



The EAERE Diversity Equity and Inclusion Initiative Online Open Discussion: “Gender and its representation in the professional world”

April 27, 2023, 3 pm CEST

The EAERE DEI executive committee held an online interactive session on Gender so as to bring forward issues and concerns in the context of day to day working life; both on an individual and collective level. The goal of the session was to understand and find hidden causes to be addressed as well as to promote greater inclusivity and equity with respect to gender. Participants were invited to share their views and perceptions on these issues, so as to build on them in future deliberations and provide a first step towards concrete pathways which the committee is keen to develop. A total of 86 registrations were received for the event (73 female and 13 male), with 32 active participants on the day of the event; of those 12 were EAERE members and 9 were members of the DEI executive committee.

AGENDA

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| 15:00 -15:10 | Welcome by EAERE President and introduction of the DEI (Phoebe Koundouri – Slides here) |
| 15:10 – 15:20 | Presentation of statistics on EAERE individual memberships (Vinay Kumar – Slides here) |
| 15:20 – 15:35 | Presentation of the EAERE Survey Results (Ebun Akinsete – Slides here) |
| 15:35 – 15:45 | Live Polls |
| 15:45 – 16:25 | Open Discussion |
| 16:25 – 16:30 | Closing remarks |
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Welcome and Introduction

Prof. Koundouri presented the global trends with regard to National Sustainable Development Goal achievement, with a special focus on SDG 5 – Gender Equality, framing ‘Gender’ in the broader context as a global developmental issue. The SDG report dashboard was presented, visually displaying the global performance against SDG 5. The report indicated that while most countries still encounter ‘significant and major challenges’ regarding the achievement of SDG 5, the general trend indicates that performance on SDG 5 is moderately improving in most countries. The full presentation can be found [here](#).

Prof. Koundouri went on to introduce the event, stating that it represented the launch of the EAERE DEI, and as it’s first event it aimed to draw in a variety of perspectives and trigger discussion and solution finding around issues to do with Gender in the workplace. Finally, the DEI executive committee was recognized along with members who were in attendance.

Presentation of the Statistics on EAERE Memberships

Dr Vinay Kumar presented some key statistics with regards to the gender balance of EAERE membership, beginning the presentation with the definition of gender as “a socio-cultural classification of man or woman, the way societies distinguish men and women and assigns them social roles, responsibilities, rights - varying from time, culture or even family”. He went on to give examples of things that may be ‘gendered’ including dressing, colours, spaces, work/jobs etc.

Dr Kumar presented information on individual EAERE memberships, with the vast majority coming from Europe (based on location) and academia (based on sector). Globally, only 36.21% of members identify as female, and a majority of them (55.6%) aged 25-39 years of age. Only a very small percentage of female members, 1.5%, are less than 25 years old. The full presentation can be found [here](#).

Presentation of the EAERE Survey Results

Dr Ebum Akinsete presented the results of the EAERE survey which involved 429 participants, including 247 who identified as female and 173 who identified as male. Questions ranged from whether respondents had experienced gender-based discrimination in the discipline and if they felt respected by their colleagues, to the bearing that their gender may have had on their career and development. On the whole, women and gender expansive respondents felt indicated more influence of gender on the various issues raised within the questions. The full presentation can be found [here](#).

