

Editorial

Dear Colleagues,



My best congratulations to all of you with the first periodical BASNET issue - Newsletter!

The main purpose of this Newsletter is to open the ways for better collaboration between women-scientists in the Baltic States as well as in the European Union.

It is known that the networking in sciences is one of the means to make the scientific activity visible for the scientific society as well as essential step in development of individual scientific career. Our counterparts - men use this opportunity better than we.

The historical way to sciences for women and man was different. Women came to sciences later when the rules of behavior were created according masculine needs and understanding. Thus is why some of us do not feel themselves very comfortable in this community and must adjust or go out from science.

In this frequently changing world all gifted people are valuable. Thus is why one of the goals of BASNET NEWS LETTER is to open wide discussion within the scientific society on gender differences allowing to clear problems and ensure real equality in all fields of scientific activity as well as in decision making process on different levels of science policy and its management.

We also will inform you about BASNET events and actions as well as articles of our colleague's women – scientists from other countries dealing with gender in sciences issuers. The announcements of professional and women in science conferences and summer schools you will be able find here as well. We will do our best to make the NEWS LETTER periodical.

I hope very much you will enjoy BASNET NEWS LETTER and join our Network.

BASNET Coordinator
 Assoc. Prof.
 Dalia Satkovskiene

Equity for Women in Physics

by **Marcia Barbosa**

Marcia Barbosa is a chair of the IUPAP women-in-physics group. She is one of the organizers of the IUPAP International conferences "Women in Physics" in Paris and Rio de Janeiro. With her kind permission we are reprinting her shortened article written after the first "Women in Physics" conference. We hope that it will be still interesting for our readers.



Prof. Marcia Barbosa

Women are greatly under-represented in physics. Of all the sciences, physics is the subject in which the increase in the number of women involved has been particularly slow. Many bright young people do not get the chance to learn about physics and to prepare

themselves for a career in the field. Others are simply discouraged from studying physics altogether.

However, the problem is worse than that. Many of the women who do take physics end up running away from it. Statistics show that a higher proportion of women than men leave physics at each stage of their career - a phenomenon that is often dubbed the "leaky pipeline".

But why should we care? After all, why should women do physics? The answer is that women who

have a passion for the subject have the right to make a living from it and have a successful career in the field. What is more, science is changing and becoming more interdisciplinary, requiring a diversity of thought and strategies to solve different types of problems. By excluding female researchers, we are limiting the available pool of talented people to half of humanity and eliminating diversity. Physics needs women to survive.

Finally, in a society in which technology is increasingly governing our everyday life, exposing women to science leads to a more scientifically literate public.

Raising awareness about the problem it is not enough. We also need action to ensure that women are evaluated with fairness and transparency at every stage of their careers. Everyone has a natural tendency to mix with and look for collaborators, co-workers and students who are like themselves. What this means in a male-dominated field like physics is that women receive less mentoring, have fewer role models, and are more likely to be excluded from the community.

Moreover, many practices that have nothing to do with the quality of the research - but do not appear as outright discrimination - can affect women's careers in a damaging way. Examples include a lack of transparency in the hiring process and in the way staff are promoted, as well as double standards. For example, a character trait that may be viewed as a virtue in a man is often regarded in a negative light when displayed by a woman. A persistent man is seen as tough, while a persistent woman is seen as pushy.

Another problem is that many male scientists take a narrow view of "scientific excellence", in which they place too much emphasis on aggressiveness and competitiveness. Women, in contrast, generally tend to examine a problem from all angles before making a statement on it. So rather than jumping into a debate during someone else's talk, for example, a woman may prefer to discuss the matter privately with the speaker after the seminar is over. This, however, is usually seen as a sign of insecurity.

These are the major causes of the leaky pipeline that affects women in particular and excludes anyone who does not fit into the "tough boys' club". This situation is not only unfair for women but also dangerous because physics needs a diverse community of people.

Searching for solutions

So how can we address this problem? Changes in hiring and promotion practices are achieved faster when women take part in the decision-making process.

IUPAP now recommends that its member physical societies should appoint women to the organization's liaison committees, which represent these societies within IUPAP. It has also called for gender to be considered when nominations to its commissions and the council are made. Finally, IUPAP expects that women should be included on the programme committees of IUPAP-sponsored conferences.

