

Gender mainstreaming initiative at the Department of Kemi-Ångström

I: Summary of the project outlined in the application

Our project had the aim to educate co-workers at Kemi-Ångström in gender-issues that can arise in the workplace and to open a dialogue for how we can hold ourselves as a department accountable for our common growth as a better workplace for everyone no matter their gender identity and gender presentation. In our application we outlined a four part seminar series: (1) Understanding gender and how gender is defined, (2) Breaking the silence on harassment, (3) Minimizing conscious and unconscious bias, (4) How to be accountable for gender mainstreaming. Following the seminars was a planned panel discussion with external experts and department members to outline a gender mainstreaming plan for the department. The emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic made it impossible to carry out our planned work. Below is a short summary of the work carried out for this project, as well as work that continues within the Department. The ultimate goal was to bring awareness and seed a change in attitude among our co-workers. This goal has certainly been achieved.

II: Performed activities

Seminar 1. Gender Identity and Gender Norms. This seminar was given twice in the department to meet scheduling needs our co-workers at the department. There were ca. 60 attendees in total with good support from department PIs. This seminar was led by Drs. Klara Goedecke and Warren Kunce. The first portion of the session was led by Dr. Goedecke, where we were familiarized with concepts of gender identity, “doing gender” and how our gender identity and gender presentation affects how we move in the world and the opportunities and difficulties we are presented with or face. The second portion of this session was led by Dr. Kunce, and the first half of the discussion included familiarization with modern language about gender as well as on reflection Dr. Kunce’s personal experience. The second portion of the seminar was an “active learning” opportunity for the participants, with a game that Dr. Kunce had arranged. It was both enlightening and enjoyable. In the game attendees practiced using the accepted terminology for the broad range of genders and sexual orientation. Importantly, attendees learned a lot about gender identity, doing gender and how it affects us in our everyday life. This seminar gave the opportunity for participants to learn about identity, norms, presentation, and injustices regarding gender, not only from a perspective of being a cis-woman or a cis-man, but also including a perspective of gender non-conformity and how that changes how one is perceived.

Seminar 2. Sexual Harassment and Bullying in Academia. For this seminar we hosted Drs. Anneli Häyrén and Renita Sörensdotter from the Center for Gender Research at Uppsala University. They have expert knowledge about academic harassment and academic power structures. Using statistics and case studies they gave our department clear examples of how gender identity and gender presentation affect us in our work opportunities. Dr. Häyrén also described how Uppsala University can function in cases of harassment and bullying. A particularly disturbing takeaway was that what can happen at the University level is not totally transparent. Often those who have been harassed or bullied do not get resolution, and experience negative career impacts as a result of making an official report. Further, academic power structures, until they are dismantled, continue to facilitate harassment and bullying and make for potentially toxic work environments. The audience that was shaken by the issues discussed.

Seminar 3. Picture a Scientist Viewing and Follow-up Group Discussion. For this seminar we purchased the viewing rights to the movie *Picture a Scientist* and held a viewing for the department. Our purchase included a physical copy of *Picture a Scientist* which we will use to host annual screenings and discussions (see continuing work). Both the screening and the subsequent discussion were at a distance to keep with Corona-19 restrictions. We hosted a zoom-based discussion seminar based on specific topics lifted from the film. We prepared a series of questions where participants contributed in small discussion groups (breakout rooms) or on a Menti poll which gave live results. For example, we asked our participants: i) what factors contribute to a “leaky pipeline” that results in the vast majority of men in higher levels of academia? ii) What biases exist in academia? iii) What is a meritocracy and how does it manifest in academia in Sweden? Nina Almgren, participated in our seminar as an expert in gender issues at the Faculty of Science and Technology. During the seminar participant ideas were collected on a Google Jamboard, a digital interactive whiteboard (see Attached appendix and Continuing work). This was a seminar which had many active participants of all academic ages – from PhD students to group leaders. All cameras were on. The passion and energy that people have for the subjects we discussed was evident. We had planned for two hours, which was not enough time. Small breakout rooms allowed for everyone to say something during the seminar, which was appreciated by all attendees. Many senior researchers participated which was a positive point for younger participants. An issue can be that the group leaders have too busy a schedule to join seminars of these types of topics and dialogues. The movie viewing/seminar was very successful. Our participants asked us to host another viewing and seminar so we could discuss more topics from the film.

