

SARAH:

Good afternoon everyone and welcome. I very much hope you enjoy your time with us today. I'm Professor Sarah Brough, I'm the former Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in UNSW Faculty of Science. And I'm delighted to be hosting today's conversation on the documentary, The Leadership. We would also like to acknowledge that the documentary, The Leadership, touches on some sensitive themes which may be triggering. If you would like to speak to someone Beyond Blue is an excellent resource which is accessible to everyone. And UNSW staff can access the UNSW Employee Assistance Program Bannister and students can access UNSW Psychology and Wellness program, which is formally CAPS. I'd like to start our discussion by acknowledging the Bidjigal people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which the university is built. And I'd like to pay my respects to the Elders past and present and to extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are with us this afternoon. I'd like to acknowledge the role of the traditional owners and Indigenous people of Australia as the first knowledge creators. And their very deep understanding of the land, the sea and the sky, forms a very important source of understanding of Australia, which should feed into all of our scientific understandings. Today's session will be recorded, so if you need to leave the presentation early or miss any part, you can watch this again at your convenience as the link to the recording will be emailed out to everybody who's attending and who registered. We encourage active audience participation and welcome any questions you may have. Please use the live Q&A chat function throughout the discussion and we will address as many questions as possible as we progress.

I'm very pleased to be hosting today's discussion topic as we will be addressing the importance of inclusive science, acknowledging gaps in our practice and working with our communities to create inclusive spaces and inclusive leadership. To kick off our session today, I'd like to introduce you to our panellists. I'm gonna start with Isabelle Kingsley, Isabelle?

ISABELLE:

Hello, thank you. My name is Isabelle Kingsley. I am the research associate at the office of the Women in STEM Ambassador, which is here at UNSW. And before that, I was a science communicator and a science teacher and have done a lot of work on evaluating programs, especially gender equity programs. So I'll be able to have a little chat about that.

FATEMEH:

Thanks for having me today, Sarah. So this is Dr Fatemeh Vafae. I am senior lecturer in the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. And my background has been in computer engineering and afterwards in computer science and then from my PhD until now in computational biomedicine. So I'm basically a computer scientist who speaks biology. I lead the laboratory of AI or Artificial Intelligence for Biomedicine in University of New South Wales. And quite deep in this multidisciplinary field and leadership having the flagship of AI and Biomedicine at the Faculty of Science.

STEPHANIE:

And I'm Dr Steph Gardner. So I'm a marine biologist, and at the moment I'm working as a marine ecologist at UNSW here. And my work is looking at microbes, so tiny things like bacteria and how they play an important role in health and function of things like corals, fish guts, algae, particularly

under a changing climate. And I was also part of Homeward Bound. So I was in the third cohort, which was in 2018, with our voyage at the beginning of 2019.

DANE:

I'm Professor Dane McCamey from the School of Physics here at UNSW, Sydney. My research is around materials for energy and for technology. But the reason I'm here today is that I'm also the Associate Dean Enterprise and Engagement for the Faculty of Science and the Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence and Exciton Science.

SARAH:

Thank you, everybody.

So to give context to the film, The Leadership is an independent documentary by award-winning Director Ili Bare. And focuses on the first Homeward Bound program which took place in 2016. As well as the systemic inequalities that women face in STEM, and that's Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine for short. The documentary follows the journey of several women in STEM and leadership facilitators. As they participate in the inaugural Homeward Bound program, culminating in a 21-day voyage in Antarctica. Through telling the personal stories of several women on board, the film addresses the need to remove structural inequities in STEM to allow for more women leaders. As this is an area in which STEM traditionally is lacking. I should also mention that I was one of the women on board that ship, although I'm only present in background shot at the beginning of the film. You've all been sent a link to watch the documentary, and that opportunity will remain open until tomorrow, 9 March, if you haven't had a chance to get to watch the documentary yet. This year's theme for International Women's Day is Women in Leadership. And through this panel, we will highlight what we've learned from gender initiatives in STEM. And what we still need to accomplish in order to successfully produce the next generation of diverse science leaders. So that our science communities accurately represent the communities they're drawn from.

So that's an introduction to the documentary. We've all seen that documentary. I know there's a lot to unpack in that, but I'd really love to hear from each of you. What point really stuck with you in that documentary? Let's start with Steph.

STEPHANIE:

I think the main thing for me is leadership is messy, like it's not perfect, it's hard. You know, there are a lot of challenges associated with it. And it's really important that I guess these leaders who are actively involved in that, they have the courage and they're able to show up and just give it a shot. You've just got to be able to lean in, have that courage that really stood out for me.