Similar actions are being taken by IUPAP working groups in their individual countries. Women will as a result become more visible in the scientific community. Other female students and researchers - inspired by these new role models of the 21st century - will hopefully then be attracted to physics.

Unfortunately, transparency alone will not guarantee that women remain in physics research. Family matters are another issue that has to be addressed. Although having a family does not necessarily prevent women from carving out a successful scientific career, children do hinder a woman's career more than they do for a man. Childcare is still largely the responsibility of women. Moreover, childhood usually coincides with the precious few years in which the roots of one's career have to be laid down. Taken together, these two factors reduce the scientific productivity of women during their child-rearing period.

However, a study carried out by the Japanese delegation in Paris - reported by Masako Bando from Aichi University - shows that the scientific productivity of women after a child-rearing period greatly surpasses that of colleagues who are at the same stage in their careers. Even though this study is not conclusive, it does highlight the fact that the careers of men and women are different and should not be treated with equality - but with equity.

Institutions should therefore launch initiatives to allow scientists to choose flexible career paths. Funds should be provided to enable scientists - women and men alike - to return to work after a career break. In Taiwan, for example, the women-in-physics working group established the Wu-Chien-Hsiung scholarship, which offers annual grants of up to \$600 per year to female graduate students. The group is now planning to ask the country's national science council to extend the scheme to young women who have taken long-term maternity leave. Other countries' working groups are also asking grant-awarding bodies to review their recruitment criteria and grant-funding mechanisms to ensure that women who have taken time off to have children

are not put at a disadvantage.

Women face a more difficult situation in developing nations. Since science funding in these regions is often limited, the chance that a woman will have access to grants becomes even less.

A fair future

By bringing together physicists from so many

BASNET News

News from Lithuanian Cluster

Lithuanian cluster consolidates four partners of the BASNET project, i.e. Vilnius University (VU), Institute of Theoretical Physics and Astronomy of Vilnius University (VU TFAI), Kaunas Technological University (KTU) and Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (MESLT). Its leader is dr. Alicija Kupliauskiene. The leaders of those partners are the members of the coordination group of the Lithuanian cluster (BASNET Coordinator assoc. prof. dr. Dalia Satkovskiene, dr. Alicija Kupliauskiene, Assoc. prof. dr. Zivile Rutkuniene, Ms. Ausra Gribauskiene and assoc. prof. dr. Feliksas Kuliesius). All works of the cluster are distributed among four work packages of the project: Coordination (WP1), Coordination of the sociological study in the Baltic States (WP2), Creation of the strategy on women in sciences and HT in the Baltic States (WP3) and the creation of monitoring and information system (WP4).

For the fulfillment of the tasks of the BASNET project, the working plans of each work package were created in February. The plans of each work package were joined into common plan of the Lithuanian cluster. All decisions were made after active discussions at the meetings of the cluster working group. Eight meetings were organized starting February and including September. The people responsible for the implementation of the plans of the corresponding work packages were invited and participated at the meetings when the discussions concerned their work.

The main goals of the meetings were to draft the questionnaires for sociological research and to collect the data for the Data Bases of BASNET. The questionnaire for sociological research was approved in March. The Data

different countries and regions in the IUPAP international conferences of women in physics, it has become clear that the issues facing women in physics are complex and appear at many different scales. Solutions to the problem will not only help women's participation in physics, but will also ensure that all physicists - men and women alike - are treated fairly.

Bases is already operating. The English version of the questionnaire was approved in May. The reconstruction of the BASNET website was discussed and approved in September. Some other problems were also discussed at the meetings. Men's viewpoint on career and the system of science were analyzed by Assoc. prof. dr. P. Pipiraite (February 02). The participation of women in scientific projects was overviewed by dr. A.Kupliauskiene (February 02). The problems of the security of personal data in BASNET project were discussed by Assoc. prof. dr. D.Satkovskiene (April). Current situation of the sociological study (assoc. prof. dr. R.Ziliukaite, May), the creation of strategy state of the work (A.Gribauskiene, September), News Letter and its structure (dr. R.Giriuniene, September), discussions on the financial issues (assoc. prof. dr. D.Satkovskiene, September) as well as the preparation for the workshop in Tartu were also the subjects of the discussions at the meetings. More details about the Lithuanian cluster activities are presented on the website www.basnet-fp6.eu.

