



Women and men in science: creating equal opportunities

Caroline P. Slomp

Utrecht University, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht, Netherlands (c.p.slomp@uu.nl)

In the Netherlands, 17% of professors are women. This is one of the lowest percentages for countries in the EU, placing the Netherlands at position 24 in a total of 27. The percentage of women professors is gradually increasing, but at the current growth rate, a gender balance cannot be expected to be reached before 2055 (LNVH, 2015). This underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is all the more surprising given the nearly equal numbers of male and female students at universities already since the end of the 1980s (CBS, 2010).

In my presentation, I will give a personal perspective on the barriers that women face when pursuing a career in science and the types of bias encountered, with specific attention to the role of cultural stereotypes and how these impact the day-to-day life of women in science and contribute to the loss of very talented researchers. I will also discuss strategies that can be developed to work around such issues and the need for further changes in research funding schemes. Finally, I urge both men and women to always speak up when they observe gender bias, for example when women are being overlooked as plenary speakers at conferences, for awards and fellowships, as project or discussion partners and leaders, for positions and for promotion.

References:

LNVH (Dutch Network of Women Professors), 2015, Monitor Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren. <http://www.lnvh.nl>

CBS (Statistics Netherlands), 2010. Terugblikken. Een eeuw in statistieken. <http://www.cbs.nl>