SARAH:

Fatemeh?

FATEMEH:

As you said, Sarah, there's a lot involved in that field and a lot of triggers that come up. But there were a couple of things that I would like to raise here that is aligned with my experience in the field

as well. One is that the environment that the film has been taken on the absolute wilderness at the end of the world, the only reserve. And then the question of why diverse fields, why diverse leaders. And having such a big cohort of leading edge scientists all together within that sort of unique environment just triggered for me. And this is why we need this planet and we need these brains, we need all these scientists. This is one thing that remained with me. And the other that was quite sort of solved in a sense was, first off, the way that all this scientist has been quite honest and sort of transparent in sharing their sort of obstacles, which many of them, as we all know, is systemic obstacles. And some sort of feeling that I had, which is a sort of confidence gap within Women in STEM in particular. Which is again, is not necessarily because of women, it's because of the environment. And I had some sort of deep thought after that, why we feel as such. And this to me has become sort of clear that Women in STEM and specifically in engineering that I'm coming from that, are in minority. And being in minority comes with lack of confidence quite clearly. And how we can build that up, this is something that I would like to try to further discuss on. But this has been the two things that remained with me.

SARAH:

Thank you. Isabelle?

ISABELLE:

I think as I was watching the film, I was thinking about the different barriers and what is true leadership, and what is true change. And it's not about finding ways around the barriers or over the barriers, but breaking them and tearing them down. And that's about changing the system and changing the culture, not changing the women, and that came through very clearly in the film. I was expecting to watch an airy-fairy, you know, warm and fuzzy film about women who go on this expedition and come out on the other end transformed. And in a sense, that's what happened, but it got messy. And I wasn't expecting that, but it really showed what the women on that ship did which is challenge and question, that is true leadership.

So this film was shown at the Sydney Film Festival last year, and there was a discussion about it. And Fabian was on that panel and she said and I wrote it down because I thought, this is brilliant. Often the challenge, when you're trying to change a paradigm, is that your solutions come from within that paradigm. And chances are the solution you come up with will keep reinforcing that same paradigm.' And I think that what happened on that ship was that the women who were there questioned and challenged what is leadership. And it exposed that despite the good intentions, it was reinforcing that we need to change the women to fit a certain leadership approach. And what we have as an idea of leadership, rather than the other way around. So for me, it made me reflect on, OK, what is true change, what is true leadership and what is true equity. And it's not changing the women, it's changing the systems and the culture.

SARAH:

Thank you. And I had not heard that quote from Fabian, I really enjoyed that, so thank you for bringing that. If you can pass the microphone along. Dane?

DANE:

Thanks, Sarah. I took away from the film that, the challenges that people face in this area tend to be

complex and individual. But when you look at a film like *The Leadership*, you can start to see themes emerging that are consistent and related in a lot of ways to the structure of how we do science. And how science is run and organised that put these barriers in place and the barriers that we clearly need to address. The other thing I took away is that it can seem overwhelming to address these sorts of things. But that given we have to address them and it's important for us to address them, we have to start somewhere. And the thing we start with might not be perfect, in fact, it may be quite messy, as we see in the film. But progress does need to begin and you start and you see what you did wrong and you fix that. And if you keep doing that, then there are ways forward.

SARAH:

Thank you. I also think in that one of the important things is listening to feedback. And maybe that was one area the film showed that that was a particularly messy thing. It's hard to listen to feedback, particularly constructive, possibly negative feedback.

I think the film showed the real strength and necessity of that in our programs.

So we'll move to our second question. I'd like to hear kind of, we've talked a little bit about this already. But what have you learned from watching the film, your experiences to date, about diversity initiatives as they exist now? So we'll talk next about how we would like to change things moving forwards. But what does it make you think about diversity initiatives as they exist in this moment in time? Dane?

DANE:

I'm happy to start there. I think the leadership and the Homeward Bound Program provides a really exemplar of an individually focused leadership activity. Focusing on what the person has to do to try to overcome the challenges that they're facing. And there's a lot of places where that's a really useful skill to have. But I'm not sure that this issue is necessarily addressable in that way. I think there are big organisational and structural issues in place that individuals can put effort into, but won't be changed by individual action. It will need collective action from a lot of people and from people who will be maybe negatively impacted by the outcomes of that action. But will need to make that individual personal sacrifice to change a system that benefits them, so that others benefit as well. And I think that's... that's a real, that's gonna be a real challenge for a lot of people. It's doing something for the greater good. And I think that's starting to look at what real leadership is. Can I make decisions that are not in my interests, that are in the interests of others to achieve a better outcome for everybody?

