

Annual Report 2018

Introduction

In 2018 we focused on policy. We started this long-term project last year by creating a list of 40 policy suggestions. This year, we took all university-level recommendations to the universities, we had contact with NWO about policy on funding levels, and we promoted the advertisement of open female-targeted positions (items 1–3 below).

The second goal of 2018 was to maintain visibility. We organized the first EWM-NL session at the National Mathematics Congress, an event which we will also organize in 2019. In addition, we organized activities for mathematicians and for a general public, both in the Netherlands as well as abroad. These included an Annual Meeting, a soft-skills workshop, a photo exhibition with grand opening, and more (see items 4–8, and 16–19). Last, we continuously improve our website, send out a monthly newsletter, and

Finally, we kept the organization running (items 9–15).

Overview

Policy projects

1. Policy recommendations to provosts
2. Targeted promotion of open mathematics positions
3. Promoting diversity through NWO structures

Activities

4. Annual Meeting
5. Workshop
6. NMC session
7. Photo exhibition
8. Tour segments

General

9. Financial overview
10. Sponsoring
11. Grant scheme
12. Promo materials
13. Mentor program
14. Bylaws
15. Volunteers and local representatives

Outreach

16. Insight Out participation
17. Supporting Benelux Olympiad
18. International Women's Day
19. Poster for WMWM meeting

Policy projects

1. Policy recommendations for fostering a gender-balanced university

The Dutch association of female professional mathematicians, EWM The Netherlands, submitted a document to the Rectoren College der Nederlandse rectores magnifici. The document was sent out to the Council of Provosts on 5 July 2018.

EWM-NL has observed that some best practices among Dutch universities regarding gender diversity are not shared among all universities. A prominent example is the contract duration of tenure-trackers with respect to a pregnancy, where in some universities an extension beyond the 4-year mark is possible in such a case and in others this is considered against the Dutch law.

To compile the document, EWM-NL visited all Dutch universities that have a mathematics department in the 2017 – 2018 academic year and initiated discussions regarding gender diversity with all faculty members. This procedure led to a plethora of statements. We gathered a few of these thoughts / observations in a two-page document, which we hope that will serve as food for thought for the Council of Provosts so as to harmonise to some extent the efforts in increasing diversity in Dutch academia.

EWM-NL secured the endorsement of the document by various relevant organisations, such as the Wiskunderaad, PWN, KWG, LNVH, DEWIS (TUD), FFNT (UT), and WISE (TU/e). We are grateful for the support.

2. Targeted promotion of open mathematics positions

The European Women in Mathematics association has created a website posting openings and an opt-in mailing list among its members (spanning all of Europe). In September 2018, the Dutch branch of the association, EWM-NL, has brought this resource to the attention of all Directors of Mathematics institutes and capacity groups in the country, as well as all EWM-NL representatives, via direct correspondence, our newsletter, and an announcement during our annual event. Openings can be submitted via <https://www.europeanwomeninmaths.org/ewm-news/job-offers/>.

Many departments in the country wish to make a concentrated effort for diversity (in the fronts of e.g. gender, nationality, seniority) and targeted advertisements have been proven to be an effective tool to increasing the diversity of the candidate pool. Any position open to mathematicians is eligible and not only fellowships or positions targeted specifically to women.

The procedure is simple, free of any costs or time limitations for the advertisement. Any individual can complete it without the need of registration or other hurdles. Moreover, it is single-step, meaning that a job opening submitted in this way appears both online at the EWM website and is forwarded per email to female mathematicians who have opted in. The list is moderated, and thus free of spam.

EWM-NL urged the Directors to consider instructing HR departments to use this resource by default. In addition, EWM-NL personally contacted individuals posting job openings in national lists to remind them of this targeted resource. With this effort, EWM-NL hopes to contribute both to increasing the diversity of mathematicians in the country and to helping departments identify more high-quality candidates.

3. Promoting diversity through NWO structures

EWM-NL established contacts in November 2017 with Astrid Zuurbier, senior policy manager within NWO tasked with the diversity policy in the domain of exact and natural sciences. As a follow up on our actions to approach all mathematics departments in the country with policy suggestions on diversity and all provosts separately on the same topic, EWM-NL also wishes to engage in a discussion with NWO to exchange ideas. The first meeting with this purpose took place at CWI, Amsterdam on 12 June 2018 with the presence of Maria Vlasiou, Astrid Zuurbier, Sera Markoff (UvA), and Maureen van den Berg (NWO).