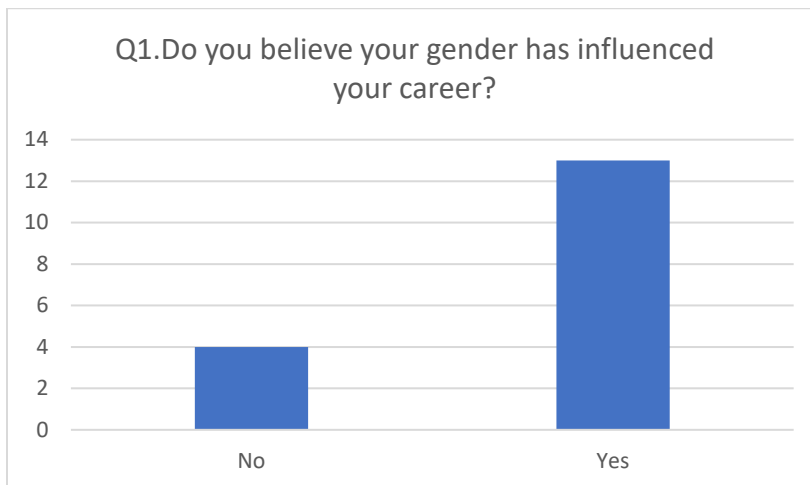


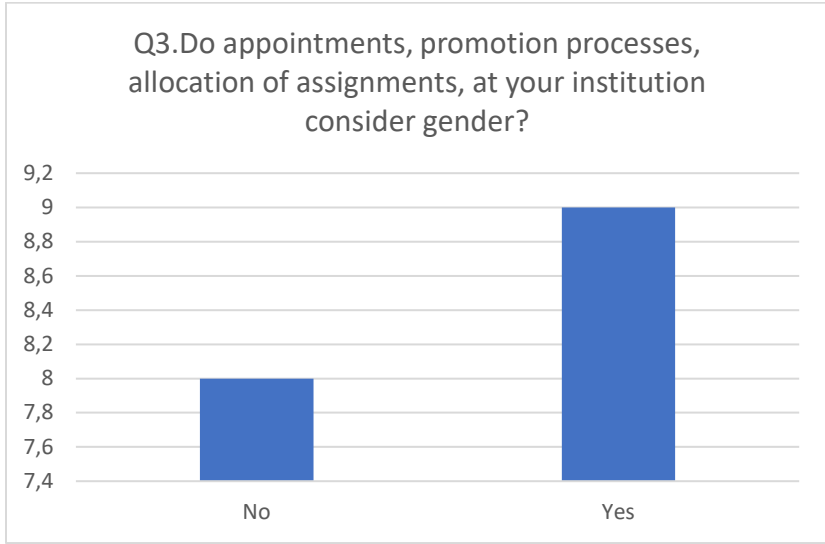
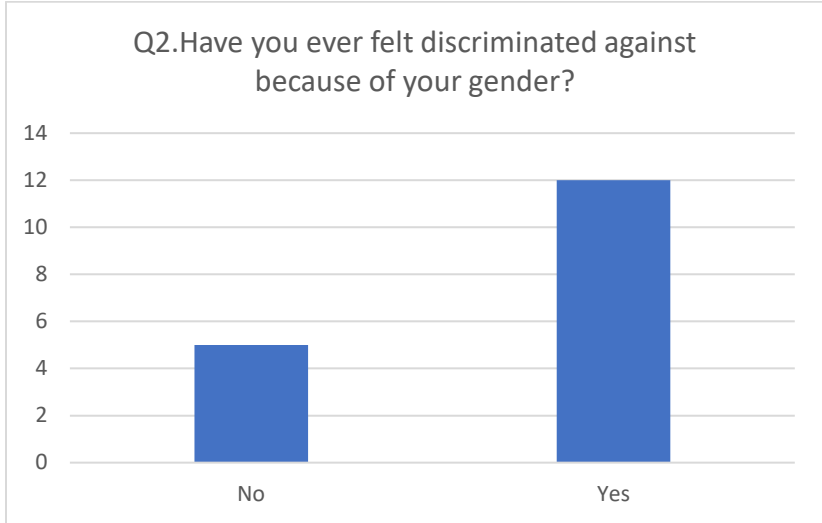
Live Poll and Discussion

