



Gender equality in Estonia – current situation and ways of improving

Presentation

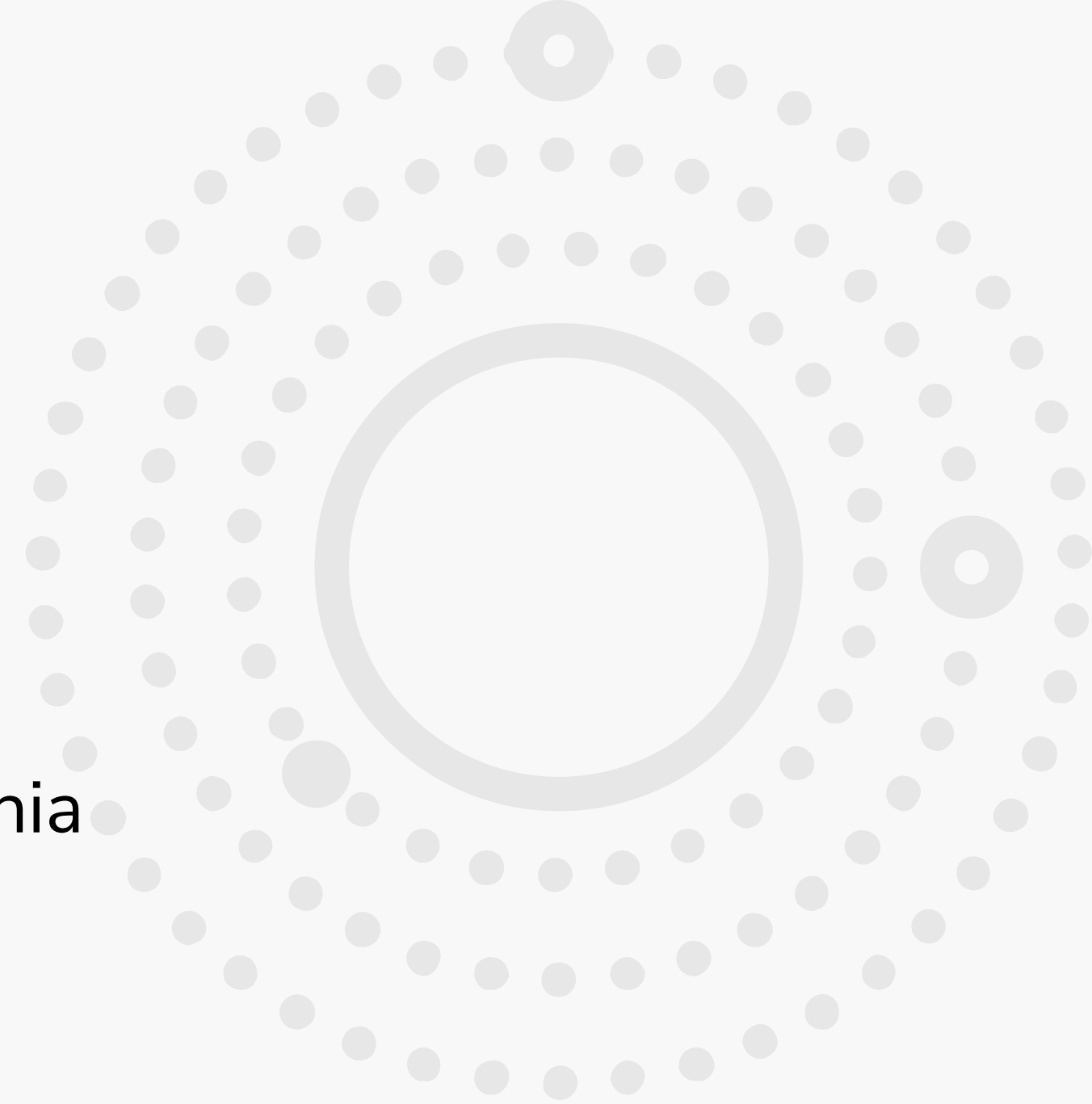
Helen Urmann | 30.03.2022

OVERVIEW

"LEAKY PIPELINE" PROBLEM:

more women than men acquire higher education in Estonia (63,6% in 2019), however less women reach higher academic positions (26% in 2019)

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY WAS TO EXAMINE GENDER EQUALITY SITUATION IN ESTONIAN RESEARCH LANDSCAPE, AND FIND OUT WHAT AFFECTS SPECIALITY AND CAREER CHOICES AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF.