EWM-NL shared with NWO the efforts we have made with universities and departments and also a list of action points that EWM-NL believes could be interesting for NWO. This list was compiled in 2017 and used resources both pertaining to published documents on best practices within EU and to experiences exchanged with researchers in The Netherlands. NWO shared their first thoughts on actions, their current programs, and the new NWO structure on the topic.

EWM-NL will continue being in contact with NWO throughout 2019 and wishes to make the monitoring of implementation of diversity policy in departments, universities and NWO one of the focal topics of 2019, as it is a natural follow-up of the 2018 action of inviting these players to think about the value of implementing our concrete suggestions.

Activities

4. Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting took place on 20th September 2018 in Delft. The theme was “Positive Discrimination: Advantages and Drawbacks”. Our main speakers were Peter van den Besselaar and Han Entzinger. The two talks were followed by a LNVH monitor presentation by Maria Vlasiou and a panel discussion featuring: Ana Ros Camacho, Arjen Doelman and Monique van der Veen. It was a very successful afternoon.

The annual event was attended by ca. 30-40 coming from the whole Netherlands. The expenses for the rental of the room and catering were about 1448 Euros which were sponsored by EDIT – the diversity and inclusion team of the TU Delft EEMCS faculty.

Summary:

The first speaker was Han Entzinger, professor emeritus of migration and integration at EUR. He gave a talk about principles of equality, gave examples to stimulate equality and what are the consequences. According to Entzinger measures to increase diversity and equality can be quotas, targeted hiring, obligatory reports about the distribution of men and women of employers and policies for a good work-life balance. In his opinion the most effective measure is a quota target. He gave examples where quotas were implemented and yielded an increase of 20% to 40 % of females in leading positions in France.

Professor Peter van den Besselaar of the VU spoke about the vicious circle of gender bias, specifically in ERC grant applications. He observed panel discussions and decisions in ERC and NWO grant applications. For example grant applications of highly qualified women were judged as “not bad” and of the same male counterpart as “very good”. The time pressure of panel members is very high so a bias training is often not realizable hence members decide often according to a gut feeling. What seems to help

preventing the bias is a critical mass of female panel members. What was remarkable according to van den Besselaar that too many female panel members had the opposite effect leading to the “queen bee effect”.

Organizational notes: we had some difficulties with securing other panelists. This took great time and effort. Retrospectively we had not needed any. There was a lively discussion anyways.

5. Workshop

The EWM-NL 2018 workshop took place on 29th November and was organized by Sanne Willems and Rosa Winter in Leiden. The topic was: “Show your worth – bluff without a blush”. There were 10 mathematicians in total, some from Leiden, some from elsewhere. The workshop was very interesting and half of the participants stayed for drinks. Based on the evaluation by the participants after the event, was very successful and fun.

6. NMC 2018 and preparations for 2019

We had a session at the NMC 2018. This session was during the lunch break: the downside of this arrangement was that people had a shorter break when attending our session; however, the upside was that we did not compete with other sessions and that it helped put the session in the final programme. We had three panelists, from different areas within mathematics and at different stages of their careers. They were also interviewed about their research and experiences as female mathematicians. Maria Vlasiou chaired the session, which was dynamic and interactive with the audience. The questions asked to the panelists were diverse in nature and the panelists had different perspectives, which resulted in a rich and fruitful session. These impressions were confirmed afterwards by the questionnaire sent to all NMC participants, which asked explicitly a question about the EMW-NL session.

For the 2019 session, Vivi Rottschäfer is on the NMC organizing committee and will help us secure a slot for a similar EWM-NL session.

7. Photo exhibition "Women of Mathematics throughout Europe - A Gallery of Portraits"

The exhibition "Women of Mathematics Throughout Europe, a gallery of portraits" presents the photographic portraits of thirteen female mathematicians from all around Europe, who share their experiences as mathematicians. EWM The Netherlands decided in 2017 to support the touring of this exhibition through mathematics departments in the Netherlands.

We have printed our own copy of the exhibit in the form of banners, together with our logos and the logos of our sponsors, that we plan to lend to mathematics department across the country, and to other possibly interested associations. EWM-NL facilitated the exposition of the exhibition in two locations in 2017 (Utrecht, Twente) and another one in 2018 (TU/e), while a second location in 2018 was deferred to Spring 2019.

