



## **didthisreallyhappen.net: Promoting gender equality in academia through comic strips**

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Besides institutional barriers to gender parity, sexist behaviors in the workplace contribute to discourage women to pursue an academic career, and reinforce gender stereotypes that are harmful to their progress and recognition in academia. [didthisreallyhappen.net](http://didthisreallyhappen.net) is a community-based platform that fights against this type of sexism by means of illustrations.

The primary aim of the project is to raise awareness on gender imbalance in male dominated scientific environments, reveal the unconscious biases that are for example present in decision making and expose the community to sexist situations predominantly experienced by female scientists. Through the website [didthisreallyhappen.net](http://didthisreallyhappen.net) we anonymously collect testimonies on sexist behaviours in academia, we turn the stories into comics and publish them without any judgement or comments on the webpage.

By now, we have assembled over 40 testimonies with recurrent scenarios. We have identified three main issues that stand out in the stories: 1) scientific skills of female researchers are frequently questioned 2) deeply-rooted stereotypes tend to maintain females in traditional roles, and 3) stereotypes pressure males to conform to traditional roles.

In this session, we present how the project has evolved into its present form and show numerous comics that illustrate the above described problems. We would like to encourage the sharing of stories with us via our platform and discuss further actions.