

strategicRESEARCH



Equality in Society, EQUA (2015–2021)

**Evaluation of the strategic
research programme**



ACADEMY OF FINLAND

The Evaluation Panel: Håkon Leiulsfrud (Panel Chair), Monica Budowski, Catrin Finkenauer, David Gordon, Matti Jutila, Esther-Mirjam Sent

Disclaimer: Copyright Academy of Finland 2023. All rights reserved. This publication contains copyrighted material which belongs to the Academy of Finland or third parties. The material may not be used for commercial purposes.

ISBN 978-951-715-945-6

Table of contents

Executive Summary	4
Tiivistelmä (Executive Summary in Finnish)	7
Foreword	10
1. Introduction	11
1.1. Strategic research programmes	11
1.2. Evaluation of strategic research programmes 2015-2021	11
1.3. Structure of the report	13
2. Overview of the programme	15
2.1. Programme description in the funding call	15
2.2. Public descriptions of the funded projects and their results.....	17
2.3. Composition of the programme	19
3. Performance of the programme	23
3.1. Promoting high-quality, multidisciplinary research on the problems and needs in the programme’s domain	23
3.2. Creating concrete steps towards tackling problems and needs in Finnish society	25
3.3. Strengthening research and stakeholder communities	28
4. Conclusions and recommendations	31
Appendix 1: Bios of the panel members	34
Appendix 2: Evaluation framework	36
Appendix 3: List of evaluation materials	37
Appendix 4: List of interviewees	39
Appendix 5: Personnel key figures	40
Appendix 6: List of projects’ collaborators	42
Appendix 7: Top10 outputs from each project	45
Appendix 8: Publication profile	51
Appendix 9: Analysis of peer-reviewed publications	54
Appendix 10: Other research output	62
Appendix 11: New research funding	65
Appendix 12: Titles of impact stories	66
Appendix 13: The self-evaluation questionnaire	68
Appendix 14: The survey for stakeholders	73

Executive Summary

The Finnish Government adopted the strategic research theme “Equality and its promotion” on 18 December 2014. The research carried out under this theme was envisaged to focus on equality and on how equality can be promoted. The research theme was directed to research that seeks solutions to support the sustainable and equal renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes. The research consortia were expected to address the following questions: What are the mechanisms of inequality in Finland today? How can equality be promoted in connection with the renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes? In what ways can the public sector best support innovative experimentation, learning by experimentation and institutional change to maintain a well-managed transition and successfully renew basic public services and benefit schemes? In addition, the consortia were expected to suggest ways in which we can best ensure that individuals, groups and institutions possess the capabilities and resources that facilitate equal adaptation to the renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes. Based on this thematic framework, the Strategic Research Council (SRC) launched the SRC programme “Equality in Society” (EQUA). The EQUA programme started in May 2015 and ended in April 2021.

In December 2022, the Division of Strategic Research at the Academy of Finland invited an expert panel to assess the performance of the programme. The expert panel conducted this evaluation between January and April 2023. For the evaluation, the staff at the Academy of Finland provided comprehensive material on the background, plans and results of the programme. After analysing the material, the panel drew up initial conclusions and raised additional questions for the programme actors. Based on these, the panel conducted interviews with the programme director and project leaders. The evaluation panel held a total of three meetings during the review process and prepared an evaluation report together.

The evaluation panel assessed the performance of the programme based on the following evaluation criteria:

1. promoting high-quality, multidisciplinary research on the problems and needs in the programme’s domain
2. creating concrete steps towards tackling those problems and needs in Finnish society
3. strengthening research & stakeholder communities in the programme’s domain

Based on its observations on the performance of the EQUA programme in items 1-3, the panel drew lessons and recommendations for developing the strategic research programmes and their operations in the future.

The evaluation panel found that the EQUA programme represented a great opportunity for Finnish social sciences and humanities researchers to contribute to a broad range of research on social inequality. The programme was an example of a productive research collaboration between universities and research institutes which typically are competitors for research funding. The EQUA programme scored high on

academic output and was a well-managed programme. In these respects, the programme was clearly worth of the money invested.

The success of major investments in large research programmes, such as the EQUA programme, is not restricted to policy relevant academic outputs, but extends to the organisational planning and infrastructure, informed by adequate measures and realistic goals. The success of the investment is also evident in both the societal impact of the programme and in the academic careers of a younger generation of researchers.

Despite its numerous strengths, the EQUA programme also had some challenges. Based on the interviews with the representatives of the consortia, the programme did not provide sufficient resources for managing high levels of multidisciplinary collaboration, incentives for prioritising new research questions across projects, or genuine interdisciplinary research.

The EQUA programme would have benefited from a clear demand of initial policy network analysis in the original SRC call. This is also the case with the engagement activities, which mainly emerged after each consortium had developed their research plans. Better engagement at every stage of the research project would have helped the implementation and impact of the scientific results. Limited administrative resources may—at least partly—explain the relatively loose coupling of consortia and restricted knowledge transfer within the programme.

The programme's ambitions to link academic research to practice and stakeholder collaboration would have been enhanced by a clearer idea of what is required to establish genuine co-creation. For example, early co-creation and co-design activities in the initial and project planning stages were only present in one project, ArtsEqual.

The EQUA programme would have gained from more resources invested in synthesizing the key findings, potential future challenges, and the recommendations of the six consortia, or the programme as a whole. Moreover, the resources invested in the programme could potentially have been better utilized with greater cross-fertilization across fields and disciplines.

All the EQUA consortia had developed their own websites for dissemination information, but the maintenance and updating of the websites after the projects have ended may warrant some further attention. This seems important if the data and knowledge generated are to be sustained beyond the funding period.

One of the main challenges of the EQUA programme, and SRC funding in general, is to ensure the continuity of commitment between the researchers and stakeholders after the projects have finished. To maintain the collaboration in a sustainable way, both researchers and stakeholders would need to make a commitment to refine and implement the research results.

Lastly, the evaluation panel would like to state that the existence of a rigorous and independent review procedure for SRC programmes is a laudable strength of the system. The evaluation panel is impressed by the care that has been taken in preparing and coordinating the process and providing information.

Basing on the key findings summarized above, the evaluation panel concludes its task with the following 10 recommendations:

1. The SRC may wish to consider a new forward-looking SRC programme focusing on the inequalities which may arise in the near future, i.e., over the next 20 years.
2. The SRC may wish to consider opening new or continuation funding for knowledge exchange to ensure long-term implementation and impact of the EQUA programme's research. Continuing the funding through an SRC instrument would enhance the careers of the PhD candidates and post-docs trained in the programme, as well.
3. It is important to ensure both the understanding and the buy-in of all researchers of stakeholder engagement activities. Therefore, at the start of a new SRC programme, research teams should meet and receive some training in stakeholder engagement and the research translation/policy making process.
4. The SRC may want to consider a bidding process where funding is available for co-designing activities with stakeholders already for those consortia that are invited to submit a full application (i.e., pass the first stage).
5. The SRC may want to consider developing best practice advice and a costing tool for stakeholder engagement.
6. All research projects should hold an inception meeting with stakeholders as soon as possible after the award of the funding to discuss and finetune research plans. The first meeting should not wait until the first research results are available but should be held before the research has begun.
7. The SRC may want to consider incentives to encourage researchers to synthesize findings across established fields to avoid a tendency of reproducing standard interpretations and perspectives.
8. Funding should be allocated at the programme level to organize cross-consortium in-person meetings particularly for early career and postdoctoral staff. Funding should also be allocated at the programme level to organize and facilitate cross-consortium meetings of stakeholders.
9. Given the importance of websites for the continued dissemination of the projects' results, the SRC may wish to consider making a small amount of funding available to ensure that the project and programme websites and/or infrastructures can be maintained and archived. The Division of Strategic Research at the Academy of Finland may wish to hold a copy of the archived EQUA websites after the end of the programme activities.
10. The SRC may wish to consider that the diversity of the research team forms a part of the research bid assessment criteria in future research programmes.

More detailed recommendations and conclusions are provided in Section 4.

Tiivistelmä (Executive Summary in Finnish)

Valtioneuvosto päätti 18. joulukuuta 2014, että strategisen tutkimuksen teemasta "Tasa-arvo ja sen edistäminen". Teemassa rahoitettavan tutkimuksen odotettiin tuottavan ratkaisuja eriarvoisuuteen liittyvien mekanismien ymmärtämiseen. Tutkimuksen odotettiin lisäävän myös tietoa peruspalvelujen tasa-arvovaikutuksista eri ryhmien kannalta (muun muassa ikäryhmät, kulttuuriset ja uskonnolliset jakolinjat, alueelliset ja työelämän erot). Tutkimuksen tuli hakea ratkaisuja, joilla tuetaan peruspalveluiden ja etuusjärjestelmän uudistamista kestävästi ja tasa-arvoisesti. Ohjelmassa tuli huomioida huono-osaisimmat ryhmät ja uudet eriarvoisuuden muodot sekä ratkaisut ja osaaminen, joilla torjutaan eriarvoisuutta, lisätään inhimillisten voimavarojen hyödyntämistä, vahvistetaan kansalaisten osallisuutta ja luottamusta, lisätään demokratiaa ja turvallisuutta sekä lievennetään eroista johtuvia jännitteitä. Strategisen tutkimuksen neuvosto (STN) teki tämän teeman perusteella päätöksen STN-ohjelmasta "Tasa-arvoinen yhteiskunta" (EQUA). EQUA-ohjelma alkoi toukokuussa 2015 ja päättyi lokakuussa 2021.

Suomen Akatemian strategisen tutkimuksen vastuualue kutsui joulukuussa 2022 asiantuntijapaneelin arvioimaan päättyneen EQUA-tutkimusohjelman toteutusta, tuloksia ja vaikuttavuutta. Arviointi toteutettiin tammikuun ja huhtikuun 2023 välisenä aikana. Strategisen tutkimuksen vastuualue toimitti arviointia varten kattavan aineiston ohjelman taustoista, suunnitelmista ja tuloksista. Aineistoon tutustuttuaan paneeli laati alustavat johtopäätökset ja esitti lisäkysymyksiä ohjelmassa rahoitettujen hankkeiden vetäjille ja ohjelmajohtajalle. Asiantuntijapaneeli piti arviointiprosessin aikana yhteensä kolme kokousta ja laati yhdessä lopullisen arviointiraportin.

Asiantuntijapaneeli arvioi ohjelman saavutuksia seuraavien arviointikriteerien perusteella:

1. korkeatasoisen, monitieteisen tutkimuksen edistäminen ohjelman teema-alueen ongelmista ja tarpeista
2. konkreettisten toimien luominen näiden ongelmien ja tarpeiden ratkaisemiseksi suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa
3. tutkimus- ja sidosryhmäyhteisöjen ja niiden välisten yhteyksien vahvistaminen ohjelman teema-alueella

Asiantuntijapaneeli teki ohjelman saavutuksia koskevien arvioidensa perusteella myös johtopäätöksiä ja suosituksia STN-ohjelmien kehittämiseksi tulevaisuudessa.

Asiantuntijapaneelin mukaan EQUA-tutkimusohjelma on tarjonnut suomalaisille yhteiskunnallisten ja humanististen alojen tutkijoille erinomaisen mahdollisuuden tutkia monipuolisesti yhteiskunnallista eriarvoisuutta. Ohjelma on myös esimerkki hedeelmällisestä tutkimusyhteistyöstä yliopistojen ja tutkimuslaitosten välillä, kun ne tyypillisesti kilpailevat tutkimusrahoituksesta. EQUA oli tuottoisa ja hyvin hallinnoitu tutkimusohjelma. Paneeli näkee, että kokonaisuutena EQUA oli siihen sijoitettujen investointien arvoinen.

EQUAn kaltaisten laajojen tutkimusohjelmien onnistuneisuus kytkeytyy paitsi politiikan kannalta merkityksellisiin akateemisiin tuotoksiin, myös tavoitteelliseen organisatoriseen suunnitteluun ja infrastruktuuriin. EQUA-ohjelma onnistui luomaan yhteiskunnallista vaikuttavuutta ja tukemaan nuoren tutkijasukupolven akateemista urakehitystä.

Lukuisista vahvuuksistaan huolimatta EQUA-ohjelmassa oli myös haasteita. Konsortioiden edustajien haastattelujen perusteella ohjelmatasolla ei ollut riittäviä resursseja monitieteisen yhteistyön johtamiseen, kannustimia hankkeille yhteisten tutkimuskysymysten asettamiseksi eikä aitoa tieteidenvälistä tutkimusta.

Ohjelman konsortiot olisivat hyötäneet siitä, että jo hakuilmoituksessa niiltä olisi vaadittu poliittisten verkostojen alustavaa analyysia. Myös sidosryhmien vuorovaikutus- ja osallistamistoimet aloitettiin hankkeissa pääasiassa vasta sen jälkeen, kun kukin konsortio oli jo laatinut tutkimussuunnitelmansa. Sidosryhmien osallistaminen tutkimuksen kaikissa vaiheissa olisi edesauttanut tieteellisten tulosten täytäntöönpanoa ja vaikutusta. Hallinnollisten resurssien rajallisuus saattaa ainakin osittain selittää konsortioiden suhteellisen löyhät yhteydet toisiinsa ja keskinäisen tiedonvaihdon vähäisyyden.

Ohjelman hankkeet pyrkivät yhdistämään akateemisen tutkimuksen käytäntöön ja sidosryhmäyhteistyöhön. Tätä pyrkimystä olisi edistänyt selkeämpi ymmärrys siitä, mitä aidon yhteiskehittämisen aikaansaaminen edellyttää. Vain ArtsEqual-hankkeessa tehtiin aitoa yhteiskehittämistä ja yhteissuunnittelua heti hankkeen suunnitteluvaiheesta alkaen.

Tutkimusohjelmassa olisi voitu panostaa tulosten synteesiin, joka olisi koonnut yhteen kaikkien kuuden hankkeen keskeiset havainnot, haasteet ja suositukset. Ohjelmaan tehdyt investoinnit olisi mahdollisesti hyödynnetty tehokkaammin, jos eri tieteidenalojen välistä ”ristipölytystä” olisi ollut enemmän.

Kaikki EQUA-konsortiot ovat tuottaneet omat verkkosivunsa tiedon levittämistä varten. Nyt kun hankkeet ovat päättyneet, verkkosivujen ylläpitoon ja päivittämiseen on syytä edelleen panostaa. Sivujen ylläpito hankkeiden päättymisen jälkeen on tärkeää, jos tuotetun datan ja tiedon halutaan olevan helposti löydettävissä myös rahoituskauden jälkeen.

Yksi suurimmista haasteista sekä EQUA-ohjelmassa että STN-ohjelmissa yleensä on se, miten turvata tutkijoiden ja sidosryhmien sitoutuminen tutkimuksen teemoihin myös hankkeiden päättymisen jälkeen. Tutkijoiden ja sidosryhmien sitoutuminen tulosten jatkuvaan jalostamiseen ja implementointiin loisi kestävä perustan yhteistyön jatkumiselle.

Asiantuntijapaneeli piti STN-ohjelmien riippumatonta jälkiarviointia instrumentin vahvuutena, vaikka se vaatiikin osallistuvilta tahoilta huomattavaa työpanosta. Paneeli oli vaikuttanut arviointiprosessin huolellisesta valmistelusta ja koordinoimisesta.

Asiantuntijapaneeli päättää tehtävänsä seuraaviin 10 suositukseen:

1. Strategisen tutkimuksen neuvoston tulee harkita uutta STN-ohjelmaa, jossa keskitytään lähitulevaisuudessa eli seuraavien 20 vuoden aikana mahdollisesti ilmeviin uudenlaisiin eriarvoisuuden muotoihin.
2. STN:n tulee harkita uuden haun tai jatkorahoitushaun avaamista tiedonvaihtoon, jolla varmistetaan EQUA-ohjelmassa tuotetun tiedon pitkän aikavälin vaikuttavuus ja tulosten toimeenpano. Rahoituksen jatkaminen tukisi myös tutkimusohjelmaan osallistuneiden tohtorikoulutettavien ja post doc -tutkijoiden urakehitystä.
3. Jatkossa on tärkeää varmistaa, että kaikki tutkijat ymmärtävät sidosryhmäyhteistyön tärkeyden ja osallistuvat siihen. Uuden STN-ohjelman alussa olisi hyödyllistä saada koulutusta sidosryhmien osallistamisesta ja vuorovaikutuksesta päätöksentekijöiden sekä hallintoviranomaisten kanssa.
4. STN:n tulee harkita hakuprosessia, jossa rahoitusta olisi saatavilla sidosryhmien kanssa toteutettaviin yhteissuunnittelutoimiin niille konsortioille, jotka valitaan aihakemuksen perusteella toiseen vaiheeseen.
5. STN:n kannattaa pohtia parhaiden käytänteiden jakamista ja kustannuslaskenta-työkalun kehittämistä sidosryhmien osallistamistoimien suunnittelun tuke-
miseksi.
6. Tutkimushankkeiden olisi järjestettävä mahdollisimman pian rahoituksen myöntämisen jälkeen aloituskokous yhdessä sidosryhmien kanssa tutkimussuunnitelmien hienosäätöä varten. Aloituskokous sidosryhmien kanssa olisi pidettävä ennen tutkimuksen aloittamista eikä vasta sitten kun ensimmäiset tulokset ovat saatavilla.
7. STN voisi luoda kannustimia, joilla rohkaistaan hankkeita yhdistelemään vakiintuneiden tutkimusalojen tuloksia. Näin voitaisiin välttää toistamasta tavanomaisia käsityksiä ja luoda uudenlaisia, kokonaisvaltaisia tulokulmia ilmiöihin.
8. Ohjelmatasolla tulee varata rahoitusta konsortioiden välisten tapaamisten järjestämiseen, huomioiden erityisesti uransa alkuvaiheessa olevat tutkijat. Asiantuntijapaneeli ehdottaa, että jatkossa varataan rahoitusta myös ohjelmatasolla kaikkien sidosryhmien yhteisten kokousten järjestämiseen.
9. Koska verkkosivut ovat tärkeitä ohjelmien tulosten tehokkaan levittämisen kannalta, STN:n tulee harkita pienen rahoitusosuuden varaamista hankkeiden verkkosivujen ja/tai infrastruktuurien ylläpitoon ja arkistointiin rahoituskauden päätyttyä. Strategisen tutkimuksen vastuualue voi myös säilyttää kopion arkistoitavista verkkosivustoista ohjelman päätyttyä.
10. Strategisen tutkimuksen neuvoston tulee harkita, voisiko tutkimusryhmän monimuotoisuus toimia vahvempuna arviointikriteerinä tulevissa STN-tutkimusohjelmissa.

Yksityiskohtaisemmat suositukset ja päätelmät esitetään luvussa 4.

Foreword

The Strategic Research Council (SRC) established within the Academy of Finland funds thematic research programmes aiming at high scientific quality, great societal relevance and distinguishable impact. SRC-funded research seeks solutions to grand challenges that require multidisciplinary approaches. An important element of the research is active and ongoing collaboration between knowledge producers and knowledge users.

The SRC is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the research it has funded. However, it is not always feasible to provide conclusive evidence of impact. The societal impact of research can also manifest itself years after the completion of the work.

Evaluating social impact in the context of research funding requires a distinctive method. The evaluation of SRC programmes does not merely rely on performance indicators but looks at the effectiveness of interaction, its consequences, and potential future impact. Understanding the operations and outcomes of each programme necessitates considering its specific framework, rather than comparing the success of different programmes with each other. The challenges and prospects of finding solutions to specific societal challenges differ, as do the roles that various fields of research play in society.

Four SRC-funded programmes were completed in 2021, and their ex-post evaluation was carried out in 2022–2023. This report presents the results of the ex-post evaluation of the programme “Equality in Society”, EQUA (2015–2021).

The SRC wants to thank the panel members for their indispensable contribution to the programme evaluation. The results of their work, as presented in this report, are of substantial value for the SRC in building the overall picture of the impact and development prospects of its programme funding. In addition, the SRC wants to thank the EQUA programme director, consortium members, and stakeholder representatives who participated in the interviews or surveys conducted as part of this evaluation.

Dr. Anu Kaukovirta
Chair of the Strategic Research Council

Dr. Päivi Tikka
Director, Division of Strategic Research, Academy of Finland

1. Introduction

1.1. Strategic research programmes

The goal of the strategic research funding that was established in 2014, has been to strengthen the impact of research in Finland by producing knowledge that helps develop the functions of different sectors of society. To pursue this goal, the Strategic Research Council (SRC) established within the Academy of Finland is tasked with funding high-quality, long-term, and programme-based research that aims at finding solutions to the major challenges facing Finnish society. Each year, the SRC prepares a proposal on key strategic research themes to be approved by the Finnish Government. The Government decides the final themes, which the SRC formulates into research programmes. The programme funding is intended for extensive, multidisciplinary research consortia that carry out research that is relevant for the programme theme, with an emphasis on active interaction and engagement with knowledge users.

Consortia funded under SRC programmes receive funding for 3–6 years. A consortium's funding plan may also include the full-time salaries of the principal investigator (PI), the subproject PIs and the work package leaders. A part-time programme director employed by their own background organisation, such as a university or research institute, is selected for each SRC programme. The programme directors are responsible for programme-level development of interaction and cross-programme cooperation, and they promote the societal impact of strategic research. For further information on strategic research funding, see the current funding principles.¹

The SRC is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the re-search it has funded, both during and after the funding period. According to the funding principles, the ex-post evaluation is implemented at the programme level. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the current or prospective scientific and societal impact of the completed programme and to produce knowledge to support the development of strategic research programmes. The evaluation focuses on the targeting, processes, outputs and outcomes of the research and interaction activities funded under each programme, as well as their observed or anticipated effects. A particular focus is on the results of multidisciplinary work and the ability to promote scientific renewal. Special characteristics of each programme and project, as well as different societal roles of science, are all considered in the impact review. The evaluation follows the principles of open and responsible science.

