

# Diversity and Inclusiveness Strategy NWO Gravitation project Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies

Wijnand IJsselsteijn, Ingrid Robeyns, Sabine Roeser, Behnam Taebi

## Introduction

With the Gravitation project we have the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute to and benefit from diversity and inclusiveness. This concerns the diversity and inclusiveness of our working environments and teams, as well as the approach to and content of our research. Aside from important arguments of basic fairness and equal opportunity, it is well known that diversity, for example, in terms of gender, culture but also socio-economic background (which is typically less visible) as well as concerning different types of personality, brings several advantages, including:

- A greater diversity of perspectives, which generally brings more creativity, more innovation, better solutions, and better team performance
- Cultural sensitivity and local knowledge to open up our predominant modes of thinking to new, unforeseen possibilities and qualities, stimulating a broader, more inclusive view of the world
- Access to a more diverse talent pool, in a competitive job market
- Opportunities for personal and professional growth

Aside from these more ‘instrumental’ benefits of diversity and inclusiveness, having a diverse and inclusive team and working environment also reflects the important intrinsic value of diversity and inclusiveness – a worthy goal in and of itself.

In our original Gravitation proposal, we have formulated diversity targets both at the level of the staffing and organizational embedding of the project, as well as at the level of the research content itself. This document is intended to translate these targets in more concrete actions that can be implemented project-wide and per partner organization. At the level of staffing and organizational embedding, we distinguish the following elements: (i) Advertisement of positions (e.g., non-biased advertisement texts), (ii) a fair selection process (e.g., representative composition of the selection committee; standardized, non-gendered questions), and (iii) more generic diversity policies (e.g., awareness of implicit gender or racial bias, diversity role models, etc). This concerns recruitment, promotion but also the general working environment within the consortium. In what follows, we highlight best practices for these aspects. Several of these practices are also endorsed by the *British Philosophical Association* in their ‘best practices’ advice on increasing diversity.<sup>1</sup> Since that advice, as well as others like it, might be refined over the duration of the Gravitation Program, we commit to keeping us informed about the latest insights on ‘best practices’ from the BPA and other scholarly sources.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bpa.ac.uk/diversity/>

### **Reaching the right people: a diversity-friendly strategy of advertising our positions**

- i. In our advertisement texts, we encourage talented candidates from underrepresented groups to apply, including female researchers and researchers from non-Western groups and/or with non-Western perspectives.
- ii. We formulate our criteria in a way that does not discourage people, so we avoid possibly gendered language, unrealistic criteria etc.
- iii. Advertisement texts are screened by a diverse panel of people, also with this specific focus.
- iv. We advertise our positions using a wide variety of academic distribution lists as well as regular media. In addition, we will actively engage with our personal networks and colleagues' networks to identify and reach out to a diverse set of potentially interested and suitable candidates, with special attention to female and culturally and ethnically diverse candidates, as well as candidates who are first-generation academics and candidates with disabilities.

### **A fair and inclusive selection and promotion process**

- i. Our recruitment and promotion committees are diverse and we are all aware of implicit biases and try to explicate worries about possible biases. We always have at least one, and preferably at least two women in our committees. We also seek to have other types of diversity in our committees.
- ii. We seek to standardize the recruitment and promotion process, by using a set of guiding questions that are used across all interviews. In addition, specific questions may be formulated to probe a candidate's specific capabilities or working experiences, yet these should be non-biased in terms of gender role or cultural expectations.

### **Stimulating a culture that embraces diversity and inclusiveness**

- i. We will cultivate an inclusive and diverse culture within the project and do our best to make everyone feel welcome and at home. We will encourage members of the Gravitation consortium to follow an Active Bystander Training in order to be prepared when they notice inappropriate or unwanted behaviour, and will share information on the availability of such trainings.<sup>2</sup>
- ii. We will create awareness with regard to gender, racial or cultural prejudice, negative (and positive) stereotypes, or implicit biases, and will implement measures - policies, training, etc. - to counteract these. Concrete examples of such measures include devoting an information and discussion session to implicit bias and prejudicial treatment at one of our major meetings, and hiring a theatre company or other type of training that is focused on raising awareness in an experiential fashion..
- iii. We will create awareness within our working environment of relevant cultural differences in ways of working and communicating. These include, for example, differences in communication style (e.g., assertiveness), non-verbal communication, professional etiquette, male-female roles, workplace habits, or working styles.
- iv. We will seek to broaden the diversity of leadership and seek to have a rich diversity of role models available for junior staff to interact with, and be coached and inspired by.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://web.mit.edu/bystanders/strategies/index.html>

- v. For every public event, workshop or conference, we will endeavor to have at least 50% diverse representation (e.g. female and culturally diverse) amongst invited/keynote speakers. This should also be reflected in the order in which the slots are filled (so that diversity wouldn't be only an afterthought once all the spots are filled).
- vi. We will develop and support, over the lifetime of the Gravitation program, an annual ESDT Visiting Fellowship program aimed at facilitating exchange and visits in relation to developing nations, and focused on non-Western philosophical perspectives. This visiting fellows could either be pre-doctoral or post-doctoral. Putting this program in place, would require
  - a. Developing a Gravitation-wide program – including a number of positions at each partner university, with academic support and coaching available for each position
  - b. Allocating funds over the project lifetime, to be spent annually. The visiting fellowship should support for living arrangements, required courses, etc. during the visit (and afterwards).
  - c. Developing an effective and inclusive application and selection procedure.

### **Monitoring and follow-up**

An effective diversity and inclusiveness strategy requires continuous monitoring and follow-up. In our initial guidelines, we build on existing guidelines, best practices, and lessons learned in previous projects and working environments. As our Gravitation project progresses, we will undoubtedly be confronted with new and unforeseen ways in which we can improve our strategy, and we will continuously learn from the day-to-day reality of implemented practices. Continuous monitoring of the adequacy of our proposed measures will be essential in order to enable timely improvements to the strategy where required. To enable this, we will:

- a. Put diversity explicitly on the agenda of our MB meeting as a returning agenda point – including vacancy texts, hiring practices, career development and support, and intercultural academic exchange
- b. Keep track of diversity policies and actions on a per partner basis, including, but not limited to, inclusiveness in hiring and career advancement
- c. Implement a formal evaluation cycle on a yearly basis, by the project manager, reporting on our diversity and inclusiveness targets, actions, and achievements, in line with our annual reporting cycle
- d. Keep track of best practices and effective diversity measures outside the consortium – e.g., the BPA, the Dutch Network of Women Professors (Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren - LNVH)<sup>3</sup>, or local initiatives such as the WISE network<sup>4</sup>
- e. Add/amend this document to reflect best practices and new insights

The implementation of the above strategy is a consortium-wide responsibility, stimulated and monitored by the project leader, program manager, and the Diversity & Inclusiveness SIG (including the authors of the current document).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lnvh.nl/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tue.nl/en/our-university/community/women-in-science-eindhoven-wise-network/>