Research Institute Davos

Approved on 13.01.2023 by the Director AO Research Institute Davos, Executive Director AO R&D, Member of the AO Foundation Executive

Geoff Richards

Gender Equality Plan

2023-2025

AO Research Institute Davos

Contents:

1. Introduction

Gender Equality (GE) is a fundamental value of the European Union (EU) [1]. In 2021, Switzerland adopted the first National strategy for Gender Equality 2030 [2]. It is believed that GE benefits Research and Innovation (R&I) attracting and retaining more talents and ensuring that everyone can maximize their potential. In addition, according to the EU, there has been demonstrable progress toward GE in the European Research Area (ERA), but data shows that there is still significant work to be done in this area. The EU believes that GE goals can only be achieved through a structural approach to change across the whole European R&I system, entailing the joint commitment of R&I organisations, their funders and national authorities, and the EU [1].

Several EU policies and funding programmes aim to promote GE in R&I. In particular, Horizon Europe has strengthened the support for gender equality in R&I, through:

- A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for public bodies, research organisations, and higher education establishments as new eligibility criterion for Horizon Europe funding;

- Integration of the sex dimension of research material (cell and tissues) and animals into R&I content as a requirement by default and an award criterion evaluated under the excellence criterion;

- Increasing gender balance throughout the programme, with a target of 50% women in Horizon Europe-related boards, expert groups and evaluation committees, and gender balance among research teams set as a ranking criterion for proposals with the same score.

The introduction of the GEP eligibility criterion aims to support these efforts, reflecting the Horizon Europe legal basis, which strengthens GE as a cross-cutting priority.

2. Methodology within AO Research Institute Davos (ARI)

2.1 Establishment of a gender equality working group at ARI

In January 2022, ARI appointed an internal Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) to conduct the gender equality data analysis within the Institute, draft a GEP, implement the plan as well as monitor its implementation. The GEWG has been composed in line

with the recommendations of the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans [1] and includes representatives of all major position groups, hierarchy levels, educational backgrounds, and genders from the Institute. The GEWG at ARI includes:

Table 1: composition of the Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) at ARI: name, function, and initials.

GEWG	Men	Women
Leadership	Geoff Richards (GR) Director ARI & Executive Director AOF R&D Martin Stoddart (MS) Program Leader Stephan Zeiter (SZ) Program Manager	Nora Goudsouzian (NG) Program Deputy & Focus Area Leader Sibylle Grad (SG) Program Deputy & Focus Area Leader Sonia Wahl (SW) Manager Administrative Service
Administrative	Ulrich Bentz (UB) Quality Management and Procurement	Nunzia Di Luise (NDL) Scientific Project Manager & Gender Equality Officer Simona Ciriello (SC) Journal Production Editor
Student/postdoc	Marco Chitto' (MC) Postdoc Maximilian Heumann (MH) PhD student	Elena Della Bella (EDB) Research Scientist
Human Resources (HR)		Judith Baumberger (JB) Senior HR Business Partner - AOF

In addition to the members listed in table 1, Peter Varga, Manuela Ernst, Zhen Li, Jan Buschbaum, and Claudia Barblan were identified as additional members for the implementation of specific measures.

2.2 Assessment of the gender equality status quo at ARI

In order to develop an effective GEP, the gender equality status quo of the Institute has been established. The specific methodological approaches used to carry out the initial assessment were:

a) Identify and review existing measures promoting gender equality at ARI
b) Collection of sex-disaggregated data about ARI employees
c) ARI employee survey

The initial assessment was conducted in 2021 and 2022. The results of the initial assessment have been used as baseline for GEP 2023-2025 to set up clear objectives and prioritized set of measures.