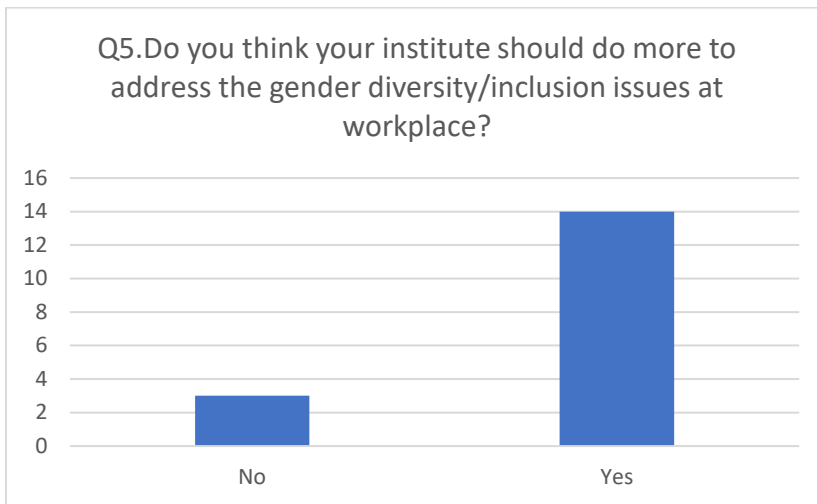
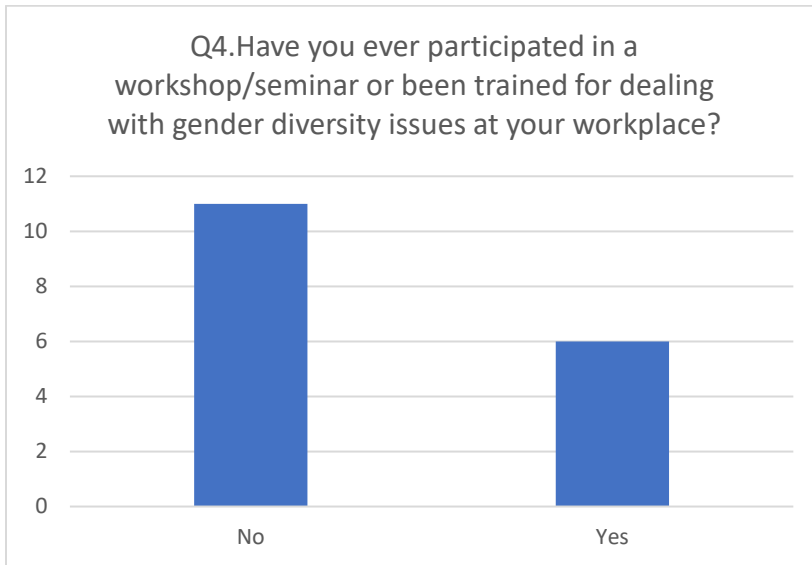
A live poll was run during the online event, with responses to the questions laying the foundation for the following group discussion. The poll included 8 questions:

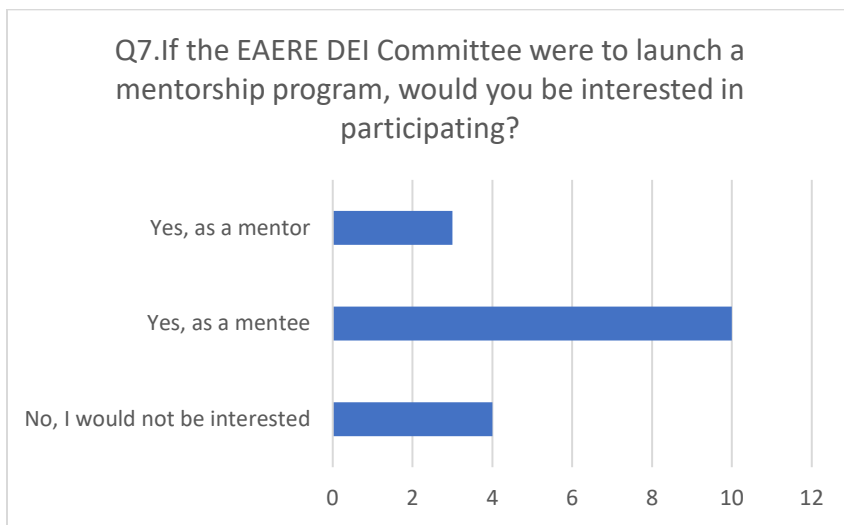
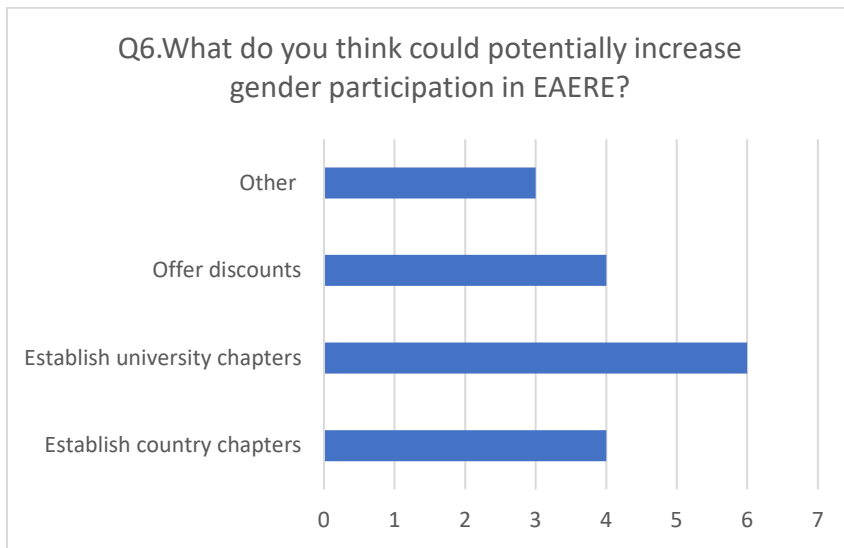
1. Do you believe your gender has influenced your career?
2. Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your gender?
3. Do appointments, promotion processes, allocation of assignments, at your institution consider gender?
4. Have you ever participated in a workshop/seminar or been trained for dealing with gender diversity issues at your workplace?
5. Do you think your institute should do more to address the gender diversity/inclusion issues at workplace?
6. What do you think could potentially increase gender participation in EAERE?
A: Offer discounts, Establish university chapters, Establish country chapters, Other
7. If the EAERE DEI Committee were to launch a mentorship program, would you be interested in participating?
A: Yes, as a mentor, Yes, as a mentee, No, I would not be interested
8. Are you aware of any examples of best practice with regards to diversity and inclusion? If yes, please share...