OVERVIEW

The study is based on the data on
academic staff of
**6 public universities and
7 public research and development
institutions.**

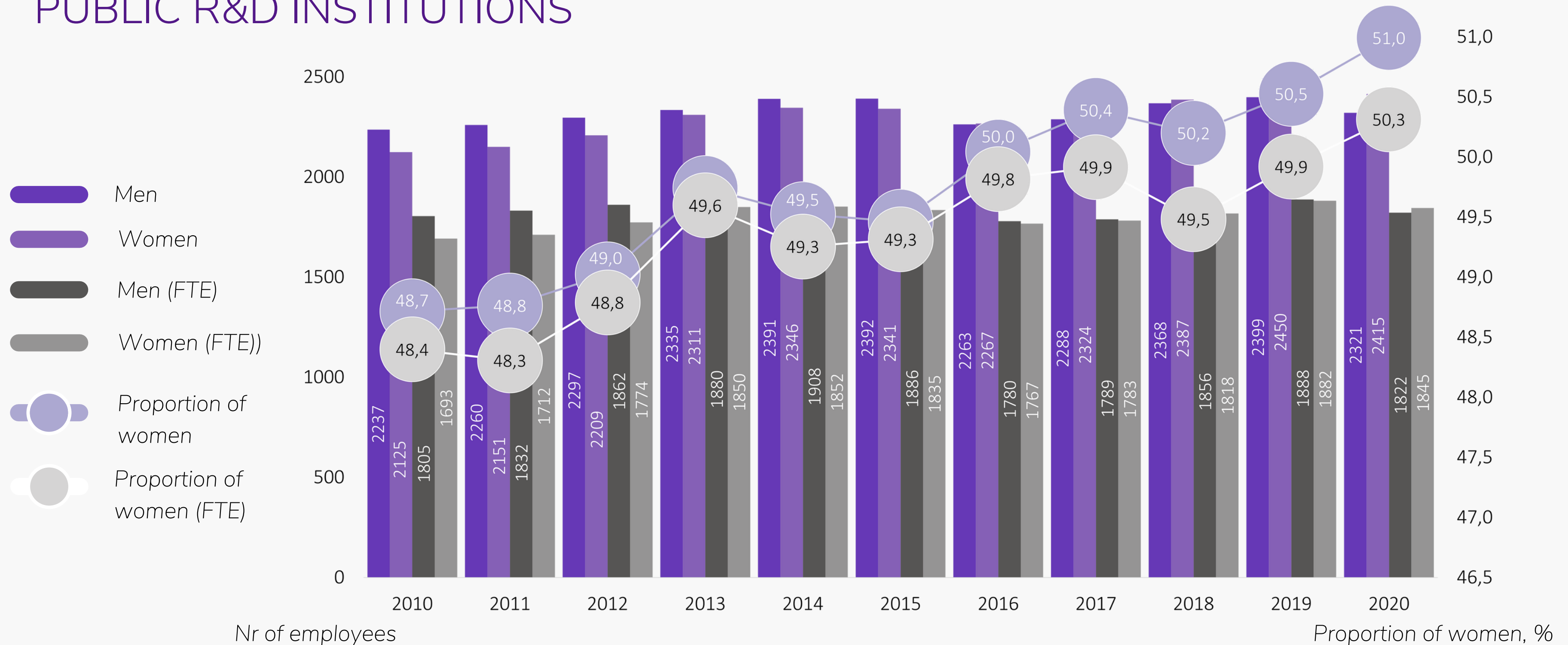
QUANTITATIVE DATA

- Estonian Research Information System
- data from institutions
- Universities Estonia - Rektorite Nõukogu