SARAH:

That's a really important point. And actually, I'd like to just go back to Fatemeh's point earlier. I never, until you said that, it had never occurred to me to think about the confidence issue as a systemic problem. I have always looked internally at that myself and wanted to solve me and not a new saying that has just and I work in this area and have done for many years. And so you've really that and together with Dan's comment, I think you're right that all of these many of these problems, maybe not all a majority of these problems are systemic and not individuals. I think it's really important to look at it that way. Sorry, Steph.

STEPHANIE:

I guess following on from that too a lot of the work that we did in HB3 within the program was trying to address and sort of help you move through imposter syndrome. And one of the most memorable moments for me when we got to Ushuaia, we had a couple of days on land before we got onto the ship. And some of the program content, the leadership that Fabian she stood up and she said, anybody in the room stand up if you've ever felt like you're not good enough or, you know, you think I'm a fraud, people are going to find out what I'm doing. I'm, you know, that kind of thing. And everybody stood up in the room and I was just yeah, it really took me by surprise. I was like, why are you standing up like you're, you know, professor of ecology and you're an astrophysicist? Like, what? Why are you guys standing up? Every single woman in that room stood up. And for me, that was so powerful because it really made you think, like, why are we wasting so much energy, thinking that we aren't good enough? We're constantly telling ourselves we can't do this we don't have confidence. Why, why are we thinking like that? But I guess coming back to your question, Sarah, I think for me, the main thing that I was thinking about with this is in HB three, in HB three, we had I think it was 26 different nationalities within the 78 women. And that was probably one of the real benefits of the program for me actually having that diversity. We had women from aged, I think it was about 23 to 65, all different stages of their career, life stages, everything, and that it really brought value to the program, being able to actually talk to these women, hear their stories, learn their backgrounds. That, for me, was a real bonus.

SARAH:

And absolute I agree similar to my experience in 2016 the film shows some of the messiness of that experience, but it also had value. And the value for me was that experience and meeting, we obviously, as the film shows, we didn't have the geographic diversity. We did however, we had some, but not as much as would be preferable. But we had the age diversity and the different, not just academic scientists, but scientists working to change policy, to communicate science and having that access to communication. I work in a very male dominated field. My colleagues are lovely, but to have that experience of being on a ship alone with so many amazing women was, was really important and life changing is too strong a word, but really valuable. I think it's definitely one of the positives of the of the program. Fatemeh.

FATEMEH:

I would like to follow up on your point in terms of like organisational changes that we need to make to basically reduce or mitigate these obstacles. But I would like to have it one step further from that and to make it in like societal level. I see the change, something that is not just related for women awareness it comes from both men and women awareness and working collectively, not in competition. All this discussion that we have is to bring a complementary brain and sort of goodness on board for a better life, for a better society and better planet. It's not a matter of for men to take their position off and replace that by female. So there is cooperation here. And I feel that quite and I experience that 'cause this is something that has been with me for ages. And I come up with some sort of personal touches on that why this is important to me is that a lot of male, they are unintentionally contributing to this like sort of this diversity rather than being intentionally. And awareness and training for both females and males are needed for those that they are willing to contribute, but just they haven't seen or realise that there is a big gap here to come on board. I have been I had this privilege myself to have to be involved from like young ages of being like little Kid,

being supported with very supportive male in my life. I had a dad that in the environment that all the peers in my age was looking to like participating in tea parties to get matched. My dad was telling me that you should go to Harvard and get the latest of the science and do good things for the humanity, not just for yourself or for your family. So you want to do this. So I was feeling that mission from early on. And, afterwards you know, I had a partner, again, that privilege to have a very cooperative partner. I was it's not a joke. And I tell the people that I have a feminist husband that who is quite supportive. I had two little kids, like right in the middle of the time that my career was flourishing. And I was listening to those women in the field that how it was detrimental. And I have heard that from a lot of my colleagues said how that joy of being a mum, being pregnant and having kids come with the fear of losing the opportunities or good jobs or just getting out of this, like truck of academy because you can produce, like outcomes for a while. Well, again, having bringing that awareness on board for men that they would like to cooperate to help and to see parenthood as a joint sort of basically role rather than being motherhood. And this is what you are destined to do, is something that may make the whole life from bottom up in an organisational level I see that is top level. It's very important to work on that and make systemic changes. But the major changes come from bottom up, you know, from the family, from our kids up to like our partners and et cetera, to make it something that works. In reality, it looks very complicated and the solution is not just to make changes, you know, like in systems, it should be quite deep changes that should be made.

