountered beyond departmental boundaries. Cynthia Cockburn (1991) distinguishes two forms of resistance: *cultural* and *institutional*. *Cultural resistance* is reflected in discourse surrounding gender equality projects, surfacing in interpersonal interactions and impacting individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. Conversely, *institutional resistance*, pertains to structures, procedures and rules that impede progress.

The interview study suggests that Genie@ACE encountered minimal cultural resistance, with largely positive reception within the department. The team's inclusion in Thursday fikas, for example, indicates their successful integration. Challenges in connecting with certain individuals could potentially reflect cultural resistance, though it might also result from busy schedules. Instead, institutional resistance seems more prevalent beyond departmental lines, where established structures, processes, and rules proved challenging – though not impossible – to modify, perhaps due to insufficient accountability. Within the department, however, Genie@ACE's institutional resistance appears less significant, as structures, procedures and rules were revised in action/operational plans, teaching, research, and sexual harassment. As Cockburn underlines, these forms of resistance are interrelated: structures can shape beliefs, and culture can influence structures. Thus, Genie@ACE's cultural impact may have facilitated structural change, for example in how the strategy is formulated and gender equality's inclusion in the action/operational plan.

Beyond the department, institutional resistance proved more pronounced. Although the Rules of Procedure work was quite successful – changes were implemented –, several coordination group members identify increasing institutional resistance. Genie@ACE experience this resistance even though some of the rules and processes in question were originally introduced

to promote gender equality (see for example the quote by Buser p. 44). Now, they have become an obstacle to the advancement of gender equality. This mirrors Callerstig's (2014) findings that gender mainstreaming can result in increased control functions and uncritical goal-checking without real impact on gender equality. Moreover, institutional resistance may lead to the removal of key objectives because of traditional measurement limitations rather than developing new ways of capturing results. Current gender mainstreaming priorities seem to leave little space for gender equality work centered on organizational culture and on cultivating awareness. Similarly, Benschop and Verloo (2006) argue that gender mainstreaming induces some transformation, yet it fails to significantly dismantle the genderedness of organizations.

Genie@ACE enjoyed the active support of the heads of department (despite changes in leadership during the project timeline). According to Pincus (2002), active support is characterized by leaders who publicly show a positive interest, promote gender equality work in their own organization, and contribute to strengthening the position of the gender equality workers. Such active leadership backing reduce the likelihood of gender equality measures being overlooked or disregarded.

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