GenHET newsletter

Issue 09 | June 2026

On the road towards equity in STEM

This issue of the GenHET newsletter explores how gender inequality in STEM is measured, understood and can be addressed. It features interviews with Tiffany Straza on women in science, data and policy, and with Hiromi Yokoyama on gender, academic culture and science education in Japan. This issue also features an initiative to collect stories of women in STEM to write an article in denunciation of gender discrimination in the field. Additionally, the issue contains an interview with the organizers of the 2026 GenHET Meeting on Beyond the Standard Model.

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Interview with Tiffany Straza

IISD/ENB

Quick profile

- Science-policy specialist at the intersection of data, governance, and inclusion
- PhD in oceanography
- Programme Officer in International Policy and Conventions at UNEP-WCMC.
- Single author of UNESCO's 2024 "Changing the Equation" policy report

From action-oriented to open science

We always like to start by recapping on our interviewees' background. Could you tell us a bit about yourself as an oceanographer?

I am trained as an oceanographer. This has given me a systems approach and an ecological perspective on science.

I think it is relevant to note that I come from a very rural area in southern Saskatchewan, Canada. I also have a lot of experience in small island settings, including the Cook Islands and Samoa, as well as in rural communities and developing countries. These are places where there is less separation between knowledge generation, research, and immediate application.

> **I come from a very rural area. I have a lot of experience in places where there is less separation between knowledge generation, research, and immediate application.**

The situations in which I have lived have made me really empathetic to people who seek to create knowledge to use it directly and meaningfully. As a result, a common thread throughout my career has been the drive for a connection between research and solutions — to pursue real applications when facing real challenges.

Could you share an example?

When I was living in the South Pacific, there were very few people trained and practicing in conventional science, but there was an enormous range of needs across different subject areas for scientific information to inform decision-making and policy. As a scientist, I could access and grapple with highly technical information — available mostly in English and often disconnected from the local context —, and interpret it for decision makers.

I worked on a wide range of issues, from ocean management to climate resilience and invasive species. This was both personally and professionally really rewarding.

How did you turn from environmental management to open science and inclusivity in science?

While in the South Pacific, I read the UNESCO Science Report for the first time. This is a global monitoring tool that looks at how governments manage our relationship with science. It tells us who is contributing to knowledge from around the world. When I read the Pacific Islands section, I thought "I want to be part of making this better".

This led me to work with UNESCO on the subsequent edition of that report[1] and later in helping countries deliver on their commitments under the Rec-

[1] UNESCO, *UNESCO Science Report: the Race Against Time for Smarter Development*, S. Schneegans, T. Straza and J. Lewis (eds.) (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2021), https://www.unesco.org/reports/science/2021/en. The UNESCO Science Report series regularly examines gender trends in science; see also A. Bello, T. Blowers, S. Schneegans and T. Straza, UNESCO, *To Be Smart, the Digital Revolution Will Need to Be Inclusive: Excerpt from the UNESCO Science Report* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2021), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375429.

[2] See UNESCO's webpage, in its *Open science* section, https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science, also for the recommendations.

ommendation on Open Science[2], an international legal framework that urges countries and the global community to practice inclusive science with dialogue across knowledge systems. I studied how we create and communicate knowledge, how we connect it across different systems and how people use it.

> **The goal of monitoring is to support action; to do so, one must identify a smart proxy that helps make decisions in the face of complex realities and with limited information.**

Monitoring women in science

If we want to make information-driven decisions at a global level, data must be collected in a way that enables comparisons. Could you tell us about the challenges such data entails?

Data are always going to be limited, expensive to obtain and not neutral. On the one hand, we want to make sure that we acquire knowledge to inform the decisions we need to make in our context. This necessarily gives rise to local constraints. At the same time, we want to be able to compare our knowledge with that obtained in other places, in order to be able to assess our collective progress. International comparison is important because it helps us see the big picture. Are the challenges we face unique to our context, or are they shared more broadly? What are our shared goals, and how are we getting towards them? One has to find the right balance.

It is important to note that the goal of monitoring is not to collect every single piece of information. The goal is to support action, and we can do that when we identify a smart proxy that helps make decisions in the face of complex realities and with limited information.

How does this work when it comes to the monitoring of women in science?

Let us consider the example of tracking representation of women in science. UNESCO has been working with countries for decades, using the percentage of women among researchers as a proxy[3]; it is easy to compare among countries and see which research communities are close to parity in numbers. However, the percentage of women in a community is not the problem in itself.

Suppose there are 30 out of 100 people in your scientific community who are women. The problem is not that 30% of your scientists are women. This is a symptom. The problem is that there is a difference with respect to what their representation would be out of chance. It entails the existence of a bias: there is a difference in experience and treatment, something that is excluding women from this particular space and hence from having influence therein. We can measure that representation proxy relatively easily because we can simply count people. It is harder to quantify or measure people's experiences, their situation.

> **In a context of under-representation, it is not enough to ask how many women are present. We also need to ask: who are these women?**

Beyond their relative presence, how do we increase our understanding of the situation of women in science?

To this aim, we should ask further questions. Are women in science being paid the same as men? Are they being hired at the same rate? Are they applying for the jobs at the same rate? Are they facing tenure on the same kind of timeline? These questions can be turned into numbers. Other queries need to be addressed through qualitative data and information, such as stories and experiences. We now have greater access to established and emerging tools that help us grapple with sets of qualitative information.

In a context of women's under-representation, it is not enough to ask how many women are present. We also need to ask: who are these women? Are they all young? Are they all white? Do they all have (or not have) kids? We have to consider intersectionality. If women are present, are they speaking? Are they heard? Are they influential? Are they comfortable? Are they being treated in the same way and receiving the same kind of challenges and rewards and incentives to stay?

There exists an emerging body of research and resources on enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in

[3] UNESCO, *Status and Trends of Women in Science: New Insights and Sectoral Perspectives* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2025), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000393768.

the workplace, which rose in public consciousness in 2020 with the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement[4].

> **What we measure matters, but there are risks: misinterpreting the causes, unwanted consequences, the creation of divides and hierarchies.**

In the face of such pervasive and multifaceted problems, what are concrete proxies we should aim to measure or specific information we should try to gather?

There is value in having the same indicator for a long period of time and comparable across institutions and countries. But there is an unavoidable tension between that and monitoring what is specific to our context and the decision-making need.

Imagine you are in an institution like CERN. Then, you most likely have some staff and student data, so you know how many women are present. If the number is very different from parity, from that expected by chance, then you want to know why. The next question would be: what are the experiences of those women? If you fear that women are facing a different situation, having a different experience, you need to find a way to not only identify but also react to this.