2.2.1 Identify and review existing measures promoting gender equality

An existing measure within ARI, addressing internal staff and covering the "gender equality in recruitment and career progression" area is the "*Career Path – Job Requirements and Responsibilities - AO Research Institute Davos*". This document describes the career path for ARI staff involved in collegiate (research) and non-collegiate / service route, detailing job requirements and responsibilities. Furthermore, it must be noted that the career path is independent from whether the employee is working part time or full time. The document is publicly available in the institutional storage system and all ARI staff and HR has access to it.
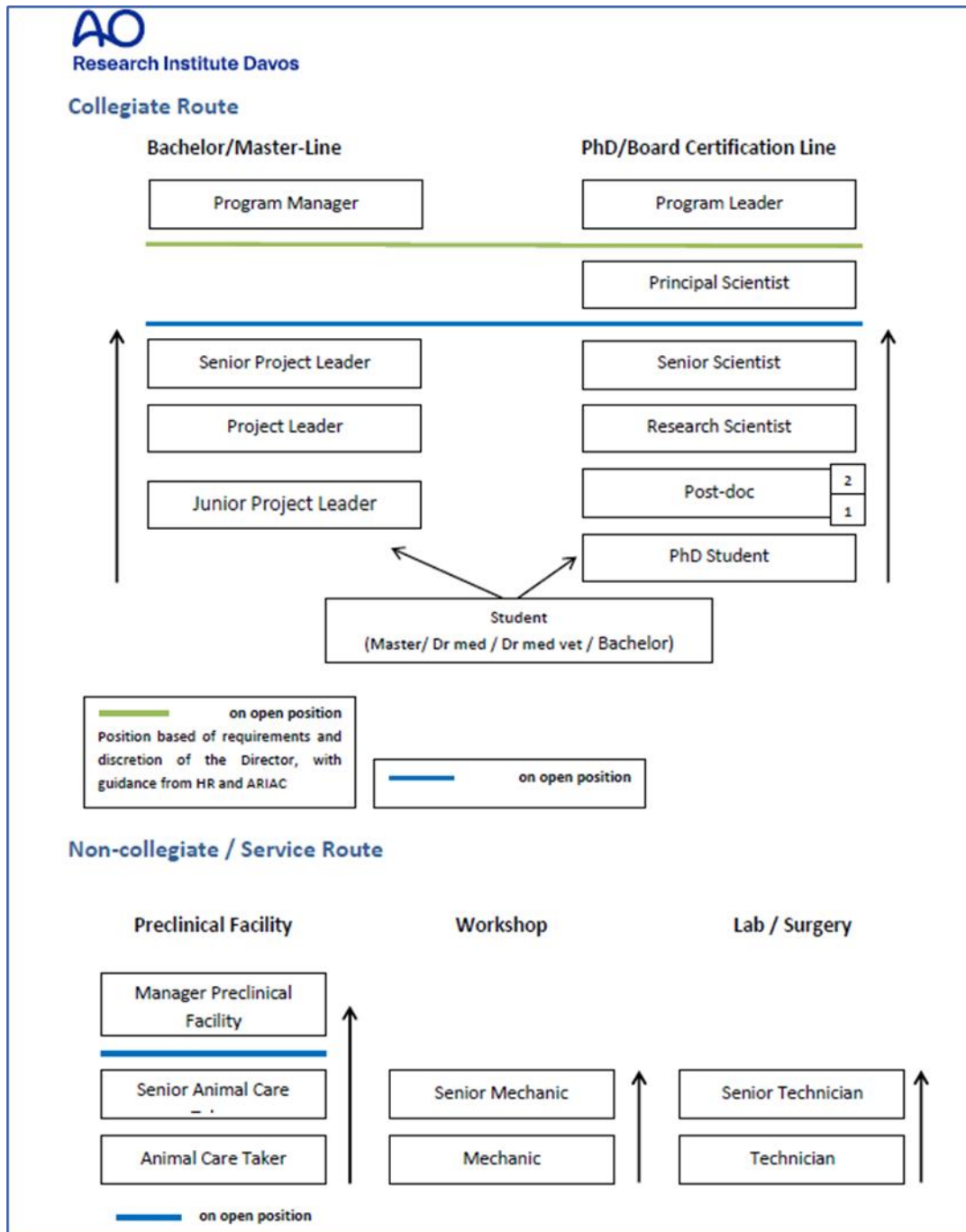
Figure 1: "*Career Path - Job Requirements and Responsibilities - AO Research Institute Davos*" policy. It is an 8-page document. The image shows only the first summary page.

A preliminary critical review of the document has shown that the ARI career path for research staff is not clear to all employees and does not include specific criteria for part-time positions in research. Also, an equivalent section track within the document for ARI administrative staff does not exist (though there are only three positions - Junior

Assistant Administrative Services, Assistant Administrative Services and Senior Assistant Administrative Services). These results were confirmed by the results of the survey, where it was found that many ARI research employees were not fully aware of this document, whereas ARI administrative staff highlighted the necessity of a similar section in the document for careers in administration. These overall results highlight the necessity of updating the career path for ARI staff and clarifying any misunderstandings of the document.

2.2.2 Collection of sex-disaggregated data
The human resources team provided sex-disaggregated data covering different aspects of the sex equality distribution within the Institute.

Sex distribution of ARI employees
The sex distribution of ARI employees is well balanced; on January 1st, 2021, 72 men (58%) and 52 women (42%) worked at ARI (figure 2).
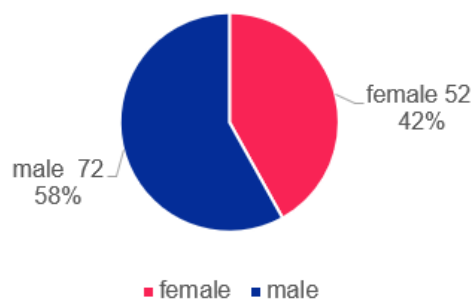

Figure 2: sex distribution of ARI employees.

Sex distribution of ARI employees across workloads
The sex distribution among ARI employees per workload shows a different situation: on January 1st, 2021, 5 men (6.9% of the total number of men) and 13 women (25% of the total number of women) worked part-time (figure 3). On the total number of part-time positions (5+13), 72% were occupied by women while only 28% by men. These data showed that, while the overall sex distribution among employees was well balanced, sex distribution among part time positions was more prevalent among women employees.
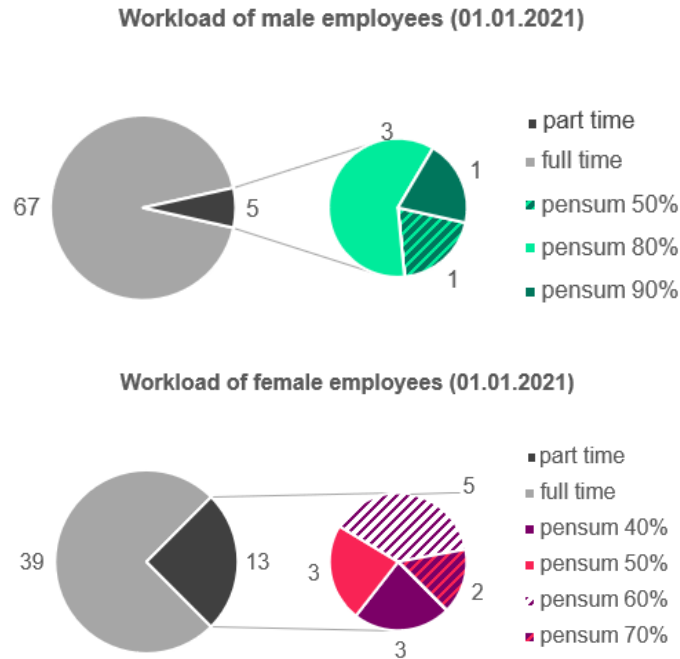
Figure 3: Sex distribution of ARI employees across workloads.