SARAH:

I think that's a really interesting point about the importance that neither of those roles are small, fatherhood, partnership, but they're very direct, they're very... in your backyard and how those changes and those attitudes make such a difference to you and your career, I think is a really important point that I hope all of our watchers take away that that's actually our impacts in our family environments are often immeasurable compared to what the changes we can make in a work environment or and of any small changes that you can make to make anybody can make to the lives of women and stem their family environments are one of the first places that those changes can most easily make impact.

ISABELLE:

Yeah, yeah, I agree. Absolutely, when we talk about, you know, those long lasting changes, there's the systemic changes, but the cultural changes. And to be able to have those cultural changes, you have to target young people, but you have to target their influencers and their influencers are the parents and carers and teachers and career advisors and all the, all the people who surround the young people so that we can bring them up to be, you know, the wonderful, you know, like your partner, and have that family support to be able to... yeah, to help you through it.

To answer your question, coming back to the point you made about it's so important to listen, every program, every initiative has these positive intentions and of course they do. But there can be negative consequences, unintended consequences. And we also just want to know what works and what doesn't and how to improve what doesn't. And that's like a very strong theme in the film, is like, what doesn't work and how do we improve it and change it. And so, feedback evaluating the programs and the initiatives to find out what works, what doesn't, how to improve it and then sharing those. So in terms of, you know, the documentary, it's now being shared very broadly.

How it was improved, so and now we're all learning from it and we're all having this conversation, so it's so important to be able to properly get feedback properly evaluate our efforts. Knowing what works and how to change what doesn't, and then sharing that with everyone very broadly so that we can all work towards cohesively work towards that ultimate goal, which is equity.

SARAH:

Wouldn't it be great if we could just be more open about what things fail?

ISABELLE:

I know.

SARAH:

We tried a thing and it failed. ISABELLE: It's so - I argue all the time I just say it all the time. ISABELLE: It's so - I argue all the time I just say it all the time. The things that don't work the way you intended them to are the most important things to share. We I know that a lot of things are funded. And so you want to present well, it worked, it was successful and this is what we achieved and all the positive things that came out of it. And that's great. But the things that didn't work exactly the way you thought, those are the really important things that are important to share, because then we can all learn from them. So I think that we need to create a culture where it's OK and it's encouraged to share those. I don't want to call them failings because nothing is a failure. It's just we thought that we would get this and this happened instead. And how can we change things? OK. We've had a few questions, so I'm going to put some of these to the panel. So starting with what are some tips or advice you can give women working in male dominated industries who want to progress their careers?

ISABELLE:

I just have...do you have one?

SARAH:

Maybe this can be a speak up if you've got an answer.

FATEMEH:

Yeah, so there are a few things that comes in my mind. And this is what I have practiced and I have learned from my peers that this is something that affect female most.

Confidence is one thing, but I put it aside and I discuss that as well, that this is something really systemic. But again, we can work out from inside to be confident. I have been like interviewed a lot of like research associates in my lab. And when looking into their CVS, I could see that it is quite competitive, like male and female. But when I was interviewing them, I was really filling, in many cases, lack of confidence, like an equally or even better CV of a female when discussing which is sad and it should be resolved systemically. But at the same time, you know, females should think about that as well and to try to work on it. Another thing that people may be less sort of considered, and I have repeatedly seen that, is that you see that females are less acknowledged for their ideas and achievements. I followed that up and have seen a study that has been shown 82% of female. They

have said that their contribution in novel ideas has been ignored. Well, this is a shared contribution or even, you know, that has been come with, let's say, a student, a female student, but it has been taken up. So take up your ideas and a step up for what you have your innovative ideas is for you. And take that ownership, which I think is quite important. And the third and last for me is work on your networks, network is quite important. And sometimes it is uncomfortable. If the we wouldn't have that personality of being like extrovert, I would say. And that but that is something that a lot of scenarios is game changer and work on that. This is important.

STEPHANIE:

Yeah, just to follow up from that, I totally agree with the networks and I think that was something else from Homeward Bound that I really valued. We've still got a WhatsApp group with 78 women and people are constantly sharing stories of success, you know, when they might need some advice or support or that kind of thing. And it's amazing having that network of, you just know you've got complete trust and respect from everybody else in there. And it's incredibly powerful. I think something else working in a male-dominated field or a suggestion for people is something to think about is unconscious bias as well. Like research is showing when you've got reviews on a panel for like an interview job or something. And there's both male and female, regardless of the gender of the panel, the candidate who's likely to get it is twice as likely to be male. And that's even coming from women as well. So having that, I guess, training or just knowing your kind of bias, blind spots, just that awareness like it starts, I guess, start small. Just have a think about your awareness. That could be something to put forward to, you know, other managers or other colleagues or something like that.

