Case study #1
Šiauliai University (ŠU)
How to increase women’s representation in the 2014 ŠU’s Council elections?
According to the Lithuanian Law on Higher Education and Research (2009), the Council of a state university should be one of its main collegial management bodies. The Council shall “approve the institution's vision and mission as well as a strategic action plan”; “set the procedure for managing”, “[use and dispose] of higher education institution’s Funds”.

IDENTIFIED PROBLEM:
In 2010, no woman was elected among the 11 members of Šiauliai University (ŠU)’s Council.
AIM:

Increase women’s representation in the 2014 ŠU’s Council election, with the aim of reaching the university’s critical mass (25%).
STEPS
ACTION/REACTION
STEP (1)

Development of ŠU Council election’s Tactics and Strategy Plan via active local team networking.
STEP (2)

Appointing the officials, setting activities and deadlines.

Proposal for the regulation on the organization of the election procedures.
STEP (3)

Informing the Rector and Chair of the Senate about the proactive action of the INTEGRER project, with regard to the elections and the search of an enhanced representativeness of women.
STEP (4)

Detailed analysis of the current regulations related to the Council election.
Consultations with University Lawyer

how to smooth women’s representation in the election process?

“The law of Equal opportunities of Women and Men is a general legal norm and the ŠU statute is designed on the basis of Science and Studies Law, where the representation in terms of gender I established. Therefore, while preparing the ŠU Council election regulation the inclusion of more equal representation for women and men (quota) is impossible. While seeking women’s representation, the main intervention should be planned via election procedures: raising, lobbying and support for women candidates.”
STEP (6)

Search

for women candidates within ŠU’s internal and external representatives (stakeholders) and students.

Lobbying and recruitment.
Letter from the INTEGER manager at ŠU to the Rector, reminding that each employer’s duty is to implement equal opportunities for women and men.

“A more efficiently (in terms of gender balance) formed Election commission, we would tangibly express respect for human rights that are the fundamental values in general legal acts and newly enacted ŠU statute...”
STEP (8)

Analysis of the 2010 Council election.
(Regulations and Committee)

Extract of the University Council composition regulation on elections.
Recruitment of women candidates:

**assistance** with the preparation of standard representative’s documents (cover letter, application–questionnaire);

**moral and technical support; lobbying**

(university community and city).
STEP (10)

Official recognition of the suggestions from the Centre for Gender Studies and the INTEGER project and of the co-opted candidates.
Design individual election campaigns for each of the candidates: image building strategies, publicity and communication.
Comparative analysis of the data provided by the candidates: gender differences, motivation and competence.

Despite a high degree of education, women are poorly represented in the higher academic hierarchy. In the academic community, women are pushed towards some specific type of services due to rooted stereotypes, unconscious bias and sexist environment.
Observation of the election process (inside and outside) and construction of a management pyramid.
STEP (14)

Raising awareness through publications on university and city media.

University has been established in the Middle Ages and were managed by the Church and Monasteries, that’s why they are characteristic to hierarchy structure.
Agreement between the Faculty of Technology and Natural Sciences and the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics to support the INTEGER project’s co-opted candidates for the election.
STEP (16)
Forming the University Council:
4 women elected out of 11 candidates.
36.3% representation: a number above the critical mass margin (25%) and close to gender balance (40%).

Meeting with the newly elected top-decision makers of Šiauliai University.
STEP (16)
Forming the University Council:
4 women elected out of 11 candidates.
36.3% representation: a number above the critical mass margin (25%) and close to gender balance (40%).

Victory!
The INTEGRER project began in March 2011 and will conclude in June 2015. This project has received funding from the European Union 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities under grant agreement n° 266638.