1.2. Evaluation of strategic research programmes 2015-2021

This report presents the outcomes of the ex-post evaluation of one of the very first SRC programmes, “Equality in Society”. The evaluation was conducted in 2022–2023, simultaneously with the evaluation of three other programmes that ended in 2021,

¹ Funding Principles of Strategic Research Council: <https://www.aka.fi/en/strategic-research/for-applicants-and-projects/for-applicants/funding-principles/> [referred to 13.3.2023]

and the evaluation of all four programmes followed the same design, methods, and protocol.

This round of ex-post evaluations was the second time SRC programmes have been evaluated after their completion. The first round of ex-post evaluations was conducted in 2020–2021, and the target of that evaluation was four smaller and shorter programmes which had run between 2016–2019. One of the key findings was that the three-year funding period was too short to enable the programmes to fully realise their ambitious goals.²

In 2021–2022, the strategic research funding scheme as a whole was evaluated by an external research group. The evaluation was part of the implementation of the Government Plan for Analysis, Assessment and Research (VN TEAS). The external research group examined if and to what extent the goals set for the SRC funding have been realized during its first years of implementation (2014–2020). Overall, the results were very positive.³

The present round of ex-post evaluation focused on the following programmes:

- Equality in Society, EQUA (2015–2021)
- A Climate-Neutral and Resource-Scarce Finland, PIHI (2015–2021)
- Disruptive Technologies and Changing Institutions, TECH (2015–2021)
- Changing Society and Active Citizenship, CITIZEN (2017–2021)

The evaluation of each of the four programmes was conducted by a panel of 4–6 invited foreign and Finnish experts, who had strong experience in the programme's themes within and/or beyond academia (Appendix 1). At least one member of each panel had also participated in the review of research proposals submitted to the original SRC programme call.

The evaluation panels worked independently, without interaction with the other panels. The scope of each evaluation was the given SRC programme as a whole, including: the performance of the projects funded in the programme; the performance of the programme-level work, coordinated by the programme director; and possible added values emerging from the programme.

The panels were tasked with evaluating the performance of the programme in relation to the key goals of SRC funding:

1. promoting high-quality, multidisciplinary research on the problems and needs in the programme's domain
2. creating concrete steps towards tackling those problems and needs in Finnish society (and even beyond)

² Strategic research programme evaluation: <https://www.aka.fi/en/strategic-research/strategic-research/strategic-research-in-a-nutshell/programme-evaluation2/> [referred to 10.5.2023]

³ Kivistö, J., Kohtamäki, K., Lilja, E., Lyytinen, A., Tirronen, J., Holmberg, K., Teräsahde, S., 2022. Strategisen tutkimuksen rahoitusinstrumentin arviointi. Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja 2022:60. Valtioneuvoston kanslia. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-487-3>

3. strengthening research and stakeholder communities in the programme's domain (even beyond the programme's life span)

The panels were instructed to focus on the input, activities, outputs and out-comes of the research and interaction activities funded in the programme, as well as their observed or anticipated effects (Appendix 2). In addition, the panels were asked to draw lessons and recommendations for developing the strategic research programmes and their operations in the future.

The panels worked between January and April 2023. The evaluation work contained the review of a substantial body of evaluation material (Appendix 2), interviews with key programme actors, participation in three online meetings with the other panel members, compiling the results of the evaluation into this report, and presenting and discussing the key findings with the SRC.

A major part of the quantitative and qualitative evaluation material was assembled from the project's funding applications and various reports from the duration and completion of the programme. In addition, the material included the results of two separate surveys, conducted after the ending of the programme: a self-evaluation questionnaire for consortium members, and a survey for the projects' and the programme's key stakeholders. An important part of the evaluation material were also the interviews with the consortium leaders and the programme director in March 2023.

The evaluation panels were supported by the Academy of Finland staff at Division of Strategic Research. The staff collected and processed the evaluation materials, designed the evaluation framework and criteria, prepared and attended the panel meetings, organized and documented the interviews, and finalised the evaluation reports.

1.3. Structure of the report

The report is composed of four sections plus several appendices. After this introduction, we present an overview of the programme. The overview includes the programme description as it appeared in the programme funding call in 2015, a short, non-technical description of each of the three consortia funded in this programme, as well as summary tables on the programme's composition and resources (Section 2).

Sections 3 and 4 were written by the evaluation panel and they constitute the crux of this report. Section 3 focuses on the performance of the programme in relation to the three key goals of SRC funding, and the structure of the section loosely follows the criteria defined in the evaluation framework (Appendix 2). Section 4 presents the conclusions and recommendations of the panel, based on their observations and key findings evidenced by the evaluation material.

In addition, the report includes several appendices, which offer more detailed information on the evaluation protocol (Appendices 2–4), as well as on the input, activities, output and outcomes of the projects and the programme that are the focus of the evaluation (Appendices 5–13). The latter include personnel key figures, list of

projects' collaborators, publication lists and analyses, lists of other re-search output, new research funding, titles of impact stories, and methods and results of the two surveys conducted for the purpose of this evaluation.

2. Overview of the programme

The Finnish Government adopted the strategic research theme “Equality and its promotion” on 18 December 2014. Based on this thematic framework, the Strategic Research Council decided to launch the SRC programme “Equality in Society”, EQUA. The EQUA programme started on 1 May 2015 and ended on 30 April 2021, but the funding was extended to 31 October 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the EQUA programme, six research consortia and a part-time programme director were granted funding.

2.1. Programme description in the funding call

The Academy of Finland April 2015 call included the following description of the SRC programme EQUA:

The research under the theme focuses on providing solutions to better understand mechanisms of inequality, formulate answers and support policy-making. The research will improve knowledge of the equality impacts of basic public services (e.g. in terms of different age groups, cultural and religious divides, regional differences and inequality in working life).

The research must seek solutions to support the sustainable and equal renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes.

The focus areas are transition and risk management, resilience and sustainable growth.

In these areas, key consideration should be given to the most vulnerable population groups and new forms of inequality. In addition, of key importance are solutions and expertise to combat inequality, increase the use of human resources, increase citizen inclusion and trust, improve democracy and security, and ease tensions due to differences.

Solutions and expertise that promote economic and ecological sustainability as well as social sustainability for different population groups form the basis for sustainable growth.

Society is changing faster than ever, and this affects citizens’ resources, functional capacity, self-perceived wellbeing, and health inequalities and disparities. To

understand the mechanisms of inequality and support policy-making, society needs multidisciplinary research that simultaneously addresses different dimensions and sectors of wellbeing. In this programme, the focus is on how basic public services and benefit schemes can contribute to equality promotion.

Programmatic questions

In its research plan, the consortium must address questions A and B, and can choose to address either or both of questions C and D. Under each question, there are a number of examples of possible perspectives on and approaches to the research.

A. What are the mechanisms of inequality in Finland today?

Possible premises: How do the mechanisms simultaneously function in different sectors (housing, education, health, income and employment) and different groups (e.g. age groups, cultural and religious divides, regional differences and inequality in working life) of wellbeing? How do we promote social cohesion and avoid polarisation between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'? How can side effects of public measures further increase inequality in Finland? How does increasing inequality bring costs to society?

B. How can equality be promoted in connection with the renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes?

Possible premises: How should the reduction of inequality be implemented, particularly accounting for the needs of different groups (e.g. age groups, cultural and socio-economic differences, religious divides, regional differences and inequality in working life)? How do we renew our basic public services and benefit schemes in an economical and socially sustainable way? What are the means with which we can influence the mechanisms of inequality? What is the role of steering by information, and what is its efficiency in terms of impacts versus costs?

C. In what ways can the public sector best support innovative experimentation, learning by experimentation and institutional change so as to maintain a well-managed transition and successfully renew basic public services and benefit schemes?

For example, how do we ensure that the most vulnerable population groups are a target for innovative experimentation and new solutions? In change management, how do we ensure that all groups are included and that all human resources are utilised? In these processes, how do we increase citizen inclusion and trust, improve democracy and security, and ease tensions due to societal differences and divides? How do we best take into account a user-centered approach in the renewal of basic public services?

D. How can we best ensure that individuals, groups and institutions possess the capabilities and resources that facilitate equal adaptation to the renewal of basic public services and benefit schemes?

Possible premises: How do we see to that the most vulnerable population groups in particular have access to adaptation-enabling resources? How do we support the resources that promote active inclusion and lay the foundation for trust? How do we help public officials to implement changes in behavior and consumption that promote health and wellbeing?

2.2. Public descriptions of the funded projects and their results

In their final reports, submitted in January 2022, the funded projects and the programme director summarized their work as follows:

Arts as Public Service: Strategic Steps towards Equality (ArtsEqual)

ArtsEqual examined the implementation of equity in the Finnish arts and arts education service system with multi-artistic, -scientific and -methodological approaches. Field studies, interventions and surveys (e.g., in primary school, Basic Arts Education, arts organizations, care and nursing homes, and prisons) showed that the services do not reach everyone equally but mainly benefit those already well-off in society. The research identified a number of historically ingrained patterns of unequal, discriminatory mechanisms (e.g., distancing, exclusion, hierarchy, utilitarian thinking, and restriction of rights) and demonstrated that by identifying these mechanisms, and their effects, the existing level of inequality can be reduced, if so wished. The building of positive equity requires change in structures, professional mental models, and cross-sectoral cooperation in the service system. The project produced significant new theorizing for the arts fields in this light.

Finnish Childcare Policies: In/Equality in Focus (CHILDCARE)

The starting point of the CHILDCARE consortium was the variation in municipal childcare benefits and provision of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Finland. The consortium studied how the variation impacts families' childcare decisions, participation in ECEC, and gender equality in reconciling work and family life. The project provided new information on the tensions between municipal childcare subsidy and ECEC policies, the selectivity of clientele in private ECEC services, the associations between the socio-economic background of the family and childcare solutions, and the division of caring responsibilities in families. The project collaborated with municipalities and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The researchers were actively involved in discussions on childcare benefits and ECEC systems locally and nationally.

Preventing Social Exclusion: What Works and Why (MyPath)

This project examined the mechanisms underlying social exclusion in Finnish schools and the effects of policies that aim at reducing the risk of social exclusion. In addition, one of the main goals of the project was to develop new tools to tackle social exclusion in school environment. As a part of the project, we designed an intervention to support student guidance counselling and this intervention was implemented in randomly selected schools in Finland. We have analysed the effects of this intervention and this analysis will also continue after the funding period when we have sufficient data on the medium and long-term outcomes of the pupils in treatment and control schools. During the project we also developed a version of the intervention that can be implemented as a part of general student guidance counselling. This version is now being implemented in one Finnish urban municipality. The project has produced results on the regional and socioeconomic learning differences in Finland and their trends. Furthermore, we have analysed the effects of the Finnish youth

guarantee, the immigrant integration plan, and access to secondary education with various socioeconomic outcomes. We have also examined the effects of the intervention that was developed in the project on the self-efficacy and motivation of students. The analysis of the effect of the intervention on register data outcomes will continue after the funding period.

Tackling Inequalities in Time of Austerity (TITA)

The TITA project produced a wide array of data on changes in inequality and the mechanisms contributing to it. Some examples of the findings are: i) The link between family backgrounds and educational choices has grown stronger; ii) Parents' educational attainment is associated particularly with children's decision to attend upper secondary school; iii) Childlessness is most common in Finland among persons with low educational attainment and has increased especially among women with low educational attainment; iv) Having children is linked to personal experiences with relationships: nearly half of those without children have never lived with a partner; v) Unemployment and disability are tightly intertwined. Additional supports should be made available to unemployed individuals to improve their work capacity; vi) Children who enter day care at an early age are most likely to achieve a high level of education. Their parents' educational background does not explain all the difference. High-quality early childhood education can promote equality of opportunities. Lastly, vii) While the employment effects of the basic income experiment were small, the participants reported improvements in their economic security, trust, wellbeing and mental health. TITA participated in the planning and evaluation of the experiment.

Social and Economic Sustainability of Future Working Life: Policies, Equalities and Intersectionalities in Finland (WeAll)

The research at the WeAll consortium focused on working life and its intertwinement with other areas of life. We did research on how diverse people can enter working life, continue working and find suitable and fitting career paths that enable combining work, family and other aspects of non-work. We looked at these issues especially in the intersections of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, class and locality. Our research focused on how to enhance social, human and economic sustainability. We scrutinised structures, practices and socio-cultural mechanisms that enable or impair equality and inclusion in working life. Instead of an individual-oriented view, we explored mechanisms and modes of operation that enable an open and just working life for diverse people. We have an outstanding track record in publishing. Our stakeholder collaboration (with public, private and the third sector) is multifaceted, extensive and has received excellent feedback.

Work, Inequality and Public Policy (WIP)

The consortium examined a wide range of inequalities and how public policy has shaped it, both in the short- and long term. This kind of information is needed for both the financing of welfare systems (education, health care, social security) and the redistribution of income, while maintaining incentives to work. The redistributive role of factors such as education were analysed in the optimal tax framework. Our

empirical results provided support for the view that if we want to return to the level of income inequality (disposable income) in the early 1990s, the means of taxation alone will not suffice, but means will be needed to address differences in market income and wealth. We also examined empirically the relationship between the extent of redistribution and the components of the optimal redistribution model. In addition, our consortium examined the trends and consequences of workplace polarization and atypical employment relationships.

Programme director's summary of the programme

The EQUA programme provided answers to the following questions: 1) What are the mechanisms that produce inequality; 2) How to promote equality; 3) How to support innovative experimental activities; 4) How to adapt to the reform of basic service and benefits systems? The starting point for my programme leadership was the observation of the late British economist Anthony Atkinson: "Inequality is embedded in our social and economic structure, and its significant reduction requires us to examine all aspects of our society." This was also the underpinning idea in my programme leadership.

The EQUA programme provided an excellent framework for addressing inequalities in culture, economy, income distribution, employment, all levels of education, gender and ethnicity and the multifaceted interaction between all these factors. The results of the studies were presented in different forums such as masterclasses focusing on different themes (providing researched information produced by consortia), "science facing election" events, and co-operation with the Finnish Social Security Committee. Some of these activities were implemented within the framework of the EQUA programme, some were cooperation activities between different projects.

The overarching observation was that everyone is in favour of equality, but opinions differ when it comes to the implementation of equality. It is easy to unify groups in regard to common and lofty goals, but the choice of means to reach the goal is already a political process. It is also often the case that political faith is stronger than scientific evidence. Evidence-based policymaking can be favoured as long as the evidence supports one's own political ideas. However, this does not mean that the ideas brought about by science are irrelevant. As the programme director, I tried to enable consortia to carry out their missions, synthesise results, comment on, and supervise theses written by junior participants in the consortia.

Assessing the impacts of social research is a difficult exercise. Oftentimes the impact will materialise over a long period of time and through many different loops.

2.3. Composition of the programme

The total funding awarded to the EQUA programme was about 33,8 million euros. The consortium projects were composed of two funding periods (3 + 3 years) and awarded 4–6,6 million euros each. The part-time programme director was awarded slightly more than a half million euros (Table 1).

A total of 19 organisations received funding from the EQUA programme. These include Finnish universities, state research institutes, other domestic organisations, and one foreign university (Table 2).

The self-reported key research fields represented by the projects (max. five per project) cover a total of 13 fields, including several fields of social sciences and humanities, as well as some health sciences and natural sciences and engineering (Table 3).

Table 1. Funding awarded under the EQUA programme.

Project	Applicant	Funding, €		
		1. period	2. period	Both periods
ArtsEqual	Westerlund, Heidi	3 933 000	2 596 960	6 529 960
CHILDCARE	Alasuutari, Marjut	2 150 000	1 929 676	4 079 676
MyPath	Pekkarinen, Tuomas	2 372 000	2 155 300	4 527 300
TITA	Niemelä, Mikko	4 470 000	2 141 860	6 611 860
WeAll	Jyrkinen, Marjut	3 061 048	2 869 840	5 930 888
WIP	Tuomala, Matti	2 950 000	2 606 330	5 556 330
Programme Director	Kangas, Olli	162 320	393 208	555 528
EQUA programme				33 791 542

Table 2. Organisations involved in the EQUA programme.

Situation at the latter half of the programme. The darkest colour indicates the organisation that led the consortium.

Organisation type	Organisation	Arts-Equal	CHILD-CARE	My Path	TITA	WeAll	WIP	Prog. director
University	University of Jyväskylä							
	University of Turku							
	University of Helsinki							
	Aalto University							
	Tampere University							
	Hanken School of Economics							
	Uniarts Helsinki							
	University of Eastern Finland							
	LUT University							
State research institute	Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)							
	Finnish Institute for Occupational Health (TTL)							
	VATT Institute for Economic Research							
Other domestic organisation	The Social Insurance Institution (KELA)							
	Cupore, Center for Cultural Policy Research							
	Finnish Centre for Pensions							
	The Labour Institute for Economic Research (LABORE)							
	Pellervo Economic Research (PTT)							
	Walter ry.							
Foreign/international	Stockholm University							

Table 3. The five most important research fields of the EQUA research projects.

The heatmap shows the top5 research fields of the six EQUA projects. The research fields are selected by the projects from the Academy of Finland's research field classification.⁴ The tone of the colour indicates the importance of the research field for the project, the darkest colour referring to the most important research field etc. Research fields that were not mentioned by any of the projects are excluded from the heatmap.

Category	Research field	Arts-Equal	CHILD-CARE	My Path	TITA	WeAll	WIP
Natural sciences and engineering	Statistics				5		
Health sciences	Public Health Research	5					
	Pharmacy				4		
Social sciences and humanities	Economics			1	3		1
	Business and administration					2	
	Women and gender studies					1	
	Education	1	3	3		5	
	Early childhood education and preschool education		1				
	Work and organizational psychology			2			
	Social sciences	2	2			3	
	Sociology, demography	3			1		2
	Social policy, social work		4		2		3
	Public administration					4	
	Law	4					
	History						4

⁴ Academy of Finland's research field classification: <https://www.aka.fi/en/research-funding/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply-for-funding/az-index-of-application-guidelines2/research-field-classification/> [referred to 10.5.2023]

3. Performance of the programme

3.1. Promoting high-quality, multidisciplinary research on the problems and needs in the programme's domain

Introduction

EQUA was a programme of high international academic standard and quality, generating 1391 publications in total of which 424 were both peer-reviewed and available in the national VIRTAs publication data service. The programme produced relevant information that offers a strong research basis for policy purposes.

The institutes, researchers, and stakeholders involved in the programme covered a remarkable breadth of topics and approaches. Everyone involved was committed to identify and address the planned research priorities. The EQUA programme has, for example, produced a massive amount of key data on income and wealth distribution in Finland. It has generated important information and insights on barriers and facilitators in elite-oriented arts as well as education of relevance for policies aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion. The EQUA programme has produced policy relevant research on how social inequality is embedded in society's institutional designs and even in parents' choices, affecting children. The EQUA programme has also provided policy relevant information on the consequences of policies in various fields, including the Finnish basic income experiment, efforts to promote fathers' parental leave, and the difficulties faced by LGBTI youth and senior jobseekers.

Multidisciplinarity

The EQUA programme spans a wide range of disciplines. The consortium leaders put effort into managing multidisciplinary collaboration. For instance, ArtsEqual's research was organised through six multidisciplinary research teams. WeAll connected sub-projects with overarching concepts to identify inequalities and devise recommendations. TITA connected its research in various fields by focusing on whether policies in one field produced polarization in other fields. As the programme director noted in the interviews, the EQUA programme pushed in the right direction and the researchers started to hear each other, which is not often the case.

At the same time, path dependence and individual incentives may have constituted serious barriers to true multidisciplinary research. For instance, WIP comes across as a group of economists conducting their regular research without much attention to multidisciplinary perspectives. Extra effort is often required because individual researchers are not necessarily strongly committed to investing much time into multidisciplinary collaboration. This is both a matter of time and effort, but also a question of research culture. The same holds for strengthening research and stakeholder communities, as elaborated later in Section 3.2.

Overall, the research conducted in the programme was more multidisciplinary than inter- or transdisciplinary even if some consortia sought engagement beyond the 'usual suspects', including ArtsEqual, WeAll and TITA. The latter was quite path-breaking in bringing together social policy and pharmacy.

Synergy

Besides multidisciplinary collaboration, the synergy of the research plans was an important assessment criterion of the evaluation (Appendix 2). All six EQUA consortia stated how their work contributed to the programme's overarching questions. They all addressed topics that were highly relevant to questions of inequality and did so in different ways. Together, they produced relevant results and new insights into understanding social inequalities. This is highly valuable for attempts to reduce such inequalities.

Synergy within the consortia was achieved by means of a solid focus on specific data collection, analysis, and interpretation, followed by clear conclusions. For example, MyPath evidenced strong synergy through a clear focus on experiments and their large-scale findings being used as a basis for policy recommendations. ArtsEqual linked the subprojects through an overarching theoretical framework on one hand and through legal advice on the other. WeAll was centered around the concepts of “intersectionality” and the “capabilities approach”.

