

Activities of the Working Group on Women in Physics (Working Group 5)

September 2014 – September 2015

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Globally, the involvement of women and girls in physics is very different across countries and is still limited in most of them. Although progress has been made, much remains to be done.

1. IUPAP International Conference on Women in Physics

The conference is the major mechanism adopted by IUPAP, through its Working Group on Women in Physics, to foster the advancement of women in physics, and the attraction of girls into physics, across the world.

Although the 5th ICWIP was held in Waterloo, Canada, August 5-9, 2014, and was reported on in the previous annual cycle, it has relevance in this report. Over 200 physicists from 52 countries participated, including, notably, from 16 African countries. The Working Group raised funds to cover full Travel Grants for 45 participants from 36 developing countries.

Workshops were organised by the Working Group Members, and each Workshop formulated actions relevant to its focus area. These were combined in a Plenary Session into a set of Resolutions for the Working Group. From these, a Resolution was formulated which was forwarded for consideration by the General Assembly in Singapore in November 2015.

Outputs from the conference include the results of a new initiative called "My STEM Story," which encouraged women physicists to share their experiences online in the form of personal stories, essays, poems, pictures and videos. The Conference Proceedings are to be published by AIP (American Institute of Physics) and are in the editorial process. Workshop summaries are included as papers.

Organisation of ICWIP2017 is under way. The conference will be held in Birmingham, in the UK, in May 2017.

2. 28th General Assembly (GA)

The GA resolved to extend the work of Working Group 5 for 3 years, and charged the WG to organise the 6th IUPAP International Conference on Women in Physics. The GA also resolved to endorse an annual International Women in Physics Day.

3. Global Survey of Physicists

The second major mechanism adopted by the Working Group has been the Global Survey of Physicists, conducted in 2010. Global results had been presented in 2010, but detailed analysis of 8 countries was presented in Canada. This survey, carried out by the American Institute of Physics, was remarkable for having 14932 respondents in 8 languages. The survey has provided significant data on differences in the experiences, and access to resources, of men and women, and in highly developed and less developed countries. The ICWIP conference resolved to find ways of pursuing follow-up surveys in future; the chief barrier is funding.

4. Travel Grants

IUPAP Travel Grants were established to give an opportunity to women physicists who might not otherwise be able to attend a regional or international conference. In the 2015 year 103 applications were received and approximately 20 grants have been allocated.

5. Working Group meetings

The next meeting of the Working Group is planned for Birmingham, UK, in May 2016. Primary objectives are sourcing funding to support delegates from developing countries with Travel Grants for ICWIP2017, forming and confirming Country Teams, proposing a date for International Day of Women in Physics to IUPAP, and taking action to start the new phase of the Global Survey of Physicists.

6. The Waterloo Statement on Women in Physics

Following the lead of the astronomers, the physicists have drafted a statement on best practice in institutional policy and departmental strategy in fostering diversity. The present draft is being prepared for comment by a reference group, which will include country representatives, IUPAP representatives, and interested institutional representatives.