DANE:

I find that a challenging question to approach, but I think some of the advice I would give to female students of mine or female colleagues of mine is, is try to find supportive environments that you can identify them in a number of ways, look for a thing that, an environment that you feel like you will do your best in and then do some due diligence on that. Make sure that the person you're going to work for is, is someone you want to work for and they'll demonstrate that, they'll give you a job with a continuing position or a longer contract. They'll pay you appropriately. They'll have other women working for them who they're more than happy for you to speak to and engage with. And there's a range of ways to know that the place you're going is probably pretty good. And if you have the choice and I appreciate that a lot of people don't necessarily have the choice, but if you have the choice, pick good people and there may be a cost to that, it may be that maybe you don't publish one or two papers that you would otherwise have published, but in the long run, a supportive mentor and a supportive team and a supportive network is probably more valuable than those papers.

SARAH:

I will from my own experience, I think the network comment speaks most to that. And it's not just actually outside of my field of astrophysics. It's inside. It's having very supportive female colleagues often having... My employers have often been male, and as Dane mentions, they've been very supportive and having those supportive environments and extending that, then that allowed me to find my comfort to extend that internationally. And a good employer and a good mentor will help you broaden your network as well. They will not limit your horizons and that will open up other

opportunities. I think that has been invaluable for me, for me in my career. Isabelle, did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

(CROSSTALK)

So, maybe... so the next one, UNSW has done a great job of making EDI and gender equity in the workplace a priority. I'm going to say thank you to that person. For organisations with nothing in place to promote gender equity, what would you suggest is the first step for them to move forward? That's a great question for you.

ISABELLE:

Is the question UNSW in general or...

SARAH:

No, so for an organisation with no EDI in place?

ISABELLE:

OK, yes. Well, I think one of the things that we all need to just remember is that we're all mighty in this and we all need to work together to create this change. And one of the best things to do is to do something. So, I kind of want to say to everyone watching, if there's in your workplace, there's a barrier or challenges that you come up with or that you come, you that are in your way or that you see, do something. We all have that power and it doesn't, we don't have to do everything and try to change everything at once, but within your realm of influence, you don't need to be a CEO. You don't need to be the director or the dean. Anyone can just kind of bring up and say, OK, this is a barrier within your realm of influence. What can you do to dismantle that barrier again, not around or over, but dismantle that barrier for yourself and for your peers and for anyone else coming up behind you? So we can all do that because to create change, you have to do something. And if you, if we do nothing and just talk about the issues, we'll never move forward.

SARAH:

Did anybody else...Dane?

DANE:

One thing from my perspective is being explicit about what you're trying to achieve and be measurable with that. So if you set fluffy goals, then it's very hard to achieve those. If you set very explicit goals that are measurable and it's easy to hold yourself and others to account for reaching or not reaching those goals. And you can do that at any level. You can do that in your team, in a school, in a faculty, in the university. And if you look at UNSW, which is an example you've given, I think some of our successes come because people have set explicit goals and put resourcing towards achieving those goals. And so, that's my...

SARAH:

Thank you, about this, from my perspective, the first thing I would do, what would you suggest is the first step is the question, I would be suggesting to whoever would listen that there should be some kind of EDI committee to discuss these issues for that organisation. And I think saying I will organise this, oh, you know, recruit people, I'll lead it. I think sometimes activity doesn't happen because everybody is tired and being pulled in lots of different directions and having somebody step up and

say, I'll do that, is actually really powerful and can be the first step to just two things happening because they're bringing the energy.

Next question. I'm part of the HB6 cohort... congratulations! Watching the movie, of course, raises a lot of questions about the program. Would you say that the program has grown enough by now and fully overcome the issues the movie highlighted? How do the learnings from this process influence how the initiative attempts to make changes in the wider society? I think this is absolutely a question for Steph.

