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ASTRONOMY FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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TRIENNIAL REPORT 2018-2021

1. Background

The WG on Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion was formally created after the IAU's assembly that took place in Beijing, China in 2012 under Division C, Commission C1. In 2015, during the GA in Hawaii, the group was consolidated, and the tasks were professionalized, in the sense of benefiting from the advice from various actors in the world of education and incorporating advances in more general areas of inclusion. Links were created with the AAS and the IAU offices, first the OAD, and later the OAO. At the beginning of 2019 the WG was elevated to an EC WG, which had a major positive impact in the WG in terms of reach and activity. This is the second largest EC WG in the IAU, with 207 members (March 2021).

2. WG sub-groups established

The past triennium has been a fruitful and busy one. The field of Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion is a vast one, covering a wide range of topics. To address the needs of different populations we decided to create several WG sub-groups, taking advantage of the large number of members now in the WG, and the variety of experiences they possess. We have so far created nine groups to focus, both discussions and actions, on the different fields across inclusion:

- Visually Challenged (chair: Doris Dau, co-chair: Amelia Bayo)
- Hearing Impairments (chair: Marius Berge Eide)
- Motor Impairments (chair: Angela Perez Henao)
- Migrants, Displaced People and Refugees, Underrepresented Ethnic Groups, Underprivileged (chair: Emilio Molinari)
- Inclusive Outreach - Inspiring Stars (chair: Cesare Pagano)
- Neurodiversity and Mental Health (chair: Natalia Lewandowska)
- Hospitals, Children's Homes, Nursing Homes and Prisons (chair: João Retrê)
- Best practice on enforcement of standards (chair: Dave Clements)

- Management of Diversity and Inclusion in Large International Collaborations (chair: Simona Mei)

The groups:

- Intend to build upon specific networks within IAU and bring in external expertise, with their members steering and informing the WGs global actions.
- Identify specific needs in the community and draft courses of action and guidelines, aligned with both the IAU Strategic Plan 2020-2030 and the Springboard of Action leveraging all dimensions of inclusion on research, outreach, education and development.
- Are in contact and close collaboration with each other through email, basecamp or online meetings, accessing the intersectionality aspects inherent to the field, avoiding duplication of the efforts carried.

A detailed description of the topic and goals of each sub-group is available at the new WG website. The website intends to showcase and centralize as a record all the activities carried by the WG and the different sub-groups.

A tenth group is about to be set up, with focus on LGTB topics, chaired by Jacob Noel-Storr. A few members in the WG had suggested the creation of this group but none had offered themselves to chair it until now.

A few of the groups are still in the process of organizing their strategies but most are already active, holding regular meetings with their members, identifying needs, researching the literature, compiling resources. All the information/documents/resources will be accessible at the new WG website.

3. Springboard to Action document

The WG has been supporting Commission C and social sciences experts in the development of IAU's "Springboard to Action" that has been published in January 2021. This document is a guide to individuals, national members, and national organisations to improve equity, inclusion and diversity in Astronomy. The OC is now discussing how to implement several of the actions outlined in the document.

4. Newsletter

The WG has been publishing a Newsletter monthly, since May 2020, that is sent to all the WG members. The newsletter contain news about the WG, as well as information and links to relevant actions and new papers on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in Astronomy. It will be available at the WG website.

5. Further activities

Prior and during 2019, the WG has been deeply involved in the IAU100 celebrations through the following actions:

- (1) The WG supported the organisation of the IAU Symposium 358 on Astronomy for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion a roadmap to action within the framework of the IAU centennial anniversary held in Tokyo, Japan in 2019 that brought together 124 participants from 31 different countries. Several members of the WG served in the SOC and LOC of the symposium.

- (2) We have also supported in various ways the the Inspiring Stars exhibition - an

IAU100 Global Project - since its inauguration at the 2018 GA in Vienna. The exhibition has travelled to different cities around the world since then. The project has now been taken by the WG sub-group on Inclusive Outreach in order to make it more sustainable. Some of the resources included in Inspiring Stars have been allocated a permanent space at an exhibition area in the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) at their headquarters in Vienna.

