

Report from the Working Group on Women in Physics
for the 25th IUPAP General Assembly
Cape Town, South Africa, 26-28 October, 2005

Since the 24th IUPAP General Assembly in Berlin, 2002, the Working Group on Women (WGWIP) in Physics has been involved in the following projects.

Stimulating the participation of women in underdeveloped countries in the international scene

The Working Group since the 24th General Assembly has established the UNESCO/L'Oreal program to support women in underdeveloped countries and Eastern Europe to attend conferences. This year we made the fourth round of grants. Due to the limited funding, we were able to support only 20 grantees from 200 applicants in each round. We are now looking for new sources of funding to expand the program. Details about the grant winners can be found at the webpage <http://www.if.ufrgs.br/iupap>.

Second Iupap International Conference on Women in Physics

The WGWIP held the Second IUPAP International Conference on Women in Physics. This event took place in Rio de Janeiro, 23-25 May 2005. It was hosted by Prof. Elisa Baggio-Saitovitch, former president of the Brazilian Physical Society. The conference brought together 150 participants from 35 countries.

Nilcéa Freire, the minister of gender issues in Brazil; Yves Petroff, the president of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics; Sergio Rezende, the minister of science and technology of Brazil; Ricardo Galvão, the director of the Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Físicas of Brazil; Pedro Rocha Filho, the president of the grant agency Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro and Martial Ducloy, chair of the International Steering Committee for Year of Physics 2005 each gave the opening speech to open the conference and welcome the participants. Five invited speakers described the situation, barriers, and actions from every region of the world.

Besides the presentations related to women in physics, the second event had presentation of scientific work both by an invited speaker and at the poster session. The issue of funding for women in physics was also discussed in a roundtable.

Discussion groups at the conference shared issues and successful practices related to six important topics for increasing women participation and success in physics: 1) attracting girls to study physics in schools and universities, 2) launching a successful career in physics, 3) improving the institutional structure and climate for women in physics, 4) getting women into the scientific leadership structure, 5) learning from regional differences, and 6) balancing family and career.

The Conference adopted six Resolutions directed at IUPAP (see the full document at <http://www.if.ufrgs.br/iupap/>). The Resolutions emphasized the importance of: keeping data regarding women in physics, having women in positions of leadership and promoting gender neutral educational materials. The proceedings of the conference are available at the webpage <http://www.if.ufrgs.br/iupap>.

One day prior to the conference, a meeting of the GWIP was held at the conference site. The working group members agree that Marcia should ask the General Assembly (28-30 October in Cape Town, South Africa) to renew the working group but with a new charge namely: Identify and publicize good practices in terms of women in physics; Make sure IUPAP is following the resolution approved at the General Assembly in Berlin and also any new resolution approved at the general assembly in 2005.

Besides some specific activities that GWIP should pursue in the future include: Asking IUPAP to collect information on and report to the GWIP the percentage of women among organizing committees, invited speakers, and participants at the conferences supported by IUPAP. Organizing a data bank containing name, institution, contact address, highest degree, year degree was received, email and field of research so we could have an idea about women in physics in different countries. This data bank should be linked through our homepage.

During the conference, an informal meeting of the African participants was organized. The group started to design the format of the African Network.

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The Network of Women in Physics

The Working Group is maintaining and updating the network that was formed during the 1st and 2nd International Conferences on Women in Physics through its webpages. The URL www.if.ufrgs.br/iupap contains a source of information on grants and job opportunities for women in physics, conferences on gender issues, data about women in physics and important links.

In order to strengthen the communication between women in different countries we sent in 2004 to all network participants a newsletter where achievements in gender issues are being publicized. A new edition of this newsletter is planned for the end of 2005.

Forming a network on women in physics in Africa

We are starting a project of building a network of women in physics in Africa. 50 women from 15 countries are already involved in participating into this network through a electronic discussion list at . A subset of this group of african women have already met twice: in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in May, 2005 and in Durban, South Africa, in November 2005. The outcome of these two meetings was the decision of writing up a proposal for giving grants for for female physicists in countries in Africa to make training, master, doctoral studies and scientific visits in other countries in Africa. The proposal should be ready by January 2006 when it will be sent to different agencies

Marcia Barbosa
Chair, IUPAP Working Group on Women in Physics