Some consortia, however, witnessed less synergy in their research plans. For instance, WIP did not seem to have a clear narrative or strong coherence. Based on the available evaluation documents and the executed interviews, the evaluation panel observed a general pattern of the consortia focusing more on their own projects rather than the EQUA programme as a whole. Indeed, there was little cross-fertilization among the consortia.

At the same time, all six consortia as well as the EQUA programme as a whole would have gained from a more integrated approach to the knowledge produced, both within and across the consortia. This could have resulted in important “edge effects” that lead to greater diversity. For example, CHILDCARE and WeAll could have interacted more closely. The former was dedicated to different childcare options and their impact on children’s wellbeing inclusion and exclusion whereas the latter aimed to renew Finnish services for children and families.

For the purpose of achieving synergies, it is important to connect the research plans and the research results with the projects. It seems that the step of putting the many valuable results together to answer the overarching questions of the EQUA programme was barely made. Such a step would have enabled the establishment of, for instance, clear markers of the risk of social exclusion that could be used to target early interventions. Given that researchers typically get credit in academia for new findings, not for combining existing ones, operationalizing synergies requires extra effort and incentives from the programme.

Careers

Many of the academics who participated in the EQUA programme have solid international reputations as leaders in their fields. This is underscored by their efforts to attract additional funding from both national and international sources. As a result, several consortia acquired substantial funding for research on topics linked to those of the EQUA programme. The acquired funds range between about 100 000 euros to 18 million euros per project, which is quite impressive (Appendix 11)

The interviews made it clear that many researchers were strongly committed to contributing to the aims of the programme—making Finland a more equal society. One interview also revealed that addressing questions of inequality to enable radical shifts in the current ways of practice may come with a cost—in this case, a loss of a job. Researchers within MyPath found that the advancement of research careers can conflict with efforts put into stakeholder management. Nevertheless, the programme generated a large number of academic degrees, especially within the ArtsEqual and TITA consortia.

All projects were strong in national and international academic networking, and in keeping up with the state of the art. Within the EQUA programme, ArtsEqual and WeAll were the most active in organising both long and short-term academic visits and exchange with international partners. WIP was the least active, but this was their planned choice.

The programme director emphasised the importance of the programme in socialising the younger generation to conduct multidisciplinary research for policy purposes. In addition, he highlighted the importance of “master class” events bringing together younger researchers from different projects and disciplines. The training received in the programme context was also important for the younger researchers who chose a career path as civil servants.

For the younger generation, the socialisation that occurred in the EQUA programme is likely to have a lasting effect throughout their careers. During their careers, they are likely to change disciplinary practices, emphasize multidisciplinary, and think more about how research results may potentially play out and better serve society’s needs. Indeed, stronger multidisciplinary collaboration for the purpose of enriching the public debate could be stimulated by training and common symposia for early career scholars from all programmes.

Visibility

All consortia have been active in providing their expertise to stakeholders in Finnish society. The EQUA programme became known to many organisations and actors in Finland. Participation in the programme has in many cases opened doors for researchers to engage with politicians. Most consortia websites contain interesting policy briefs for the public. The civil society actors interviewed by the evaluation panel considered these up-to-date results important for their work. For example, the results of WIP have informed decisionmaking: their results were presented in the Finnish Parliament and created some debate. From this perspective, the programme was successful.

3.2. Creating concrete steps towards tackling problems and needs in Finnish society

Scientific knowledge is a powerful catalyst for change. The innovative knowledge and research insights produced by the EQUA programme can substantially contribute to addressing the societal challenges that surround inequalities faced by the Finnish society. The challenges range from distributional inequalities (e.g., wealth

and income inequality, educational disparities) to relational inequalities (e.g., unequal relations of power among stratified social groups, including groups defined by race, class, ability, gender, sexuality, and their intersections).

Societal engagement

All consortia made considerable efforts to systematically translate evidence into action. To translate insights to practice and tackle societal inequalities, the EQUA programme aimed to actively engage individuals, groups, and/or organizations that had a direct or indirect interest in the different research projects and their outcomes. A broad variety of stakeholders were accommodated in the activities, including, but not limited to, policymakers, teachers, schools, government agencies, NGOs, and members of the public.

The evaluation materials contained a wealth of detail indicating that all consortia engaged in a broad range of activities to engage stakeholders and disseminate their results. For example, they engaged in the organisation of workshops, and wrote blogs, organised masterclasses for stakeholders and interested parties (e.g., municipalities and ministries), wrote policy briefs, held webinars, developed interventions, participated in working groups, seminars, and many more. Also, throughout the EQUA consortia, researchers actively disseminated their research findings via (social) media channels. Being aware of potential challenges regarding the translation of science, some consortia organised trainings to equip their researchers with the necessary skills to accelerate the communication of their results to the greater public.

Although stakeholder interaction and commitment were considerable, it should be noted that on average, there was little room for co-design or co-creation. Collaboration with stakeholders was mostly limited to the dissemination of research output. To ensure that research is meaningful and relevant to stakeholders and to improve the impact of research, active collaboration between researchers and stakeholders throughout the whole duration of the research process would be needed, starting from identifying research questions to interpreting results. Stakeholders should be engaged more thoroughly already during the SRC application process, especially when drafting the proposal for the second stage.

Both researchers and stakeholders noted that the interactions required considerable investments and were costly in terms of money and time. Given the temporary funding, the continuation of stakeholder engagement, expertise, and networks beyond the duration of the EQUA programme is at risk.

Useful results and outputs

Overall, the stakeholder involvement enhanced the relevance and usefulness of the research conducted in the EQUA programme although the involvement varied considerably across the consortia. An important element of the strategies of most consortia was to achieve and maintain a strong support base among national and local political stakeholders in close cooperation with government departments and municipalities.

Stakeholders described the knowledge and information produced by the EQUA consortia as being of high quality and relevant to their daily practice. It helped to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity of questions regarding societal (in)equalities in Finland. The information has mostly been utilized in the public sector to support decision-making.

Stakeholder involvement, such as interactions in the steering committee of MyPath, encouraged researchers to align their research questions and objectives with the needs and priorities of those who wanted to use the research findings (e.g., Central Union of Child Welfare; ref. interview with Kaisu Muuronen). The EQUA consortia developed a range of interventions to address different inequalities. For example, to ensure that arts and cultural education services reach all citizens, including people from specific groups, the ArtsEqual consortium developed art education interventions, tools, and resources to support equal participation of primary school pupils in art education.⁵ Similarly, the MyPath consortium developed interventions to inspire and help young people to successfully navigate academic transitions, using an iterative process to ensure that the learning materials aligned with schools' technology.

Stakeholder involvement also helped to improve research quality and impact by providing valuable insights and perspectives that informed the design, conduct, and dissemination of research. In some of the EQUA consortia, stakeholders provided input on data collection tools and outcome measures, which contributed to the validity and reliability of the research results (ref. interview with WeAll representative). In ArtsEqual stakeholder involvement provided new insights about structures maintaining inequality in art institutions and art education systems. In some other consortia, stakeholders were actively involved in data collection. Researchers also noticed that stakeholders were happy that the consortium provided a platform for stakeholders to meet and get to know each other.

Societal impact

Programmes funded by the SRC, such as EQUA, are expected to have high policy relevance and societal impact. The impact stories produced by the EQUA consortia described involvement in various policy processes and the used methods of influence. However, the impact stories included limited information about substantive impact. Questions such as “What are the research-based recommendations for tackling inequality?” or “Is there evidence that research-based advocacy has been successful?” were not sufficiently answered.

For the most part, research results did not lead to major changes in the objectives of the stakeholders but offered a strong support for their existing advocacy. In a few cases researchers also experienced resistance when the objectives of tackling inequality conflicted with the objectives of the stakeholders. This happened, for example, in the interactions between ArtsEqual consortia and music education institutions. The SRC programmes would benefit from training and other support for

⁵ Saastamoinen, R., Heiskanen, J., & Jokelainen, J., 2018. Teatteripedagogiikan mahdollistamia kohtaamisia kouluuyhteisössä. *Research in Arts and Education*. 1/2018, 20–46. <https://doi.org/10.54916/rae.118889>

research-based advocacy, like some consortia already implemented to some extent (c.f. MyPath).

The evaluation panel underlines that while only a fraction of knowledge got translated to policy and practice, it was not due to total unwillingness or indifference on the part of the researchers. Rather, the incentives to encourage knowledge sharing and (data) infrastructures to facilitate utilization needed to be developed. Also, science translation did not seem to be an explicit part of the academic training.

The work of the programme director was highly praised and appreciated by both the consortium teams and the stakeholder community. His work clearly helped to ensure that the separate and diverse EQUA consortia constituted an effective programme and that the results were widely disseminated to policy makers, practitioners and the general public.

3.3. Strengthening research and stakeholder communities

All consortia in the EQUA programme showed evidence that they were effectively promoting the learning and development of the larger community, thereby connecting science and society on a broad variety of questions surrounding inequalities in education, childcare, marginalized groups, economy and policymaking. Most consortia produced policy-informed research for the future (TITA, WeAll) or extended the traditional work and practices of their field (ArtsEqual).

The involvement of a broad variety of actors

Some consortia encountered difficulties in strengthening research and stakeholder communities within their domains. For example, CHILDCARE was not able (or did not invest sufficient resources) to access less privileged or non-Finnish speaking children in its parental survey. Also, the WeAll consortium mentioned that it did not manage to reach less privileged populations in their field of work (work-family-silenced inequalities). Stakeholders in ArtsEqual needed to change their practices to enable more inclusion.

A key finding in the assessment is a narrative of culturally homogeneous research groups with low levels of diversity regarding their ethnic background, disability, etc. Thus, the researchers who spoke at various events were often white, non-disabled, cis people that were discussing the culture, wellbeing and equality of groups they did not represent. To what extent this made a difference in the EQUA research is not self-evident, but it is nevertheless noticeable in a research programme on social inequality.

Setting up practices and tools for co-production of knowledge

Over the course of the EQUA programme, researchers and stakeholders built mutual trust and credibility. Stakeholders reported that working with the researchers helped to demonstrate the usefulness of scientific facts and raised the necessary awareness to start discussions and debates about equality, inclusion, and cultural differences in Finland. Additionally, during the interviews, the researchers and stakeholders noted

that effective collaboration benefited from (physical) meetings for building trusted and sustainable personal relationships and networks.

The interviewed stakeholder representatives were generally very positive about their involvement with the research projects. However, there had been only limited engagement with the stakeholders during the design phase of the research and during the development phase of the research application beyond submitting letters of support. Some stakeholders only met with the research project teams a year or so after the research had begun. This meant that it was very difficult for the researchers to modify their research based upon stakeholder expertise, feedback, and suggestions. One of the interviewed stakeholders described that “Everything is planned and decided in advance. You can go and listen to what has been done. There are no opportunities to influence” (Appendix 4). This may, only in part, be explained by the constraints of holding in-person meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic as these constraints occurred towards the end of the programme period. It is likely that the research bids would have benefited from a co-design approach with stakeholders. However, the SRC research bid process does not currently provide funding for any co-design of research bids with stakeholders.

Moreover, there was little evidence of cross-project engagement and learning about best practices for strengthening stakeholder engagement. Each consortium appeared to engage with their own stakeholder communities with little cross-fertilisation of ideas across the research projects about how best to strengthen stakeholder engagement. There was also little evidence that the stakeholders working with the different consortia met to discuss and share their experiences and learning. This, of course, may have been partly due to the difficulties of holding in-person meetings toward the end of the EQUA programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there was, on the level of the whole EQUA programme, little information available on academic workshops or training activities where capacity building for multidisciplinary and/or transdisciplinarity could have taken place.

A clear finding from the evaluation is that while the large majority of researchers made concerted and successful attempts to engage with their relevant stakeholder communities, the time and cost of the engagement was significantly underestimated at both the consortium and programme levels. There was little evidence that any best practice advice had been followed in budgeting for stakeholder engagement work.

Tensions in stakeholder engagement

While the EQUA programme strengthened research and stakeholder communities in the programme’s domain, it is important to be aware of the potential tension between societal demands and academic expectations. Many researchers were not trained to translate their findings into practice, nor rewarded for doing so. Considering this, it is impressive to observe how many of the involved researchers changed their research practices—from disciplinary to multidisciplinary and from fundamental research to applying results.

Further, not all researchers considered stakeholder engagement to be a worthwhile activity. Some seemed to hold a rather naive view of the use of research—sometimes

called the engineering model in the policy literature—which assumes that “research use is ...an instrumental process that involves the direct application of research to policy and practice”.⁶ This kind of instrumental view is based upon the idea that society “has an explicit evolutionary mechanism that employs scientific methods”.⁷

Programmes such as EQUA will be more effective in strengthening the links between researcher and stakeholder communities when all participants buy into the key idea that stakeholder engagement will improve research quality and impact through the inclusion of diverse and multiple perspectives.⁸ No matter how brilliant the research, simply reporting the results to stakeholders and policy makers and then walking away is unlikely to result in improved policy or practice or in stronger stakeholder and researcher engagement and understanding.

The SRC funding provided resources for stakeholder engagement. Nevertheless, there was little investment (in terms of time and money) in maintaining websites and continuing the dissemination of the research results after the projects had ended. Given that some of the projects’ spin-offs are still ongoing (e.g., intervention studies in MyPath), it would be beneficial if stakeholders and researchers were to invest in continued interactions and ensure the findability and accessibility of the research, including outcomes, results, and data.

⁶ Nutley, S.M., Walter, I., Davies, H.T.O., 2007. *Using evidence: how research can inform public services*. Bristol, U.K., Policy Press.

⁷ Coleman, D., 1991. Policy Research- Who Needs It. *Governance*. 4, 420-455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.1991.tb00022.x>

⁸ Hoffman, A., Montgomery, R., Aubry, W., Tunis, S.R., 2010. How best to engage patients, doctors, and other stakeholders in designing comparative effectiveness studies. *Health Affairs* (Millwood). 29:10, 1834 –1841. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2010.0675>; Parker, R., Tomlinson, E., Concannon, T.W., Akl, E., Petkovic, J., Welch, V.A., Crowe, S., et al., 2022. Factors to consider during identification and invitation of individuals in a multi-stakeholder research project. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-022-07411-w>

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Measuring impact is difficult. It is easier to measure influence in terms of academic output (publications, citations etc.) than the broader and more diffuse impacts of research on stakeholders, organisations, and society at large. Nevertheless, the evaluation panel believes that the EQUA programme has had a broad range of positive impacts on stakeholders and society.

The EQUA programme and consortia were of very high academic quality and informed effectively both policy makers and the public about the changing nature of society in Finland. The EQUA programme was highly successful and focused on a range of current problems faced by Finnish society, particularly unequal income and wealth distribution. The programme has also made a difference by training and educating a substantial number of researchers to increase the quality and impact of research through stakeholder engagement.

A large-scale programme such as EQUA requires a substantial investment in establishing and maintaining organisation and administration. The EQUA programme is also a good example of the importance of having a skilled programme director and consortium leaders that are able to reach out to both the research teams and to a highly diversified stakeholder community. Even though the work of the programme director was highly appreciated, there was clearly room for improvement in the cross-fertilisation of ideas and knowledge exchange across the consortia and during their interaction and communication with stakeholders.

Based on the observations described in the previous sections, the evaluation panel concludes its task with the following recommendations:

1. The SRC may wish to consider a new forward-looking SRC programme focusing on the inequalities which may arise in the near future, i.e., over the next 20 years.

There are good reasons to believe that Finland's future problems will differ from the problems of the past and present. For example, Finland is one of the most rapidly ageing societies in Europe and the world. Finland plans to implement the transition to net zero carbon emission by 2035 and to be carbon negative by 2040—a more rapid transition than virtually any other country in the world. It seems likely that these developments may generate different dimensions of inequality in the future than currently exist, i.e., new “winners” and “losers” in less than a generation. Hence, future programmes are not just expected to provide results that are relevant for the programme period but to be forward looking and include an analysis of their relevance for future research, and how future users might find and utilize the results.

2. The SRC may wish to consider opening a new or continuation funding for knowledge exchange to ensure long-term implementation and impact of the EQUA programme's research. Continuing the funding through an SRC instrument would enhance the careers of the PhD candidates and post-docs trained in the programme, as well.

One of the main problems in major public investments such as the EQUA programme is what happens after the results have been published, particularly with respect to the use and implementation of the results.

3. It is important to ensure both the understanding and buy-in of all researchers of stakeholder engagement activities. Therefore, at the start of a new SRC programme, research teams should meet and receive some training in stakeholder engagement and the research translation/policy making processes.

There were many good examples of active and productive stakeholder collaboration across the EQUA programme. However, the stakeholder collaboration tended to be uneven and, in some cases, more of a formal requirement and an obligation rather than an important or prioritized activity among some researchers.

4. The SRC may want to consider a bidding process where funding is available for co-designing activities with stakeholders already for those consortia that are invited to submit a full application (i.e., pass the first stage).

Although the response rate among stakeholders reporting their experiences was low, the results suggest very positive experiences regarding their involvement in the EQUA consortia. However, the activities tended to be a collaboration based more on mere information exchange and discussion instead of a co-design approach.

5. The SRC may want to consider developing best practice advice and a costing tool for stakeholder engagement.

There is a financial cost related to stakeholders' involvement that requires an estimation of needed time and resources. In line with the evaluation panel's observation of little evidence that best practice advice had been followed in budgeting, it would be useful to pay more attention to the financial costs of engagement in the future SRC programmes.

6. All research projects should hold an inception meeting with stakeholders as soon as possible after the award of the funding to discuss and finetune research plans. The first meeting should not wait until the first research results are available but should be held before the research has begun.

The impact stories reported by the projects would have been even more fruitful if the stories had described the impact goals (what the inequalities were and what was done to combat them). Building trust and creating a common language are not just time consuming but are based on a willingness to reflect upon the researchers' position regarding stakeholder collaboration.⁹ Genuine co-creation must be based on realistic expectations both from the SRC and the researchers, as well as insights into what it takes to break institutional barriers.

7. The SRC may want to consider incentives to encourage research to synthesize findings across established fields to avoid a tendency of reproducing standard interpretations and perspectives.

⁹ Belcher, B., Halliwell, J., 2021. Conceptualizing the elements of research impact: towards semantic standards. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*. 8:183. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00854-2>

The lack of integration of the results from the six EQUA consortia into more overarching syntheses is a chance lost to identify a broader range of mechanisms at play in the study of social inequality. Stronger incentives for combining existing findings across subject areas would probably have increased the academic novelty of the results from the EQUA programme.

8. Funding should be allocated at the programme level to organize cross-consortium in-person meetings particularly for early career and postdoctoral staff. Funding should also be allocated at the programme level to organize and facilitate cross-consortium meetings of stakeholders.

Experiences in the EQUA programme revealed the difficulties of multidisciplinary research and the tensions accompanying academic career advancement with societal engagement activities. Overall, the research conducted in the EQUA programme was more multidisciplinary than inter- or transdisciplinary. The material available to the evaluation panel showed surprisingly little cross-fertilization and the ‘edge effects’ could have been larger.

9. Given the importance of websites for the continued dissemination of the projects’ results, the SRC may wish to consider making a small amount of funding available to ensure that the project and programme websites and/or infrastructures can be maintained and archived. The Division of Strategic Research at the Academy of Finland may wish to hold/retain a copy of the archived EQUA websites at the end of the programme activities.

Dissemination of research results was generally well managed via the consortia’s websites during the funding period. The SRC website also links to the individual consortium websites. However, there is no established practice or resources to maintain and update the EQUA consortia websites. Consequently, some websites may not be updated and cease to work in the foreseeable future.

10. The SRC may wish to consider that the diversity of the research team forms a part of the research bid assessment criteria in future research programmes.

It is unclear to what extent the cultural homogeneity and lack of cultural diversity reported by some stakeholders have made a difference in the research. It may nonetheless be a potential problem and a limitation in a study of social inequality.

Appendix 1: Bios of the panel members

Håkon Leiulfsrud (Panel Chair) is Professor in Sociology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). His research focus is on the organization of early childhood as well as on schools and associated welfare system in a comparative perspective. Leiulfsrud is currently appointed in an expert committee on social inequality in schools and kindergarten by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research. He has published widely with a special interest in social inequality, class and social stratification, labour market and welfare state issues. Professor Leiulfsrud teaches sociological theory, philosophy of science, social inequality and welfare, and research methods. His latest publications include “Concepts in Action”, “Theory in Action” and “Constructing the Social Research Object”, all published by Brill.

Monica Budowski is Professor Emerita of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at the Department of Social Work, Social Policy and Global Development at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. As scientific director, together with the team, she has designed and set up the Swiss Household Panel. In Fribourg, she implemented the BA and MA programmes in Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work and Gender Studies. She initiated and ran the joint interdisciplinary doctoral programme PROWEL of the Universities of Freiburg and Neuchâtel. For eight years she was a member of the Research Council of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Swiss National Science Foundation and was active in numerous subcommittees. She has published in the fields of social inequality, poverty, precarious prosperity, stratification, subjective wellbeing, quality of life, health, households, families and gender, social policy (with focus on Latin America) with qualitative and quantitative methods, longitudinal analyses and from a comparative perspective.

Catrin Finkenauer is Professor of Youth Studies at Interdisciplinary Social Science, at the Utrecht University, the Netherlands, where she participates in the interdisciplinary research program Youth in Changing Cultural Contexts. She is also scientific director of the Utrecht University interdisciplinary strategic theme Dynamics of Youth. Her interdisciplinary work seeks to understand how we can strengthen lasting social connections and supportive relationships in adolescence, especially for the most vulnerable adolescents. As scientific director she promotes interdisciplinary research efforts with and for children and adolescents to improve their health, reduce inequalities, and to strengthen their capacities and resilience to navigate and meet future demands and challenges.