In 2018, the TU/e opening of the exhibition happened with a public outreach event. The event, "Celebrating Mathematics" took place on 27 August 2018 and comprised talks that showcase the communication of mathematics, the popularisation of mathematics, and the impact of mathematics. The invited speakers were Prof. Nelly Litvak, Prof. Frank Thuijsman, Dr. Tom Verhoeff, and Prof. Ionica Smeets. The abstracts and presentations can be found on our

website: <http://www.ewmetherlands.nl/celebrating-mathematics/>. The afternoon closed with a reception opening the exhibition.

In total 90 participants registered for the event, which was co-organised and co-sponsored by the Mathematics and Computer Science department of TU/e. The exhibition was displayed in the main building of TU/e for a month, until 30 September 2018.

EWM-NL will focus on having this photo exhibition displayed in another two locations in 2019.

8. Groningen and Twente visits

In 2017, EWM-NL visited most mathematics departments in the country. The goal of this tour was twofold:

1. Promote EWM-NL, activate members, encourage discussion on gender.
2. Get feedback, ideas and suggestions from the community about what EWM-NL should be doing (in terms of policy).

Due to scheduling conflicts on location, Twente University and the University of Groningen were visited in Spring 2018. The visits were organised as a lunch meeting, sponsored by the corresponding departments. Both events were well attended and fulfilled the stated goals. Feedback from the meetings was used to formulate a proposed policy letter sent to all universities in the country regarding gender balance in academia.

General

9. Financial overview

EWM membership	60
Annual Meeting	354.8
Workshop	1666.82
Board meetings	452.81
Tour of the Universities	115.22
Promo material	1244.39
Miscellaneous	42.36
Grants	1351.37
Photo exhibit	2054.84
Total	7342.61

10. Sponsoring

We received in cash and in kind sponsoring this year for the photo exhibition, the visits of EWM-NL to the remaining mathematics departments, and the annual meeting. Departments typically covered the costs of the room and catering. For the photo exhibition opening, TU/e covered ca. 1100 euros in cash. At the annual meeting, the TU Delft covered ca. 1000 euros in cash and in kind. Other expenses in kind are not estimated.

11. Grant scheme

This year we started a grant scheme to support female mathematicians in their careers. We had five applications, of which we honoured three. We evaluated each proposal on the following merits: “will the funding enhance the applicant's career”, and “could the activity have been funded otherwise”.

The three awarded grants went to:

Wioletta Ruszel for childcare during travel and invited collaboration with Loren Coquille.

Sarah Graaf for travel to SIAM Conference on Applied Linear Algebra in Hong Kong.

Marta Maggioni for travel to a female mathematics camp in Kenya.

We plan on continuing the grant scheme next year.

12. Promo materials

This year we ordered new flyers, and new Doppet bottles (as gifts for invited speakers and volunteers).

13. Mentor program

The mentor program of EWM-NL has been running since 2015. In 2017, NWO passed the administration of the program to EWM-NL under the leadership of Birgit Sollie. After Sollie's term on the EWM-NL executive board, the administration of the program passed to Maria Vlasiou. In 2018, the program had very few (eligible) requests. Requests from men or non-mathematicians are not considered eligible. A first change implemented in 2018 has been that rather than appointing a mentor to a mentee, all mentors are approached for each case and asked if they wish to volunteer. This has shown that the pool of available mentors is rather reluctant to accept mentees. As a result of this observation, the actions planned for 2019 regarding the mentor program are to re-confirm the interest of the registered mentors personally, to solicit new volunteers as mentors, to monitor closely the running of past and current mentor-mentee relationships, and to evaluate if the demand for mentoring justifies the existence of the program and the associated administrative burden.

14. Bylaws

In January 2018 we finished the bylaws, We now have procedures regarding the appointment of new board members and advisory board members, guaranteeing transparency in board appointments, continuity and renewal. The bylaws will be found on our website from 2019.

15. Volunteers and local representatives

In 2018, we had some changes in local representatives. We welcomed Sophie Huiberts as our new local representative at the CWI, Katerina Stankova joined as local representative for Maastricht, and Steffen Muller temporarily took over at Groningen.

Marta Regis helped writing the bylaws, and Theresia van Essen together with Olfa Jaibi helped with the Women in the Spotlight column. Sanne Willems and Rosa Winter organised this year's workshop in Leiden.