An indicator like the percentage of women is a proxy for the outcome of a situation; you can also measure the existence and implementation of a process to address gender inequities. Processes link a vision (policy) and concrete actions tailored to the context. For instance, you can record the establishment of a support group or the creation of an institutional gender mission statement, fostering the coming together of people with a shared vision.

Beware that it is going to take a long time for the outcome to change, in this instance the percentage of women. The number of women in an institution is related to hiring, retention, and processes that take years to affect that percentage.

There are different proxy indicators that can be adopted, but it might be most valuable to start by simply opening a conversation in your institution. People should be asked what they see as valuable to measure, what they would be willing to participate in. Again, just measuring all the categories does not necessarily get us anywhere. It can even place people at risk. The survivors of genocide have told us to be cautious when we see a regime trying to categorize us and create divides. So we must ask ourselves: what can we measure that gives us information, but that keeps people safe? We need processes, including monitoring processes, that bring us together with shared values and shared goals, instead of breaking us apart into pieces.

> **We need monitoring processes that bring us together with shared values and goals.**

Could you elaborate on the possible risks involved in proxy measurements?

What we measure matters, and there are risks associated with it. There is a risk of misinterpreting the causes behind a given proxy value. Consider again representation of women in science. If there is a field of work where there are a lot of women, over-represented compared to their proportion in the general population, is it because everything is good? Or is it because the pay is low, respect is low, or some other driver has meant that men (who typically remain as the primary income earners) avoid that profession? There are some technical fields with more women than men. In some cases, men are not entering those fields any more: there has been a process of feminisation. This a particularly insidious problem. If a field is seen as feminine, then it is seen as not an option for men, which constitutes an equity issue. Worse, feminised fields may be seen as less scientifically valid, less interesting, or less worthy of investment.

There is a risk of ranking: there are many advantages to having long-term, stable series of data sets that we can compare across countries or fields, but these could be mis-used to rank and compete. Information ideally helps us all progress, it should not create divides and hierarchies.

[4] For a discussion of the post-2020 expansion of the diversity, equity and inclusion discourse and institutional responses, see, for example, M.L. Wang, A. Gomes, M. Rosa, P. Copeland and V.J. Santana, *Translational Behavioral Medicine* 14, 156 (2024), https://academic.oup.com/tbm/article/14/3/156/7324745, as well as further references gathered in the rubrique at the end of this Newsletter, on p. 21.

What is the problematic behind proxy-based rankings?

If we use proxies to rank, be it countries or institutions, this can lead to a denial of resources. We may declare a country already successful based on a proxy, mistaking the proxy for the problem. Or we may deem an institute too far from success and hence unworthy of help, even if those are precisely the places where we need to invest the most resources and pay the most attention. Monitoring can also distract us from acting, if used irresponsibly.

> **Monitoring can also distract us from acting.**

Bridging data and action

Indeed, the idea is to collect data that orients our decisions and actions.

Monitoring cannot be an excuse to stop, to not do anything. We cannot desist indefinitely: "I can't make this decision because I need more data". As scientists, we say this a lot, but that is not how decision-making works. There are many contexts, including politics, where we want solid information to make the next, smartest choice. But a choice has to be made, even with limited information.

In fact, the precautionary principle is one of the 1992 Rio Declaration principles[5]: we can make a decision in the absence of complete evidence. It is often misinterpreted as having to take the most conservative choice; rather, the precautionary principle is about taking immediate action, not allowing a lack of scientific certainty to postpone action.

How should we articulate this principle in the context of women in science?

We can take action to boost gender equity even without fully understanding why women are underrepresented in science.

If training had been the only gap, we would have seen, from the 1960s onwards, a progression of women accessing science degrees, and then being promoted into the next career stages, and ultimately taking leadership positions in these spaces. Instead, what we have seen is a leveling off, where there is a perpetual absence of women in leadership, even though they have access to the relevant education and they have successfully completed it. They enter the fields, and are then leaving. The fact that the measured percentage of women stays at around 30% lets us know that there is something else that we need to do. It's complex, dependent on a mix of societal, cultural and personal factors.

Just measuring an indicator, such as the percentage of women, does not do anything. Do you have a group of people who can take that information and use it in some way to make a difference going forward? Have you set out a shared vision? Do you have a way to respond to the situation? Do you have a process in place? Frequently, having that process is more valuable than monitoring indicators.

> **The 1992 Rio Declaration's precautionary principle urges us to take immediate action, even in the absence of full scientific certainty.**

Processes can trigger unity, but they can also face resistance.

When we monitor a proxy, or when we try to make a change, it is very important to engage as many people as possible. We should avoid making people feel like they are excluded.

We see this clearly at play in gender equity work. For some time now, there has been a focus on women's empowerment. This is because, statistically speaking, and all around the world, it is mostly women who are facing the negative effects of gender bias. It is women who are more likely to be the recipients of gender-based violence. That does not mean that men are not valuable or don't suffer themselves from gender bias impacts. However, we do see a backlash effect wherein some men perceive the focus on women, especially in the workplace, as problematic. These men feel their opportunity is being taken away, or at least they feel that they are not being called to participate.

Recently, there is evidence[6] of backlash in knowledge fields where women are becoming more prevalent

[5] For the exhaustive list, see https://www.cbd.int/doc/ref/rio-declaration.shtml.

[6] T. Straza, UNESCO, *Changing the Equation: Securing STEM Futures for Women* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2024), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391384.

in the student body. We are actually seeing rates of gender-based violence increase, a symptom that people feel divided and threatened. The way to not feel threatened by change is to be part of the process.

> **The way to not feel threatened by change is to be part of the process.**

Addressing the leaky pipeline

You mentioned the circa 30% female representation in STEM research world-wide. This number has hardly changed in the last few decades, even if data has been collected, role models have been promoted, people have been appointed to help prevent bias in hiring processes, women have been placed in committees, etc. Where does the stagnation come from?

The answer is in the question. We are asking an awful lot of the people who are the least represented and the most vulnerable. We see this trend with women, but also with members of minorities. Intersectionality has to be taken into account: women do not come in just one category. Women are bearing many different burdens and identities. When society and their personal circumstances ask more of women than of men, reasons to avoid or not be able to sustain a challenging situation multiply.

> **Imagine you are a capable young woman choosing between, say, history and information technology. Responsibly, to have a good life for yourself, what would you choose?**

Let's begin with the work place. We have a history in the Western world of asking our scientists to live fully devoted to science. We are asking for huge investments of their whole selves, and that does not allow for things like care of elderly parents and young children, responsibilities around the home or in the community, development of the religious faith, and others. Namely, there is no possibility to attend to structures that keep us human. Such structures are sometimes essential to individual identities within certain ethnicities or social groups.

Then, there is the private sphere. Even if we were to have a perfect situation in one institution, women are still expected to do all of the childcare at home, among others[1]. Women are facing a plethora of biases and pressures in the broader society.