Sex distribution of ARI employees across function classes

Further analysis of sex distribution of ARI employees across different function classes was conducted. 15 different function classes were categorized into 5 main groups: 1) apprentices, interns, students, and postdocs, 2) executive and middle management, senior project management, 3) junior project management, project management and technical staff, 4) senior administrative staff, 5) externals, guests, extended guests. The figure 4 shows that women were 27% representing higher decision-making positions (including executive and middle management, senior project management).
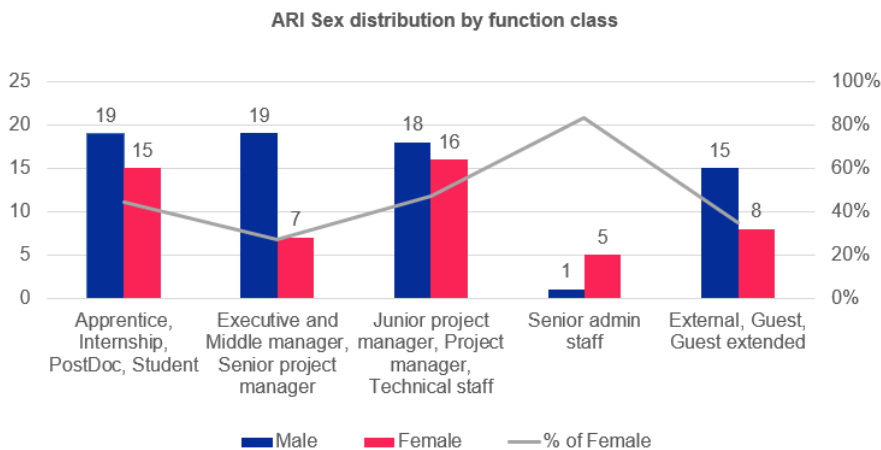

Figure 4: sex distribution of ARI employees across function classes.

<u>Sex distribution of ARI employees across type of contracts</u>

Figure 5 shows the distribution of contracts among ARI employees across types of contracts: male employees (51% temporary to 49% permanent) respective and among female employees (45% temporary to 55% permanent). The slight prevalence of women with permanent contracts may be due to majority of women in administrative staff, where permanent contracts prevail.
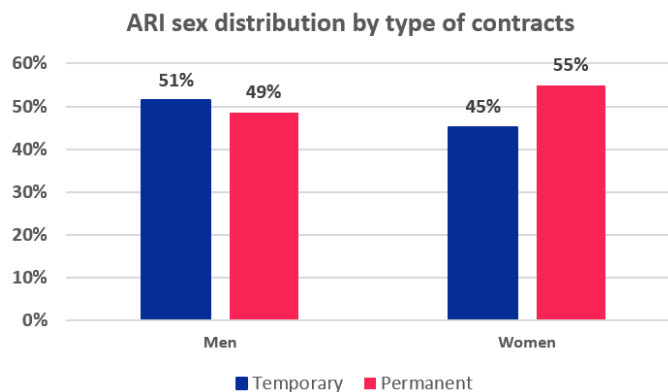

Figure 5: sex distribution of ARI employees across types of contracts.

2.2.3 Survey

The survey methodology allowed valuable data on the perceptions and experiences of all ARI staff to be gathered, which has assisted in defining targeted objectives of the GEP. In addition, the survey encouraged discussion and engaged not only the GEWG, but also the entire ARI staff in the gender and diversity topics.

The survey was designed to address the 5 content areas suggested by EU plus a section for gathering demographic data on the survey participants:

Section 1: Organization culture and work life balance
Section 2: Gender dimension into research content
Section 3: Leadership and decision making
Section 4: Recruitment and career progression
Section 5: Gender-based violence
Section 6: Demographic information

The survey was prepared using Outlook forms and distributed on April 25th, 2022, to all ARI employees (140). In order to address data protection issues, the survey was anonymous and confidential. Collected data were held confidentially, responses were

presented in aggregated form only and could not be traced back to respondents. The response rate of the survey was 72% (101 responses / 140 participants). These were good results and gave an estimation of the overall interest of ARI employees in the topics gender, diversity, and inclusion. For clarity of exposition of the survey results, the section 6 "Demographic information" will be presented first. Also, only the most meaningful figures in the view of the GEWG will be presented.

- <u>Section 6: Demographic information</u>

The "demographic information" section provided an overview of the composition of the survey participants (figure 6). Survey participation was well gender balanced. Seven participants preferred not to disclose their gender (Q#33). 53 participants were aged between 26 and 35 years old, 36 participants were older than 35 years (Q#35). Most participants (70) were among apprentices, trainees, students, postdoc and research scientists. The rest of participants was composed by directors, project leaders, focus area leaders (21) and administrative staff (10) (Q#36). Most of the participants had a high educational level (Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, professional's degree, PhD) (Q#37). Finally, 77 participants (38+39) were in the current position for 1-5 years (Q#23). This latest data was expected as 53 participants are aged 26-35 with short term contracts.

(Q#33) What is your gender?

I do not wish to disclose — 7
Prefer to self-describe — 1
Man — 49
Woman — 44

participant responses

(Q#35) What is your age range?

56-65 — 6
46-55 — 13
36-45 — 17
26-35 — 53
16-25 — 12

Age

participant responses

(Q#37) What is your highest level of education?

Doctorate — 46
Professional degree — 7
Master's degree — 27
Bachelor's degree — 12
College, no degree — 3
High school degree — 6

participant responses

(Q#36) What is your main function at ARI?

Student, PhD, postdoc, research scientist, or similar — 70
Admin staff - mid level — 4
Admin staff - senior level — 6
Director, program director, director of an area, project leader or similar — 21

participant responses

(Q#23) About how many years have you been in your current position?