David Gordon (FBA, FRSA) is Professor of Social Justice and the Director of the Bristol Poverty Institute and the Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research at the University of Bristol, UK. He has written and edited over two hundred books, papers and reports on poverty, health inequalities and social exclusion, social justice and social policy. In 2018 he had the honour of being elected as a Fellow of the British Academy for his work on poverty research. In 2006 and 2007, he was given the tremendous honor of addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations about poverty and inequality.

Matti Jutila works as a senior officer at the office of the Finnish Non-Discrimination Ombudsman. He holds a PhD in World Politics from the University of Helsinki (2011). He has specialized on issues of nationalism, human rights and equality. Before moving first to a non-governmental organisation and then public service, he held various research and teaching positions at the universities of Helsinki, Minnesota and Turku.

Esther-Mirjam Sent is Professor of Economic Theory and Policy at Radboud University in the Netherlands. She is also Chair of the Labor Party in the Netherlands. Her research interests include history and philosophy of economics as well as economics of science. Her areas of interest are behavioural economics, experimental economics, and economic policy. Esther-Mirjam Sent has studied and worked in the United States. She obtained her doctorate from Stanford University in 1994, under the guidance of Nobel prize winner Kenneth Arrow. She received the Joseph Dorfman Best Dissertation Prize 1995 for her doctoral thesis and the Gunnar Myrdal Prize 1999 for her first book. Professor Sent is co-editor of the Journal of Institutional Economics.

Appendix 2: Evaluation framework

Table 4. Performance of the SRC programme: key criteria

	1. Promoting high-quality, multidisciplinary research on the problems and needs in the programme's domain	2. Creating concrete steps towards tackling those problems and needs in Finnish society (and even beyond)	3. Strengthening research & stakeholder communities in the programme's domain (even beyond the programme life span)
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multidisciplinary competence of research teams • relevance and synergy of research plans • resources for managing multidisciplinary collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reach and commitment of societal stakeholders • appropriate plans for societal interaction and outreach • resources for managing societal interaction and for stakeholders to take up and utilize the results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involvement of a broad variety of actors in programme activities • resources for training and organizational learning
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate methods and practices for multi- and transdisciplinary research and collaboration, and for researchers' capacity building • national and international networking, keep up with the state of the art • training and supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timely involvement of knowledge users; responsiveness to their needs • active and constructive participation by knowledge users • public engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotion of responsible research: equality and nondiscrimination, research ethics, open knowledge and innovation • setting up practices and tools for co-production, mutual learning, and capacity building
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • productivity • significance, novelty, and innovation of results beyond single disciplines • dissemination, visibility and accessibility of publications and other outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • useful results and outputs • effective, timely, and easy-to-understand communication of results to stakeholders and relevant publics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • useful results and outputs made and kept available for use by multiple beneficiaries • clear ownership and licensing of intellectual property • scalability and applicability of solutions
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced knowledge of the state of the art and best practices • integration or transformation of existing disciplinary knowledge, methods, and practices • advancement of multidisciplinary research careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new knowledge used in concrete solutions, such as models, practices, guidelines, technologies, etc. • changes in practices, policies, behaviours, attitudes, etc., influenced by the research • specific expectations of the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced capacity of stakeholders to absorb and utilize research-based knowledge • acquiring new resources for continuing the work • promotion of new and versatile career paths, including mobility across organisations and sectors

Appendix 3: List of evaluation materials

Background information of SRC funding and the specific programme

- Strategic research brochure (updated in 2023)
- 2015 calls by the SRC (original calls for funding for this programme)
- 2017 call for a second funding period
- SRC funding principles 2022
- Kivistö et al. 2022: Evaluation of SRC funding instrument (machine translation) + original evaluation report in Finnish

Information from the project's funding applications

- Original funding applications of the five projects (2015)
- Publicly available “situational picture reports” written by the projects at the start of the programme in 2015 (machine translation) + original situational picture reports in Finnish
- Composition of the programme: involved organizations, involved key research fields, amounts of funding awarded
- List of the projects' collaborators

Information from research reports

- Research implementation and results – (text, ~36 pages altogether)
- Important new research funding (list)
- Research visits from Finland to abroad and vice versa (list)
- Degrees completed within the projects (list)
- Produced data sets (list)
- Personnel key figures (number of staff, career stages, and gender)
- Invited expert work by the projects' members (list)

Publications

- 10 most important publications of each project (as a list and full text pdf-documents)
- List of all publications produced under the programme (table)
- Publication analyses (overall statistics of all publications produced under the program, and more detailed statistics of verified peer reviewed scientific publications)

Survey results

- Results of a self-evaluation questionnaire for consortium members (21 respondents from the EQUA programme, 75 respondents in total)
- Results of a survey for stakeholders of SRC programmes (13 respondents from the EQUA programme, 33 respondents in total)

Impact stories etc.

- All impact stories by the projects (altogether 20 stories) at the end of the programme (machine translation) + original impact stories in Finnish
- Summaries of the impact stories, written by Academy staff
- Impact story by the programme director at the end of the programme (2021) + original impact story in Finnish
- Annual reports from the programme director: 2019, 2020, 2021 (machine translation)

Interview material

- Video recording of the interviews on 22, 23 and 24 March
- Notes / transcription of the interviews on 22, 23 and 24 March
- List of 10 key stakeholders of each project and the programme director

Appendix 4: List of interviewees

Consortium leaders

- Marjut Jyrkinen, WeAll
- Heidi Westerlund, ArtsEqual

Other consortium representatives

- Kai Lehtikoinen, ArtsEqual
- Mira Karjalainen, WeAll
- Matti Sarvimäki, MyPath

Programme director

- Olli Kangas

Stakeholder representatives

- Jussi Ahokas, SOSTE
- Kaisu Muuronen, the Central Union of Child Welfare

Appendix 5: Personnel key figures

The figures below show simple statistics of the academic and other staff who worked in the projects under the EQUA programme during the years 2015–2021. The figures are based on salary payment data and refer to the number of persons (headcount) instead of full-time equivalent person years. The total number of staff in Figure 1 is different from the total number in Figures 2–3, because several persons among academic staff have worked in different career stages during a project.

Figure 1. Number of staff by career stage and gender in EQUA programme.

The academic staff have been divided into four categories according to a model of a four-stage research career path which is used at Finnish universities. The stages of the research career path are as follows:

Stage I: Doctoral student, early-career researcher, etc.

Stage II: Postdoctoral researcher, etc.

Stage III: University lecturer, Academy Research Fellow etc.

Stage IV: Professor, Academy Professor, research professor, research director, etc.

Other: Support and management staff, who did not act as researchers in a project; for example, research assistants, interaction coordinators, “technical” PIs

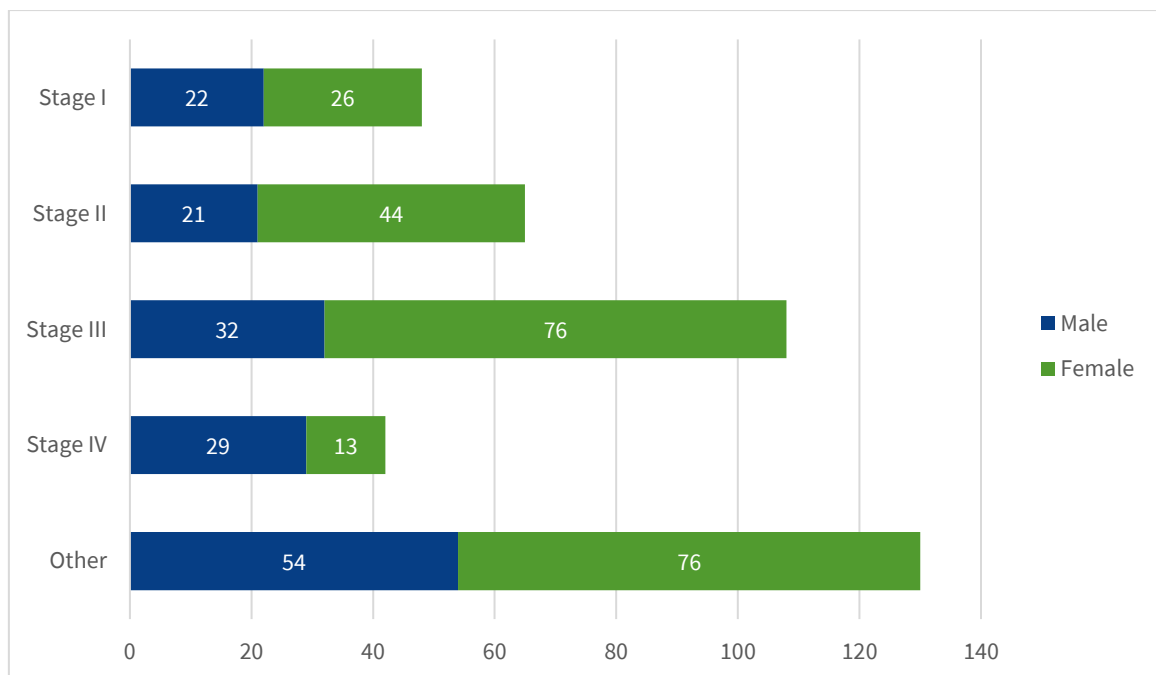


Figure 2. Number of staff by nationality in EQUA programme.

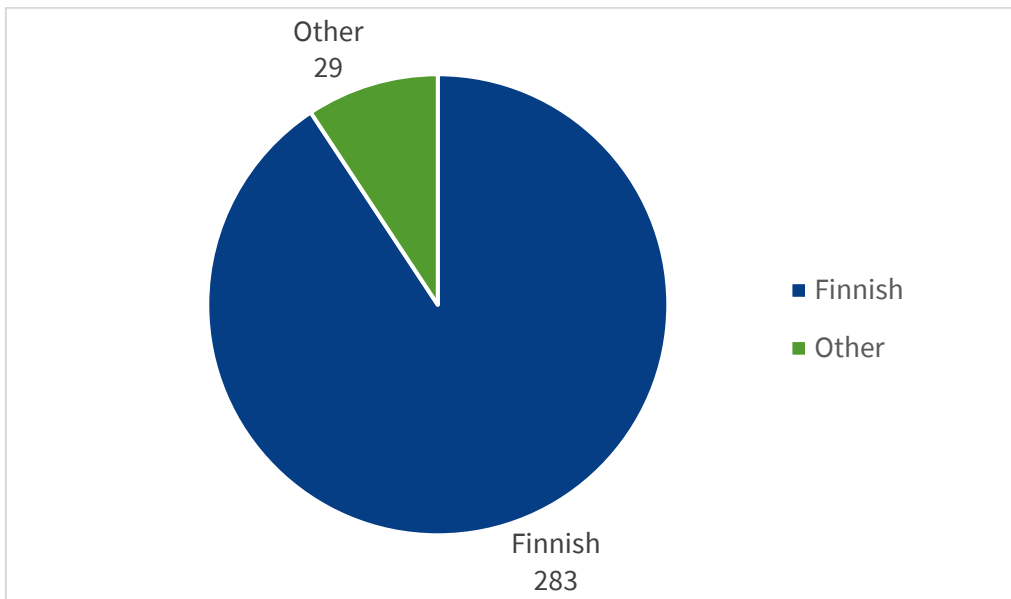
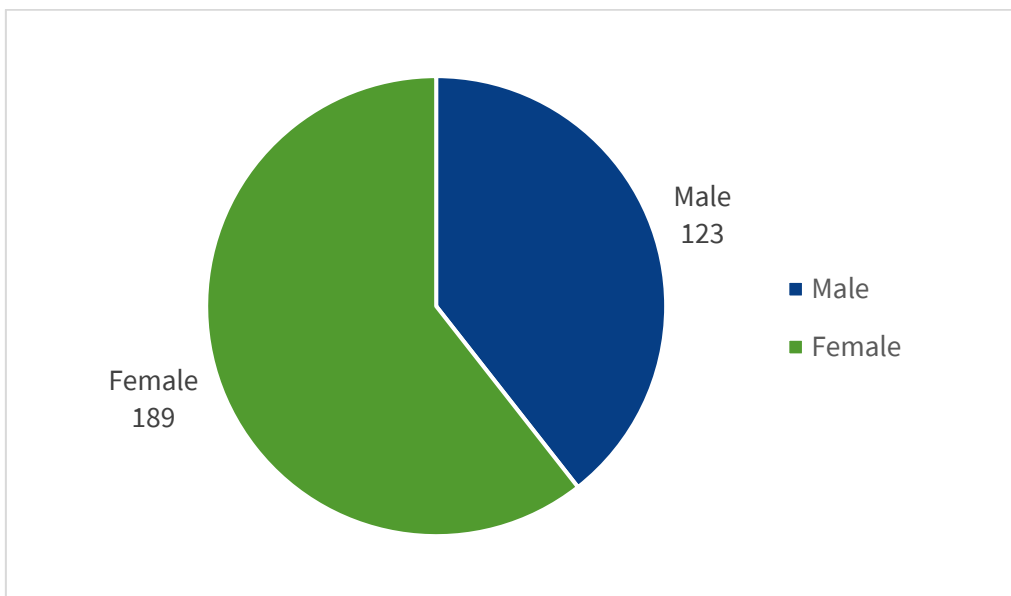


Figure 3. Number of staff by gender in EQUA programme.



Appendix 6: List of projects' collaborators

List of projects' collaborators (organisations) mentioned in the funding applications.

In Finland

- Aalto University
- Akava Special Branches
- ARVO – the Finnish Association for Social Enterprises
- Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities (Kuntaliitto)
- Association of Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL), Tampere
- Attorneys at Law Borenius Ltd
- Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK)
- Central Union for Child Welfare
- City of Helsinki
- City of Jyväskylä
- City of Pori
- City of Rauma
- City of Salo
- Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters
- Finland for All Families (Monimuotoiset perheet) – Diverse Families Network
- Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE)
- Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA)
- Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK)
- Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK)
- Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health (SOSTE)
- Finnish Green Party
- Finnish Parent's League
- Helsinki University Hospital (HUS)
- HENRY – Finnish Association for Human Resource Management
- Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre
- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
- Ministry of Education and Culture

- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- Minna.fi – Centre for Gender Equality Information in Finland
- MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association Finland
- National Youth Council Allianssi
- Non-discrimination Ombudsman
- Office of the Ombudsman for Children
- Oulu University of Applied Sciences
- Regional State Administrative Agencies
- Rural Policy Council
- Seta – LGBTI Rights in Finland
- Social Insurance Institution (Kela)
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Helsinki
- University of Jyväskylä
- University of Tampere
- University of Turku

Beyond Finland

- Aalborg University, Denmark
- Cornell University
- European Business Ethics Network
- International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Austria
- Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
- Leuven University, the Netherlands
- National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway
- Statistics Norway, Norway
- School of Music & Conservatory at North-West University, United States
- University of Antwerp, Belgium
- University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- University of Auckland, New Zealand

- University of Auckland, National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, New Zealand
- University of Bath, United Kingdom
- University of Bielefeld, Germany
- University of Chester, United Kingdom
- University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- University of Essex, United Kingdom
- University of Georgia, College of Education, United States
- University of Ghent, Belgium
- University of Iceland, Iceland
- University of Maastricht, the Netherlands
- University of Oslo, Norway
- University of Western Ontario, Canada
- University of Wisconsin Madison, United States
- University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
- University of Stockholm, Sweden
- Uppsala University, Sweden
- Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo, Canada

Appendix 7: Top10 outputs from each project

Table 5. ArtsEqual

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2017	Väkevä, L., Westerlund, H., Ilmola-Sheppard, L.	Social innovations in music education: Creating institutional resilience for increasing social justice	Action, Criticism and Theory for Music Education
2018	Kallio, A. A., Länsman, H.	Sami Re-Imaginings of Equality in/through Extracurricular Arts Education in Finland	International Journal of Education and the Arts
2019	Lehikoinen, K.	Dance in Elderly Care: Professional Knowledge	Journal of Dance Education
2020	Kivijärvi, S., Rautiainen, P.	Contesting music education policies through the concept of reasonable accommodation: Teacher autonomy and equity enactment in Finnish music education.	Research Studies in Music Education
2021	Westerlund, H., Gaunt, H. (Eds)	Expanding professionalism in music and higher music education - A changing game	Routledge
2021	Ilmola-Sheppard, L., Rautiainen, P., Westerlund, H., Lehikoinen, K., Karttunen, S., Juntunen, M-L., Anttila, E.	ArtsEqual: Equality as the future path for the arts and arts education services	ArtsEqual, Uniarts Helsinki
2021	Westerlund, H., Karttunen, S., Lehikoinen, K., Laes T., Väkevä, L., Anttila, E.	Expanding professional responsibility in arts education: Social innovations paving the way for systems reflexivity	International Journal of Education & the Arts
2021	Koskela, M., Kuoppamäki A., Karlsen, S., Westerlund, H.	The paradox of democratic popular music education. Intersectionalizing 'youth' through curriculum analysis	In Kallio, A., Westerlund, H., Karlsen, S., Marsch, K., Saether, E.(eds): The Politics of Diversity in Music Education. Landscapes: Arts, Aesthetics, and Education, Springer.
2022	Väkevä, L., Westerlund, H., Ilmola-Sheppard, L.	Hidden Elitism: The Meritocratic Discourse of Free Choice in Finnish Music Education System	Music Education Research
2022	Lehikoinen, K. & Turpeinen, I.	Fear, Coping and Peer Support in Male Dance Students' Reflections	In Risner D., Watson, B. (eds.): Masculinity, Intersectionality & Identity: Why Boys (Don't) Dance. Palgrave Macmillan.

Table 6. CHILDCARE

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2017	Karila, K., Eerola, P., Alasuutari, M., Kuukka, A., Siippainen, A.	Varhaiskasvatuksen järjestämisen puhekehykset kunnissa	Yhteiskuntapolitiikka
2018	Kauppinen, A., Alasuutari, M.	Esiopetusvuoden palvelukokonaisuudet lasten hyvinvoinnin ja yhdenvertaisuuden näkökulmista	Varhaiskasvatuksen tiedelehti (Journal of Early Childhood Education Research)
2018	Närvi, J., Lammi-Taskula, J., Hieta-mäki, J., Malander, J., Repo, K.	Nelivuotiaiden lasten hyvinvointi ja palvelut: CHILDCARE-hankkeen NEVA-kyselytutkimuksen tuloksia viidestä kunnasta	Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (THL). Working Paper 24/2018. 29 pages. Helsinki 2018.
2019	Kuukka, A., Siippainen, A., Alasuutari, M.	No periaatteessa minun tiedossa se aika lailla on: Palveluohjauksen työntekijän tiedollinen asema varhaiskasvatuksen palveluohjauskusteluissa	Prologi - puheviestinnän vuosikirja
2019	Paananen, M., Kuukka, A., Alasuutari, M.	Assembled policies: The Finnish case of restricted entitlement to early childhood education and care	Journal of Early Childhood Education Research
2019	Repo, K., Kuukka, A., Eerola, P.	Lasten kotihoito ja sen taloudellinen tukeminen: kunnallisten luottamushenkilöiden näkökulma	Janus - Sosiaalipolitiikan ja Sosiaalityön Tutkimuksen Aikakauslehti
2020	Repo, K., Alasuutari, M., Karila, K., Lammi-Taskula, J. (eds)	The policies of childcare and early childhood education: Does equal access matter?	Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA
2020	Ruutiainen, V., Alasuutari, M., Karila, K.	Rationalising public support for private early childhood education and care: the case of Finland	British Journal of Sociology of Education
2021	Ruutiainen, V., Alasuutari, M., Karila, K.	Selectivity of clientele in Finnish private early childhood education and care.	Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy
2022	Eerola, P. Repo, K. Alasuutari, M., Karila, K., Lammi-Taskula, J. (eds)	Lastenhoidon ja varhaiskasvatuksen monet polut. Lasten, perheiden ja politiikan näkökulmia	Gaudeamus, Helsinki

Table 7. MyPath

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2016	Harju-Luukkainen, H., Vettenranta, J., Ouakrim-Soivio, N., Bernelius, V.	Differences between PISA reading literacy scores and grading for mother tongue and literature at school: A geostatistical analysis of the Finnish PISA 2009 data	Education Inquiry
2017	Sarvimäki, M.	Labor Market Integration of Refugees in Finland	Nordic Economic Policy Review
2017	Jokela, M., Pekkarinen, T., Sarvimäki, M., Terviö, M., Uusitalo, R.	Secular Rise in Economically Valuable Personality Traits	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
2017	Hämäläinen, K., Hämäläinen, U., Tuomala, J.	The Evaluation of a Finnish Youth Guarantee: Lessons for Europe?	In Malo, M., Moreno Minguez, A. (eds): European Youth Labour Markets. Springer, Switzerland
2018	Ouakrim-Soivio N., Rautopuro J., Hildén R.	Shadows under the Northern Star - The inequity developing in Finnish school education	Nordidactica – Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Education
2018	Huttunen, K., Pekkarinen, T., Virtanen, H., Uusitalo, R.	Lost boys: Access to secondary education and crime	VATT Working Papers
2019	Ansala, L., Hämäläinen, U., Sarvimäki, M.	Age at arrival, parents and neighborhoods: understanding the educational attainment of immigrants' children	Journal of Economic Geography
2019	Korhonen, V., Rautopuro, J.	Identifying Problematic Study Progression and “At-Risk” Students in Higher Education in Finland	Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research
2019	Nykänen, M., Salmela-Aro, K., Tolvanen, A., Vuori, J.	Safety self-efficacy and internal locus of control as mediators of safety motivation – Randomized controlled trial (RCT) study	Safety Science
2020	Pulkkinen, J., Räikkönen, E., Jahnkainen, M., Pirttimaa, R.	How do educational reforms change the share of students in special education? Trends in special education in Finland	European Educational Research Journal