Continuing work and collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Group at Kemi-Ångström

After receiving this funding, 2019 Dr. Glover was asked to join the Equal Opportunities Group (EOG) at Kemi-Ångström. As an active member Dr. Glover contributes intellectually to the many ideas and planned activities going on in the EOG. Dr. Glover’s first project in the group was to devise material for new employees that gives clear definitions for harassment and discrimination in Sweden. This new material includes a questionnaire that all new employees must complete to test their understanding of these topics in the workplace.

In December 2021 Dr. Glover organized workshop on bias for the Department of Kemi-Ångström. The workshop will be participant centered; it will include group activities and role-playing where participants can practice recognizing and calling-out bias in the workplace. A workshop like this was originally planned to take place after a seminar given by Dr. Paul Walton (University of York), an expert on academic bias. As Dr. Walton was not able to come due to pandemic restrictions, the workshop was delayed.

In spring 2023 we will host a second showing of *Picture a Scientist*. In the follow-up seminar the ideas collected on Google Jamboard from the first seminar will be summarized and presented to set the stage for the discussion. A Jamboard will be used in the upcoming seminar to collect more ideas. The first collection of ideas was an excellent group effort and an invaluable resource.

IV: Advice for future projects

Our biggest problem has been to find the time to plan these activities properly. Our goal was to have scheduled and hosted all five events during the 2019 calendar year, unfortunately this is not what took place which led to the stretching out of the initiative. An issue might have been that we are close co-workers (Starla is the main PhD advisor of Sigrid) and so we were bound to be busy with our work at the same time. As advice for future gender mainstreaming project planners, these are some things that could have made the process smoother for us: (1): Booked in dates for each installation in the beginning of the year instead of one by one. This would have helped us stay on the schedule, and also would have avoided issues with finding free dates due to being too close in time while planning. We could also have had more time to market more efficiently this way. (2): Involved a third person outside of Starla's research group. This could have helped in times that were busy for Starla and Sigrid, and having a third person involved would have helped with the workload of planning, marketing, ordering fika and etc.

V: Evaluation

Our primary goals were to raise awareness, make space for an ongoing dialogue, and change the climate at our department. Even now several years after the first seminars they are still brought up by our co-workers as great learning opportunities, and people ask if we are planning more similar things. I believe that a greater want for knowledge and understanding has been developed at the department, as well as a greater willingness to discuss these issues in a constructive way.

The purchase of *Picture a Scientist* opened a great opportunity; it provided a platform from which we can discuss gender mainstreaming issues again and again. As mentioned, in our first seminar the discussion was not over in the two hours planned. It was obvious to us as organizers that people want to discuss these issues and improve our workplace environment. This motivation will keep people engaged.

What was the biggest missing point was the panel discussion to develop a gender mainstreaming plan for the department. We believe that the discussion about *Picture a Scientist* functioned almost as a panel discussion however, with a visiting expert discussing with the breakout-rooms. This discussion helped break the ice in the discussion regarding gender inequalities and biases in academia, and have provided an excellent baseline of conversation among co-workers. However we believe that a sincere panel discussion is best held in person and not over zoom. With restrictions lifted a physical meeting is now possible. We still want to host a panel discussion. Based on the department motivation after the PAS discussion we tentatively suggest holding a panel discussion after watching the movie. One of the challenges with a panel discussion, and all gender mainstreaming activities, is that it is relatively easy to engage our academically younger co-workers like PhDs and postdocs. Ensuring that group leaders and senior researchers also participate is important, but can be challenging. This would contribute to our last goal of the this gender mainstreaming project and benefit the department.