Against this background, consider young women who are highly capable in the sciences. Generally, these women are high-performing across the board[6]. Those other fields may provide good employment opportunities while being more welcoming, more known or considered suitable by their families, and might not have as much pressure from workplace biases and gender-based violence by comparison to 'hard' sciences. Imagine you are a capable young woman choosing between, say, history or literature and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). You have two good choices, but one of them comes with all aforementioned challenges. Responsibly, to have a good life for yourself, what would you choose?

> **The UNESCO call to action is centered around three areas: role models, educational initiatives for girls, and workplace well-being.**

Could you share with us measures recommended or in place by UNESCO to confront the resulting leaky pipeline?

The UNESCO call to action[7] is centered around three areas. One is role models, aimed at helping people understand that science is a viable option for women. Another one is educational initiatives for girls, making sure that girls have the prerequisite training and the background information. It includes exposure at an early age to science-related study and job opportunities. The third one is workplace well-being, both practices and the policy frameworks that support them – where both governments and businesses have a role to play.

Should we be hopeful with respect to the ongoing processes?

There is hope. There is a reason that those three areas of action are in place. When women, or anyone else

[7] UNESCO, *UNESCO Call to Action to Close the Gender Gap in the Science*, (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2024), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388641.

who is underrepresented, can see themselves reflected in a field, particularly in leadership positions, it generates an emotional and a practical response: it nurtures a welcome feeling that makes them more willing to engage and stay.

The more we normalize women being in theoretical physics, or any other science, the easier it is to just be female in those spaces, and the more we increase retention.

Equality in a complex present

Currently, what is the guiding vision?

I hope that we are getting to a point where it does not matter as much, where we do not have to be so conscious about being of a certain gender, ethnicity, background.

Beyond women under-representation in STEM, there are also instances of boys dropping out of school, and fields where men are no longer choosing to join. That is a problem too. The goal is to have a world and a scientific community where people can have equal opportunity to choose to join, contribute, and have influence based on their effort, intelligence and contribution, rather than on their identity.

The goal is to have a world and a scientific community where people can have equal opportunity to choose to join, contribute, and have influence based on their effort, intelligence and contribution, rather than on their identity.

It is important to be optimistic towards the future, but we must acknowledge that we live in intricate, and at times, contradictory times.

We have not yet fully dealt with the root cause for gender inequality. There are reasons to celebrate; for example, now there are some women researchers in positions of leadership. But good processes can have unintended consequences. We are in a situation where there is both a rise in identity politics and a pushback against equity efforts.

We are pressing for celebrating diversity and acknowledging our differences as part of a contribution to a wonderful big picture. That is different from categorizing, saying "you are other, and therefore I do not have to engage, I do not have to respect, I do not have to treat you the same". Unfortunately, such dynamics are also taking place, and this is something we have to grapple with, especially in the resurgence of political and social movements that seek to divide us.

Let's be inspired by the history and growth of the feminist movement.

There are even aggressive discourses that bring into question the need for gender equality. How can we counter-argue such messages?

I think a root cause is fear. Some political, societal or scientific leaders claim that, if we were to have a certain equity and diversity measure in place, then we would be taking something away from someone else. As individuals, if we believe that supporting others hurts ourselves, we are going to perpetuate the divides.

Let's be inspired by the history and growth of the feminist movement. At the beginning, the fight for the right to vote in Western countries concerned only a certain (high) class of white women. Later on, a wave of feminism developed that claimed that we would all benefit from a more equitable world. Namely, that feminism and all people would benefit from a fight against bias and bigotry across the board. In the North American context, these ideas were closely linked to the fight against slavery and segregation and their consequences.

If we can show that a future in which people of color, women, people with disabilities, or whatever minority or vulnerable category, have the same opportunity and enjoy a safe situation is a world in which all of us live better, we can move towards that future collectively.[8]

This boils down to stories and emotional response more than it does to data. There is a tendency among us scientists to think that people can behave objectively and just follow the numbers, but none of us do that. Certainly, we cannot expect society as a whole to do this.

[8] During the conversation, Tiffany Straza also pointed us to policy literature on the economic benefits of gender equality. In the STEM context, see for instance: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU – How gender equality in STEM education leads to economic growth* (EIGE Publications Office, 2017) https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2839/652355.

The way forward I see here is connecting to fight against polarization. Things are often so heated that we avoid the discussion of a sensitive subject with our friends or family. But silence just makes things worse. To fight pushback and to make progress, even if it is slow, we need to engage people.

Indeed, this is the value of multilateralism. The United Nations was set up as a house where we can all come, talk, connect. We have to set up processes. Are we looking for evidence of our situation? That is the monitoring part. Then, do we have a space and a way to come together? We need to discuss. We need to use the gathered information to decide what other information we need and what steps we are to follow. This can take the form of a committee or a convention, a platform where different communities come together. And we must take action.

> **Silence just makes things worse.**

How can we engage people who are strongly against the processes into the change?

We have to counter the fear, which means engaging with different people. We have to connect using shared knowledge and values. Consider the 'yes-ladder' method, or simply appropriate introductions. If you want someone to learn about string theory, you do not necessarily plop them in a lecture hall with the most advanced discussion on the subject. They would feel not just lost in the subject but also perhaps alienated. The same holds true for gender equity.

We often see gender events where the room is full of women. We have to change this in small steps, for which we need to build allies. To interest someone in physics, I would take something that is interesting to them, and show them how physics has a connection. Similarly with gender.

Should we take action within the bright spots? These are contexts where a little effort can make a big difference, because people are close to a big change. Should we instead focus our efforts on the darkest spots? This refers to people facing the toughest situation or those who are least likely to engage with us. The latter is difficult work and might mean slow progress. I am not saying that we do not need to do the hard work, but I do claim we need to do the hard work in manageable chunks.

We have to reach the people who are most influential. Working with them allows us to access their community and hear what their community is thinking, needing and feeling. It is essential to find common grounds. This is not always easy, but one has to start there, at some sort of common ground. If we start by creating a barrier, we are going to have a limited tolerance to spend time speaking about the issue.

> **This is not always easy, but one has to start at some sort of common ground.**

Could you make this important idea a bit more precise in the context of women in STEM?

Let's take the example of the organisation of a conference. Making 'the gender inequity problem' part of the core function can help everyone connect with it. For example, the keynote speaker talking about the latest scientific results could also be asked to spend a little bit of time addressing gender issues. Maybe they can just be honest and say "I hadn't thought about my gender affecting my research, but I was asked to grapple with the topic, and here's my first thoughts". That's actually a strong approach: the process of learning out loud is how we build trust. That is what the social science research tells us[9].