Leader of Lithuanian Cluster
Dr. Alicija Kupliauskiene

Baltic Rim Conference on Women Empowerment



On February 9 – 10, 2007 at the University of Gothland (Sweden) was organized Baltic Rim Conference "Power to Form Society and Your Own Life". The organizers – nongovernmental organization Genderinstitutet Gotland (Sweden) in cooperation with nongovernmental organization

Social Alternative Institute (Latvia) – invited representatives from BASNET project to participate in the conference and to read a presentation about the BASNET project. On behalf of project coordinator assoc. prof. Dalia Satkovskiene Ruta Juodelyte, BASNET project administrative assistant, gave a presentation entitled “Information on FP-6 project Baltic States Network: Women in Sciences and High Technology”.

The Conference focused on democracy, participation, empowerment, education, employment and culture. *The aim of the Conference* in first step is to create functional network for exchanging experience and scanning a framework of theoretical base and background, to create a virtual room for further development of the work and to form regional and local networks around every participant - mentorship program for work with these questions in own region, creation of network, information of society about these questions. The participants of the conference were from various countries – Latvia, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Estonia, India, Zanzibar (Tanzania), Finland, Poland, and Lithuania. All participants gave presentations on different topics relating to women empowerment issues and equal possibilities in the society for both genders. All the expenses of the participants were covered by the organizers of the conference.

Project administrative assistant
Ruta Juodelyte

A Bit of Truth about BASNET Workshop in Tartu



Introduction

As a partner in EC FP6 Project *Baltic States Network “Women in Sciences and High Technology”* (BASNET), according to the

project contract No 017170, University of Tartu organized a workshop on sociological study and analysis in Tartu 21-22 November 2006. 35 participants from all project partner countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania) were invited to the second largest city of Estonia to present results and discuss experience collected during sociological study about career of women in sciences and high technology conducted in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and analysis of the situation in other countries. The event was successful, facilitating exchange of information and integration of all workpackages towards the goal of the project - for realization of the gender equality in research and fostering of the integration of the gender dimension throughout the European research... etc.

Thanks for bothering to read this far. Sometimes people get a bit fed up with successful workpackages, milestones and deliverables, even “shooting reports” and “coffee brakes” – and want to know and tell how it really was.

And here comes the truth, at least one facet of it – only for those who managed to read this far.

Preparations

At first, it was quite exciting and a bit scary. It was the first time I organized an international meeting. A possibility to make an international difference and to be internationally important – and to get a good deal of international shame on me (and the worst is that not only me) if I screw things up.

There could be invented some excuses (some of them even gender-related) for not having done such a thing in my previous 34 years of life, but despite all possible excuses this was the hard fact - as was the rector’s signature on the contract. So there were two choices left: to get a decent workshop done or to invent a time machine. After serious calculations the probability of success for the first choice seemed to be just a little bit better.

Planning is a foundation of success. To be honest, I did not conduct extensive risk + SWOT analyses. We just collected our team and consulted with the coordinator. We wrote a timetable and a simple budget and during the preparatory work these started to grow in details. Especially did the budget, of course.

During the opening conference of the project in Vilnius we experienced the meaning of the contract that says that the organizer of the event takes care and pays for everything – travel, accommodation, meals, conference facilities and the piece of cake

between presentations. In principle, we could get all our work done there without having a *centas*. Everything was ready for participants of the event and it was an excellent idea – then. But looking from Tartu, the idea somehow seemed to have lost its brightness ...

