

GYA trains Inclusive Science Leaders



The [GYA Focus Group on addressing systemic discrimination](#) was established at the 2020 AGM and works to support GYA members in reflecting on systemic bias that results in discrimination, and how to avoid this.

The group developed a training workshop, together with facilitators from Inclusive Innovation, that took part in two online sessions. The workshop aimed to foster reflection and understanding on how bias works, and practice inclusive leadership skills that can be applied in academia and other contexts.

The workshop originally operated with the working title “Anti_Discrimination.Workshop”, but the group decided to rename these events as the **GYA Inclusive Leadership Workshop**. The name change goes together with the desire to start a wider, ongoing conversation among GYA members.

Day 1 of the workshop addressed the role of GYA members as science leaders and explored opportunities of inclusive leadership. For an organisation like the GYA, building and keeping trust is an important foundation of group cohesion. But how can that happen? Facilitators introduced some ground rules for the sessions, including “embrace openness and curiosity”, “lead with empathy” and “respect everyone’s story”. An ice-breaking activity about “identity” demonstrated how many identifiers each of us complexly intertwines within our own biography and self. The

ensuing conversation encouraged participants to recognize multisectionality in others and when exercising leadership in the academic context. An intervention by Sarah Summers titled “Bias and acts of exclusion” provided theoretical background on cognitive biases, and how to recognize and overcome them. Finally, participants reflected and discussed on subtle acts of exclusion: where these happen in our lives and careers.

Day 2 The second workshop day focused on navigating polarities in inclusive leadership. Participants were introduced to [leadership polarities](#): ways we tend to act in various situations. There is no right or wrong between these polarities, but rather always a tension which needs constant re-adjustments and balancing. When we tend to prioritize one pole over another, especially as leaders, we create problems. Participants interactively charted the positive and negative sides of different polarities and applied these insights to individual, GYA and academic contexts.

Led by [Vanessa Schweizer](#) (University of Waterloo, Canada) and [Lalit Khandare](#) (Pacific University, USA) – co-leads of the [GYA Focus Group on addressing systemic discrimination](#) – and excellently facilitated by Inclusive Innovation, this workshop provided a strong start to a journey of development for the GYA and its members towards being inclusive science leaders.