STEPHANIE:

Thanks. Oh, yeah. Firstly, congratulations and hopefully, we'll see you around campus it would be good to have a catch-up and meet the other women around here who have also been part of homeward bound. I think something that's really big with homeward bound as well is the feedback. We all have to do a really big, you know, questionnaire at the end to just fill in our experiences, what we did like, what we didn't like, and what we've seen from going from homeward bound one to three, which I was part of, was they really take on board everybody's suggestions and feedback. And we really noticed a difference within the program between the different cohorts as well. And now coming up to six, that's just every time it's just getting, I guess, better and better. It's definitely not perfect. These things do take a long time. But, you know, it's steps in the right direction and things that people have brought up and had the courage to bring up and say they are things that people are acting on now. So, yes, it is a little bit of a slow process. It has changed a lot and it is still changing a lot. It's a continually evolving program and process, which I think is another great part too, that you can actually have your feedback listened to and taken on board. And then, you know, for the next cohorts, it'll be amazing to say by HB ten what it's like, I would love to be able to go back again, but yeah, really interested to hear from that. And we were talking with Fabian too, with following up from having the screening of the leadership. And I kind of said to her, I was like, well would you feel the leadership too again from eight, from HB ten, because it would be really interesting to sort of see the kind of differences, what has changed, how the program has grown and evolved. That would be very interesting, probably broadly, not just to me.

ISABELLE:

When did she say?

STEPHANIE:

She said, I hadn't thought about it. So maybe she has now.

SARAH:

I'll say, so coming from the perspective of the first cohort, it had its challenges. You saw the challenges, but there was still a great amount of value. Um, I do not regret my participation in that program at all. I gained a great deal from the program, from the network of women I met and also from watching the feedback process. So we had a more organic feedback process because we got to the end of the program and kind of went, this needs some work. And so there was a whole day onboard the ship where we took over and ran through a very distributed leadership model of taking on board feedback and assessing and kind of reducing it down to something that is manageable. And then again, on land in Nashua, once we got back to shore. Actually, that experience of watching that

feedback process happened, that taught me nearly as much as a leadership program itself because I had never seen that done and I'd never seen it done so organically, so constructively, so broadly. And among such a big group of women. And I think that's a really important additional skill to learn things. It wasn't perfect. But I've learned so much from that, and I think there's still a lot to be learned. And so I greatly enjoy your homeward bound six experience and I'm absolutely sure that you will.

FATEMEH:

Sorry, I just wanted to add one sentence from Fabian that I've heard in one of the interviews that she had after that film. And that was, I think, really interesting quote. So, it's not exactly like what she said. But the take-home message was that we need to have a paradigm shift in terms of like women leadership in STEM and all the paradigm shifts comes from the paradigm, the actual existing paradigm itself. So we need that power of females and their feedback to be able to make that paradigm shift to happen and this just resonance with which you just mentioned.

SARAH:

So we've got a couple more questions. I'm going to quickly just go back to... I'd like to make sure that we addressed the final question I had for the panel discussion and we'll, so we'll respond to that and then we'll kind of answer a couple more audience questions. So a final question I had for our panel is, what do we need to implement for future successful diversity initiatives? You know, what needs to happen? What needs to change as we move forwards?

ISABELLE:

I have the book of answers.

SARAH:

Excellent.

ISABELLE:

I do. I have the book of answers. So, there is a document called, The Women in STEM Decadal Plan, and essentially it's, it was written by the Australian Academy of Science with the Australian Academy of Engineering and, sorry, Technology and Engineering. And it's a 10-year plan. It was published in 2019. And it is brilliant because it's what we need to do. So it talks about the problem, the barriers, and then what we need to do to dismantle them. So we have a plan. It's a federal, you know, national document. And essentially, if we all put together our efforts, align our efforts to this, we could be very successful. What I especially like, and this is available online. If you just write Women in STEM Decadal Plan, it comes up it's available online. Is the appendices, because there's a whole section at the back with. They did broad consultation with experts. And so it's like the suggested solutions from consultations map to the barriers. So it's literally the book of answers of what we can do to improve gender equity in our efforts.

SARAH:

Thank you. There may be some more answers from our panel to that that I'd also like to hear from.

FATEMEH:

I think that was quite comprehensive And thank you for bringing that book on board. I think that

answers that in a very comprehensive way. But again, I think I have sort of touched upon that. But to make changes, we need to do in bidirectional sort of way, bottom-up and top-down. We need to change ourselves. We need to change our surroundings. We need to change our next generation. And it should be top-down as well. The organisation, the leadership, those that they are making influence now should make changes. And together, that may expedite the changes in future.

