

Women in Physics in Lithuania: Challenges and Actions

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Status:

There are seven universities and three research institutes in Lithuania where physicists are mainly doing their research. A percentage of women physicists in Lithuanian universities and research institutes on different ladders of scientific carrier convincingly illustrate acuteness of the problem (TABLE 1).

TABLE 1.The percentage of women physicists in Lithuanian universities and research institutes in 2008 (Principal researchers (PR), senior researchers (SR), researchers (R) and junior researchers (JR)).

	Universities				
	Professors	Associated Professors	Lecturers	Assistants	Total
Vilnius University	3	11	12,5	0	9
Other Univ.	7	30	42	0	27
All Univ.	4,5	21	35	0	18
	Research institutes				
	PR	SR	R	JR	Total
All R. Inst.	8	19	31	12	19

The main Lithuanian university -Vilnius University (VU) having the largest number of graduates demonstrates a slightly different trend in women in physics compared with other Lithuanian universities. On the other hand when comparing the universities and institutions one can find a lot of similarities.

Trends: Analyzing how trends of women under representation depend on time one can come to the conclusion that the number of women in higher academic positions is slightly growing up when the total percentage of women in physics does not reveal any changes.

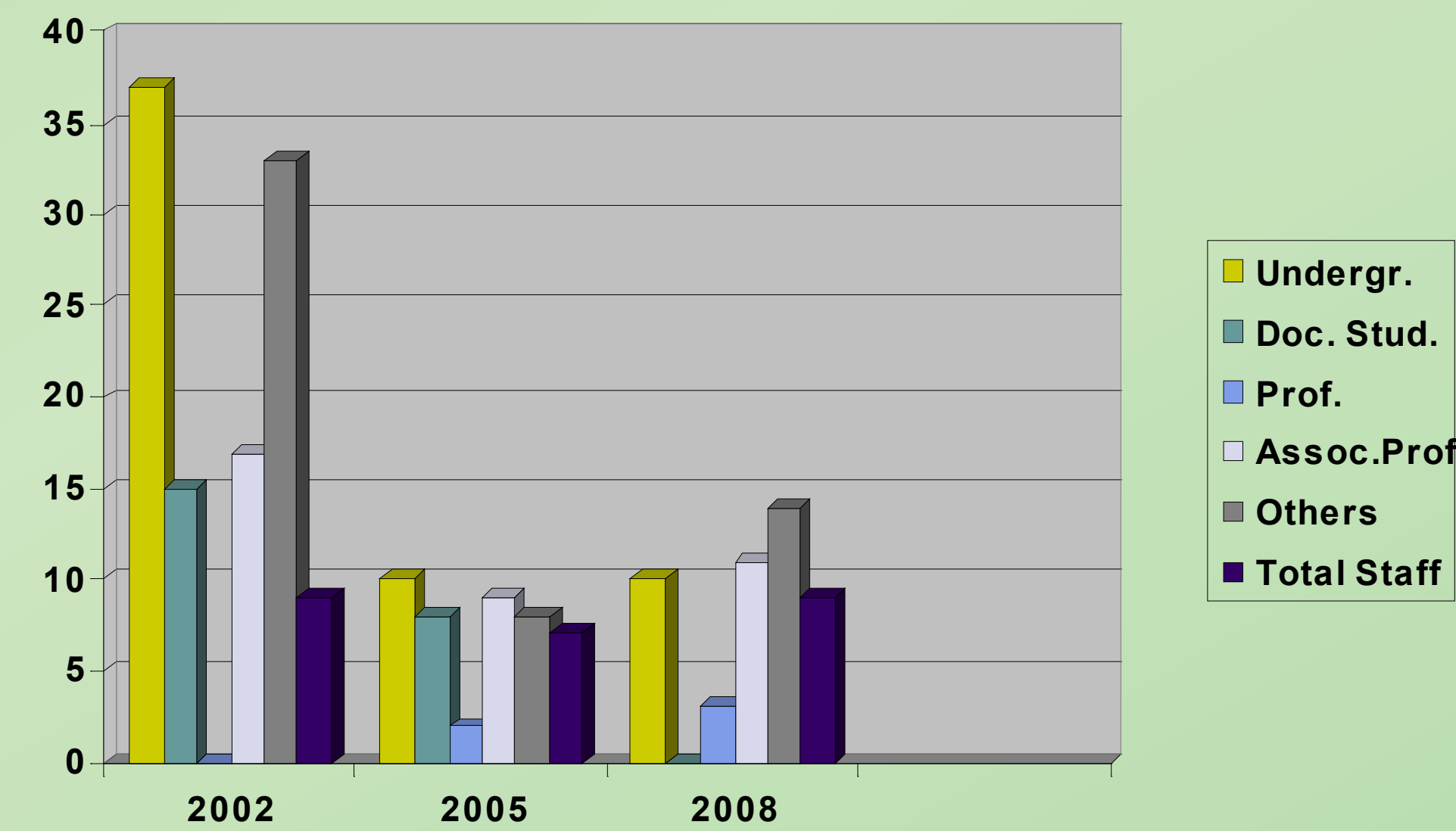


Fig.1.Changes in percentage of women physicists in academic positions in Vilnius University (2002-2008)

Actions:

To further the changes Lithuanian women physicists 2005 initiated regional FP6 project entitled: “Baltic States Network: women in Sciences and High Technology “(Basnet).

Study:

BASNET provided “in depth” sociological study revealed the following main factors influencing women under-representation in Physics:

- stereotypes existing in the society where physics is assigned to the masculine area of activity;
- failures in the science management system;
- conservatism of scientific community- reluctance to face existing in the scientific society problems and to start solving them.

Strategy:

On the basis of the results obtained as well as practice of other countries the BASNET strategy for solving women in sciences (physics) in the Baltic States region was formulated. BASNET strategy was adapted to all sciences (social and humanitarian also) and accepted by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

Implementation:

Lithuanian women physicists together with science policy makers are involved in preparation of national project concerned with implementation of the strategy in Lithuania.