Table 8. TITA

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2017	Karhula, A., Erola, J., Kilpi-Jakonen, E.	Home sweet home? Long-term educational outcomes of childcare arrangements in Finland	In Blossfeld, H-P., Kulic, N., Skopek, J., Triventi, M. (eds): <i>Childcare, Early Education and Social Inequality. An International Perspective</i> . Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
2017	Aaltonen, K., Heino, P., Ahola, E., Martikainen, J. E.	Estimating the economic effects of pharmaceutical reimbursement scheme reform by microsimulation	Finnish Journal of Social Research
2017	Jalovaara, M., Fasang, A. E.	From never partnered to serial cohabitators. Union trajectories to childlessness	Demographic Research
2018	Mussino, E., Tervola, J., Duvander, A-Z.	Decomposing the determinants of fathers' parental leave use: Evidence from migration between Finland and Sweden	Journal of European Social Policy
2019	Kujala, P., Kallio, J., Niemelä, M.	Income inequality, poverty, and fear of crime in Europe	Cross-Cultural Research
2020	Salonen, L.	Processes of long-term work disability and socioeconomic disparities: unwinding the roles of family background, sickness absence, and psychosocial work environment	Annales Universitatis Turkuensis B:521. University of Turku, Turku.
2020	Weber, R.	Borders and barriers: Studies on migration and integration in the Nordic and Mexico-U.S. settings	Doctoral Thesis in Sociology, Stockholm University, Stockholm
2020	Mattila, M. (ed)	Eriarvoisuuden tila Suomessa 2020	Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, Helsinki
2020	Korpela, T., Heinonen, H-M., Laatu, M., Raittila, S., Ylikännö, M.	Ojista allikkoon? Toimeentulotuki uudistuksen ensi metrit	Kela, Helsinki
2021	Kangas, O., Ylikännö, M., Niemelä, M.	Trust, capabilities, confidence and basic income	In Kangas, O., Jauhiainen, S., Simanainen, M., Ylikännö, M. (eds): <i>Experimenting with Unconditional Basic Income. Lessons from the Finnish BI Experiment 2017–2018</i> . Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Table 9. WeAll

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2017	McKie, L., Jyrkinen, M.	MyManagement: Women Managers in Gendered and Sexualised Workplaces	Gender in Management: An International Journal
2019	Kangas, E., Lämsä, A-M., Jyrkinen, M.	Is Fatherhood Allowed? Media Discourses of Fatherhood in Organizational Life	Gender, Work and Organization
2019	Lehtonen, J.	Kun kaksijakoinen sukupuoliajattelu murtuu - sukupuolen ja seksuaalisuuden moninaisuus tasa-arvobarometrissa	Terveysten ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (THL). Working Paper 6/2019, pp. 136–157. Helsinki 2019.
2019	Steel, T., Lämsä, A-M., Jyrkinen, M.	Paradoxes of Mentoring: An Ethnographic Study of a Mentoring Programme for Highly-educated Women with Migrant Backgrounds	Culture Unbound - Journal of Current Cultural Research
2020	Heikkinen, S., Jyrkinen, M., Lämsä, A-M., Niemistö, C. (eds)	Yhteiskunnallisesti ja taloudellisesti kestävä työelämä. Tasa-arvoa tutkimassa ja toteuttamassa.	Research Reports 77. Helsinki: Hanken School of Economics
2020	Francis, D., Kjaran, J., Lehtonen, J. (eds.)	Queer Social Movements and Outreach Work at Schools. A Global Perspective	Part of the book series: Queer Studies and Education, Palgrave Macmillan
2021	Enbuska, M., Lähdesmäki, M., Suutari, T.	Belonging and its Frames: Rural Employers' Boundary Construction Concerning Immigrant Employees	Sociologia Ruralis
2021	Heikkinen, S., Lämsä, A-M., Niemistö, C.	Work–Family Practices and Complexity of Their Usage: A Discourse Analysis Towards Socially Responsible Human Resource Management	Journal of Business Ethics
2021	Karjalainen, M., Islam, G., Holm, M.	Scientization, Instrumentalization, and Commodification of Mindfulness in a Professional Services Firm	Organization
2021	Niemistö, C, Hearn, J., Kehn, C., Tuori, A.	Motherhood 2.0: Slow Progress for Career Women and Motherhood within the 'Finnish Dream'	Work, Employment and Society

Table 10. WIP

Year	Author(s)	Title	Journal or Publisher
2016	Tuomala, M.	Optimal Redistributive Taxation	Oxford University Press
2016	Böckerman, P., Laaksonen, S., Vainiomäki, J.	Are Jobs More Polarized in ICT Firms?	IZA Discussion Paper Series
2017	Suoniemi, I.	Intergenerational mobility and equal opportunity, evidence from Finland	Labour Institute for Economic Research. Working Papers 312.
2018	Roikonen, P., Heikkinen, S.	A Kuznets rise and a Piketty fall: income inequality in Finland, 1865–1934	European Review of Economic History
2018	Vainiomäki, J.	The Development of Wage Dispersion and Wage Rigidity in Finland	Finnish Economic Papers
2019	Tanninen, H., Tuomala, M., Tuominen, E.	Inequality and Optimal Redistribution	Series: Elements in Public Economics, Cambridge University Press
2019	Tuomala, M.	Markkinat, Valtio ja Eriarvoisuus	Vastapaino, Tampere
2020		WIP thematic issue	Talous & Yhteiskunta -lehti 2/2020
2020		WIP thematic issue	Talous & Yhteiskunta -lehti 3/2020
2021	Rantala, J., Pyy-Martikainen, M., Riihelä, M.	Miten nettotulot muuttuvat eläkkeelle siirryttäessä? Tarkastelu nettotulosuhteen muutoksesta vuosina 2002–2017	Finnish Centre for Pensions 4/2021

Appendix 8: Publication profile

All publications

The projects under the Programme reported several types of publications in their final reports according to the national publication type classification¹⁰

- A. Peer-reviewed scientific articles
- B. Non-refereed scientific articles
- C. Scientific books (monographs)
- D. Publications intended for professional communities
- E. Publications intended for the general public
- F. Public artistic and design activities
- G. Theses
- H. Audiovisual publications and ICT applications

Table 11. Number of publications reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole in 2015–2021.

Project	All publications	Scientific publications (A, B, C)
ArtsEqual	461	235
CHILDCARE	96	31
MyPath	89	73
TITA	433	226
WeAll	213	142
WIP	99	99
EQUA programme	1391	806

¹⁰ More information about the publication type classification: https://wiki.eduuni.fi/display/cscsuorat/Julka-isutiedonkeruun+tutkijaohjeistukset?preview=/39984924/256871940/2021_Publication%20data%20collection%20instructions%20for%20researchers.pdf, pages 7–11. [referred to 12.5.2023]

Figure 4. Number of publications by year reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

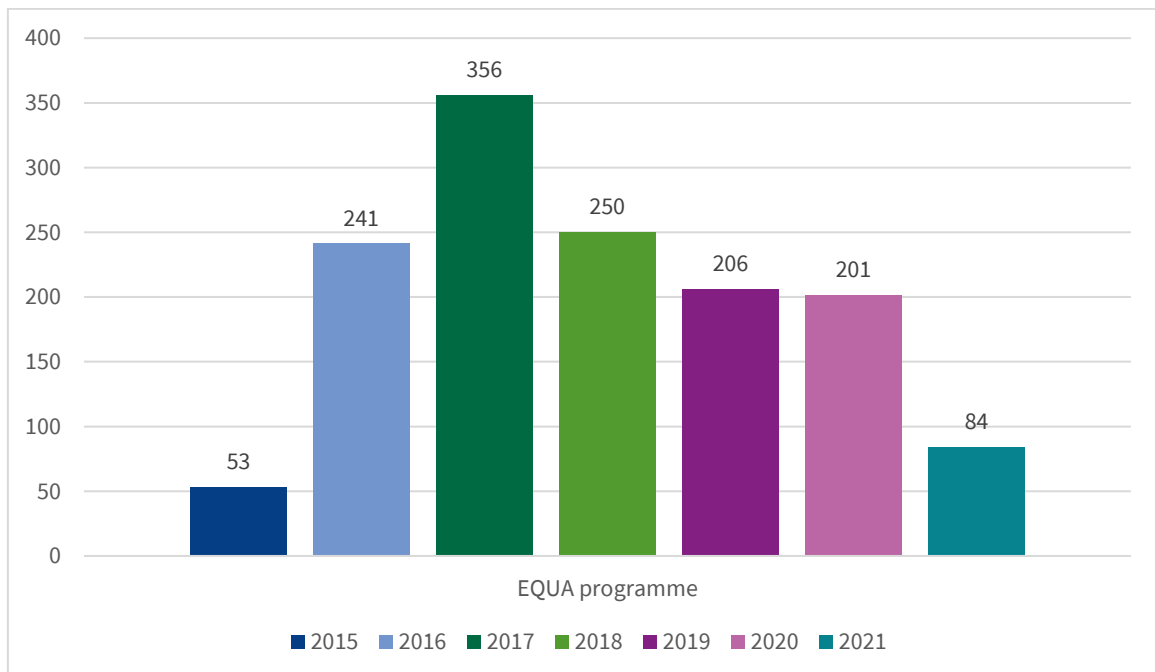
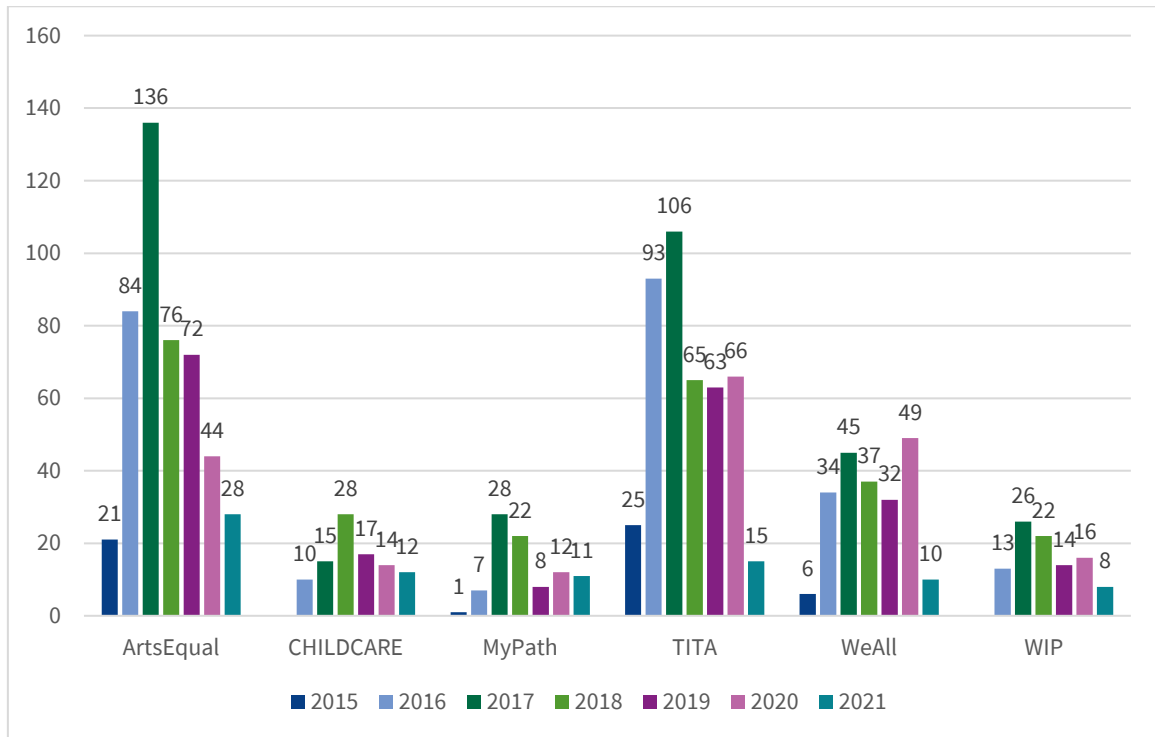
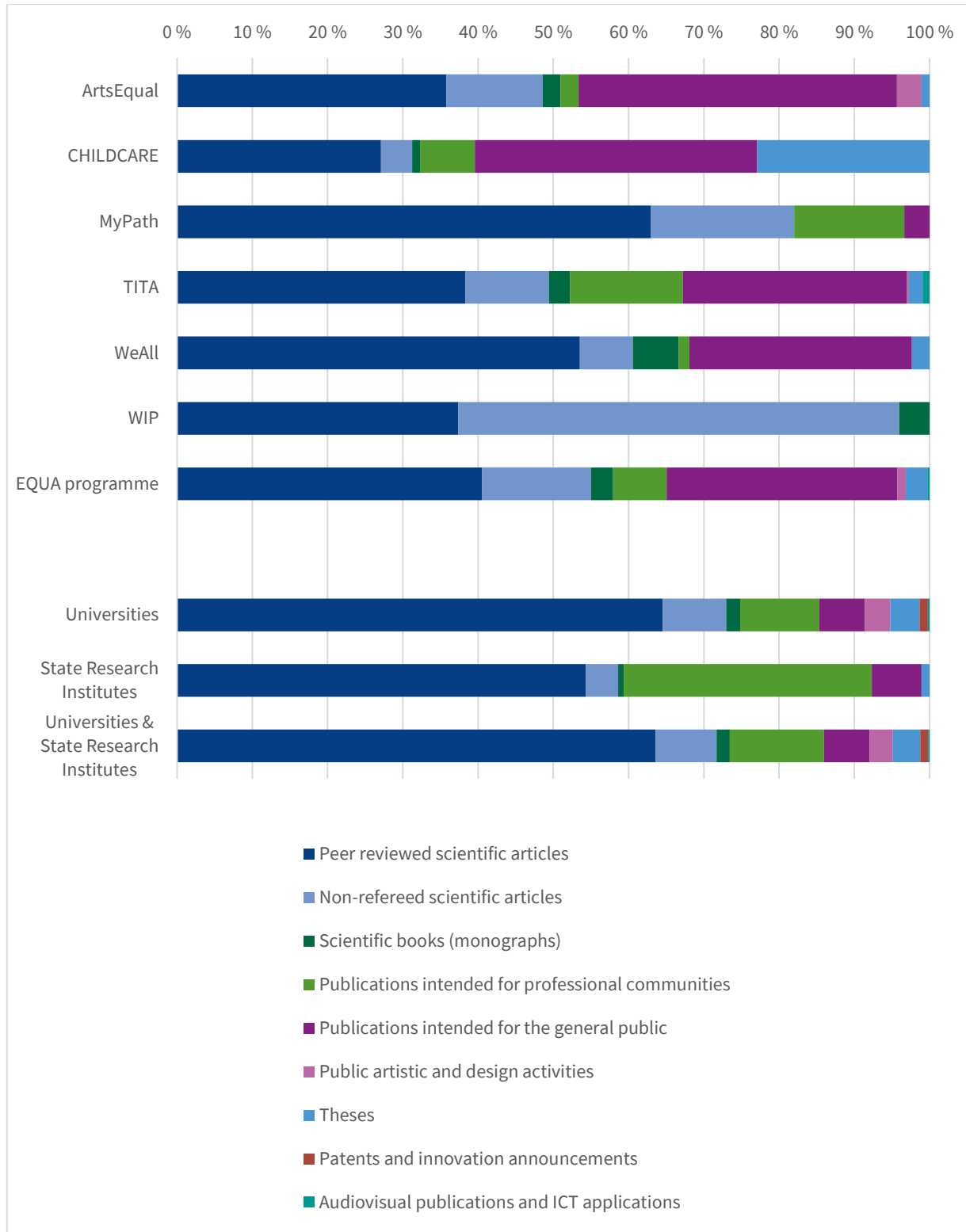


Figure 5. Share (%) of different publication types reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole, as well as in Finnish universities and state research institutes (as separate categories and together).



Appendix 9: Analysis of peer-reviewed publications

For a more detailed analysis of peer-reviewed scientific publications of the EQUA programme, publication data reported by the projects was supplemented with metadata from the national publication data collection VIRT.A. VIRT.A covers most publications from Finnish universities, universities of applied sciences, university hospitals and most state research institutes. The coverage of VIRT.A data in terms of the publications reported by the EQUA projects is presented in Table 9. The analyses presented in this appendix include only those EQUA programme publications that were found in VIRT.A.

Table 12. Number of peer-reviewed EQUA publications in VIRT.A data and their share of the peer-reviewed publications reported by the projects in 2015–2021.

Project	Number of peer-reviewed publications in VIRT.A	Share in reported publications
Artsequal	115	65%
CHILDCARE	23	85%
MyPath	42	75%
TITA	111	62%
WEALL	100	79%
WIP	33	80%
EQUA programme	424	70%

Figure 6. Number of authors per publication in the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

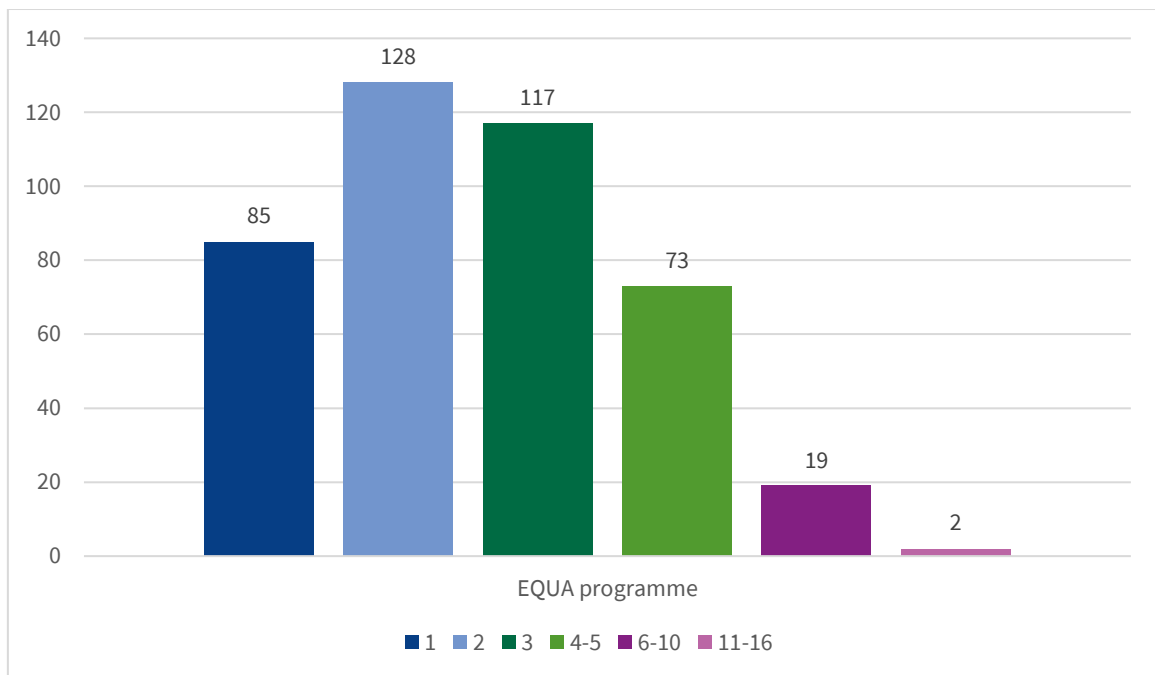
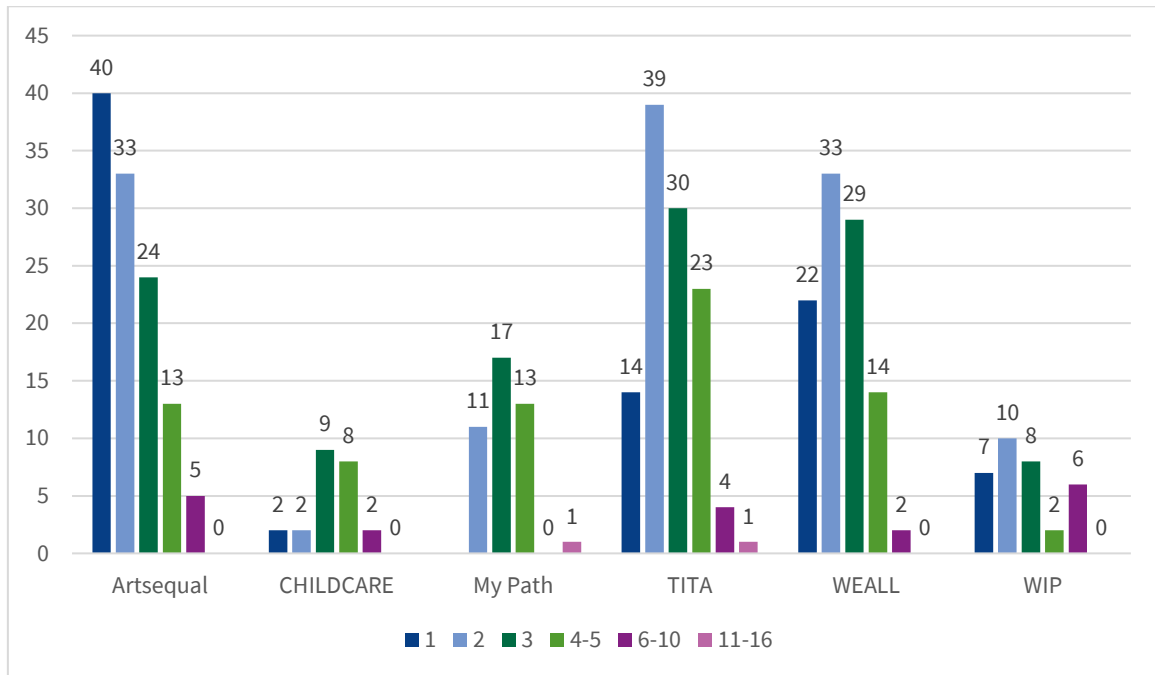