STEPHANIE:

Yeah, I think adding onto that as well, we, I guess coming from the what can we do as a from a personal point of view rather than systemic is, you know, we tend to not think of ourselves as leaders and we assume other people will take responsibility. But something that we can do ourselves is actually lean in to that and sort of research and look into things yourselves, question things. You know, as scientists we are generally curious people. If something's kind of picked your interest from the discussions today, like go and look at it, research it, try and understand where your point of view is coming from. What can you change? What can you do? You know, we've been talking before about, like the sphere of influence and think about just starting small. A lot of these changes, they do start small. So think about what specifically can you do? And don't just think about, oh, yeah, OK, I can do this. Just thinking about converting that intention into action. Think about these valuable things that way.

DANE:

For me it's acknowledging that most of the people watching this are probably women, then most of the people who can make change are probably men and if you're a man, make change. Get out there, figure out what you can do, how you can do it effectively, what barriers are in place, and talk to people about that. Ask questions. Figure out what would be the most effective and efficient change be and how can you help bring that about. There's a really sort of compelling and concerning quote in the film that, I feel like I have to change as a woman to be a member of the science community, and that's horrific. No one in our field should ever feel like that. You should feel comfortable being who they are coming to work, doing a job they love, in an environment that supports them to do that. And so if you're a leader in science, either a man or a woman, figure out what you can do and do it, and then report on it. I agree, like having, we're scientists, we like measuring things and reporting on those things. And, it's a way to hold yourself and your organisation accountable for what you do and how you do it. And if you get into that process of finding collaboratively the problem, identifying what you need to do to fix that, trying to do that, reporting on that appropriately and continuing to do that in a continuous manner, then that's how change will happen.

SARAH:

Thank you, I think you've covered most of the things that I was thinking about. One of the things that hasn't come up so far and that does come up in the film is that intersectional lens and how the issues we've been very gender focused and very binary gender focused. You know, we have many more people in our community who don't always feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to the workplace. And I think that has to be an increasing part of our conversations going forwards, in exactly the manner that they just described. And everybody that, you know, talking to people and asking what their experiences are and how we can support them to bring themselves to the

workplace and continually examining how those attempts to change, how they are hitting their targets.

OK, thank you everybody on the panel. I'm going to you, I'm looking at the time, we have a little bit more time. And I'm going to go back to our questions and, I've got a few more. So, how can these changes be managed if key figures such as long time institutional professors may not be interested or capable of adopting new behaviours or addressing their own unconscious bias? And, what kinds of leadership training, apart from Homeward Bound project, currently exist for academics in general, if any?

I can speak to one and I can't remember its name. I know that there is a leadership program for women academics that exists. And I can't remember its name, I'm embarrassed to say. If we think about it, we'll make it available in the post. When I remember, I will put it in the post event, email. Is there anybody else? Yes, professors with inabilities in adopting new behaviours.

(LAUGHS)

ISABELLE:

So I just want to share and it comes back to your point about unconscious bias. So one of the projects that the women in STEMM Ambassador Office is working on, we're working with four large research organisations. So, CSIRO, ANSTO, National Computational Infrastructure and Australia Astronomy Ltd, who all run funding and grant schemes for like science equipment. So, telescopes and supercomputers. Now, there's unconscious bias in those selection processes, and so we decided to run a study and work with them to blind the review and the assessment of grant applications in those organisations. Now, what seemed like a simple process, which was really, remove the names and the pronouns in the applications and then assess them in a blind way, which I thought would take about a month, took over a year. Because there was a lot of, it was a challenging process for a lot of people within those organisations to take those change in practice on board. And there was a lot of scepticism and there was resistance. And you can understand why there is resistance. Because with change comes discomfort, and with change comes disadvantage to some people who have always had the advantage. And that's confronting. And it's not easy. And it's just about, you know, having the patience, having the ability to listen and negotiate and, you know, also the confidence to keep the pressure on enough in a gentle but firm way to be able to have those changes happen. And it's normal to come up against those, that resistance. But you just need to continue applying that pressure. And those four organisations are all on board now and they're all doing these blind reviews for the next few years, at least, as we measure how that's going to change the outcomes of the grants. So, yeah, it's normal.

FATEMEH:

Can I just very quickly add, just mindful of time. I have very, like quick, don't say advice, just sharing thoughts, that it's quite hard to give a universal advice for these types of situations. It's quite like a case or situation specific, independent. And this is like the whole sort of reason for having the skills to be able to deal with that. But just in a very quick note, being proactive in these scenarios. So, try to make changes. Think about it, evaluate it and try to make changes. Being proactive and being reflective and that you will find the way that you should behave. In many cases, the problem is that

we see the problem, we see the issue, but we are not acting upon that. But what that would be to act, it's very situation dependent and person dependent.

SARAH:

I was gonna say Dane may also be able to comment on general academic leadership training.