By contrast, if people do not feel that they are reflected or respected in science and knowledge creation, they might feel no need to participate in it. They may even not want to use it. They won't even think of supporting it, including supporting leaderships' decisions to invest in science. Not all of us need to be scientists. Not all of us need to be gender equity experts. But all of us need to be aware of our situation, our environment, and respect that there is a process bigger than any one of us, that we can all benefit from efforts to understand it. The more we can help people see this bigger value, the more we can engage them.

[9] See, for example, L. Saffran, S. Hu, A. Hinnant, L.D. Scherer and S.C. Nagel, *Constructing and influencing perceived authenticity in science communication: Experimenting with narrative*, *PLOS ONE* **15** e0226711 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0226711; and J.R. Kerr, C.R. Schneider, A.L.J. Freeman, T. Marteau and S. van der Linden, *Transparent communication of evidence does not undermine public trust in evidence*, *PNAS Nexus* **1** pgac280 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad476.

Thoughts that matter

Would you like to share a final message with our readers?

Keep going!

It is easy to see the problems, and sometimes we get stuck looking for the problem so that the issue feels important. I had a situation where we saw that the percentage of women was getting close to equity, and a person said we should not publish that. The fear was that people would no longer invest in action and participate if the situation was improving.

We have to keep going. We have to respond to the reality of the situation, and when we have achieved success, let's celebrate that success and look at how we need to advance. What is the next best step? What is the other key thing that is missing? It is complicated, but there are benefits to continuing. And we do see evidence of positive change.

Think about what your good life looks like, and how you will adjust course and celebrate progress at meaningful stages. Our answers to those kinds of questions inform our collective effort towards the peaceful future that we want for people and for our planet.

To end on a high-note, make a wish! If you could change something about policy making and the scientific environment itself, what would it be?

Policies and action plans are better and stronger when they are developed with inputs and perspectives from all of those who are affected[10]. A first wish would be that policy makers would make their policy with as diverse and as open a process as they can, so that when it comes to turning it into action, they have a strong team already with them to turn that policy vision into reality.

I would also want individuals to know and have the reassurance that they belong in science with all of their identities, whether or not those identities are named or unnamed in the metrics that we use today. I would like them to know that they are more than just numbers.

I encourage readers to think about what their good life would look like, and how they would check on their situation, how they would adjust their course and celebrate their progress at meaningful stages. Our answers to those kinds of questions inform our collective effort towards that peaceful future that we want for people and for the planet that we share.

[10] Following the interview, Tiffany Straza also shared with us a number of practical resources on gender-related survey design, policy assessment, and inclusive event communication. We gather a selection of these in the rubrique on p. 21.

One story is an anecdote. A thousand is evidence

A call for action against bullying, harassment and misuse of power in academia

by **Aneta Wojnar**, **Betti Hartmann**, **Anna Pachoł**, **Julia Contreras-García**, **Mariam Tórtola**, and **Elena-Simona Apostol**

Banner design by Małgorzata Badowska

Many women and members of underrepresented and marginalized groups in academia can recall moments that left a lasting mark on their feeling of belonging in academia: a supervisor who crossed professional boundaries, a senior colleague who misused their authority, a conference interaction that felt unsafe, a hiring process that seemed unfair, or years of subtle exclusion disguised as "normal academic culture". Often, these experiences are dismissed as isolated incidents. As a result, they are internalized as personal shortcomings, and the targeted academics believe that they alone have failed, that they are somehow not good enough, and that what happened to them is merely their own unfortunate exception rather than part of a broader pattern. They are encouraged to move on, adapt, become more resilient, or simply remain silent. Many of us have done exactly that.

Over the past months, however, a growing number of academics have begun sharing their experiences with one another. What emerged was not a collection of isolated stories, but a striking pattern. Across institutions, countries, disciplines, and career stages, women and other underrepresented groups repeatedly describe similar experiences of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and misuse of power. While many universities and research institutions have introduced policies and reporting procedures, these mechanisms frequently fail to provide meaningful protection. Formal regulations alone do not change academic culture. Too often, those affected continue to carry the professional and personal consequences, while existing power structures remain intact.

In response, we have launched a grassroots initiative bringing together researchers who believe that these experiences should not remain invisible. As part of this effort, we are currently preparing an article built around the academic trajectory of a fictional female scientist whose experiences are drawn from real events shared by researchers across the academic community. Our goal is not to highlight individual cases, but to reveal broader systemic patterns that continue to affect careers, well-being, and participation in academia. While this character is female, we acknowledge that similar stories exist for other underrepresented groups and that intersectionality is important. We understand this initiative as being all-inclusive. Those interested are invited to contribute as follows.

- **Join our mailing list** ✉ Follow this link

  Joining does not imply any commitment. It simply allows you to stay informed about the initiative, future actions, and opportunities to contribute. We hope to build a broad network of researchers who share the conviction that academic environments should be safe, respectful, and equitable,

  and/or

- **Anonymously share your experiences** Follow this link

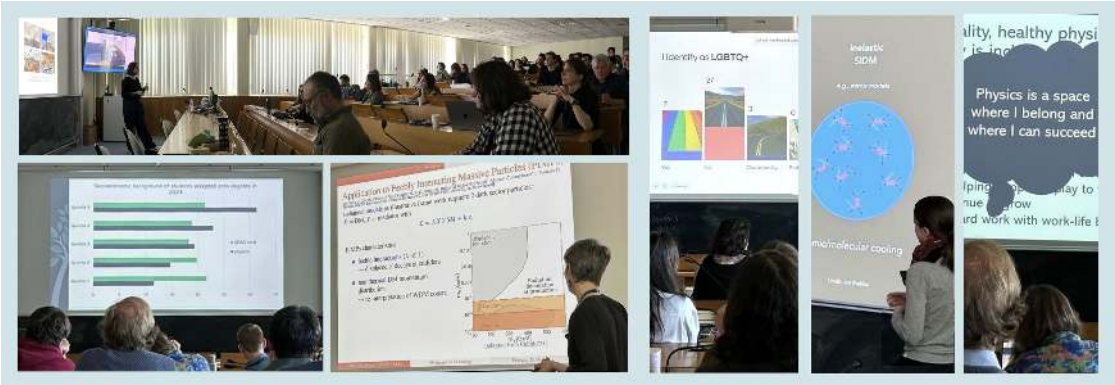
  Include your stories related to bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse of power, retaliation, unsafe working environments, and other forms of misconduct encountered during academic careers. Anonymous contributions will help us better understand recurring patterns and ensure that the diversity of experiences is represented. We would like to ask you to submit your story until **July 17, 2026**. This is not a strict deadline and the stories will still be collected, serving in future as a growing body of evidence.

In both cases, data will be treated with utmost confidentiality and participants can - at any moment - remove their name from the mailing list and/or ask shared stories to be deleted. No individual story will be used *per se* and anonymity will be respected.