Figure 7. Language of publications in the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

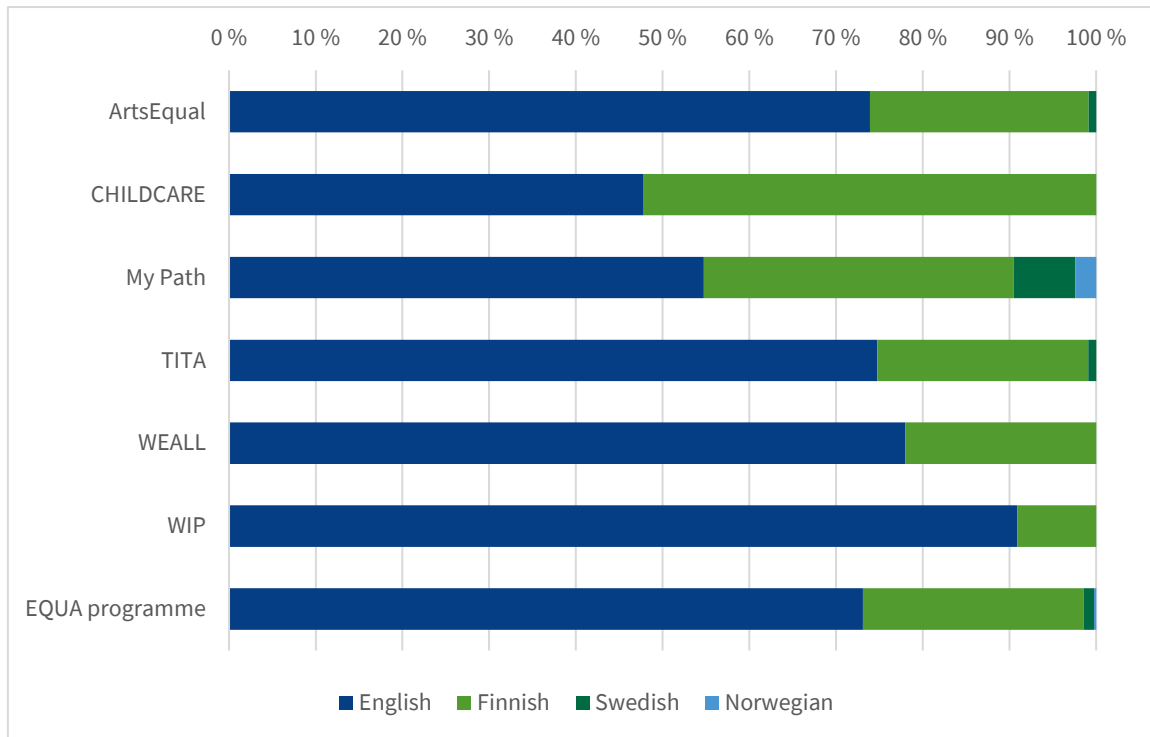


Figure 8. Share of national and international publications (%) in the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole, as well as in Finnish universities and state research institutes (as separate categories and together).

A national publication means a publication that is published by a Finnish publisher or is primarily published in Finland. An international publication means a publication that is not published by a Finnish publisher or is primarily published elsewhere than in Finland. For conference publications, publisher means the publisher of the conference publication.

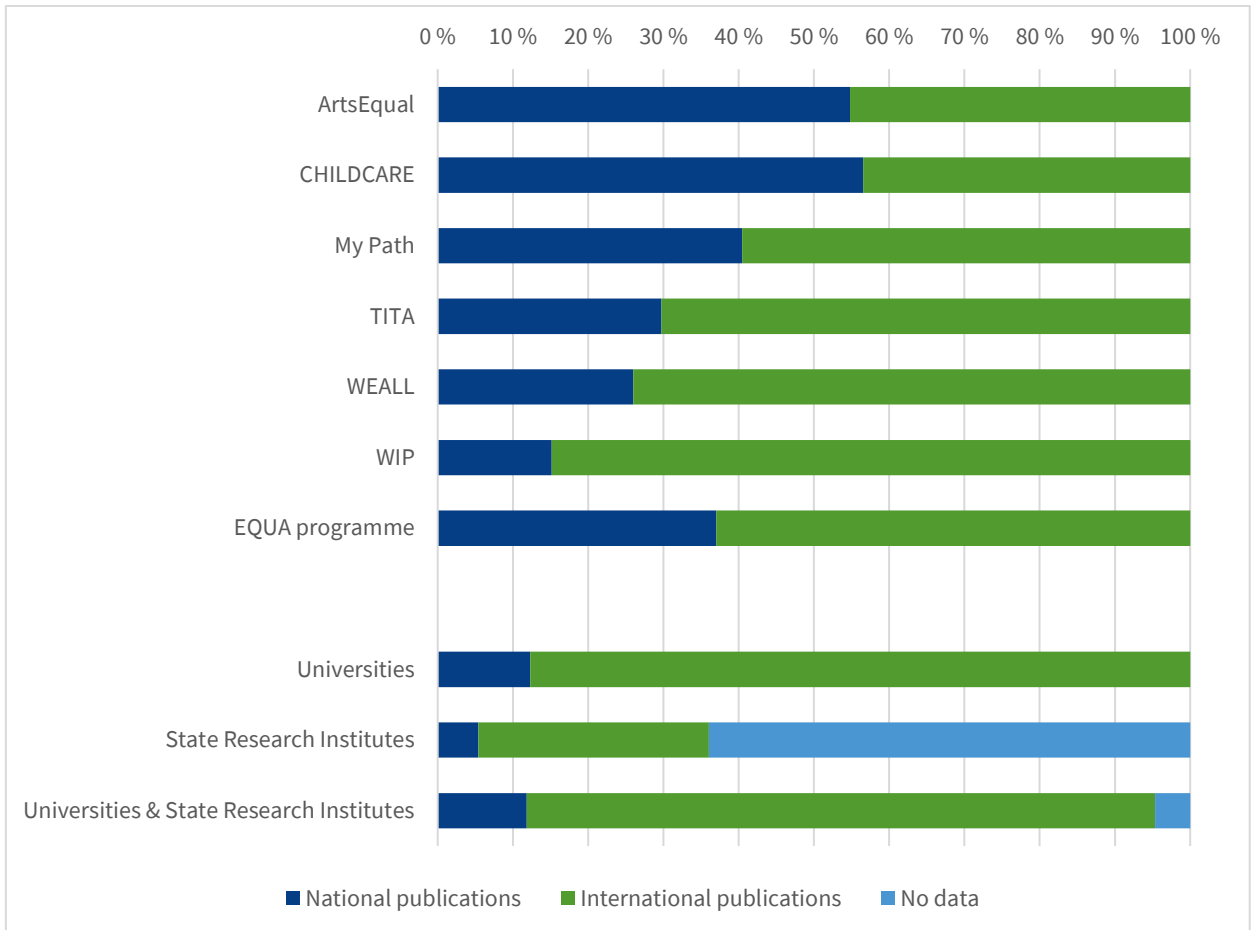


Figure 9. Share of international co-authoring (%) in the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole, as well as in Finnish universities and state research institutes (as separate categories and together).

At least one author of an internationally co-authored publication is affiliated to a non-Finnish organisation (the author may also be affiliated to both a Finnish and a foreign organisation). The foreign editor of the publication channel does not yet meet the criteria for international co-publication.

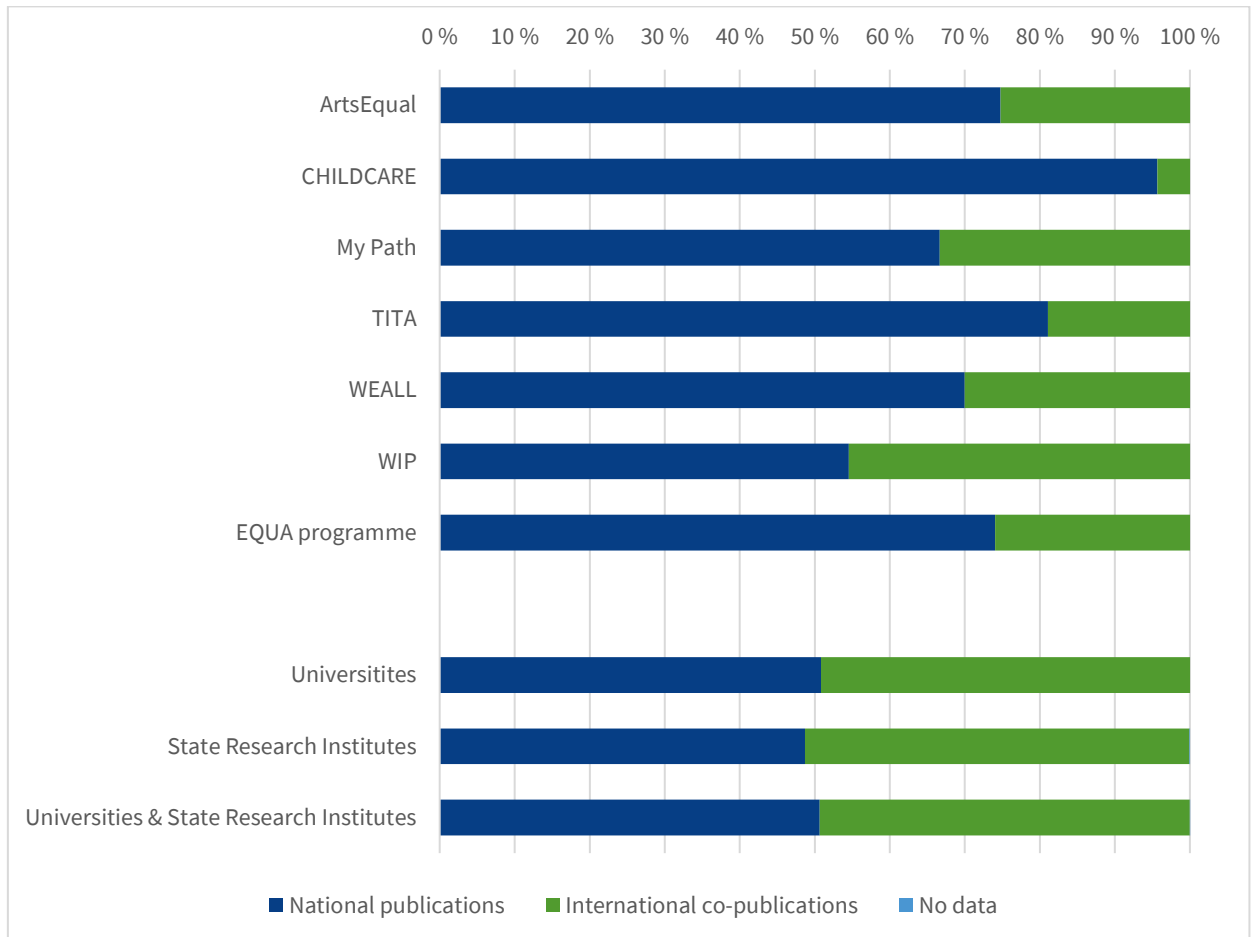
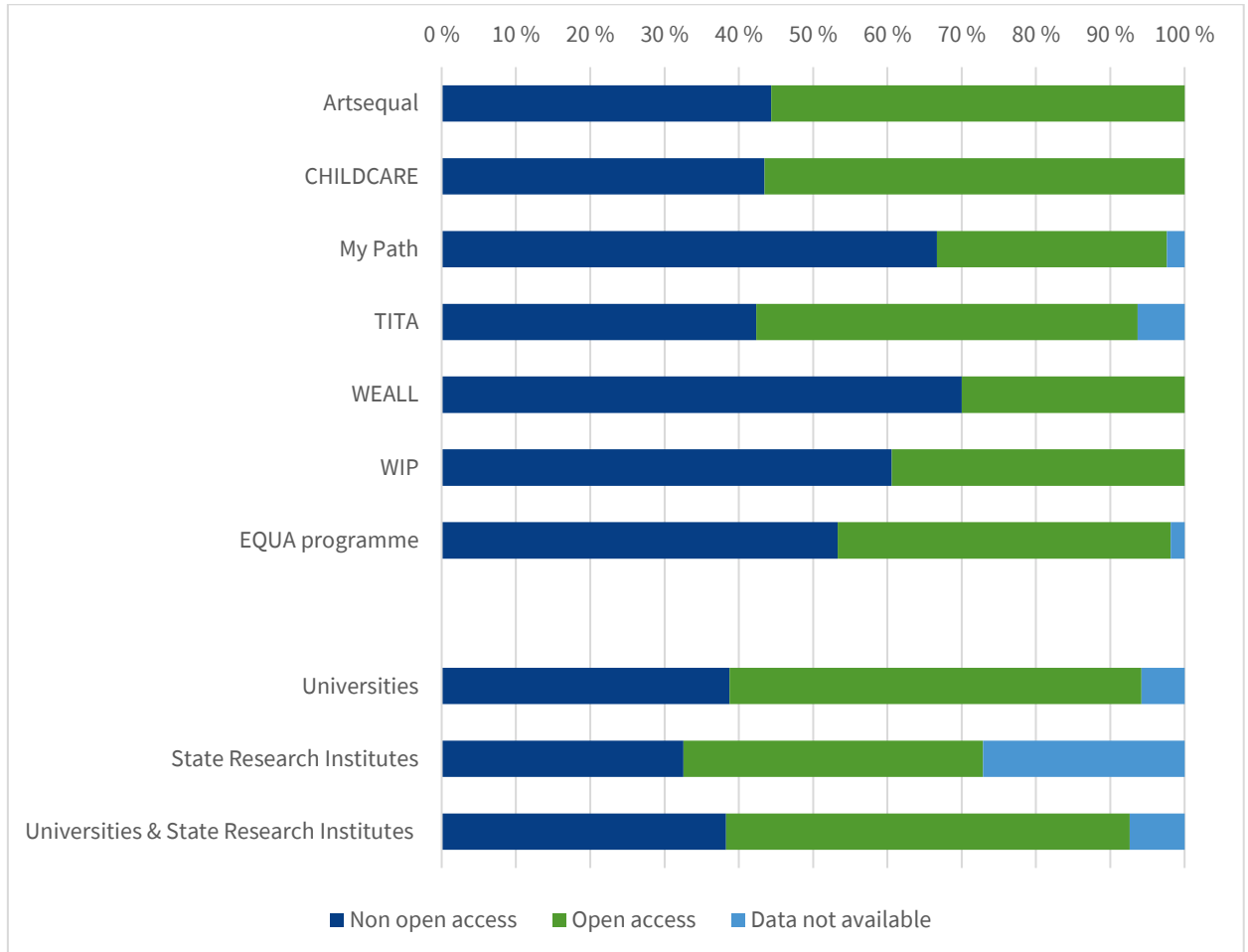


Figure 10. Share of open access publications (%) in the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole, as well as in Finnish universities and state research institutes (as separate categories and together).

Open access refers here to all modes of open access publishing defined in the national publication data collection¹¹

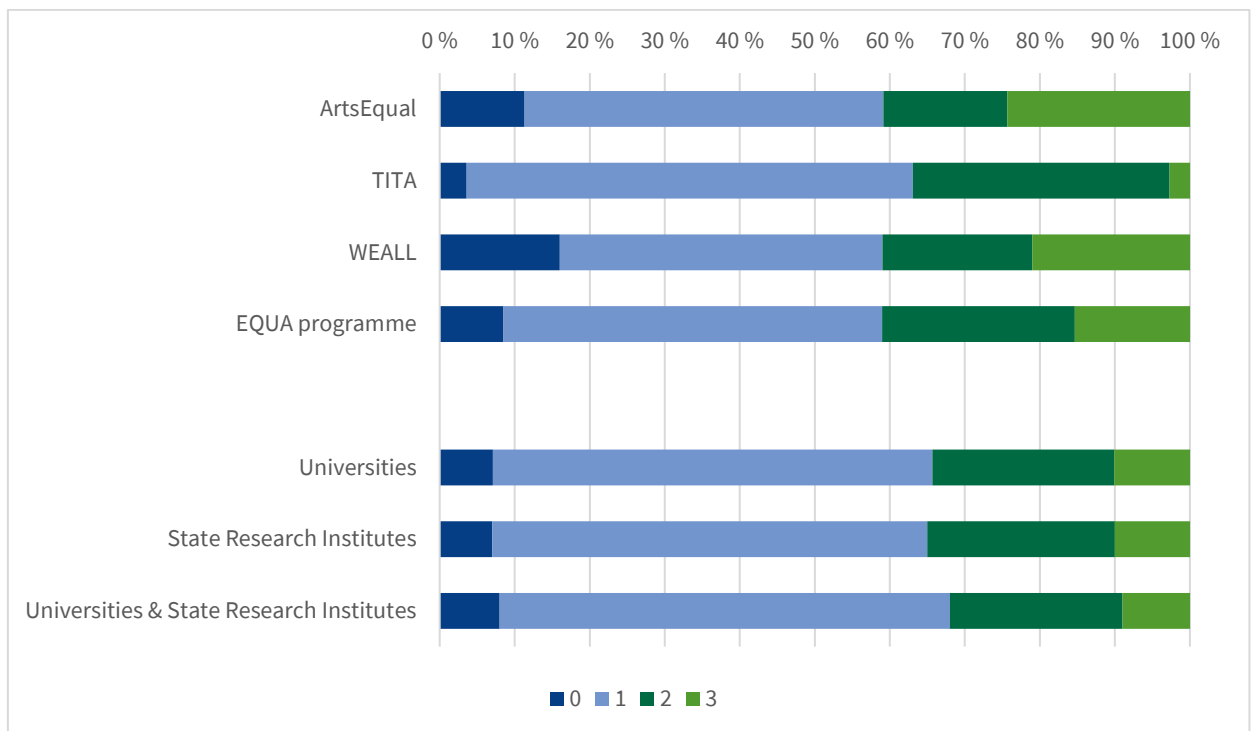


¹¹ More information about open access publishing: https://wiki.eduuni.fi/display/cscsuorat/Julka-isutiedon-keruun+tutkijaohjeistukset?preview=/39984924/256871940/2021_Publication%20data%20collection%20instructions%20for%20researchers.pdf, pages 12–13. [referred to 10.5.2023]

Figure 11. Share of publications at different Publication Forum (JUFO) levels (%) in EQUA projects and the programme as a whole, as well as in Finnish universities and state research institutes (as separate categories and together).

Information on CHILDCARE, MyPath and WIP publications is excluded from the figure because the number of publications is less than 50.

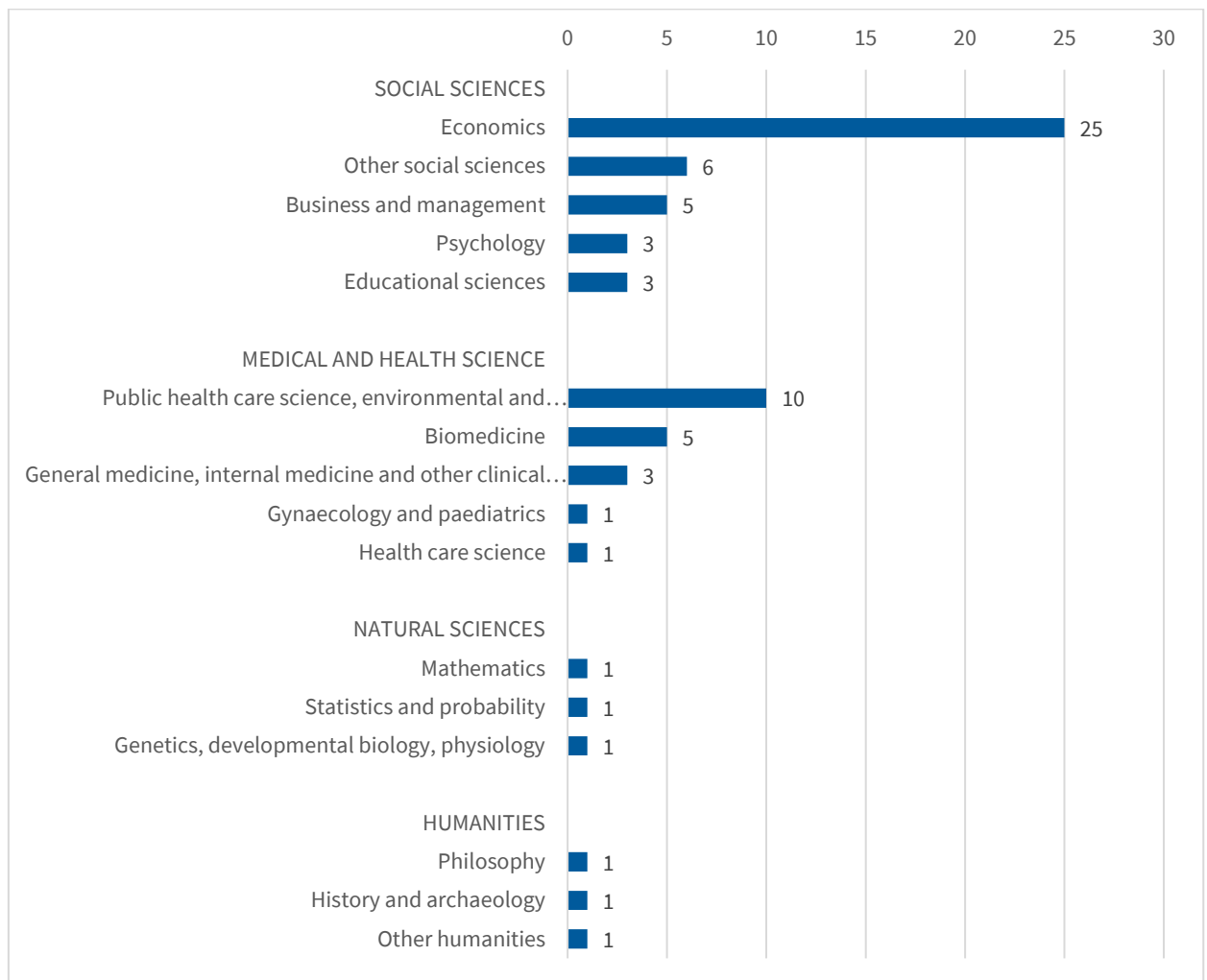
JUFO is a rating and classification system to support the quality assessment of research output. The four-level classification rates the major foreign and domestic publication channels of all disciplines as follows: 1 = basic level; 2 = leading level; 3 = highest level; 0 = publication channels that don't (yet) meet the criteria for level 1. To account for the different publication cultures characteristic of various disciplines, the classification includes academic journals, book series, conferences as well as book publishers.¹²



¹² Publication Forum 2022: <https://julkaisufoorumi.fi/en/publication-forum> [referred to 10.5.2023]

Figure 12. Fields of science assigned to publications in the EQUA programme.