DANE:

Actually wanted to comment on one more thing first, which is, I think building teams that are supportive is also very valuable in that approach. So, find those in your team or in related teams who have the same views as you do. And working together is a very powerful way to overcome individuals.

SARAH:

Yes.

DANE:

Particularly in organisations like universities that are designed around consensus building and process. There are some really great general leadership programs run by institutions like ours. They are often aimed at developing mid-level or senior leaders. I've been lucky enough to do one of those that was extremely diverse, you know, extremely equitable and extremely amazing. Interacting with the set of people who were on that course is really a useful thing personally, and I would encourage anyone who has an opportunity to engage in those activities to do so. It also is, general leadership activities like that, and I'll say the differences between the one I've been engaged with and some of the, and the leadership was that it was very much designed for science and academic participants. So they were very much engaged with the literature, with the evidence, with examples for, particularly designed for what we do. And I think that's quite a useful way to keep people engaged. But the, again, it's a community building and network building activity. The people that you build relationships with during those processes are the people who can help you to overcome those sorts of barriers that you got to encounter.

SARAH:

I've got one final question which we'll get kind of very brief answers from, any suggestions for women who find grassroots activities are suppressed, then actively discouraging women networking together as being sexist and undermining reporting lines. I have a very quick and personal response to that, which is time to move jobs. But that's not necessarily the most constructive response. And, anybody have a more constructive response to that?

DANE:

Mine is built out of that about that people don't like to be called out for the things they do that are clearly unreasonable. And if you're loud about things, people will often stop.

STEPHANIE:

I think just briefly with that too is, you know, try and understand where they're coming from, like what's stopping them or what's preventing them thinking this is a good idea. You know, when you generally just cast a net out with these kind of things, you can't just assume that, you know, there's one solution to everything. And what we're talking about before with, like the intersectional ideas

with all this is, you need that diversity. And what we have seen from research is that businesses are more successful when they are diverse. So, trying to, I guess, teach these people or try and educate or improve their education with this type of thing and letting them understand and realise that when they can bring and use the diversity of their teammates, they can actually move forward and that can be a lot more successful for their business. So, getting them to understand from the other point of view that it's for all of us, it's not just for women, it's for all of us.

SARAH:

And encouraging women, networking has been shown to be a very successful and important way of encouraging that support and ongoing growth of women in the workplace. So, yeah, Fatemeh.

FATEMEH:

Very quickly about, just about like a personal sort of approach that I would possibly have is that, first off, as Dan suggests, that I would, speak up on that. But maybe beforehand, I would team up. I try to raise that up with my colleagues 'cause you will see that you are not the only one that suffer from the issue. There are quite a diverse number of peoples. And you make your teams and that makes your voice loud. You are not a standing one against everyone. You have a team behind you that makes you more powerful to make changes.

ISABELLE:

Oh, very good. Again, I think it's about listening, as well as teaming up and acting. Stephen Covey says, seek to be to understand, then to be understood. So there's probably a reason why there's resistance. Seek to understand why that resistance is there, so that then you can team up and act accordingly. And then either that resistance will be removed or you can better push against it.

SARAH:

Think those were excellent pieces of advice, and now my feeling to move careers is feeling less constructive. We've now reached the end of today's event. I'd like to thank our panel. Which I'm going to get to, and you all for joining us virtually for International Women's Day 2021. So, some of the things that I've taken away from talking today, many things, and I wasn't in a position to write everything down. But, really want, I certainly am feeling very empowered from our discussions. And I hope you are too. To notice imbalances and to go ahead and make changes and do that one thing, because every small step makes a difference and doesn't have to be perfect, the film showed us that. To have a positive impact and not just perfect, but also kind of, it can have an impact on many other people, not just yourself. And then as Isabelle shows in her research, really kind of coming back round and checking on and listening to the people who've taken part in that, whatever that small change was and hearing the impact of that and what improvements need to be made. We need not to be scared of making change and just getting on and doing it, but taking on board the impacts of those changes. I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to Isabelle, Dane, Fatemeh, Steph for sharing their expertise and experiences with us today. As well as the event producer, Stephen Parker, Ethan and EDI project officer Mikaela Viray for their work behind the scenes. This presentation has been recorded and will be made public and shared with everybody who's registered. And if you've got a spare minute now, there will be a link to a feedback survey and shared via the Q&A chat window. And we would appreciate any feedback you have on today's virtual event, because we value feedback. And if you would like to watch any of our previous Inclusive

Science series, you can do so on our Science EDI website, which is linked in the chat window too.
And thank you everybody, and have a great afternoon.