Those that experience any form of inappropriate behaviour believe they are alone. Our experience suggests otherwise. We believe that change begins when individual stories become visible as part of a collective reality. Together, we hope to transform silence into evidence, evidence into awareness, and awareness into action building a better academic future for all of us. So, please feel free to circulate this also among your colleagues.

GenHET Meeting '26 – an interview with the organizers

This year's GenHET Meeting took place in February 25-27, 2026 at CERN in Switzerland. Organised by **Maria Ramos**, **Ryan Plestid**, **Tim Cohen**, and **Venus Keus**, this meeting in Beyond the Standard Model (BSM) set out to bring current research in the field into conversation with questions of gender, inclusion, and equal opportunity. Alongside scientific talks, the gathering featured panel discussions on gender issues in academia, a networking event across career stages, opportunities for young researchers to present their work, and support for student participation. To look back on the workshop and the ideas behind it, we asked the organisers to share their experience of putting the event together, what worked especially well, and what they hope such meetings can continue to build in the community.



Bringing the workshop together

What was your motivation to organise a GenHET workshop?

We had two goals in mind. First, we strongly believe in the mission and goals of GenHET, and it was our pleasure to have the opportunity to organize an event that exposed the BSM community to the GenHET group. By organizing this workshop, we hope to have inspired members of the high energy theory community beyond "formal" theory to get involved in GenHET going forward.

The second goal was more immediate. We wanted to organize this event because it is critically important to educate ourselves and our community with regards to the implicit (and often explicit) barriers faced by underrepresented members of our community. By bringing together underrepresented stakeholders and allies, we hope to make the BSM and high energy theory communities more welcome for all. We also hope that the participants, especially those at early career stages, would be positively influenced by the advice from the panels and networking events. Hopefully, everyone left the event having learned some interesting new BSM physics, and feeling a bit less alone in their career struggles.

What were your initial expectations? Have they been met?

Our initial expectations were to have an event that would attract a reasonable number of participants. I would say that the attendance was higher than we expected, and it was wonderful to see the passion and enthusiasm of all participants.

Hopefully, everyone left the event having learned some interesting new BSM physics, and feeling a bit less alone in their career struggles.

Another notheworthy goal is that all participants should have a positive experience in a welcoming and safe environment. We think this goal was largely achieved, although some of the PhD students felt that the advice of the panelists was occasionally a bit out of touch when it came to work/life balance. It is our understanding that participants had an overall very positive experience, which is all we could hope for. Many people who came gave us the immediate feedback that the event was uplifting and they were very glad to have attended.

What type of participants were you targeting, and why? What did you do to encourage diverse participation?

We wanted anyone who was interested in the topic and in showing their support for building a stronger and more inclusive community. Our goal was to get BSM theorists at all career stages to participate, from PhD students to senior professors. We were very happy with the diversity of rank that attended. To achieve this, we offered the opportunity for students to submit abstracts for short talks, and we used our funds to pay for the stay in the hostel of any student that requested it. We also broadly advertised the event and encouraged participants of all career stages to join us in the advertisement.

How the event was received

What aspects of the workshop did you find particularly successful?

The mix of scientific talks interspersed with sessions on career and diversity made for a very compelling program. We felt that the colloquium from our invited speaker Prof. Judith Hillier was particularly profound. The other high point was the networking event, which was a fantastic way for participants to mingle and discuss with a lot of different people. This also gave PhDs and young postdocs the opportunity to meet researchers from the same minority groups thriving in academia, and to exchange advice with them on navigating shared struggles around work, life, and family balance. Another positive outcome was that, during the breaks, we often heard invited senior researchers discussing concrete measures to promote diversity in the field through shared experiences.

> **A high point was the networking event, which was a fantastic way for participants to mingle and discuss with a lot of different people.**

How did the participants react to the content and format of the workshop? Were there – any comments or suggestions that particularly struck you?

Our impression is that the participants were very happy with how the event was organised. If anything, the schedule was a bit too packed, but that is always a compromise when organising events (having more people get a chance to speak versus having more unstructured time).

What comes next

What advice would you give to others wishing to organise a similar event?

It is a lot of work, so be prepared to really invest time. We worked very hard to find the right speakers, and to organise the various activities, including the student session. This event took at least a factor of 5 more effort to organise than a typical workshop at CERN Theory Department. It was certainly worth the effort and very rewarding, but we suggest that the next organisers budget enough time to this aim.

> **The meeting gave PhDs and young postdocs the opportunity to meet researchers from the same minority groups thriving in academia.**

What are the next projects or initiatives you would like to set up to continue the fight against gender inequality in your scientific community?

This is a tough question. We think having a group like GenHET sends a strong message, and we are very happy that BSM has been brought into the GetHET fold. It is really important that we have open conversations about the consequential topics of inclusion and career strategy in the forum of these workshops.

One suggestion would be to set up a networking group for BSM modeled after the "string theory networking group". But of course this requires a group to take the initiative to make this happen.

Inclusive arrangements taken by the organisation: Alongside the scientific and discussion program, the organisers also put in place practical measures to support an inclusive environment, including a Code of Conduct, accommodation support for young participants on request, and information on child-care. For more information about the meeting, see `https://indico.cern.ch/event/1616274`.

Interview with Hiromi Yokoyama

Quick profile

- Professor and Deputy Director at Kavli IPMU, with research spanning trust in science, AI ethics and governance, and women in STEM.
- PhD in particle physics
- Author of international publications on gender inequality in STEM, AI ethics, science communication, and public perceptions of science in Japan.

From physics to sociology

You have had a very interesting non-linear career: you moved from physics to science communication and then to sociology. Could you tell us a little about that journey?

Yes, my career is a little unusual. But at the same time, since I was in junior high school, I already had two strong interests: one was physics, and the other was writing. I was very interested in science, but I also wanted to write about science. At the beginning, I hoped to become a science journalist.

I decided to study physics first. At that time, I was especially interested in dark matter and neutrinos, and later I indeed studied neutrino physics for my PhD. My supervisor encouraged me to continue to the PhD, although I was still thinking that after my Master's I might leave for journalism or publishing. During my Master's, I had already started writing articles for children's magazines, and I enjoyed that very much. One editor told me that if I wanted to become a science writer, working experience as editor is not necessary. So I continued in physics and completed a PhD. It was not easy. Physics is very competitive, and I was in a large collaboration. But I was lucky. Some senior researchers were very kind to me and encouraged me. After the PhD, I moved away from physics towards journalism, science communication, and later sociology.

For me, the motivation was always the same. From the beginning, I wanted to think about the relation between science and society. That is why I first did a PhD in physics, and later changed my field.

From the beginning, I wanted to think about the relation between science and society. That is why I first did a PhD in physics, and later changed my field.