> 20 years — 3
16-20 years — 4
11-15 years — 8
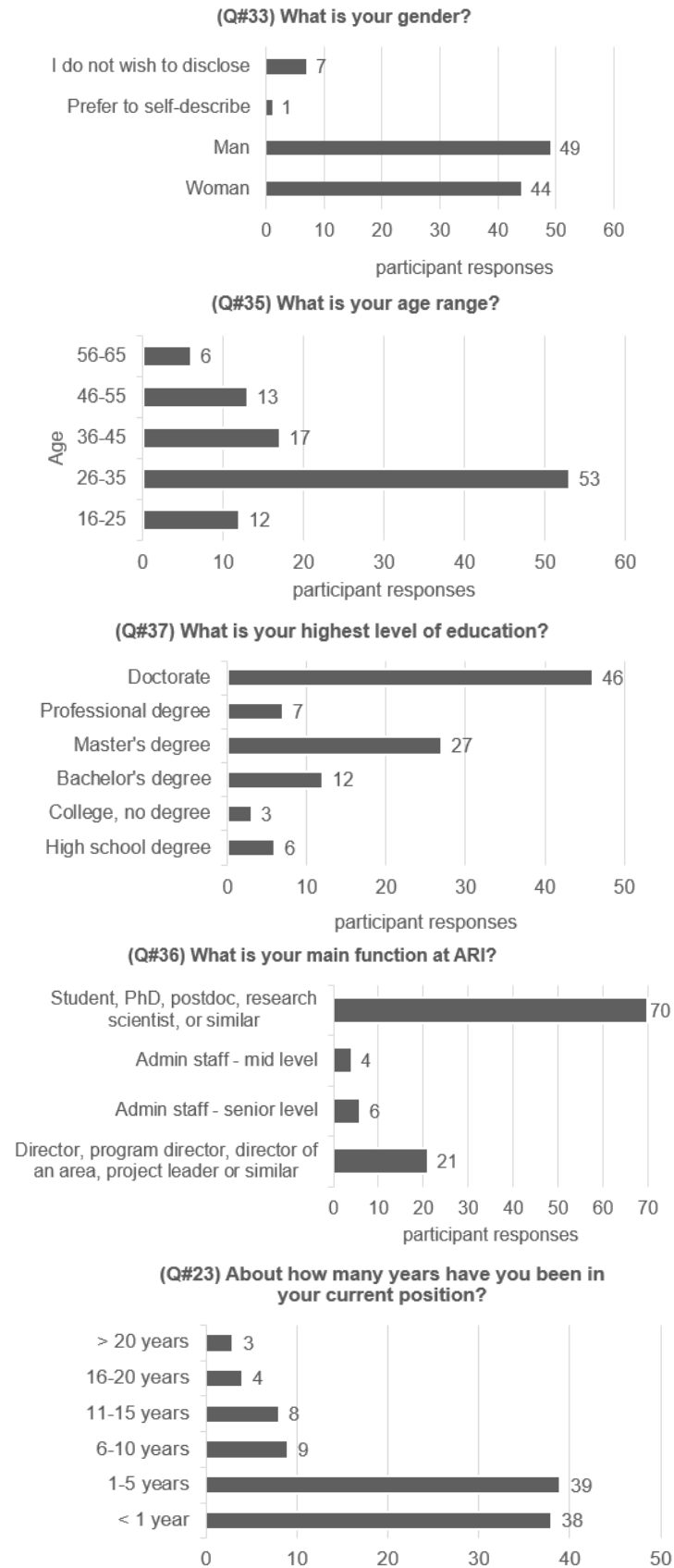6-10 years — 9
1-5 years — 39
< 1 year — 38

Figure 6: demographic data of survey participants.

- Section 1: Organization culture and work life balance

The "organization culture" section provided an understanding of what people associate with equity, diversity and inclusion. Gender, ethnicity and cultural differences are the 3 main aspects that make people think about diversity (Q#1). Moral duty, social responsibility and explicit value are the 3 main reasons for ARI why equity, diversity and inclusion topics are important (Q#2). The survey indicated that executive management, human resources department and a dedicated team should be primarily involved in implementing strategies (Q#3, figure not shown).
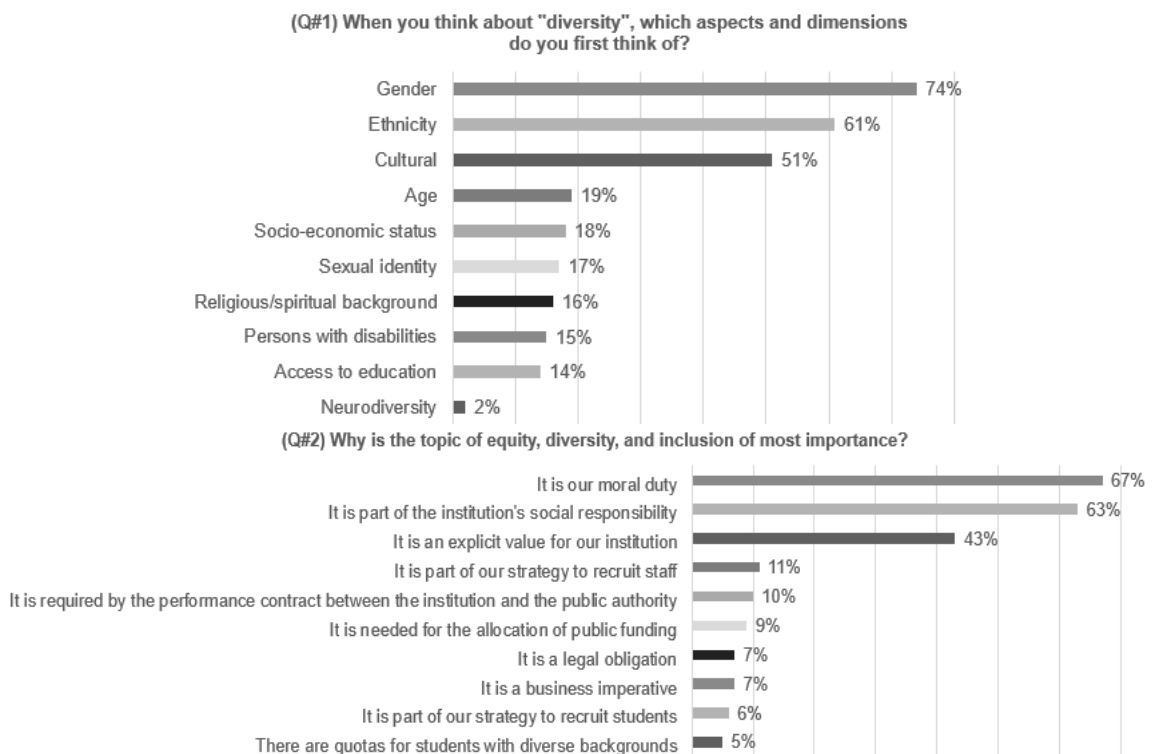

Figure 7: organization culture.

