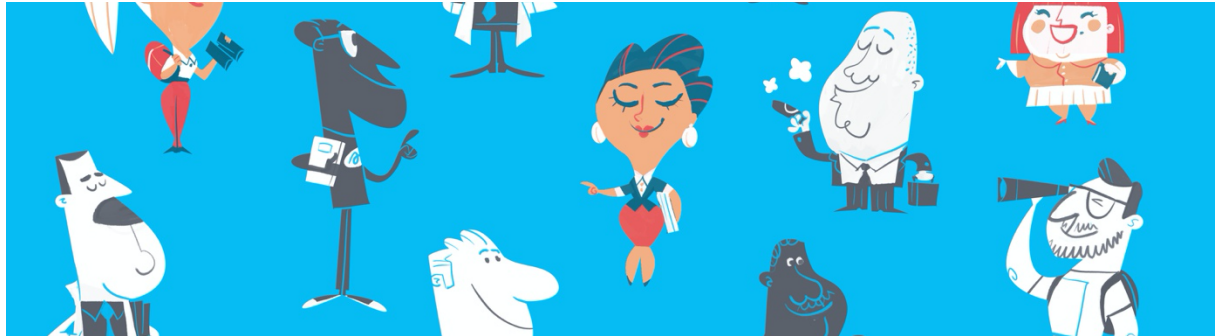


# Webinar N°1 - Women in the Natural Sciences

within the SCNAT webinar series Achieving Gender Equality and Diversity in the Natural Sciences, held in 2021



## Summary of inputs and conclusions

by Romaine Jean

Many women study Natural Sciences, but they are still widely under-represented compared to men in advanced and leading positions. The aim of the webinar series “Achieving Gender Equality and Diversity in the Natural Sciences”, prepared over the last year by the Platform Biology of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), is to address causes and consequences of this under-representation and to propose solutions for achieving a wider diversity in science and research.

“In the discipline in which I teach and do research, around 50% of all students are women, but at higher level positions, we typically have less than 20% women”, says Astrid Oberson, member of the Organizing Committee, senior scientist and former president of the Swiss Society of Agronomy.

Daniela Hansen, from ETH Zurich, makes the same observation. She is a reference in gender studies and project manager of a career building programme for female scientists. “Things are moving very slowly. One can observe a progressive disappearance of women as they advance in the career. This is the leaky pipeline phenomenon. We are losing talents. We are losing very well-educated students. Women generally interrupt their academic careers at the doctoral level”. The combination of a scientific career with family life still appears to be one of the major obstacles for the female scientist’s career. Another reason is the lack of female role models. “The inequalities in the society generate inequalities in the academic world”.

The under-representation of women in science has historical roots: fifty years ago, women in Switzerland obtained the right to vote and to elect at the federal level. The value system in careers is however still largely dominated by male values, says Dr. Andrea Zimmermann from the Center for Gender Studies at the University of Basel. Few women who pursue careers as university professors are able to pursue a family life at the same time.

Some solutions for change have been outlined during this first webinar: there should be cultural and structural change in the society and raising awareness to gender equality, with a higher focus on work/life balance issues: increased child care, support of reduction of working hours, job sharing and /part time professorship.

### Watch the webinar on youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqKEOQ7LFVo>

### Website of webinar series

[https://biol.scnat.ch/de/activities/uuid/i/d87a53d7-bac7-522f-957c-12f0d9ebc843-Achieving\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_and\\_Diversity\\_in\\_the\\_Natural\\_Sciences](https://biol.scnat.ch/de/activities/uuid/i/d87a53d7-bac7-522f-957c-12f0d9ebc843-Achieving_Gender_Equality_and_Diversity_in_the_Natural_Sciences)