In the national VIRTA publication data and collection, on or more fields of science¹³ is assigned to the publication. The number of publications is 424, and the number of field assignments is 623.



¹³ Fields of science are derived from Statistics Finland field of science classification: <https://www.stat.fi/en/luokitukset/tieteenala/> [referred to 10.5.2023]

Appendix 10: Other research output

Table 13. Research Data reported by the EQUA projects.

The SRC requires that the projects take charge of the responsible management and opening of research data. The degrees of data openness may justifiably vary, ranging from fully open to strictly confidential. If the research data cannot be made openly available, the metadata must be stored in a Finnish or international data finder.

Project	Research Data	Openness	Location
ARTSEQUAL	Accessibility in Basic Education in the Arts 2018	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3495
ARTSEQUAL	Kokemuksia sairaalamusiikkitoiminnasta 2018–2019	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3589
CHILDCARE	Early Childcare Education Inquiry 2016	Work for openness ongoing	
CHILDCARE	Early Childcare Education Inquiry 2019	Work for openness ongoing	
PSE	Peruskoerekisteri	No, but metadata available	
PSE	PSE Seurantatutkimus	No	
TITA	Welfare and Inequality in Finland 2016	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3310?study_language=en&lang=en
TITA	Welfare and Inequality in Finland 2017–2018	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3316?lang=en&study_language=en
TITA	Welfare and Inequality in Finland 2020	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3539?study_language=en&lang=en
WEALL	WeAll Media Data on Equality Issues in Working Life and Education 2016	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3148?study_language=en&lang=en
WEALL	Gender Equality Barometer 2017	Yes	https://services.fsd.tuni.fi/catalogue/FSD3345?lang=en&study_language=en
WEALL	Kyselyaineisto (Setan ja Nuorisotutkimusverkoston): ei-heteroseksuaaliset ja transnuoret koulutuksessa ja työelämässä.	Work for openness ongoing	

Project	Research Data	Openness	Location
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto työ-perhesuh- teesta ja johtamisesta	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto maahanmuut- tajien rekrytoinnista.	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto: kiinalaiset maahanmuuttajat Suomessa	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Kyselyaineisto: yhteiskunnalliset yritykset Suomessa	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	HLBTI-ihmiset koronakriisissä haastattelut	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto 50+ työnhaki- joista	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Etnografinen aineisto 50+ työnha- kijoiden työpajoista	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto korkeasti kou- lutetuista ulkomaalaistaustaisista naisista ja mentoroinnista.	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Etnografinen aineisto mentoroin- tiohjelmasta, joka suunnattu ulko- maalaistaustaisille korkeasti kou- lutetuille naisille	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Etnografinen aineisto Setan nuor- ten toiminnasta	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto maaseudun PK-yrityksistä, jotka työllistävät ulkomaalaistaustaisia	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto: työn ja muun elämän yhdistäminen mielenter- veysorganisaatioiden työssä	Work for open- ness ongoing	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto turvapaikan- hakijoiden vastaanottokeskusten työntekijöistä ja vapaaehtoisista	Research on- going	
WEALL	Verkostot non-management orga- nisaatioissa	Research on- going	
WEALL	Media-aineisto isät työelämässä	No	
WEALL	Haastatteluaineisto: Etelä-Pohjan- maan sairaanhoitopiiri.	No	
WEALL	Etnografinen aineisto, Hanken Bu- siness Lead korkeasti koulutetuille turvapaikanhakijoille	No	
WIP	No information	No information	

Table 14. Number of higher education degrees reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

Project	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
ArtsEqual	5	8
CHILDCARE	-	1
MyPath	-	6
TITA	7	9
WeAll	6	4
WIP	1	2
EQUA programme	19	30

Table 15. Number of research visits reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

Long-term visits are visits with a total uninterrupted duration of at least one month. Short-term visits are visits with a total uninterrupted duration of at least five working days but less than one month.

Project	Incoming long-term visits	Incoming short-term visits	Outgoing long-term visits	Outgoing short-term visits
ArtsEqual	-	10	8	44
CHILDCARE	-	-	4	2
MyPath	1	-	3	1
TITA	1	6	3	2
WeAll	2	6	6	23
WIP	-	-	6	-
EQUA programme	4	22	30	72

Appendix 11: New research funding

Table 16. New research funding reported by the EQUA projects and the programme as a whole.

The projects were asked to report important new research funding applications (including at least two members of the SRC project) that continue or advance the research carried out in the SRC programme. The table presents the total amount of reported new funding from national and international funding sources.

Project	National funding, €	International funding, €
ArtsEqual	1 961 740	403 004
CHILDCARE	99 963	2 329 552
MyPath	400 000	1 514 763
TITA	13 177 008	4 875 545
WeAll	207 000	2 438 408
WIP	2 451 263	-
EQUA programme	18 296 974	11 561 272

Appendix 12: Titles of impact stories

The societal impact of SRC consortia is monitored with the help of impact stories. The impact stories are reports that describe and discuss the research and interaction carried out in the project in relation to the joint impact objectives of the programme and the project's own impact targets.¹⁴ Each consortium in the EQUA programme was expected to prepare at least three impact stories and update them during the entire period the consortium was active. Most impact stories will be available via the strategic research website.¹⁵

ArtsEqual

- Metanarrative: Developing the service system for art and art education in a changing society
- Equal art education
- Accessibility of art services outside established art and art education institutions
- Expanding job descriptions in artistic fields and the development of vocational education and training

CHILDCARE

- Securing the equal systems for childcare support and early childhood education and care services
- Developing early childhood education and care support through dialogue with municipalities
- Promoting gender equality in families with young children: information to support decision-making

MyPath

- Mechanisms of social exclusion
- Impacts of measures aimed at preventing social exclusion
- The MyPath programme

TITA

- Assessments of reform measures
- Options to support decision-making
- An influential and active participant in discussions

¹⁴ Strategic research, Reporting and monitoring: <https://www.aka.fi/en/strategic-research/for-applicants-and-projects/for-projects/reporting-and-monitoring/> [referred to 12 May 2023]

¹⁵ Impact in strategic research, Impact stories: <https://www.aka.fi/strateginen-tutkimus/strateginen-tutkimus/strateginen-tutkimus-pahkinankuossa/vaikuttavuus-strategisessa-tutkimuksessa/vaikuttavuuskertomukset>

WeAll

- Introductory impact story
- The complex relationship between work and family
- Towards social and human sustainability in the Finnish world of work
- Identifying diverse differences strengthens employment and wellbeing

WIP

- Public Policy
- Distribution of income
- Producing new research data on the transformation of the labor market, its consequences and challenges for social security to reduce inequality

Appendix 13: The self-evaluation questionnaire

The aim of the self-evaluation questionnaire was to collect information on the success of the completed SRC programmes (EQUA, PIHI, TECH, CITIZEN) and on needs to develop SRC programme funding. The self-evaluation questionnaire was targeted at the consortium PIs and deputy PIs, work package and team leaders, and interaction coordinators, to whom we sent a personal invitation to respond.

The questionnaire was open between May 2 – May 27, 2022. The total number of recipients was 148, of whom 75 responded to the survey (response rate 51%). The number of recipients in the EQUA programme was 33, of whom 21 responded to the survey (response rate 64%).

The questionnaire data will be available at the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD).

Responses:

Select the consortium you were part of. (n=21)

ARTSEQUAL	7
CHILDCARE	3
TITA	3
My Path	3
WIP	3
WeAll	2

What was your (primary) role in the consortium? (n=21)

Research team leader, Work Package leader, or both	10
Consortium Principal Investigator	7
Interaction coordinator	2
Consortium deputy Principal Investigator	1
Other	1

In what kind of organisation did you work during the funding period? (n=21)

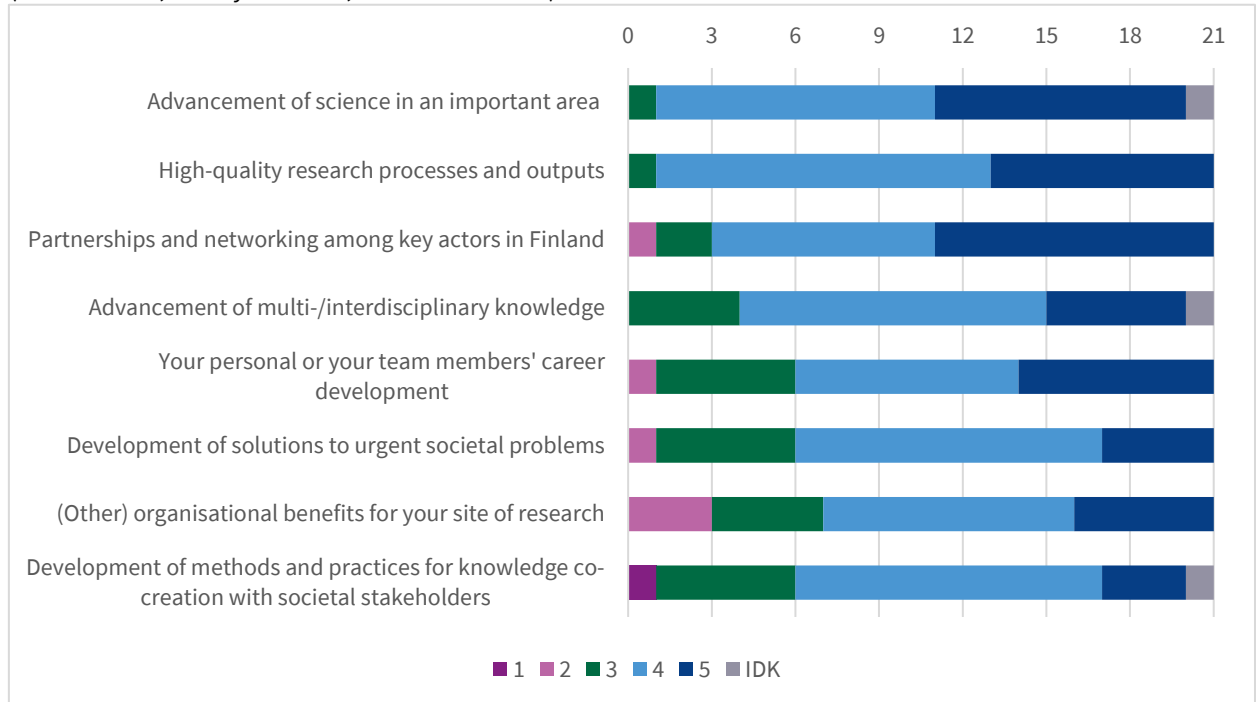
University	13
Government research institute	4
Non-governmental organisation	2
(Other) public sector organisation	1
Other	1
Several other options	-

Did you know the other partners of your consortium before this SRC programme? (n=21)

I knew all or most partners before the programme	10
I knew one or a few of the partners before the programme	7
I did not know the partners before the programme	4

Assess the effectiveness of your consortium in advancing the following goals of SRC funding, based on your own experiences and impressions. (n=21)

(1=ineffective, 5=very effective, IDK=I don't know)

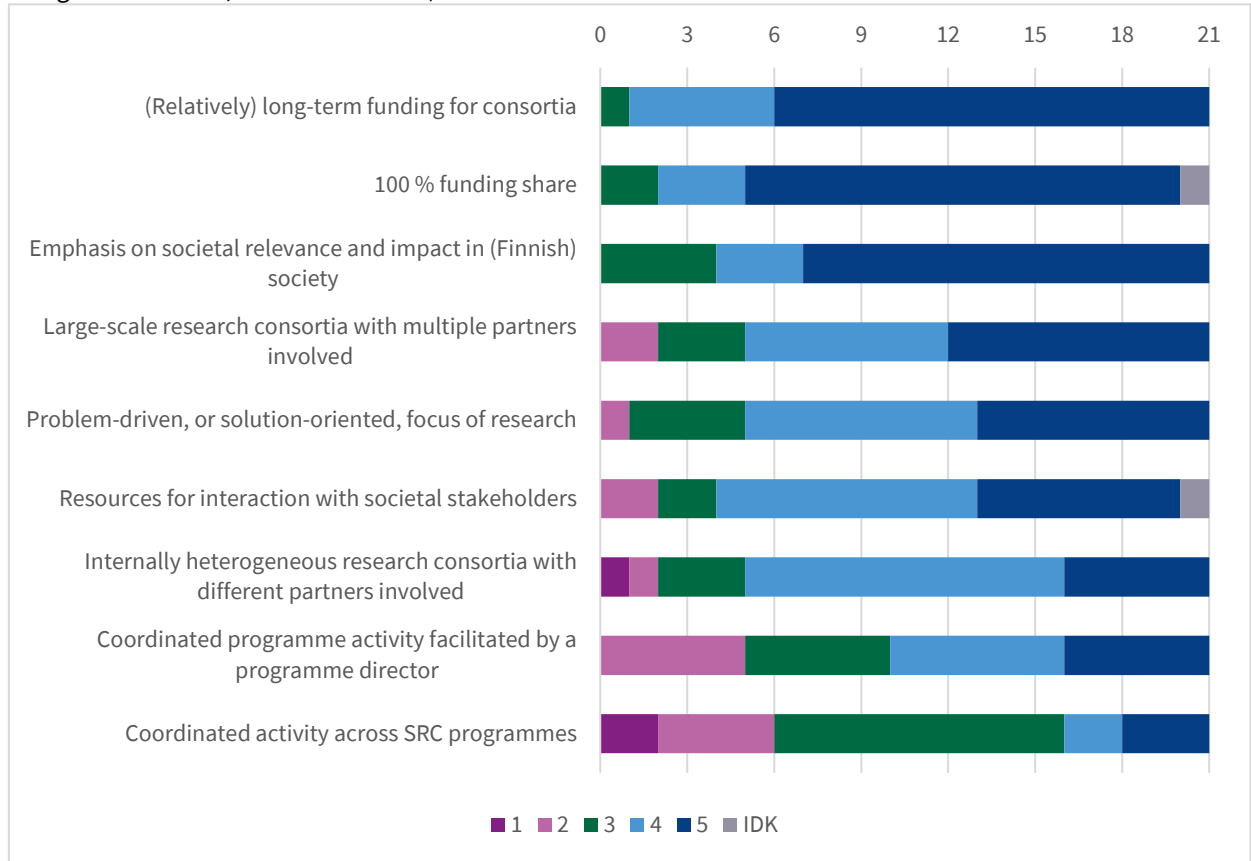


Tell us more about the effectiveness of your consortium in advancing the goals of SRC funding. (n=4)

The respondents thought that they were successful in advancing goals especially regarding collaboration. Effectiveness varied across research groups. The respondents stated that they inspired and influenced the whole research field also outside Finland.

Assess the added value of the following features of SRC funding, based on your own experiences and impressions of the SRC programme you were part of. (n=21)

Please consider the added value vis-à-vis your other/regular research activities. (1=no added value, 5=high added value, IDK=I don't know)

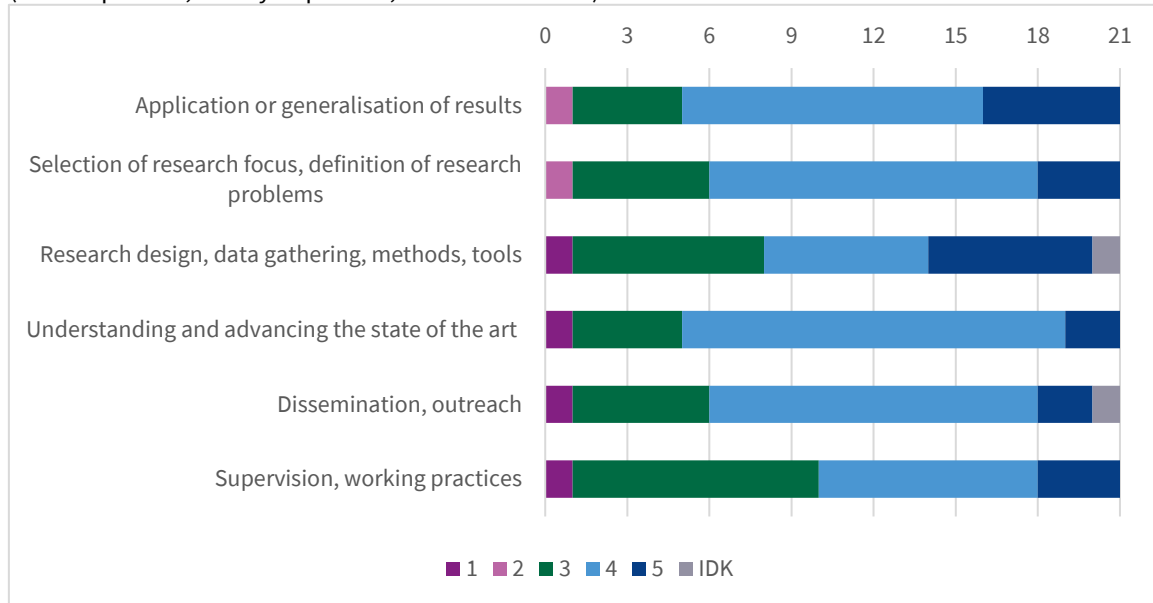


Tell us more about the most important added value of SRC funding. (n=5)

Collaboration between the stakeholders and researchers in addition to mutual learning processes as well as creation of new ideas were mentioned as the most important value adding aspects of SRC funding.

Assess the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration within your consortium. As a consortium partner, how important was the collaboration for the following aspects of your work? (n=21)

(1=unimportant, 5=very important, IDK=I don't know)



Tell us more about the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration in your consortium. (n=4)

The respondents stated that the multidisciplinary collaboration enabled a multifaceted approach by broadly applying different methods. The multidisciplinary collaboration created knowledge that integrated expertise from different fields as well as new research streams.