We seemed to have a significant amount of euros for the workshop, but dividing these with the number of participants I realized that I could pay it all for cheapest available flight tickets if I do not buy the tickets early. The pricing system of flight tickets is definitely not made by physicists. No laws of conservation hold there – two passengers can fly together and get exactly the same service, one paying ten times more than the other. It depends on when, where and how you buy the tickets and how skilled are you or your travel manager in communicating with a global internet being called Amadeus. While Amadeus swallowed these 15 Lithuanian names like Dalia Satkovskiene and Giedre Purvaneckiene, losing only 2 letters in the process, the best offers were gone already. Nevertheless, having some remotely related work experience I did what I could and managed to compose a perfect travel plan with all cheapest available flights from different countries nicely synchronized to meet in Tallinn for traveling to Tartu together.

I still feel sorry for Latvians who had to come by bus – there are no flights to Tartu, so flying from Riga through Tallinn would make a double distance, take at least the same amount of time and cost tenfold price of the bus. Yes, we agree to come by bus to Riga next time, too...

We obtained the flight tickets and sent these to participants. Then I prayed for 2 weeks for the parcel with 15 Lithuanian tickets that moved with average speed of a very slow walker between the post offices (they said that a week after the workshop I can apply for search after it – not too comforting to hear in the situation). Gradually the red marks on the timetable became yellow and then green meaning that all travel plans were agreed and tickets had reached all participants – and some days after that Air Baltic cancelled the flights from and to Vilnius which we had tickets for. The whole perfect flight-plan crashed. Next bad news arrived soon: that the coordinator Dalia was forced to participate by remote sensing due to health reasons and the leader of Latvian team threatened to do the same, some invited guests cannot come and some just do not answer...

At this point I spare you from descriptions of

hunting lost bills, hacking malformed presentation files and printing loads of handouts with invaluable help of colleagues Dr. Imbi Tehver and Anu Ülejõe. Let us better think about the early Monday morning in Tallinn Airport where Ruta Juodelyte and me were meeting and counting the participants from Lithuania, to spend half of the rainy and windy November day together in the city while Anu Ülejõe met other participants at the airport. By the evening everybody had reached the hotel in Tartu and nothing terrible had happened yet. My tongue had already three knots in it from mixture of three working languages, so Tiia Raudma from Estonian Ministry of Education and Science with her perfect English helped me out with greetings and announcements from this point on.

Presentations

Tuesday morning the serious work began. There were presentations and discussions of results of sociological research conducted in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, also results of situation analysis by Polish and Romanian teams. About 70 women with a degree in sciences and work experience in sciences and hi-tech at least for 2 years had shared their experience about their career and work environment: obstacles and possibilities, joys and sorrows in the areas that in the past were traditionally dominated by men. Opinions of respondents were asked in relation to different measures for increasing equal participation: scholarships especially for women, preference of female candidate among the equals, support for returning from the maternity leave and of course those much-discussed quota...



There were both great similarities and essential differences in answers, so finding common denominators for these experiences and molding these into recommendations for strategy development was not an easy task for sociologists. Without details of thematic coding method and computerized qualitative analysis, the results were presented in understandable form for physicists and officials and most of the presentations with

conclusions can be found at the project webpage (www.basnet-fp6.eu). Thanks to Lithuanian webmasters of the project for the fact that the guests who could not come or decided not to come will not miss everything. As I had to take care about reproduction of last-minute papers and send somebody from the kitchen fishing for diet of some guests that was ordered well in advance, a considerable part of presented results reached me also only after the event.

Also expert lectures and technical meetings, discussions on strategy and database creation were held and sometimes different views and experiences created quite hot discussions. These two days in Tartu were packed with information and meetings, also organizational details, so they passed like two hours. Everybody got something to take home, but some important notes were lost and were never seen again. Maybe they just deserted from the heavy battle and moved into some better parallel universe with absolutely equal genders...

During the concluding dinner with spontaneous popular songs from all 5 delegations much positive feedback was given about the event. Nevertheless, the feeling that sword of Damokles is hanging somewhere in the air did not leave me until bondage of Athena got a short break from our busy fingers and all participants were safely home again.