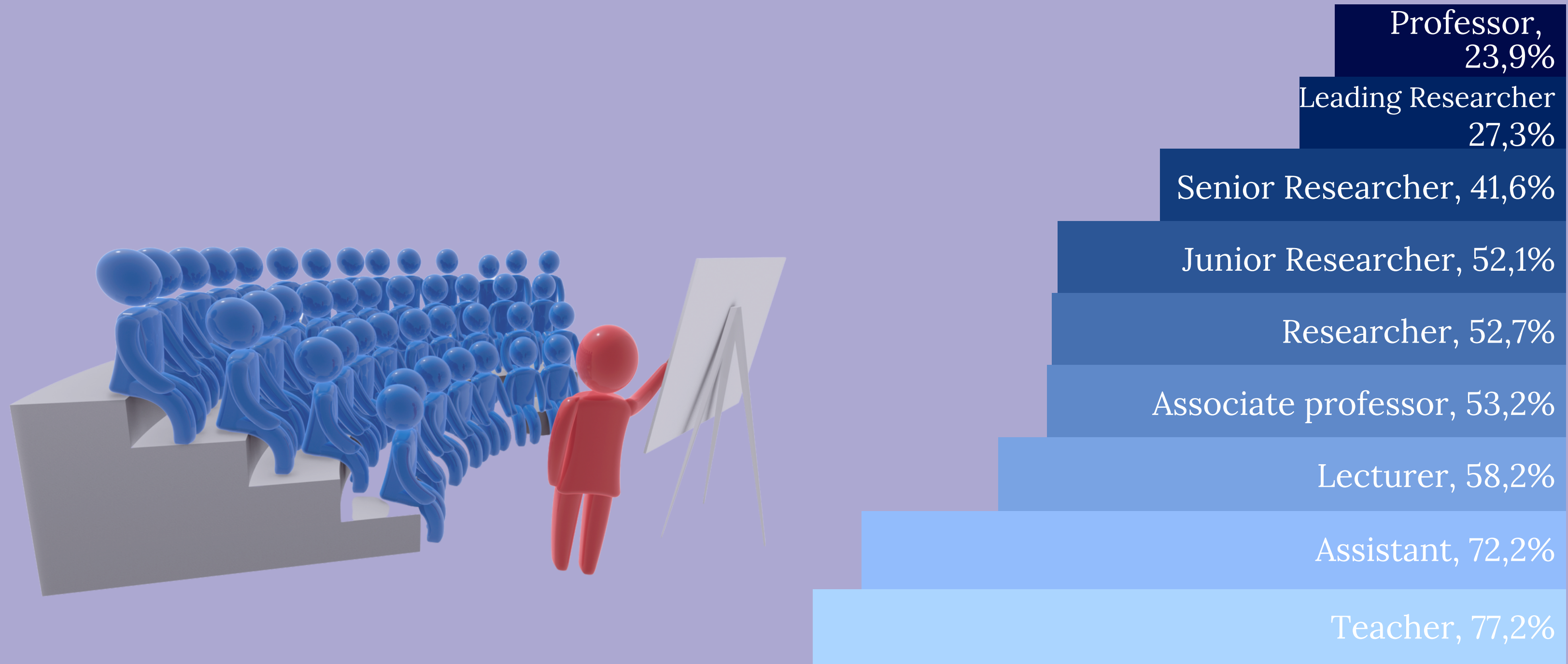
QUALITATIVE DATA

- interviews
- focus group interviews
- document analysis

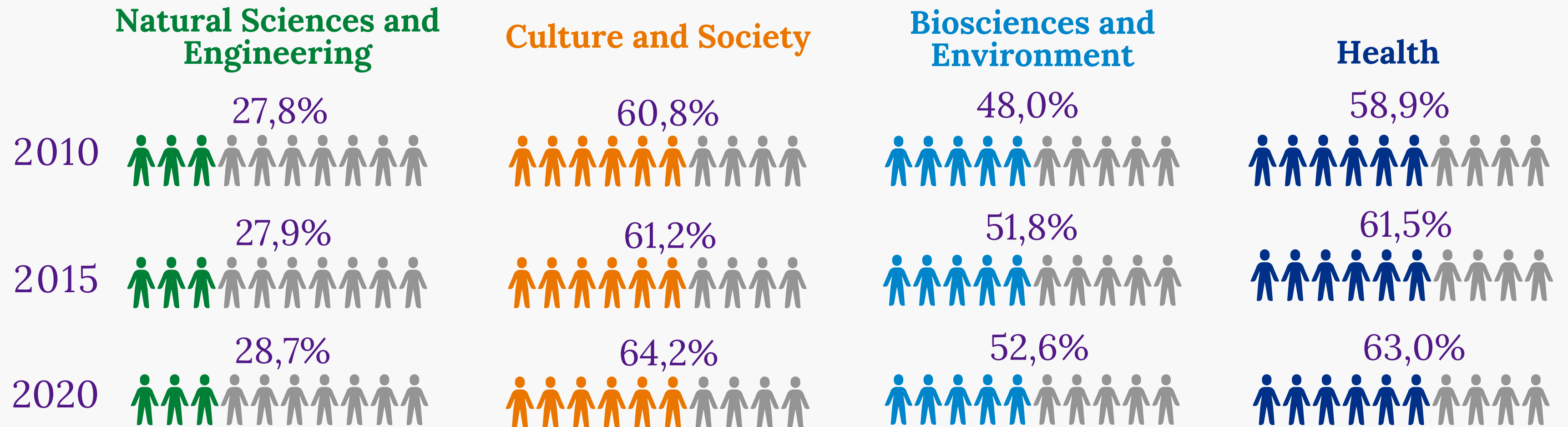
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND PUBLIC R&D INSTITUTIONS



PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN ACADEMIC POSITIONS (2020)



PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN DIFFERENT FIELDS OF SCIENCE



GENDER INEQUALITY IS GENERALLY NOT PERCEIVED AS A PROBLEM IN ESTONIAN RESEARCH LANDSCAPE:

While diversity and gender balance are seen relevant in research, measures to ensure them are not widely favoured.

Academic landscape is perceived gender neutral - inequalities are primarily seen as a result of personal choices rather than inflexible system.

EQUAL POSSIBILITIES
=
EQUALITY



CURRENT SITUATION

- Principles of gender equality and means of solving issues have not been widely covered in institutions' documents.

Presumption of unveiling and solving unequal situations as part of other concerns.

Motivation to address (gender) equality in institutions' documents arose from formal requirements.

- Requirements for academic staff is different across institutions - managements' role in distributing tasks within work teams is high.

- People working in research landscape do not know what to do when experiencing or witnessing unequal treatment.

Difficulties in recognizing gender inequality and unequal treatment.

Belief reporting unequal treatment will not have consequences.

CHOICE OF ACADEMIC CAREER

THE CHOICE TO PURSUE ACADEMIC CAREER IS "UNINTENTIONAL" OR STRATEGIC.

The support and guidance from academic community is a key factor in choosing academic career. Involving talented people in academic tasks attracts especially people who are unsure of their choices.



FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC CAREER

RESEARCH SYSTEM



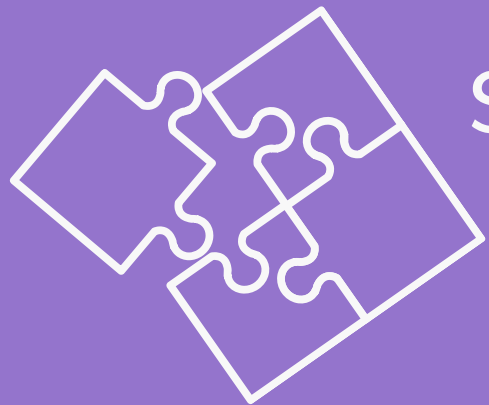
- requirements for academic staff
- addressing career breaks
- linear academic career path

ORGANIZATION CULTURE



- role of leaders
- profile of decision-making bodies
- awareness of choices

STEREOTYPES, ATTITUDES



- gendered specialization
- social norms

PERSONAL CHOICES



- led by the system
- "family versus career"

CONCLUSIONS

There are almost equal numbers of male and female researchers in Estonia, but there is a gender imbalance in terms of academic positions and research areas.

The premise of an uninterrupted academic career path shaped by structural factors, such as research evaluation indicators and the organisation's work culture, alongside with more general attitudes and stereotypes, creates gender inequality in science.

Estonian research landscape is gender blind - criteria for academic staff is perceived neutral and objective, and inequalities are explained by personal choices.

Perception of gender equality and the lack of consequences of unequal treatment prevent people from taking action even in serious situations.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE...

- ↪ Importance of gender equality as an inherent value of the institutions: training, instructions, messages.
- ↪ Gender equality is not a matter of a single institution: developing inter-agency guideline, framework.
- ↪ Flexibility in the system: supporting non-linear pathway to academic career and people returning from career breaks.
- ↪ Tackling stereotypes: implementation of gender-conscious teaching methodology in teacher training.