The work-life balance is considered in the survey as a key component of the transformation of an organisation's culture for advancing gender equality. Work-life balance was shown to be relevant for all members of staff and involves ensuring that everybody is properly supported to advance their career alongside personal responsibilities that they may hold outside the workplace, including caring responsibilities [3].

(Q#4) Describe your current relationship status

Single - never married — 52
Married / domestic partnership — 42
Single - divorced/separated — 5
Divorced - remarried / domestic partnership — 1

(Q#5) Do you currently have children?

No - and I do not plan to have children — 39
No - but I plan to have children — 37
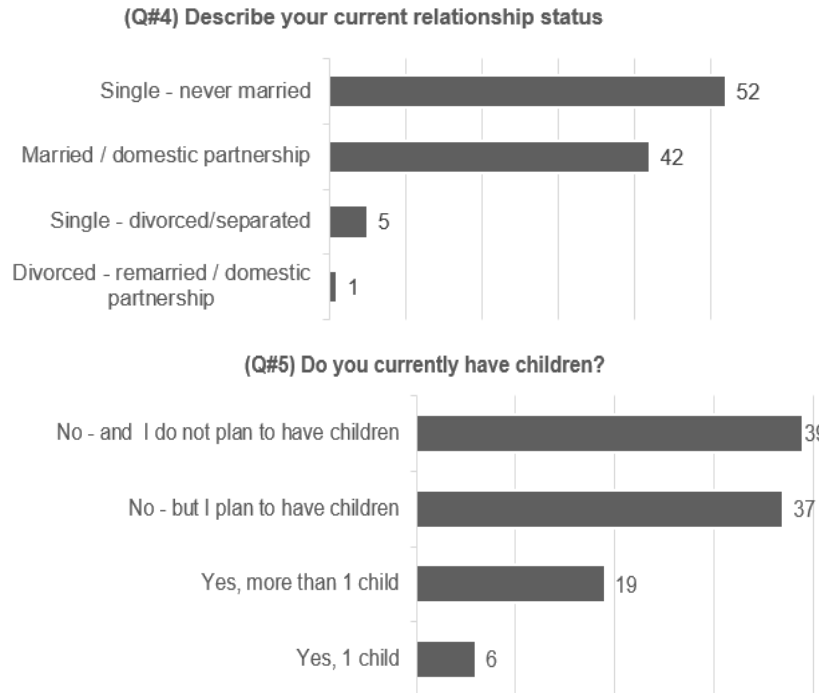Yes, more than 1 child — 19
Yes, 1 child — 6

Figure 8: work-life balance (I).

Q#4 in figure 8, describing the current relationship status, showed that 52 survey participants are single / never married (51.5% respondents), while 42 are married / domestic partnership (41.5% respondents). Q#5 in figure 8, describing the caring responsibilities, showed that 25 survey participants (19+6, 24.7% respondents) have children, 37 plan to have children (36.6% respondents), and 39 (38.6% respondents) do not have nor currently plan to have children. Figure 9 shows the perception of ARI employees about the balance between the workload and flexible work.

(Q#10) Assess the statement: I feel able to strike the right balance between work and home life

Strongly disagree 1%
Disagree 9%
Neither agree nor disagree 18%
Strongly agree 12%
Agree 60%

(Q#9) Assess the statement: I feel my manger supports flexible working

Disagree 2%
Strongly disagree 1%
Neither agree nor disagree 15%
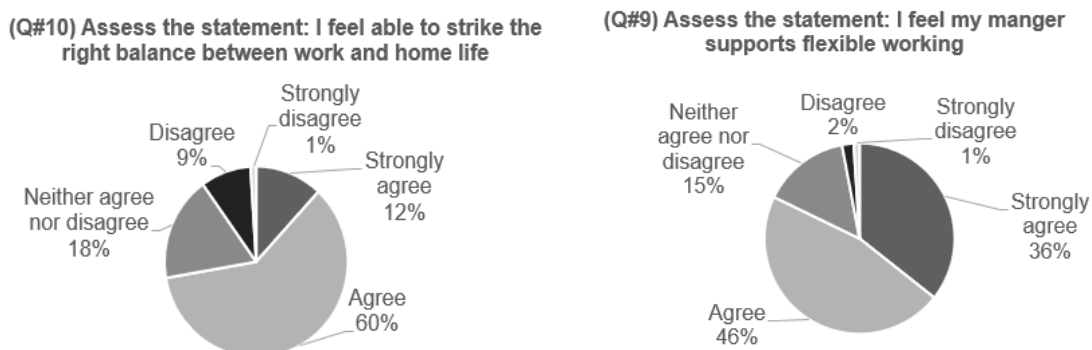Strongly agree 36%
Agree 46%

Figure 9: work life balance (II)

3% of survey participants felt that his/her line manager does not support flexible working (Q#9). 10% of survey participants feel unable to strike the right balance between work

and home life (Q#10). However, 51% (15+36%) of survey participants think that at ARI there is a long working hour culture (Q#11, figure not shown). Therefore, although half the respondents think that there is a long working hour culture, line managers support flexible working so that employees can strike the right balance between work and home life.

- • Section 3: Leadership and decision making

Improving gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions in universities and research institutions is a key objective for gender equality plans. The "leadership and decision-making" section provides information on the perceptions of ARI employees about the leadership bodies in the Institute (figure 10).

