



You can't be what you can't see - Increasing the visibility of female scientists

Ronja Ebner¹, Allix Baxter², Jana Cox³, Frances Dunn⁴, Kimberley Hagemans⁵, and Lonneke Roelofs⁶

¹Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Earth Sciences, Netherlands (r.m.ebner@uu.nl)

²Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Earth Sciences, Netherlands (a.j.baxter@uu.nl)

³Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Physical Geography, Netherlands (j.r.cox@uu.nl)

⁴Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Earth Sciences, Netherlands (f.e.dunn@uu.nl)

⁵Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Physical Geography, Netherlands (k.hagemans@uu.nl)

⁶Universiteit Utrecht, Geosciences, Physical Geography, Netherlands (l.roelofs@uu.nl)

The Young Women of Geosciences (YWoG) go by the maxim “You can’t be what you can’t see”. We are a group of early stage researchers at Utrecht University striving to make universities more diverse and inclusive. The group was honoured with the university’s Diversity & Inclusion Award 2020 for its goals and activities.

Although the Netherlands rank high in equality [Gender-Equality-Index of the EU, 2019] and the gender balance among students is close to 50:50, there is still a huge discrepancy when it comes to the male-to-female ratio of employed researchers and their wages [Monitor Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren 2019]. While the various causes for the gender gap are highly debated, we feel strongly that a lack of role-models is one of them.

Hence, our goals are to increase the visibility of female scientists, connect women to improve the exchange of experiences and to raise awareness for problems caused by a non-diverse and non-inclusive environment. Our regular workshops and soft research on gender in the classroom are therefore aimed at understanding and improving the dynamics within mixed groups. For the same reason we keep our events open to people of all genders.

In order to achieve our goals, we focus on showcasing role-models by organising “meet & greets”, where young scientists like PhDs and postdocs can learn from and connect to other female scientists in different stages of their careers. On those occasions, we not only invite scientists from Utrecht University but also well-known researchers from abroad, like Conny Aerts from the KU Leuven, Belgium, and first woman to receive the Francqui Prize. For even broader outreach we organised a symposium on the Experiences of Gender in Academia with a keynote speaker from

the Expertise Centre for Diversity Policy. This symposium was also used as an opportunity to improve the exchange with other female scientist networks like WISE from Delft, Netherlands, and WICS from Utrecht, Netherlands. The latter were also awarded with the diversity and inclusion award.

You can be what you can see!