Did your consortium have research collaboration with other SRC consortia (within or beyond the SRC programme you were part of)? (n=21)

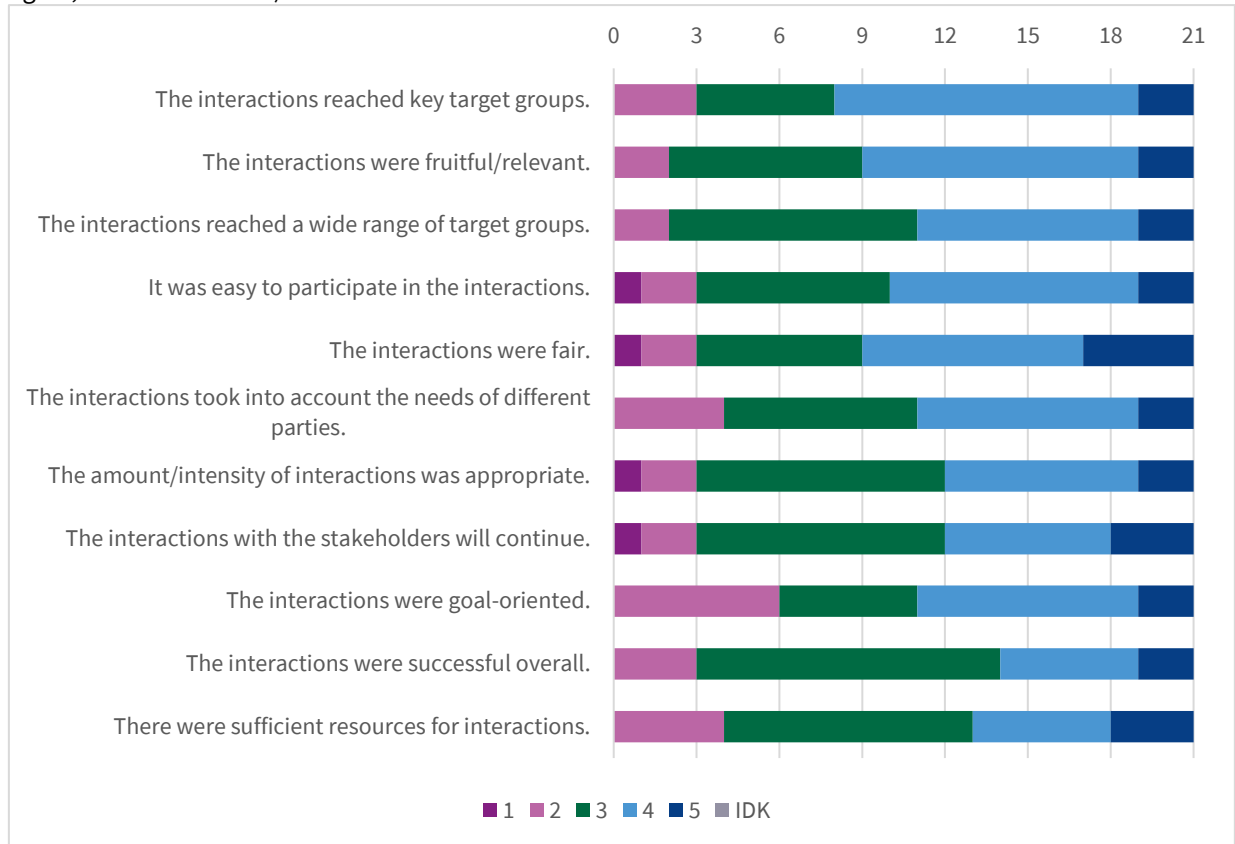
No, or I am not aware of it	14
Yes, within the SRC programme	7
Yes, across the SRC programme borders	-

Tell us more about the added value of your research collaboration with other SRC consortia. (n=1)

Collaboration between consortiums was adding value as participating in joint sessions and symposia in scientific conferences.

Assess the consortium's interactions with societal stakeholders (those you were involved in) using the following statements. (n=21)

(1=I disagree, 2=I disagree to some extent, 3=I neither agree nor disagree, 4=I agree to some extent, 5=I agree, IDK=I don't know)



Tell us more about the consortium's interactions with societal stakeholders. (n=5)

Variation in stakeholder attitudes was detected. Some respondents reported challenges in stakeholder interactions but had mostly succeeded in overcoming the tensions. Some of the stakeholders were cooperative from beginning. Interactions led to impacts for example in preparation of regional and cultural well-being plans.

In your view, what should be done to further strengthen the societal relevance and impact of strategic research programmes? (n=6)

Identifying the key level of impact realization was mentioned as the most important task to strengthen the societal impact. The respondents perceived that setting the target of realizing the impact of the results and recommendations should have been set on NGO's and policymakers instead of politicians. It was also mentioned that the stakeholders should have been engaged from the beginning of the projects and that collaboration between consortiums could have been beneficial.

Appendix 14: The survey for stakeholders

The survey was designed to collect information on the societal interaction of the completed SRC programmes (EQUA, PIHI, TECH, CITIZEN) and the significance of the programmes' research and interaction for project partners and stakeholders. The aim was to examine the achieved and expected societal impact of the programmes. The target group of the survey were the main stakeholders and partners designated by the projects and programme directors funded in these programmes.

The survey was open between March 15 – April 22, 2022. The total number of recipients was 195, of whom 33 responded to the survey (response rate 17%). The number of recipients among the EQUA stakeholders was 59, of whom 13 responded to the survey (response rate 22%).

The survey data will be available at the Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD).

Responses:

Select one strategic research programme (and one or more research projects under that programme) with which you have interacted. (n=13)

SRC programme: Equality in Society, EQUA	13
CHILDCARE	5
My Path	3
ARTSEQUAL	3
WeAll	2
WIP	2
TITA	1

To which of the following does your organisation/ stakeholder group primarily belong? (n=13)

NGOs, other civil society actors	3
Ministries	2
Government agencies and institutes	2
Municipal/City agencies and actors	2
Universities	1
Cultural and arts institutions and organisations	1
Trade and industry organisations	1
Other	1
Several other options	-

What (formal) role did you have in relation to the research programme or project? (n=13)

Stakeholder representative (without formal relationship)	7
Collaborator	3
Other	3
Service provider	-

Which of the following best describes your previous relationship with the researchers with whom you interacted within the programme or project? (n=13)

I knew the researchers from before.	5
I did not know the researchers, but my organisation has worked with them before.	4
I did not know the researchers, and my organisation has not worked with them before (or I am not aware of such collaboration).	2
Other relationship	2

What kind of cooperation or interaction has your organisation engaged in overall with researchers or research organisations before this programme? (n=13)

Occasional contacts, meetings, joint events, etc.	9
Long-term institutional collaboration	3
At least one joint project	1
None/I don't know	-

What role did you play in relation to the research carried out in the research programme or project? (n=13)

Supporter, participant or assistant	1
Other role	4
Expert or information source	8
Knowledge broker	6
End-user of research knowledge	6
Supervisor, leader or adviser	1
Experimenter or tester	-

If necessary, tell us more about your role in the research of the programme or project. (n=7)

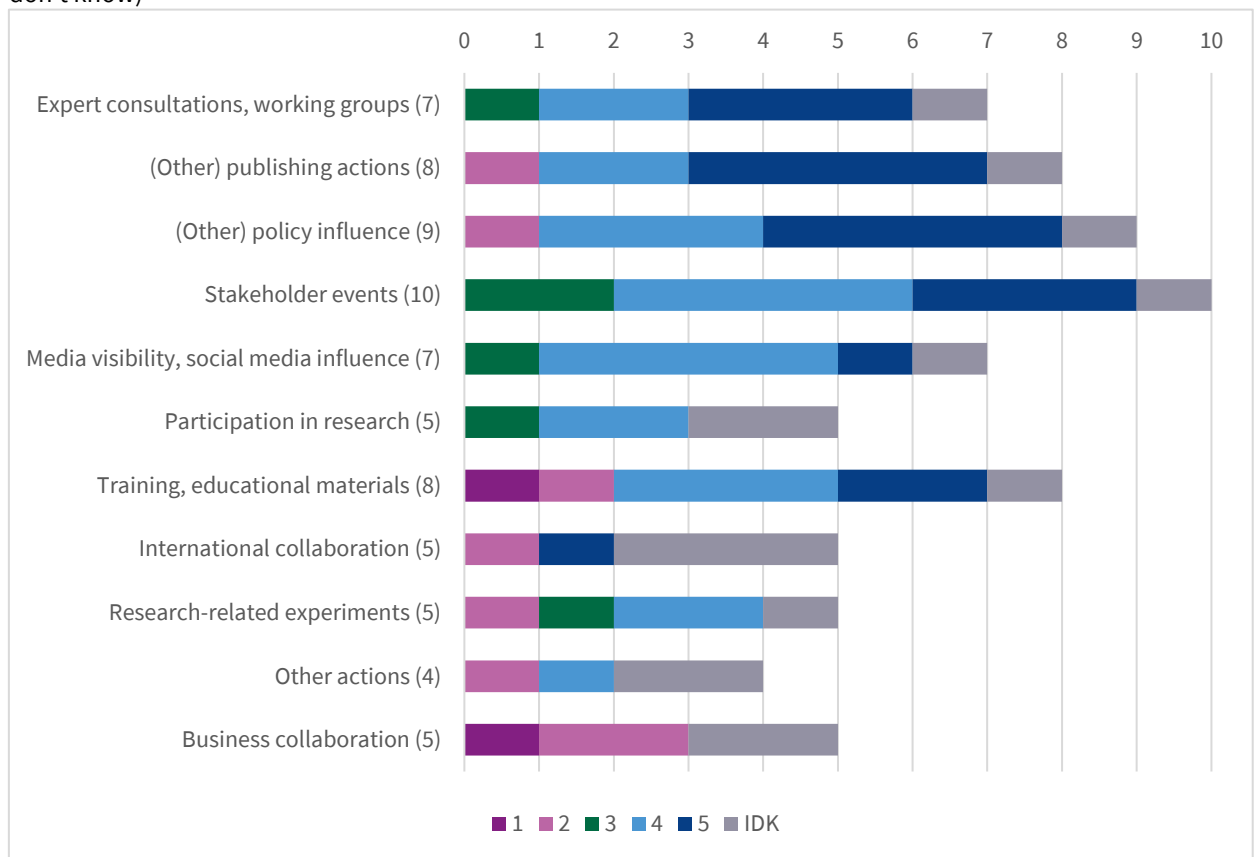
Stakeholders' role in research programme and projects were related to monitoring, steering and interaction. One of the participants was like a consultant, providing expert knowledge for the study.

How often did you interact with or work on the research programme or project? (n=13)

Several times a year	5
Once a year or less often	5
Monthly	2
Weekly	1
Once during the whole programme period	-

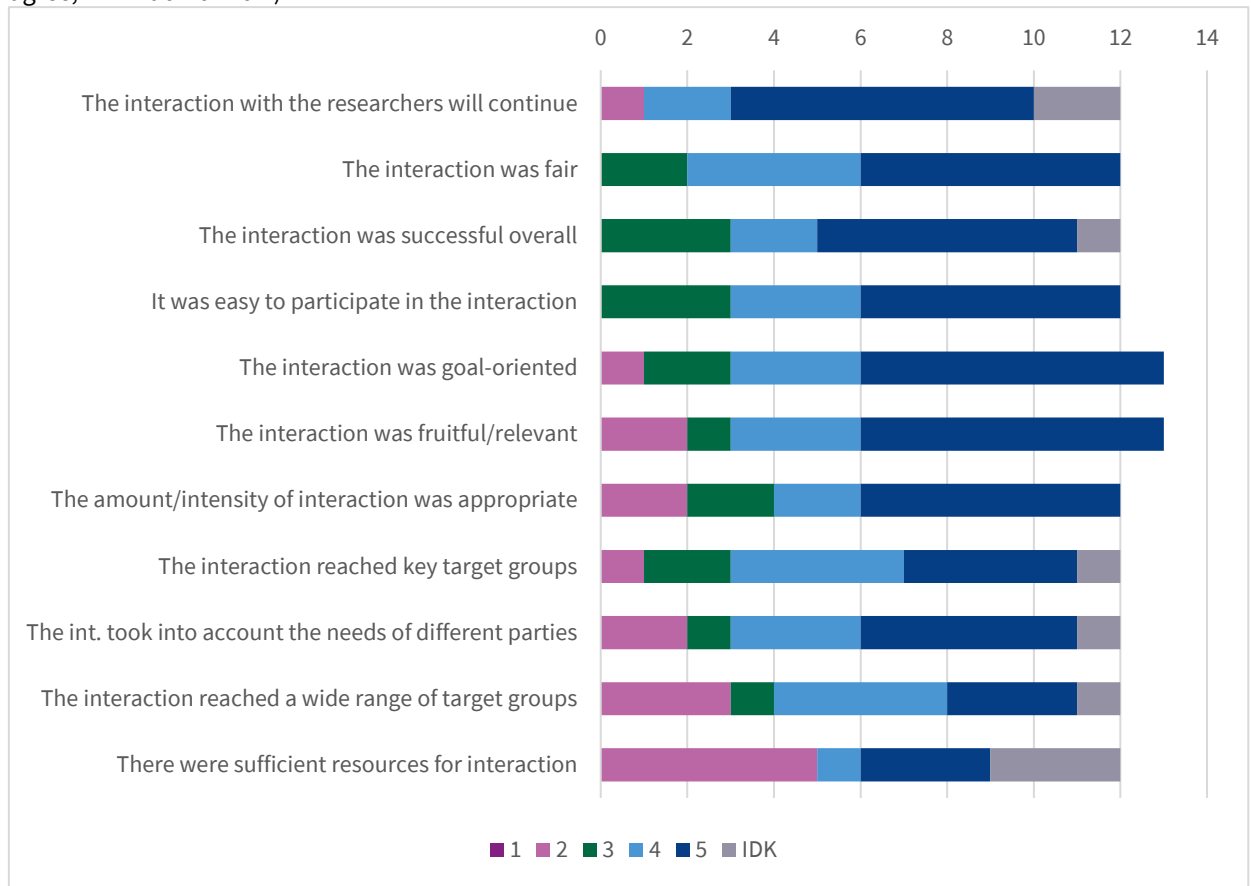
In what form were you involved in the research programme or project? Also assess the usefulness of the actions in terms of the societal impact of research. (n=13)

(1=useless, 2=quite useless, 3=neither useless nor very useful, 4=quite useful, 5=very useful, IDK=I don't know)



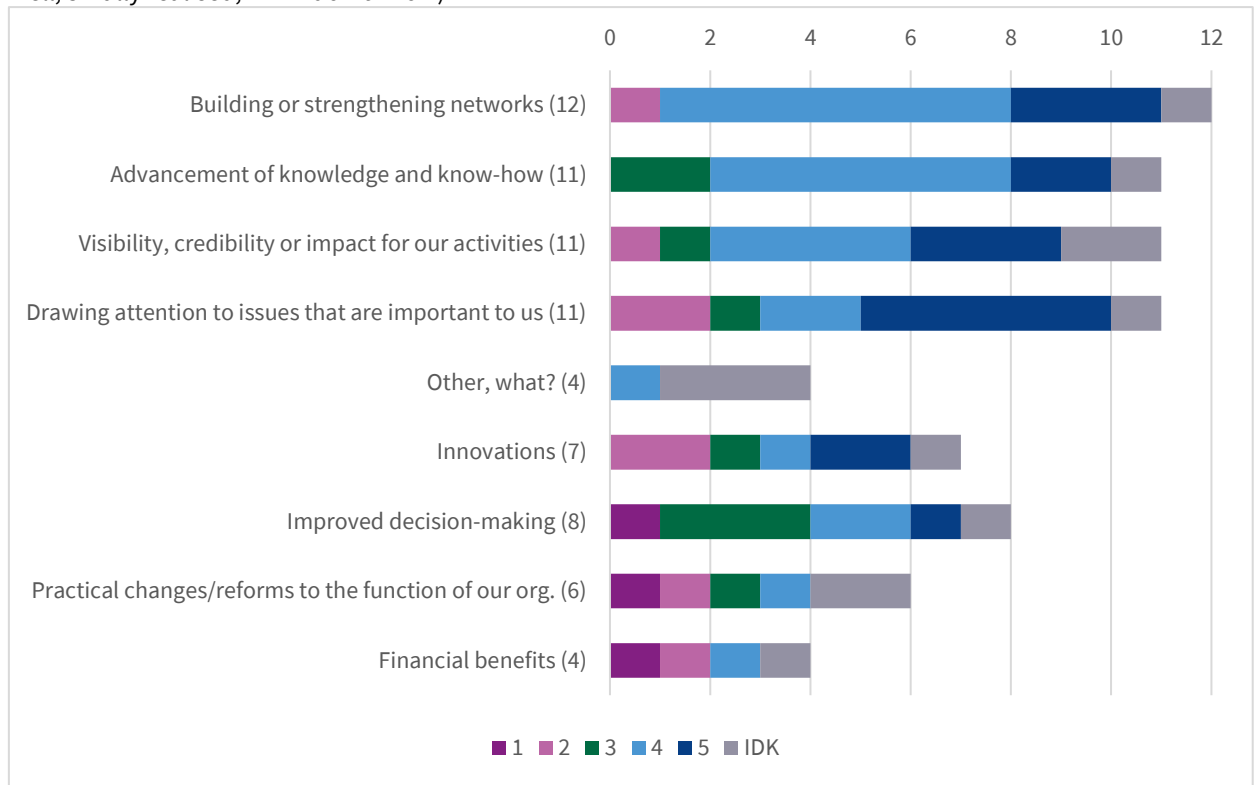
Assess the interaction with the research programme or project using the following statements. (n=13)

(1=I disagree, 2=I disagree to some extent, 3=I neither agree nor disagree, 4=I agree to some extent, 5=I agree, IDK=I don't know)



What were your aims for the interaction with the research programme or project? Please also assess how well your objectives were achieved. (n=13)

(1=not realised, 2=not realised to the expected extent, 3=realized to some extent, 4=realized fairly well, 5=fully realised, IDK=I don't know)



Please describe briefly one of the results, perspectives or solutions of the research programme or project that you consider significant. (n=8)

The different publications, policy recommendations and visibility in public discussion were described as significant. Knowledge was implemented for example in operational plans.

What practical significance has the work of the research programme or research project had for you? To what change has the research led or contributed? Please provide concrete examples, if you can. (n=11)

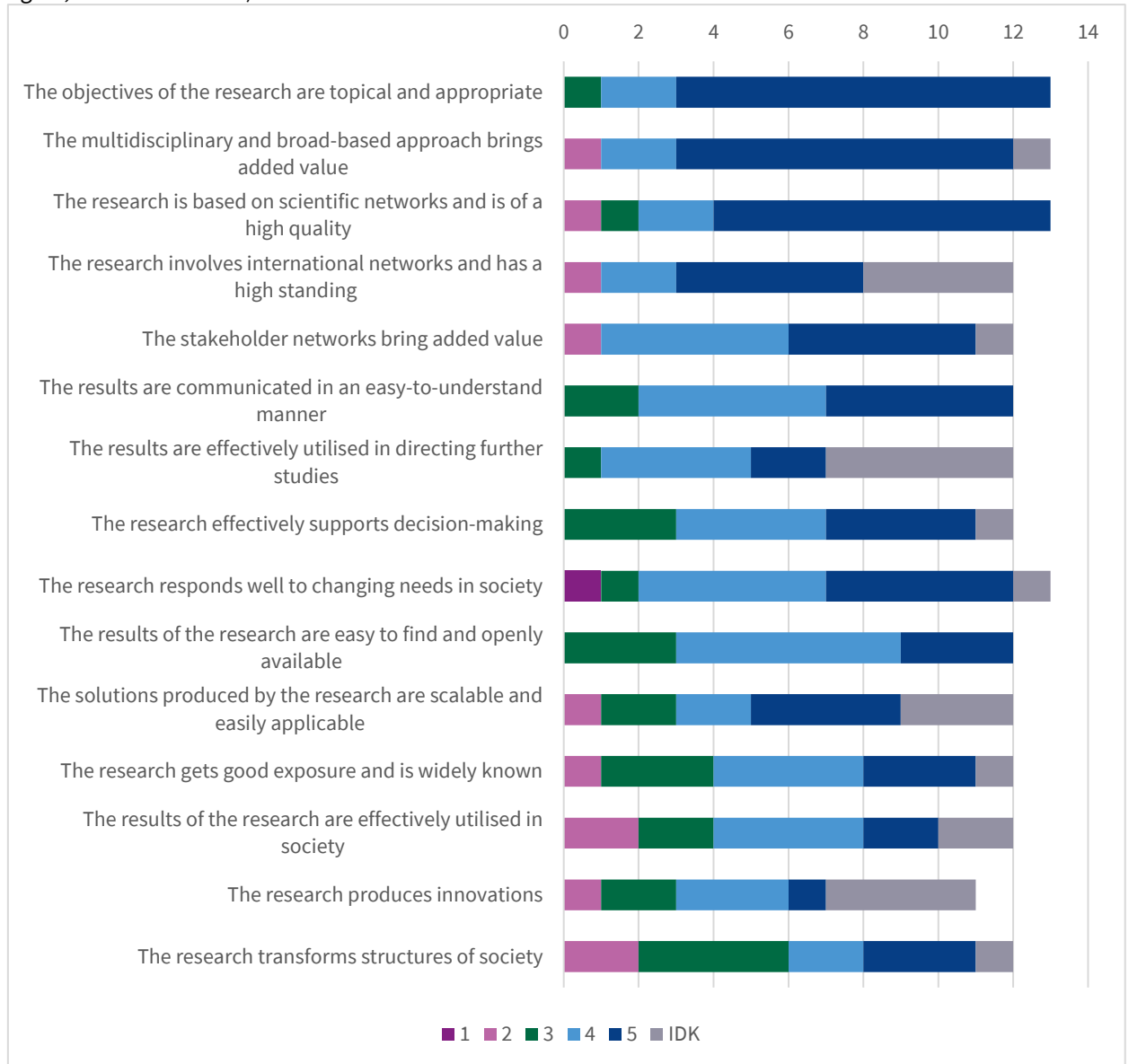
Some respondents mentioned the producing and use of policy briefs, whereas some of respondents mentioned the development of new practices and processes. Media visibility also came up in the answers.

How do you think the research programme or project managed to influence society more generally, in other ways than from your own perspective or from the perspective of your organisation? Tell us why you think this. (n=8)

Affecting the public opinion and providing knowledge to nationwide reform processes were acknowledged by the respondents to have broader scale societal impact. Creating new links between topics like society, childhood education and equality were also considered major discoveries.

Please assess the below statements on strategic research based on your own experience and views. (n=13)

(1=I disagree, 2=I disagree to some extent, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=I agree to some extent, 5=I agree, IDK=I don't know)



What do you think should be done to further strengthen the social relevance and impact of strategic research? (n=8)

Communication of the results could be developed with consideration to diversity, multilingualism and utilization of different channels to reach an even wider and more versatile audience. Steering the focus on a systemic approach was also suggested.

What could you do yourself to strengthen the social relevance and impact of strategic research? (n=8)

The respondents stated that they could also themselves disseminate the results more efficiently in their networks, cite the research in their own documents and pay attention to these kinds of projects and their outputs.