(Q#17) In your workplace, do you feel that you are treated equally referring to your gender?
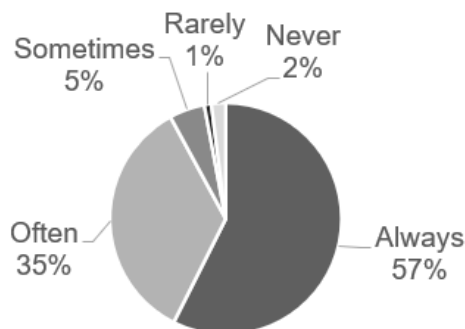
(Q#20) How well does the following statement describe ARI: promotions are based only on individual performance?
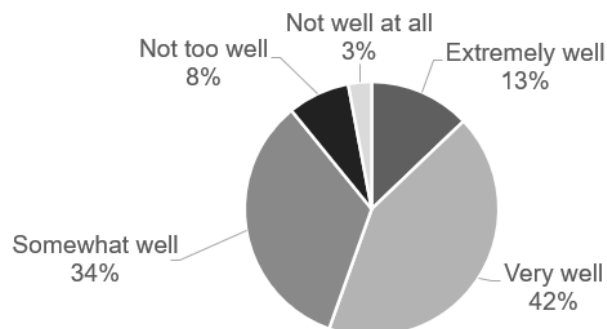

Figure 10: leadership and decision-making.

3% of survey participants felt not to be treated equally referring to gender, (Q#17). 4% of survey participants felt not to be treated equally referring to age (Q#18, figure not shown). However, only 11% of survey participants thought that promotions are not based only on individual employee performance (Q#20).

- Section 4: Recruitment and career progression

Various studies have shown the existence (and persistence) of implicit gender bias in the evaluation of research and performance [3]. Different gender roles are associated with women and men, and a different value is given to each [3]. The "recruitment and career progression" section provides data on the perception of ARI employees on the correlation between gender and job opportunities in ARI in terms of recruitment, promotions, and appointments (figure 11).
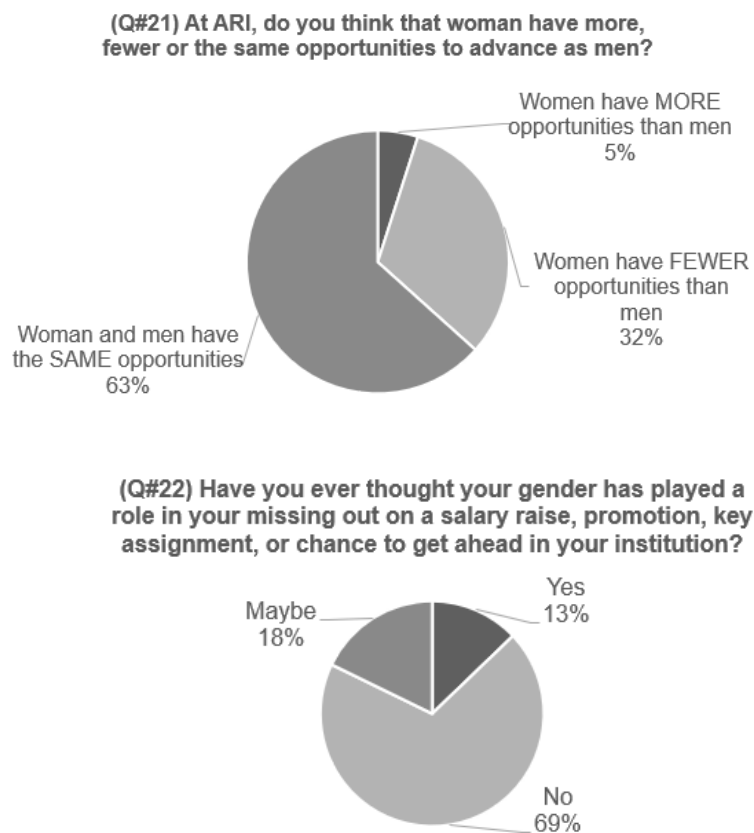

Figure 11: recruitment and career progression.

63% of survey participants consider that women have same opportunities to advance as men, while 32% think women had fewer opportunities (Q#21). 69% of survey participants believe that the gender has not played a role in missing out on a salary raise/promotion, (Q#22). 70% of survey participants believe ARI is doing enough to increase gender equality, while 28% think ARI should do more (Q#24, figure not shown). Several formal strategies for improving and increasing gender equality within ARI in the recruiting and career progression area were suggested by the survey participants. Among others, «*Promoting more women in leadership positions*» was suggested by 9 people (8.9% respondents), while «*Making clear criteria for promotions and salary*

increase / adapting criteria for part time positions» was suggested by 6 people (5.9% respondents) (figures not shown). This specific feedback from survey participants revealed that not all ARI employees are aware of existing policies in the Institute that affect them directly, such as the ARI career path for research staff (figure 1).

- Section 5: Gender-based violence

The field of research and innovation is not immune to sexual and gender-based violence, but this issue tends to be underestimated in research organizations and research funding bodies. Recent analyses and reviews carried out in the framework of EU-funded projects on structural change, among others, show that there is an urgent need for action on this problem [3].

The "gender-based violence" section of the survey analyses whether ARI employees have ever experienced any form of harassment / violence at the workplace and whether they are aware of the existing measures and instruments in the Institute in case of abuse.