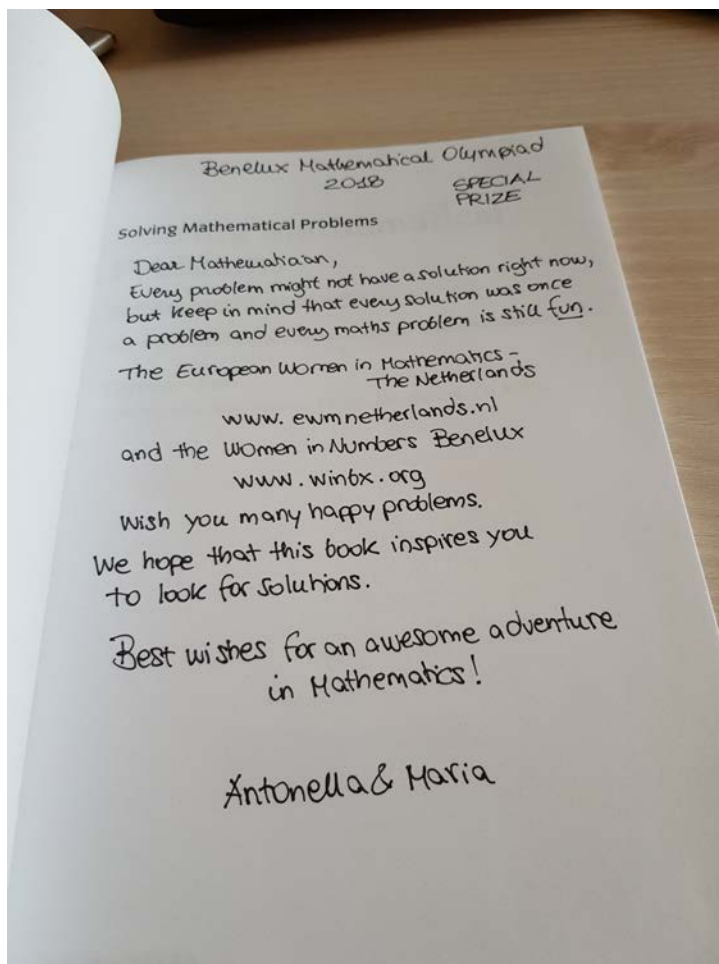
Outreach

16. Insight Out participation

We were invited by the organisation of Insight Out "Connecting women in science" organized by NWO to participate in a special panel discussion. Olfa Jaibi represented us on the panel about gender policy, being the youngest panelist of all four participating. A lot of different experiences surrounding gender bias in science have been discussed, resulting in a strong need for and feeling of "sisterhood". EWM-NL is seen as one of these covering associations and gained positive attention by being represented. It was great to speak for such an audience.

17. Supporting Benelux Olympiad

The 10th Benelux Mathematical Olympiad was held in Luxembourg in April 2018. After communication with the network "Women in Numbers, Benelux, WinBx" (www.winbx.org) and the local organisers of the Olympiad, EWM-NL supported the event by sponsoring a small prize for the best 2 girls of the competition. The prize comprised a book about solving mathematical problems by Terence Tao, a personal message, and EWM-NL memorabilia. The prizes were given to Marie Peeters (BE), Gold medal and Anna Mustata (IR), Bronze medal. More details about their performance can be found here: <http://bxmo.org/results/2018>.



18. International Women's Day

In celebration of the International Women's Day on 8 March 2018, EWM-NL promoted the outreach activity of the Committee for Women in Mathematics (CWM) of the International Mathematical Union, the global professional society supporting mathematicians and mathematics.

Eugenie Hunsicker and Irina Linke, a mathematician from Loughborough University and her filmmaker sister, have produced a short film for International Women's Day this year featuring cameos by women mathematicians around the globe. A request for selfie film clips was sent around the world through the CWM Ambassadors list. In the Netherlands, EWM-NL used its own network to promote the participation of women mathematicians. These efforts resulted in a phenomenal response - 146 clips of 243 women mathematicians from 36 different countries and speaking 31 different languages. The film can be seen at: <https://vimeo.com/259039018>

19. Poster for WMWM meeting

Monique Laurent (CWI) was an invited speaker at the World Meeting for Women in Mathematics (WM²). As EWM-NL, we submitted an abstract on the status on female mathematicians in the Netherlands, which was accepted. We thus combined all available numbers into a poster, which Monique Laurent presented for us at the WM².

Based on this initiative, we plan on monitoring on a regular basis the numbers of women mathematicians in the country.