

Report from the Working Group on Women in Physics

Berlin, Germany, October 2004

The Working Group on Women (WGWIP) in Physics has been involved in the following projects.

The Network of Women in Physics

The Working Group is maintaining and updating the network that was formed during the 1st International Conference on Women in Physics through its webpages. It contains a source of information on grants and job opportunities for women in physics, conferences on gender issues and important links. Last April, the WGWIP had made available by Internet a set of graphs showing the percentage of women at different levels in countries in all five continents. This work is the result of a data collection presented at the 1st IUPAP International Conference on Women in Physics in 2002.

In order to strengthen the communication between women in different countries we are sending to all network participants a newsletter where achievements in gender issues are being publicized. Between the activities developed by women in different countries, one can highlight the formation this year of working groups on women in physics now officially linked to the local physical societies in Brazil, Spain and France. Moreover, early this year Larissa Svirina, the leader of the Belarus team, organized a seminar on gender inequality in science. This event was sponsored by the framework Belarusian-Swedish project "Development of Initiatives in Sphere of Civil Education". Similarly seminars on the topic of women in physics are being organized by Helle Kaasik from Lithuania under the umbrella of the Baltic joint project .

Discussions on the subject of women in physics are being held within scientific meetings. This was the case of the 22th Statistical Physics meeting in Bangalore, India. The event had a session in Physics and Society where gender issues were part of the program coordinated by Neelima Gupte. Similar discussions were

organized by Ling-An Wu in the Annual Chinese Physics Society meeting. A conference on Women in Basic Research is being organized by Nelli Didenko in St Petersburg, Russia next November. This event, in honor of Prof. Iya Ipatova, a preeminent female physicist in Russia who recently died in a tragic auto accident, will bring together women discussing their scientific work.

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

The Working Group is continuing the UNESCO/L'Oreal program to support women in underdeveloped countries and Eastern Europe to attend conferences. This year we made the third round of grants. Due to the limited funding, we were able to support only 20 grantee from 200 applicants. We are now looking for new sources of funding to expand the program.

Forming a network on women in physics in Africa

We are starting a project of building a network of women in physics in Africa. 30 women from 15 countries are already involved in launching this network. The network proposal is being designed and it will be finalized in a meeting that it will take place in South Africa next January. The WGWIP will look for funds to support the proposal structured in that meeting.

Participation of women on the Year of Physics 2005

The WGWIP is planning another conference on Women in Physics. This event will take place in Rio de Janeiro, 23-25 May 2005. It is being hosted by Prof. Elisa Baggio-Saitovitch, former president of the Brazilian Physical Society. The details about the event will be on line early October at the website <http://www.cbpf.br/women-physics>.

Besides the conference, the WGWIP is looking for funds to support the participation of young female physicists at the Launching Event that it will be held in January 2005 in Paris, France, and to help the participation of senior physicists from underdeveloped countries at the Sustainable Development event that will happen in October, 2005 in Durban, South Africa.

Besides these projects, members of the WGWIP have been involved in bringing gender issues to policy building events. This past August, Nelli Didenko organized a special session “Where are the women in science?” at the Euroscience Open Forum 2004 in Stockholm, Sweden, where two working group members, Judy Franz and Marcia Barbosa, made presentations.

Marcia Barbosa

Chair, IUPAP Working Group on Women in Physics