(Q#27) Have you ever experienced any bullying, harassment or discrimination?
- Yes 10%
- No 90%
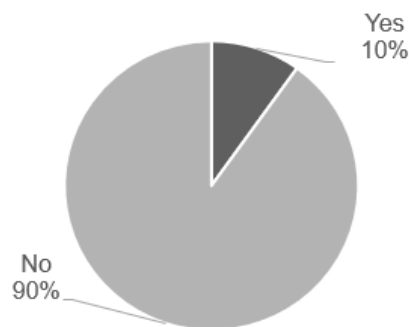
(Q#31) Would you make a formal complaint of bullying, harassment, or discrimination without fear, ridicule or reprisal?
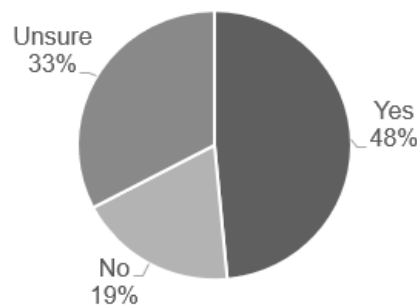- Unsure 33%
- Yes 48%
- No 19%

Figure 12: gender-based violence.

90% of survey participants have never experienced any form of violence, harassment, discrimination; 10% experienced a form of abuse, though not defined which (Q#27). Those who experienced a form of abuse (10%) would know where to go for reporting and assistance, ideally to human resource department, ombudsperson or online (Q#29, Q#30, figures not shown). 49% of the total survey participants would make a formal complaint in case of abuse, the remaining 51% answered no or unsure (Q#31) as they would not be understood (6 people), feel ridiculed / fear reprisal (26 people), they thought no measures would be taken (19 people) (Q#32, figure not shown).

- Section 2: Sex dimension into research content

The inclusion of the sex and/or gender dimensions into research content means that differences, whether biological or social, are considered in research and teaching. It is therefore crucial that the created knowledge through research and transferred through education is free of biases. Looking at potential sex and/or gender differences and at issues related to gender equality generates added value in terms of research excellence, rigor, reproducibility, and creativity; brings in-depth understanding of all people's needs, behaviors, and attitudes; and enhances the societal relevance of R&I. Integrating the sex/gender dimension into educational activities is also essential for the proper training of the next generations of researchers and innovators. The integration of the sex/gender dimension is relevant through the entire R&I cycle. This includes setting research priorities through defining concepts, formulating research questions, developing methodologies, gathering and analyzing sex-disaggregated data, evaluating and reporting results, and transferring them to markets as innovations and products [3]. The "sex dimension into research content" section of the survey analyses the level of knowledge and experience that ARI research employees have about integrating sex and/or gender differences into research content. Given the purely scientific nature of this section, only ARI research staff was requested to answer the questions of this section.

58% of the survey participants have never included gender and/or ethnicity dimensions into research content (Q#12). However, 52% considered including at least one of these dimensions (Q#13). 55% of the survey participants were aware of the benefits. Interestingly, 14% of the survey participants did not understand the question, as they meant including the gender dimension in the research team (not in the research content) (Q#14, figure not shown). It is also possible that many more did not understand this question which should have been clarified as sex dimensions of material and not gender.

(Q#12) Have you ever included gender and/or ethnicity dimensions in your research?

42%

58%

■ Yes ■ No
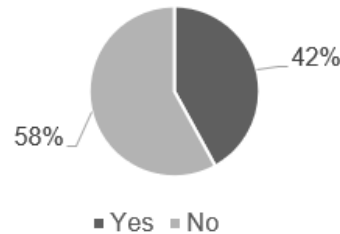
(Q#13) Have you ever considered including gender and/or ethnicity dimensions in your research?
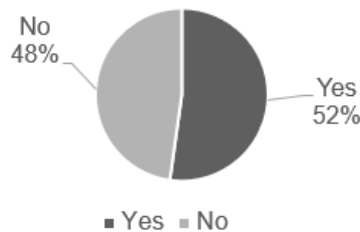
No
48%

Yes
52%

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 13: gender and/or ethnicity dimensions into research content.

Based on the results of the initial assessment of the gender equality status within ARI, it was possible to note:

1. ARI career path for research staff is not well known by ARI members or disseminated to new employees and may also not be well understood by some ARI staff. It does not include criteria for part time positions. In addition, some ARI employees questioned the lack of an equivalent career path for administrative staff.
2. The survey response rate is 72% and there is still space for improvement.
3. Through the survey, without explanation, Women appear under-represented among higher decision-making bodies in ARI.
4. Sex-disaggregated data collection is incomplete, in particular data about "leadership and decision-making", "recruitment and career progression", "authorship in scientific publications" and "grant application".
5. Abusing events happened in the past.

Based on these conclusions, it was possible to identify the possible strengths and weaknesses concerning gender equality at ARI. This allowed the development of clear objectives and a set of targeted measures, with specific priorities. Below it is illustrated a schematic of the proposed objectives and corresponding measures.

3. Action Plan

AREA 1: Work life balance and organizational culture			
Objective 1.1 Promoting reconciliation of career and family life			
Action	**Targets and indicators**	**Task force**	**Priority**
1.1.a Analysis of the possibility to provide childcare for children 0-5 years (e.g. during school suspension periods).	- Presentation analysis results - Nr employees which benefit from the measure over the total per year	JB (financial department), SG (Academia Raetica)	End 2023
1.1.b Analysis of the possibility to provide more flexible (shared, discontinuous) parental leave.	- Presentation analysis results - Nr parental leaves taken per years		
1.1.c Analysis of the possibility to provide family allowance for assisting people because of health conditions.	- Presentation analysis results - Nr people whose care is supported from the measure per year		
Objective 1.2 Continuing promoting alternative and flexible working arrangements			
1.2.a Implementing more flexible working arrangements, including remote working for limited and specific periods of time (e.g. school holidays, family member severe illness)	- Policy implemented - Nr employees which benefit from the policy over the total per year	JB	End 2024
Objective 1.3 Promoting use of inclusive language around the organization			
1.3.a Active use and encouragement of inclusive language around ARI in relation to gender and other forms of identity and diversity.	- Nr communications/mails/posts on social media using inclusive language over the total per year - Guidelines implemented	SC (Communication Dpt.)	End 2023 and continuously