Pursuing physics all the way to a PhD to then turn into sociology is quite unusual...

Yes, but for me it made sense. I wanted to understand science itself first. Later, when I moved into science communication and sociology, that background remained very important.

At first, I became a postdoc in ethics studies. There was a professor, Koji Hirata at Sokendai University, who had also moved from physics towards sociology and science communication, and he invited me. At that time, I was still writing science articles as a freelance journalist, which I enjoyed very much.

Two years later, I was hired by the University of Tokyo as Associate Professor in a position related to science communication. That was a big surprise for me. I did not enter sociology through formal training, in the usual way. Instead, I learned through practice, through administration, through management work, and through reading and teaching. This period, lasting some ten years, was very difficult for me. I had no formal degree in sociology, so I had to start from the beginning in many ways. But at the same time, this gave me a different point of view from that of many other sociologists: I knew science itself, and I

also knew the practical side of institutions. I believe that the reason why I served on so many government committees back then is that both of these perspectives were required. Currently, I am conducting research that analyzes social data in three areas: trust in science, artificial intelligence and society, and science and technology and women.

> **I did not enter sociology through formal training, but through practice.**

I began my research in the field of EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) when I was promoted to Professor at Kavli IPMU (Kavli Institute for the Physics and Mathematics of the Universe, in Tokyo) in 2017. I was asked to seriously investigate the reasons why there are so few female students in physics and mathematics in Japan. This was very different from my previous research, and I was initially bewildered because I hadn't had a strong interest in EDI research. However, I quickly secured a large budget from JST (the Japan Science and Technology Agency) and I launched a research project, which yielded results and attracted attention as "science for policy".

University culture as regards EDI

You have contributed to writing the current Code of Conduct at the University of Tokyo. Could you share some insights thereof and how the code helps address concrete problems?

For writing a code of conduct, the first step is always to share the basic idea inside the institution. Before writing policies, the leadership has to communicate clearly what kind of values the institute wants to have, what is considered good conduct, and what kind of environment it wants to create. So at the beginning, it is important that directors and committee members explain these ideas in meetings and lectures, at different levels of the institute. A code of conduct is not only a document. It is also a way of showing the direction of the institute.

Of course, every now and then, problems happen. The situation is then case-dependent. If something is very serious, it may need to be reported to a higher committee or even to the university level. Most often, it is difficult to immediately appeal to the highest level. Typically, a smaller committee will carefully consider the case and think about the best way to handle it.

Institutional policy is very important, but it is not easy. A lot of different problems can happen, and they each have to be considered separately.

Problems are diverse and the university itself is diverse. For researchers it is hard to be fully aware of how different departments within the same university can function very differently. Could you say more about these differences?

I think this is a very important point. Even inside one university, the environment can be very different from one department to another.

Our institute, Kavli IPMU, is very international. People can discuss, and younger researchers can speak to senior people. But in some other fields, the environment can be much more closed and hierarchical. For example, in some other departments and institutes, the professors' power is extremely strong. Young people may easily feel that they better not say anything. In that kind of situation, it is very difficult to improve the atmosphere.

In my view, openness matters a lot. If younger researchers, postdocs, and junior faculty can actually speak, that already changes many things for the best. Departments that function better in terms of diversity are often those where the atmosphere is more open, so that not only the professor at the top has a saying.

> **Departments that function better in terms of diversity are often those where the atmosphere is more open, so that not only the professor at the top has a saying.**

Hence, the issue is not only policy, but also whether the local environment allows everyone to speak and to participate freely. Is this specific to some universities, or is it connected to the research area or to the local culture?

It is related to the research area, at least partly. I only know the case of physics and of sociology of science internationally, so I do not want to generalize too much. But I do feel that different research areas have different cultures. For instance, it is important to realize

that some areas are more connected to companies, to stronger hierarchies, or to more traditional ways of working, which impacts the departmental atmosphere.

Also, it is interesting to note that openness in a department is not always directly related to its female ratio. For example, mathematics in Japan has a very low female ratio, but the atmosphere is often rather open, similar to physics. By contrast, some other research fields tend to have a better female ratio, but the internal culture remains highly hierarchical. It is not only a question of numbers.

> **Internationalisation is strongly connected with diversity.**

You just connected internationalization to openness. How does internationalization relate to diversity?

Internationalization very much helps with diversity. Domestic environments can be more closed. International institutes require of a more open atmosphere, and that is good for diversity.

At Kavli IPMU, for example, many researchers come from abroad. That already changes the environment. It is not perfect, of course, but compared with more traditional departments, it helps. I think internationalization is strongly connected with diversity.

Attracting and retaining diversity

Does a university's code of conduct change often or what are the appropriate mechanisms to fit new needs and ideas as regards promotion of diversity?

Usually the code of conduct itself does not change very much. It is the policy. So, once the institution has decided on it, that basic statement often remains. But even if the code itself stays stable, many practices around it need to be reconsidered. Especially human resource policies are very important.

For instance, at Kavli IPMU, hiring practices have changed quite a lot over the last ten years. When I came, postdoc hiring was already very active, but at that time there was not so much awareness of diversity in the early stages of selection. Later, after discussions, we became much more careful.

In this regard, one important thing I learned came from Eiichiro Komatsu, director at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Germany. He explained that if you want diversity in hiring, you must think of it already at the long-list stage. If the long-list does not have much diversity, then by the time you make the short-list, diversity is gone altogether. So first and foremost you need to make sure that diverse candidates are present in the long-list. Then, you must also keep the ratio in the short-list. Only then can diversity really remain part of the final selection. I thought this was very instructive. It is not enough to say at the end that diversity matters. It has to be part of the whole process.

Of course, quality is essential. It is often the case that all of the candidates are very strong at the technical level. But diversity must also be taken seriously, and that requires attention from the onset.

> **First and foremost, you need to make sure that diverse candidates are present in the long-list. Then, you must also keep the ratio in the short-list. Only then can diversity really remain part of the final selection.**

Beyond hiring, what are other measures that are important for preserving or fostering diversity?

Family support is very important. At Kavli IPMU, there has been strong support for children, for partners, and for relocation. Sometimes both members of a couple can be hired. That helps a lot.

For international researchers, there are many practical issues: childcare, schools, language, housing, and sometimes support for bringing family members. These things matter very much if one wants to create a genuinely inclusive environment.

In this regard, budget matters. If there is no budget, many things are difficult or impossible. We were fortunate that our institute had stronger support than many others. Without resources, even the best of intentions are hard to realise.

Women-only positions and stigma

A very low ratio of women can place them in a vulnerable position. What is a good support strategy for these women? Are women-only positions a positive measure?

A low female ratio is always a difficult situation. At our university, many women professors support each other, not only inside their own department but also across the university. I have also supported women in other departments, especially in engineering.

