



ACADEMIA EUROPAEA

The Academy of Europe

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION APPLICATION

Title: Empowering young scientists as stakeholders in university decision-making

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Category: From Curiosity to Career

Problem (max. 50 words):

Young researchers' voices are often not heard in universities regarding their promotion and career development due to lack of power, legitimacy and often – urgency as stakeholders in formal and informal decision-making. We see that official representation does not reflect intersections of gender, language, and socio-ethnic background.

Unmet Need (max. 50 words):

For the universities to be inclusive and fostering young scientists' careers, awareness raising and empowerment of young scientists are crucial across intersections of gender, language and socio-ethnic background. Further, addressing the gaps in policies and actions regarding the inclusion of young scientists in university decision-making needs to be tackled.

Project Description (max. 200 words):

The recent studies (Leisyte et al. 2022, 2023, 2025) have shown that although some European countries (e.g. Lithuania, The Netherlands) have a high level of involvement of young researchers in decision-making, a lot of other European young scientists are invisible when it comes to voicing their concerns and needs for their career development. The aim of this study is to better understand the mechanisms that help empower young scientists in voicing their concerns in formal and informal ways at universities in Lithuania, Germany and the Netherlands, which already have rather strong formal representation of young scientists in university decision-making (Leisyte et al. 2025). To ensure that we better understand the voices of young scientists' needs across intersections of gender and socio-ethnic backgrounds, we will interview young outstanding scientists (recipients of national academy or similar awards) from various backgrounds to understand the success factors in achieving the top performance. Drawing on the Bourdieu's (1986) notions of different forms of capital as well as intersectionality literature (Mitchel et al. 2019), we will focus on interviewing male and female young scientists from various socio-ethnic backgrounds and disciplinary fields.

Hypothesis (25 words):

Young scientists who are female and minorities in their universities will have more difficulties in voicing their needs and concerns and being heard regarding their career progression due to lack of academic capital.

Implication for Practice (50 words):

We will develop an inclusive model for career development of young scientists from various backgrounds and disciplines as empowered stakeholders. It will be complemented by a set of policy recommendations for university management, and governmental policy makers. We will share this across various forums representing key policy stakeholders in higher education.

Implication for Research (50 words):

We aim to publish our findings in a high impact journal in higher education and science policy, such as Nature, Higher Education, or Science and Public Policy. We also plan to disseminate our results in academic conferences such as EAIR which will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2026.



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