17 participants responded to the poll, and results are presented below:









In response to Question 8 on known examples of best practice, the following recommendations were received:

1. Frameworks supporting female leadership, eg. at the Technical University of Denmark
2. Gender-based university commissions for public examinations
3. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)
4. Mentorship programs
5. Support for mothers returning from maternity leave

During the discussion that ensued, the following key themes emerged:

Gender remains an issue

A number of female participants contributed to the discussion, providing examples of situations in their professional life where they felt they had been treated differently due to their gender. In particular in scientific fields which are still traditionally considered 'male domains'. Many times social factors (external to the professional environment) are considered to have an influence on these cases, whereby girls and women are traditionally socialized into certain roles and professions as opposed to boys and men; this extends to topics of conversation (e.g. while socializing at conferences and networking events). Even in professional settings, women are often assigned tasks more related to a 'nurturing role', e.g. with students. There is a strong cultural component to this.

Interventions should be considered from school age, to provide positive examples of female role-models and ensure that young people are provided equal opportunities. Building confidence of female students and professionals, upskilling to ensure that they possess broad knowledge in their areas of competence can help to mitigate against 'imposter syndrome'.

Intersectionality of gender and other relevant dimensions

The intersectionality of gender with other dimensions such as ethnicity, ability and age are just as important as the influence of gender alone on professional life. Being a woman of an ethnic minority background can prove challenging in certain professional contexts where both aspects are counted against you; as reflected by professional appointments.

Regarding age, there are certain crucial points at which it is observed that women begin to 'lag-behind' professionally, often related to the years associated with starting a family and child-rearing. There is often the assumption, even today, that women will adopt the main role of childcare and home-making and therefore not prioritize their careers; when the same assumptions are not made of male counterparts. This perception becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when women are often overlooked for promotions and are consequently underrepresented in leadership positions. In addition, age comes into play early on in professional life, when younger women at the beginning of their careers are not taken as seriously (both due to their gender and their age). Once more, a deference to seniority/experience at the expense of youth has strong cultural underpinnings and varies from country to country.

In all cases, having a strong support network within one's personal life is crucial to overcoming these challenges.

Policies and regulations are needed to accelerate inclusion

Policies and regulations at different scales (from national to organizational), are necessary to provide the required push to encourage institutions to take steps towards gender inclusivity. In addition,



performance against gender targets are becoming a requirement for corporate Environmental, Social and Governance reporting. Such policies and frameworks must be embedded within institutional structures and may include but are not limited to elements such as:

- A Gender Plan
- Directives to encourage gender balance of invited speakers at conferences and workshops
- Programs to support mothers
- Imposition of gender balance on committees (for examinations, appointments, executive roles in associations, etc.)
- Mentoring programs: women supporting women not to give up and extend a hand backwards and open doors for the generations to follow
- Sensitivity training

In addition, it is necessary to support policymakers in the design of appropriate laws and regulations. It is also important to see that such policies are embedded within the organizational culture to ensure their effective implementation and avoid 'Tokenism' and 'tick-box' appointments to meet quotas.