At this point, it becomes necessary to explain the Japanese situation. Japanese universities have female-only positions for professors, associate professors, and postdocs. The Ministry of Education provides the budget for these positions, and if a university gets that budget, it has to hire a woman into the specific position.

> **The Japanese government hopes to increase the female ratio quickly, but instead it creates a difficult situation.**

I do not think this is a good way. The government hopes to increase the female ratio quickly, but instead it creates a difficult situation. Women hired into those positions can face discrimination from male professors, who say, "You are in a female-only position, so maybe you do not have the required ability, or maybe you were evaluated in a different way." The women themselves are generally excellent, and I have many friends in those positions whom I respect very much. But the system itself is not good, because it creates a stigma.

On the whole, this is a very complex situation in Japan. There is no easy way to increase the number of women students or women researchers.

We were surprised to learn about girls-only positions at undergraduate level in Japan. Why do you think these measures are being introduced, and why are you critical of them?

Most of the professors who promote that kind of girls-only positions think that if the number of girls increases, then younger girls will also find it easier to come to the department. They think that the reason girls do not come to the sciences is the preexisting low ratio of women therein. But I myself went into physics knowing that there were very few women, and I did not care. For me, interest in physics was the most important thing.

The stereotype about mathematics not being for girls is very strong in Japan. Many parents believe boys are good at mathematics while girls are not. Researchers do not believe that at all, but society still believes it.

It is in this climate that society creates girls-only positions. To me, that can look as if people are saying, "Girls cannot do mathematics, so we will prepare a special position for them." That has the opposite effect from encouraging girls to come to physics. That is what I worry about most. Many professors who support these ideas think they are doing a good thing, but I disagree. It is not enough just to create a separate category for girls. There is not a single measure that can change the situation. But we need to make efforts so that science is interesting for girls, and we must change the stereotype that science is not for them.

> **If someone feels "I am in a girls-only position", or "I am a quota person", then she may lose self-efficacy. Even if she is very able, the stigma can affect her confidence.**

Does the stigma of being in a women-only position affect the women in such positions themselves?

One example often discussed in Japan is that many women who enter university through girls-only positions do not continue to graduate school in the same way as others. I do not think this is because of ability. I think it is more of a stigma issue. If someone feels "I am in a girls-only position", or "I am a quota person", then she may lose self-efficacy. Even if she is very able, the stigma can affect her confidence. Moreover, boys may criticize them, and that makes it very difficult to retain self-reliance. So even if one can keep the quality high, if this psychological effect cannot be removed, then the

[11] K. Tamada et al., *Evaluation of the gender-neutral academic climate on campus for women faculty in STEM fields*, IJEDRO 7, 100390 (2024). Available Open Access at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2024.100390. For Japanese speakers, you may want to consult further details at the webpage https://www.kyushu-u.ac.jp/ja/researches/view/1164.

system still causes harm. That is why I disagree with this kind of positions.

In fact, there is a paper[11] showing that women in female-only professor positions are brilliant, and their papers are very good. So the issue is not ability. Still, the stigma persists.

Efficacy towards inclusiveness

If quota-type systems are not working well and may even backfire, what would you propose instead?

At the very least least, girls-only positions should be open to boys also. Then it becomes not a girls-only position, but a diversity position inside the department. Then, the criticism is less strong.

In Japan, there are now recommendation-based systems to access university, not only the usual written entrance examination. Our university also has such a system. About 3,000 students enter each year, including around 100 recommendation-based positions. I think this system is good for diversity, because all students at the University of Tokyo are very strong, but these 100 students may show a different type of ability, beyond excellence at written exams. Both groups nicely complement and create a good effect for the university.

Could you explain how this recommendation system works?

In this system, a high school can recommend a student to a university. The reasons can be academic ability, such as participation in the mathematics Olympiads, but also other merits, including leadership or sports. Entrance to the university is then not only about academic performance. Different abilities can be welcomed.

In more detail, usually in Japanese universities, ability is checked by written examinations in mathematics, physics, English, and so on. Students often have to study very hard and go to after-school institutions. Thus, only very hard-studying, high-performing students make it to the top universities. This system has been criticized for a long time, and now some universities are trying to change the examination style. Currently, the number of students admitted through self-recommendations with school recommendation is increasing to the same extent as those admitted through traditional written exams. However, this proportion remains limited at top universities.

> **There are many layers to the complex situation behind low female ratios in science.**

Girls-only positions are but a part of a broader attempt to diversify admissions, but I still feel it is the wrong way to attract compelling girls.

Besides, medical school is very popular and respected in Japan. If girls are skillful at mathematics, many parents encourage them to go to medical school. As a result, many excellent mathematics female students end up in medicine rather than mathematics. That is yet another layer of the complex situation behind low female ratios in science.

> **Gender is important, but it is not the only issue. There are differences in economic situation, access to extra schooling, etc.**

Beyond gender, are there other prominent axes of inequality when it comes to access to university in Japan?

Yes. In Japan, rural areas are in a difficult situation compared to urban areas, both in terms of gender equality and in terms of access to university. In Tokyo, the university-going rate is about 77%, which is very high. But in some areas far from Tokyo, such as Kagoshima, it may be closer to 42%.

Even before that, there are differences in economic situation and access to extra schooling. In big cities, it is much easier to go to good after-school institutions and prepare for the entrance exams of top universities. So, there is already a significant difference in an earlier stage.

We must be careful when discussing diversity. Gender is important, but it is not the only issue.

Where the problem starts

In your work, you emphasize the importance of fostering interest in science to promote diversity. Thus your work looks at the broader social context, especially in high school and even childhood. What are the main challenges in making girls more interested in science and in breaking stigma barriers?

Surveys from our 2021 study[12] show that junior high school students are the most important group if we want to change things. By high school, most students have already decided whether they will go to science or humanities. Junior high school is different: students' minds are still open. Earlier still, in elementary school, pupils tend to be interested in science. It is in the sensitive junior high school time that they start to dislike it. This is partly because the material becomes more abstract and seems more challenging. But the environment also matters very much.

> **Teenage girls care a lot about friendships, about fitting in, and about being similar to others. They may hide their interest in mathematics or physics in fear of losing their friends.**

In this regard, Professor Akitoshi Uchida at Oita University told me a revealing story. He was a mathematics teacher and thought most students in his class liked mathematics. He organized a psychological test on the topic. Therein, the girls stated that they disliked mathematics and science. Professor Uchida and a collaborator conducted implicit association tests and found that female students who showed weak identification with mathematics tended to report a lower preference for the subject.[13] The problem may not be true dislike, but the pressure of the environment. Teenage girls care a lot about friendships, about fitting in, and about being similar to others. If they say, "I like mathematics" or "I like physics," they may fear losing friends. In Japan especially, people care very much about that kind of relationship. So girls may hide their interest.

