

Sealing the leaky pipeline

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Despite the many initiatives and programmes that have been established in recent years to fight the gender imbalance in geosciences, the progress of sealing the leaky pipeline (referring to women dropping out of their scientific careers) in this research field is very slow and only slightly seems to improve within recent years.

The (lack of) success of these initiatives has various reasons. One major reason might be the lack of having an open dialogue on this topic – including men and women. We believe that only by including everyone into the discussion, we can actually decrease gender inequalities in, for example, hiring, funding or collaboration activities. Moreover, from our personal experience, it is a controversial and unpleasant topic to discuss with colleagues and collaborators. Hence, many people that perceive or experience inequalities choose to be silent about it.

Changing social constructs takes time. We might not overcome deeply rooted gender bias within a few years, but having a more inclusive, open dialogue about it, is certainly another step in the right direction.

In this contribution, four early-career researchers will give insights into their personal perception of the existing gender imbalance. We will present numbers of the ratio between women and men in different career stages at our own institutions, showcase existing initiatives and their acceptance and success, suggest strategies for both the personal and institutional level to promote diversity and equality, and discuss existing ‘role models’ as well as modern and reverse sexism in our research field.