Leader of Estonian Cluster
Dr. Helle Kaasik

Situation of Women in Poland

According to very recent results presented in January 2007 by Polish agency for statistical studies CBOS, in our country 76% of population agree that men and women should have the same rights in public life, 21% of population rather agrees with this and only 1% does not agree. On the other hand, the same studies showed that only 50% of Poles think that women and men have equal quality of life, 45% think that life quality of men is better and 5% stated the women's life quality is better. Polish sociologists connect this situation with the fact that women in ages above 30 are overtaken with both home and professional duties, and often in this period they meet health and personal problems. In this case if they do not obtain support from family they feel frustrated. Problem of discrimination reflects in answers to

the question on the life chance of women and men: only 42% of Poles think that they have equal chances and 46% that they do not have. Responses to the question "If you ever met discrimination?" are surprising because only 16% answered "Yes". In general the discrimination is connected with lower salaries (3,5% of studied cases), mobbing (3%), difficulties of finding job (3%), especially in the cases of women having children or being pregnant (2,5%), lower chance of promotion (1%) and sexual harassment (0,5%). These problems mostly concern persons with higher qualification and higher professional position.

Governmental web page "Women and Family", www.rodzina.gov.pl, quotes the comment of Mrs. Rostkowska – Vice-Minister of Labor and Social Policy – who said that she is satisfied that most of Poles accept present governmental policy. In our opinion, unfortunately, she does not understand the problem completely. Mrs. Rostkowska argues that for years Polish women did not need to fight for gender equality because in past they fulfilled important role in their families and they were active in many other fields due to the lack of men in home who were fighting for country independence. Mrs. Vice-Minister does not distinguish the past from present time and does not notice the problems connected to the mentality of modern Polish women. She does not see the alarming situation that most of women do not perceive the situation when they meet discrimination. Sometimes they think that they should be very brave and manage themselves with everything. It means that in general they accept the discrimination. Additionally, statistical data shows that most women obtain lower salaries than men and their promotion is slower.

Recently the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women sent to Poland a letter asking our authorities to change the attitude referring Polish women. In the letter there are listed 40 indicators which our government should fulfill in three years in order to satisfy the above mentioned Committee and improve the situation of Polish women. Between others there is rebuke concerning a division of roles between men and women at home and in the society. There is also the indicator that in Poland should be introduced parity in every kind of election – parliament as well as to the other important positions in professional career.

Polish team members
Prof. E.Czerwosz
Prof. A.Leliwa-Kopystyńska

Events**Commissioner *Janez Potočnik* to Visit Lithuania**

On 23 February 2007 European Commissioner Janez Potočnik, responsible for science and research, visited Lithuania. While there, Commissioner Potočnik participated in the National Launch Conference for the 7th Framework Programme in Lithuania. Research is a key policy for the European Union and one which holds the key to many of the challenges facing European society, such as sustainable development, economic growth and the health and quality of life of its citizens. With almost €55 billion over 7 years, the 7th Framework Programme has an important role to play in developing Europe's science base. The conference set out the opportunities within the programme for Lithuanian scientists, universities and businesses.

During the conference Agency for International Science and Technology Development Programmes in Lithuania presented publication representing Lithuanian participation in FP6 programme. The BASNET project is presented between others in the book.

Recently BASNET Applied for Membership to EPWS

As a member of EPWS (<http://www.epws.org/>) BASNET expected to gain the opportunity to deliver and discuss women scientists' problems on the highest European Science Policy level. It

also will open the ways for more wide collaboration on the European level.

L'ORÉAL National Fellowships

L'ORÉAL, with the support of UNESCO National Commissions, offers National Fellowships to doctoral students to pursue scientific research in their home countries. National Fellowships now exist in over 20 countries. However, it is foreseen to introduce them in over 50 countries before the end of 2008. Since their creation in 2001, more than 200 doctoral students have received L'ORÉAL National Fellowships. In 2007, new national programmes will award their first scholarships in the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chili, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, Morocco, Mexico, Russia, Slovenia, Ukraine and Venezuela. For more information on the fellowships visit www.forwomeninscience.com.

Call for Registration in BASNET DATA BASIS

Dear Colleagues,

You are pleased to register in BASNET DATA BASE. We hope that it will help you to become more visible in the scientific community, easier to find colleagues for fruitful scientific collaboration as well as to be involved in solving problems arising for women – scientists.

For registering you should fill in registration form available on <http://www.basnet-fp6.eu/quest.php>.

Published by: BASNET

www.basnet-fp6.eu

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