Additionally, many students have trouble understanding what kind of jobs they can get if they study physics, mathematics, or engineering. In Japan, engineering is strongly connected to manufacturing, and many girls think that is for boys, not for them. But in reality, many tech companies want to hire women. Young students just do not know this yet.

In short, junior high school teachers and parents must encourage teenagers' interest in technology and science, and inform them of the many job opportunities related to these fields.

Research in the West suggests that it can help when women professors or researchers go to schools and talk to students before they have chosen between science and humanities. Do you think role-modeling is important? Is there research about it in Japan?

Yes, I think it is very important. I myself measured role-model effects in different ways. In our research comparing Japan and England[14], for example, my team measured the role-model effects against other stereotypes. The role-models do influence the image that girls have of physics and mathematics only in England. We understood though that, in Japan, gender stereotypes on the occupational image and mathematics stereotypes are so strong, that these effects may be balance off the role-model effect.

> **In Japan, gender stereotypes on the occupational image and mathematics stereotypes are so strong, that they balance off the role-model effect.**

More broadly in society, role models are relevant. It is important to note that most students will go to companies, though, and not become professors. Accordingly, beyond research-oriented, other types of lectures are needed. Recently, I have been advocating in favor of companies sending lecturers to junior high schools.

[12] Ikkatai et al., *Factors related to girls' choice of physics for university entrance exams in Japan*, Phys. Rev. Phys. Educ. Res. 17, 010141 (2021). Available Open Access at https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.17.010141.

[13] Uchida and Mori, *Detection and Treatment of Fake Math-Dislikes among Japanese Junior High School Students,* Int. J. Sci. Math. Educ. 16, 1115 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-017-9825-3.

[14] Ikkatai et al., *Masculinity in the public image of physics and mathematics: a new model comparing Japan and England*, Public Underst. Sci. 30, 810 (2021). Available Open Access at https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625211002375.

Not only female researchers, but also female staff in companies should participate in such activities.

The government has been organizing such promotional campaigns and events in summer for many years, but the problem is that only already interested students go. For this reason, I think it is better to directly go into junior high schools and talk to all students.

Closing words

Would you like to share a final take-home message with our readers?

Japanese universities have learned a lot about diversity issues from other countries, especially from the United States and also EU countries. Change is slow, but we can change. There remains many problems, not only in terms of diversity. But change is the key. If we decide on good policies and good directions to pursue, then we can make a good environment for ourselves and for younger generations. The decisive aspect is to keep moving towards a better situation.

Change is slow, but we can change. The decisive aspect is to keep moving towards a better situation.

Rubrique

UNESCO Brief on Women in STEM by Tiffany Straza

A key publication in this issue is *Changing the Equation: Securing STEM Futures for Women* (UNESCO Publishing, 2024), written by our first interviewee Tifanny Straza. Focusing on the G20, this Policy Brief argues that the under-representation of women in STEM should not be understood only as a question of entry into the field, but also in terms of what happens later: progression, retention, workplace conditions and leadership all matter. The report brings together comparative data and policy examples to show that the obstacles are structural rather than individual, and that effective responses must not only begin early but also continue all along the academic and professional path.

Find it: here.

Resources suggested by Tiffany Straza

Following our interview with Tiffany Straza, we gather here a selection of practical resources she recommended for readers wishing to explore further some of the topics raised during the interview.

Measuring and monitoring gender equality:

UNESCO's *SAGA Survey of Gender Equality in STI* is a standard reference for assessing gender-equality policies in science, technology and innovation.

Find it: here.

Paula Otero-Hermida and Clara Furió-Vico author the article *The Evolution of Gender Monitoring and its Challenges: the Case of Research and Innovation in Europe*, reviewing the premises and limits of gender-monitoring frameworks since 2003.

Find it: here.

Advanced Oxford's report *Gender Inclusion Guidance and Toolkit* provides tools for building a gender-inclusive culture in companies and institutions.

Find it: here.

Scientific organisations' surveys:

InterAcademy Partnership has launched *Advancing Gender Equality in Scientific Organizations*, a project combining quantitative and qualitative methods to assess structural barriers and identify recommendations for fostering gender equality in scientific organisations.

Find it: here.

GenderInSITE, the InterAcademy Partnership and the International Science Council presented in 2021 the result of two global surveys, *Gender Equality in Science: Inclusion and Participation of Women in Global Science Organizations*, which provides baseline information for a transformative action agenda in pursuit of gender equality in global science.

Find it: here.

Communication and community-building:

ASTC has made public a quick *Gender Representation Toolkit*, especially useful for posters, exhibitions, displays and public-facing event communication.

Find it: here.

Kiwa Initiative has multiple resources available on Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), as well as human rights, on its webpage.

Find it: here.

Diversity, equity and inclusion after 2020:

Z.O. Dunivin, H.Y. Yan, J. Ince and F. Rojas, Black Lives Matter protests shift public discourse, PNAS **119**, e2117320119 (2022).

Find it: here.

B.L. McGowan, R. Hopson, L. Epperson and M. Leopold, *Navigating the Backlash and Reimagining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a Changing Sociopolitical and Legal Landscape*, JCC **26**, 1 (2025).

Find it: here.

D.K. Bartley, *Boom to Backlash; George Floyd's Legacy on DEI as a Business Imperative*, Wiley 2025.

Conclusion of CERN's 25 by '25

CERN's 25 by '25 initiative concluded at the end of 2025, closing a four year effort to improve gender and nationality diversity across the organization. The program aimed to reduce "nationality clusters" and raise the share of women among staff and graduates/fellows to 25%. By November 2025, that figure had reached 24.7%, up from 21% in 2021. CERN also reports progress in nationality diversity and highlights new measures such as conscious hiring, recruitment dashboards and departmental Diversity & Inclusion Officers.

Find it: here.

Global report on gender equality in scientific organizations

A new 2026 report of the International Science Council, the Inter-Academy Partnership and the Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science reviews gender equality across scientific organizations worldwide. It draws on data from 136 organizations, nearly 6000 scientists and a series of interviews. The report finds progress, but it is uneven: in national academies, women made up 19% of members in 2025, up from 12% in 2015, yet they remain underrepresented in leadership positions, awards and nomination pools. Its main conclusion underlines that many institutions now have gender-equality policies, but these policies are still not well integrated into how scientific organizations are run.

Find it: here.

An interview with Iris Abt

Elisabetta Gallo and Henriette Ullmann sign an interesting interview with high energy physicist Iris Abt.

Find it: here.

The newsletter team.

This issue of the GenHET Newsletter has been produced and edited by Saskia Demulder and Verónica Errasti Díez. We welcome suggestions for articles, interviews or announcements at genhet.newsletter@gmail.com. Don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to become an editor.