(3) The WG provided advise, resources and support to the IAU100 Theme on "Inclusive Astronomy".

The WG has also supported the organization and celebration of the SARA (Space and Astronomy Research Accessibility) meeting in 2020, representing the IAU. This meeting is intended to be the first in a series organized jointly by ESA, IAU, ESO and SKAO, with the goal of increasing awareness and promoting inclusive policies and actions in the four institutions to welcome researchers with accessibility needs. The meeting, which initially was intended to be face-to-face, was finally held on-line, on November 30th, and December 2nd and 4th.

In 2020 we have progressed in the compilation of the 2nd list of astronomical signs in Sign Language, that will be announced on April 13th, 2021, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the death of Annie Jump Cannon, who was a deaf astronomer.

6. Website and social media

This WG is generating a lot of content, therefore the need to have a website which we can update regularly and in a sustainable way. Back in 2012, the website was hosted by the institution of the former chair of the WG, Beatriz Garcia. More recently we started to work on a more long-term sustainable version, as the previous staff were no longer capable of maintaining the site. The domain astro4inclusion.org has been secured by the IAU OAO but it is not yet available due to technical reasons. Given the strong connection with communication and accessibility linked to several inclusive outreach programmes developed and implemented by the IAU OAO and NAOJ (e.g. Inspiring Stars, IAUS358), the content is currently being migrated and the feedback received from the WG members implemented in a temporary website currently hosted by the IAU OAO at a server at NAOJ (<https://iau-oao.nao.ac.jp/iau-inclusion/>).

We keep also a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Astro4Inclusion>) where we publish news, information, papers... about EDI in Astronomy. The list of people who have publishing privileges in the page includes the WG's chair and vice-chair, an OAO International Outreach Officer and the chairs of the sub-groups. We have also a volunteer to set up and maintain a Twitter account. Additionally to quickly share news and updates from and between regular members on a regular basis the WG has also created a dedicated team on Basecamp.

7. Conclusion and future plans

The IAU WG Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion has grown enormously in size and activity since its inception in 2012, in particular after it was elevated to an EC WG status in 2019. We are lucky to have people who are highly motivated and ready to work in order to make EDI a reality in all aspects of Astronomy.

From 2021 on, we will work in the implementation of the Springboard to Action. We plan to create task teams in order to push some of the recommendations: conducting a survey to learn about the real EDI problems we are facing; defining a set of conference

guidelines for IAU conference organisers; compiling a bibliography on EDI in Astronomy; supporting Division C in EDI topics on Astronomy education and communication; and contributing to the nominations of PhD Theses in the area of EDI in Astronomy for the annual IAU PhD Prize Program.

The WG OC has been discussing a proposal for an IAU-wide anonymous reporting mechanism (IAU Ombud) to be established. The current reporting procedure within the IAU is highly identifiable and it does not lead to any actions. It will be submitted to the IAU EC during 2021 for input and approval, pending agreement of the EC.

The WG will continue to assist the IAU Offices in the topics of EDI. In particular, the recently created OAE will offer new opportunities for EDI actions in the field of Astronomy education. We are also studying the possibility to create WG ambassadors that will act within other IAU WGs in order to support them in implementing EDI into their projects.

We are studying a proposal to request an International Day of Scientists with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses to UNESCO and the establishment of grants to foster inclusion of persons with disabilities, minorities, and underrepresented groups in the field of professional astronomy.

A task in progress is populating the website with the contents created by the subgroups in order to support them in the visibility and dissemination of their established actions.

Finally, we will commit to recommending to the IAU any actions regarding EDI that the WG seems that can help in order to achieve larger levels of inclusion in the Union.

Amelia Ortiz-Gil & Lina Canas
Chair and Vice-chair of the WG