

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Dear colleagues,

We wanted to follow up on last week's event on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS) with some reflections. Thanks to all of you that joined, at some point we had over 100 participants! For those of you that couldn't assist, unfortunately, we did not record the event, but maybe the text below is a useful summary. We had a very rich discussion that deserves to be followed up as much as possible. We will organise more events soon, but anytime is a good time to discuss these issues, so let's all get involved!

Below we summarise some of the key topics and reflections during the talks and panel discussion

Have a nice weekend,

Diversity allies

Co-authorship

Nanna B. Karlsson's presentation on the state of gender distribution in Geo-Sciences offered many insights and food for thought. One especially relevant aspect was that women were significantly underrepresented in publication authorship, and tended to publish in lower-impact journals. This prompted many of us to review our publication lists and, in many cases, observed a similar trend.

A few key actions were discussed:

- Review your publication list and reflect on the results: Do you have a significant disparity in the gender ratio of authors on your papers? What about first authors? What about final authors?
- When establishing collaborations, consider gender balance: From your list of potential collaborators, are there people that are equally well suited to collaboration that may improve the diversity of researchers in your programme?
- When choosing collaborators reflect on unconscious biases: Do you tend to work only with people that have backgrounds similar to yours?
- When PIs decide where to submit students' papers, reflect on unconscious biases. That is, are you recommending similar-tier journals for all your students' papers?

Personality traits

Attitudes and personal traits are often perceived as gender-specific and valued differently when exhibited in men and women, e.g., a strong, determined personality is valued in men, but often perceived negatively when exhibited in women. So for many traits, we collectively favour "stereotypically male-like" traits and then we penalize women when they exhibit them. Ultimately, there are no inherently male- and female-traits, and we have the power to collectively decide which traits we want to foster in the workplace, and we can value them regardless of gender. This is, we should focus on desirable traits regardless of gender, and value a diverse set of traits in our leaders.

A few key actions were discussed:

- When you have a negative reaction to a particular personality trait, reflect if your perception is gender biased. That is, would you view this personality trait negatively in a person of a different gender?
- There are "natural" leaders, and they certainly don't segregate by gender. Let's all continue the discussion of which traits we want to favour and foster in GLOBE.

Post-gender-bias world

There was a discussion that if a lot of current issues are faced by both genders, we should be discussing "everyone-issues" and not "women-issues", and that ultimately, we should just treat everyone equally.

There were some key reflections on this point:

- It is sadly not true that all "women-issues" have been "solved"; women still face more biases and gender-specific issues (see the "[Leaky Pipeline in Academia](#)").
- Not perceiving gender-based issues, or not having first-hand experience with these issues, does not mean those issues do not exist.

- Just because you don't actively discriminate does not mean that others do not.
- We should distinguish equality from equity. We should treat everyone with equity because we are all different and some people carry specific disadvantages or conditions. Treating everyone "equally" magnifies imbalances.
- Elevating your female colleagues does not represent a cost to you, so why not do it?

Unconscious bias

Many if not all the issues above relate to implicit/unconscious biases. Standing issues with gender disparity are not only about blatant discrimination; many issues are nuanced, systemic and hard to perceive. We are all products of the systems we learned in. The single most important thing to do is to challenge ourselves and check our biases and privileges. There are plenty of resources out there to better understand our biases:

Guide: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-qa/pages/resources-articles-workplace-bias.aspx>

Explanatory video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoBvzI-YZf4&t=318s>

Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/user/pih/pih/index.jsp>

Through the event people contributed links to important material:

- On impact factors: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0253397> here is one
- Davies et al manuscript <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001282>
- Denmark is very underrepresented in DORA: https://sfdora.org/signers/?_organization_country=denmark
- A short version of the "Invisible Women" book, Zetland had recently an article / podcast feature about it: <https://www.zetland.dk/historie/s85EaDd0-ae2KvJdE-1c306> (in Danish)
- Another podcast in English: <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/invisible-women/>
- Special issues on female role models and their contributions in Evolution and Natural Sciences
- <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17524571/2016/9/1>
- <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/700119>
- Read more about the problem with student evaluations here: <https://www.nplusonemag.com/issue-34/essays/sexism-in-the-academy/>
- The GLOBE institute has had a male-biased structure since its inception: globe.ku.dk/newslist/2019/new-institute-to-describe-the-diversity-of-humans-and-the-earth/
- Resources on how to be an effective ally to improve gender equality: <https://menengage.unfpa.org/en/news/7-ways-men-can-be-better-allies-gender-equality>