AREA 2: Gender balance in leadership and decision making			
Objective 2.1 Supporting and promoting women in leadership positions			
Action	**Targets and indicators**	**Task force**	**Priority**
2.1.a Organizing presentation on career development by successful female researchers in the field.	- Presentation given - 1 presentation every 2 years	GR, SG, MS, SZ	End 2023 and continuously
2.1.b Enhancing visibility of women in activities such as expert panels and public outreach.	- Nr events presented by women speakers on the total of events over 1 year	All	
2.1.c Providing talented women employees with leadership programs/workshops.	- Nr woman employees participating to a workshop over the total per year - 1 course every 2 years	JB, ND	
2.1.d Advertise job positions on specific websites	- Specific website(s) included in the standard website list for job posting	JB	

	- Nr job advertisement on these websites over the total per year		
2.1.e Implementing a dual career service to provide the partners of new members with advice and support service, to enable them to continue their career in Davos/CH	Nr people supported by the service over the total per year	JB (Academia Raetica)	End 2024

AREA 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression			
Objective 3.1 Raising awareness on gender issues at different levels			
Action	**Targets and indicators**	**Task force**	**Priority**
3.1.a Providing trainings on gender equality, diversity, inclusion for all employees	- 1 training per year (mandatory) - Nr attendees per training per year	JB, ND	End 2023 and continuously
3.1.b Providing unconscious gender bias trainings for decision makers	- 1 training every 2 years (mandatory) - Nr attendees per training over the total per year	JB, ND	
3.1.c At AO level: discussing with AO Executive Committee about the possibility of establishing an AO GEP targeting AO employees	Presentation given at AOEC	JB	
3.1.d Celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, on 11 February	1 Post/video/interview published on ARI social media per year	NDL, SC, All	
Objective 3.2 Implementing an updated ARI career path			
3.2.a Examining and adjusting the ARI career path for research staff: - considering adjustment of criteria for part-time positions - accounting for the period of time for the achievements and the intensity of work - accounting for the career breaks without bias against those who chose not to take career breaks - evaluating non-traditional career paths - listing the assessment of soft skills as well as research outputs (which are undertaken but not written on the career path in detail) - ensuring that admin responsibilities and student supervision are transparent and valued	new career path implemented	Non-collegiate / service route: SZ, ME, NDL, JB Collegiate route: SG, MST, PV, ZL	End 2023
3.2.b listing the ARI career path for administrative staff	career path implemented	JB, SW, CB	

AREA 4: Measures against gender-based violence (verbal / physical), including sexual harassment			
Objective 4.1 Preventing chances of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment			
Action	**Targets and indicators**	**Task force**	**Priority**
4.1.a Implementing a code of conduct, clarifying whether relationships are (or are not) considered harassment	Policy implemented and widely known	JB, EDB, NG, legal department	End 2023
4.1.b Implementing a reporting system for any form of discrimination	- Policy implemented - Nr people reporting over 1 year		
4.1.c Implementing an investigation policy, victim support measures, disciplinary measures, educational programs.	Policy implemented and widely known		

AREA 5: Integrating sex dimension into research content			
Objective 5.1 Raising awareness on the possibility of including sex aspect in research content			
Action	**Targets and indicators**	**Task force**	**Priority**
5.1.a At research level: organizing trainings on how to add the sex aspect into research content	- 1 training per year (mandatory for research staff) - Nr attendees per training over the total per year	EDB, MC, MH, SZ, NG, UB	End 2023 and continuously
Objective 5.2 Setting up standard procedures for integrating sex aspect into research content			
5.2.a Establishing protocols ensuring that sex analysis is considered in the design and outputs of research, where appropriate	protocol(s) implemented	Same as above	End 2024
5.2.b Developing Standard Operation Procedure(s) (SOPs) that incorporate the sex dimension	SOP(s) implemented		
5.2.c Publishing papers or writing grant proposals including sex dimension	Nr papers/grants approved per year		End 2025 and continuously

4. Allocation of dedicated resources

The Horizon Europe criterion requires that the GEP has dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan. When developing the GEP, ARI has considered the type and volume of resources required to support throughout the whole GEP cycle. Dedicated resources allocated by ARI for the GEP include:

1. A dedicated ARI gender equality function composed by one gender equality officer, a team with different expertise, including one human resource representative, and an executive leadership member (director of the Institute), publicly supporting the whole function (see section 2.1 for more details).

2. Earmark staff time for the whole ARI gender equality function to work throughout the whole GEP cycle.

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Earmark budget to support specific measures and areas of the GEP, such as work life balance, as well as staff training and development will be evaluated and potentially allocated in the next few years.

5. Gender equality strategy at ARI

The Horizon Europe criterion requires that research organizations must carry out annual monitoring and reporting, based on targets and indicators, of the progress and efficiency of the measures, as well as to provide basis for corrective actions. In order to meet this requirement, regular meetings will be organized: 3-4 meetings per year with the whole GEWG and task forces meetings in between to discuss specific objectives and measures. There will be data collection, followed by analysis, reviewing, and reporting. Datasets on gender distribution will be collected on annual basis, while survey and datasets about authorship and grant application will be collected every two years, each on alternate year. In addition, the ARI annual activity report, publicly available on the AO Foundation (AOF) website, will include a new dedicated section to the gender equality initiative and will publish about the annual progress.

Figure 14: GEP 2023 - 2025.

6. AO Access initiative

ARI is the research arm of the AOF. Within the AOF, another initiative called AO Access aims to deliver diversity, inclusion, and mentorship values for the surgeon community of the AOF. The AO Access vision is to be a diverse and inclusive organization with equitable access, and opportunity for advancement within the AOF organization at all levels, regions, clinical divisions, and units. The AO Access mission aims to implement dedicated programs, policies, and organizational structures that reflect a diverse and inclusive global community of health care professionals including mentoring to make AOF the most productive, innovative, and sustainable learning community for the benefit of our patients [4].

7. Bibliography

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4. AO Access