



SARAH:

Good afternoon everyone and welcome. I very much hope you enjoy your time with us today. I'm Professor Sarah Brough, I'm the former Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in UNSW Faculty of Science. And I'm delighted to be hosting today's conversation on the documentary, The

under a changing climate. And I was also part of Homeward Bound. So I was in the third cohort, which was in 2018, with our voyage at the beginning of 2019.

DANE:

I'm Professor Dane McCamey from the School of Physics here at UNSW, Sydney. My research is around materials for energy and for technology. But the reason I'm here today is that I'm also the Associate Dean Enterprise and Engagement for the Faculty of Science and the Deputy Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence and Exciton Science.

SARAH:

Thank you, everybody.

So to give context to the film, The Leadership is an independent documentary by award-winning Director Ili Bare. And focuses on the first Homeward Bound program which took place in 2016. As well as the systemic inequalities that women face in STEM, and that's Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine for short. The documentary follows the journey of several women in STEM and leadership facilitators. As they participate in the inaugural Homeward Bound program, culminating in a 21-day voyage in Antarctica. Through telling the personal stories of several women on board, the film addresses the need to remove structural inequities in STEM to allow for more women leaders. As this is an area in which STEM traditionally is lacking. I should also mention that I was one of the women on board that ship, although I'm only present in background shot at the beginning of the film. You've all been sent a link to watch the documentary, and that opportunity will remain open until tomorrow, 9 March, if you haven't had a chance to get to watch the documentary yet. This year's theme for International Women's Day is Women in Leadership. And through this panel, we will highlight what we've learned from gender initiatives in STEM. And what we still need to accomplish in order to successfully produce the next generation of diverse science leaders. So that our science communities accurately represent the communities they're drawn from.

So that's an introduction to the documentary. We've all seen that documentary. I know there's a lot to unpack in that, but I'd really love to hear from each of you. What point really stuck with you in that documentary? Let's start with Steph.

STEPHANIE:

I think the main thing for me is leadership is messy, like it's not perfect, it's hard. You know, there are a lot of challenges associated with it. And it's really important that I guess these leaders who are actively involved in that, they have the courage and they're able to show up and just give it a shot. You've just got to be able to lean in, have that courage that really stood out for me.

SARAH:

Fatemeh?

FATEMEH:

As you said, Sarah, there's a lot involved in that field and a lot of triggers that come up. But there were a couple of things that I would like to raise here that is aligned with my experience in the field

as well. One is that the environment that the film has been taken on the absolute wilderness at the end of the world, the only reserve. And then the question of why diverse fields, why diverse leaders. And having such a big cohort of leading edge scientists all together within that sort of unique environment just triggered for me. And this is why we need this planet and we need these brains, we need all these scientists. This is one thing that remained with me. And the other that was quite sort of solved in a sense was, first off, the way that all this scientist has been quite honest and sort of transparent in sharing their sort of obstacles, which many of them, as we all know, is systemic obstacles. And some sort of feeling that I had, which is a sort of confidence gap within Women in STEM in particular. Which is again, is not necessarily because of women, it's because of the environment. And I had some sort of deep thought after that, why we feel as such. And this to me has become sort of clear that Women in STEM and specifically in engineering that I'm coming from that, are in minority. And being in minority comes with lack of confidence quite clearly. And how we can build that up, this is something that I would like to try to further discuss on. But this has been the two things that remained with me.

SARAH:

Thank you. Isabelle?

ISABELLE:

I think as I was watching the film, I was thinking about the different barriers and what is true leadership, and what is true change. And it's not about finding ways around the barriers or over the barriers, but breaking them and tearing them down. And that's about changing the system and changing the culture, not changing the women, and that came through very clearly in the film. I was expecting to watch an airy-fairy, you know, warm and fuzzy film about women who go on this expedition and come out on the other end transformed. And in a sense, that's what happened, but it got messy. And I wasn't expecting that, but it really showed what the women on that ship did which is challenge and question, that is true leadership.

So this film was shown at the Sydney Film Festival last year, and there was a discussion about it. And Fabian was on that panel and she said and I wrote it down because I thought, this is brilliant. Often the challenge, when you're trying to change a paradigm, is that your solutions come from within that paradigm. And chances are the solution you come up with will keep reinforcing that same paradigm.' And I think that what happened on that ship was that the women who were there questioned and challenged what is leadership. And it exposed that despite the good intentions, it was reinforcing that we need to change the women to fit a certain leadership approach. And what we have as an idea of leadership, rather than the other way around. So for me, it made me reflect on, OK, what is true chan

complex and individual. But when you look at a film like *The Leadership*, you can start to see themes emerging that are consistent and related in a lot of ways to the structure of how we do science. And how science is run and organised that put these barriers in place and the barriers that we clearly need to address. The other thing I took away is that it can seem overwhelming to address these sorts of things. But that given we have to address them and it's important for us to address them, we have to start somewhere. And the thing we start with might not be perfect, in fact, it may be quite messy, as we see in the film. But progress does need to begin and you start and you see what you did wrong and you fix that. And if you keep doing that, then there are ways forward.

SARAH:

Thank you. I also think in that one of the important things is listening to feedback. And maybe that was one area the film showed that that was a particularly messy thing. It's hard to listen to feedback, particularly constructive, possibly negative feedback.

I think the film showed the real strength and necessity of that in our programs.

So we'll move to our second question. I'd like to hear kind of, we've talked a little bit about this already. But what have you learned from watching the film, your experiences to date, about diversity initiatives as they exist now? So we'll talk next about how we would like to change things moving forwards. But what does it make you think about diversity initiatives as they exist in this moment in time? Dane?

DANE:

I'm happy to start there. I think the leadership and the Homeward Bound Program provides a really exemplar of an individually focused leadership activity. Focusing on what the person has to do to try to overcome the challenges that they're facing. And there's a lot of places where that's a really useful skill to have. But I'm not sure that this issue is necessarily addressable in that way. I think there are big organisational and structural issues in place that individuals can put effort into, but won't be changed by individual action. It will need collective action from a lot of people and from people who will be maybe negatively impacted by the outcomes of that action. But will need to make that individual personal sacrifice to change a system that benefits them, so that others benefit

STEPHANIE:

I guess following on from that too a lot of the work that we did in HB3 within the program was trying to address and sort of help you move through imposter syndrome. And one of the most memorable moments for me when we got to Ushuaia, we had a couple of days on land before we got onto the ship. And some of the program content, the leadership that Fabian she stood up and she said, anybody in the room stand up if you've ever felt like you're not good enough or, you know, you think I'm a fraud, people are going to find out what I'm doing. I'm, you know, that kind of thing. And everybody stood up in the room and I was just yeah, it really took me by surprise. I was like, why are you standing up like you're, you know, professor of ecology and you're an astrophysicist? Like, what? Why are you guys standing up? Every single woman in that room stood up. And for me, that was so powerful because it really made you think, like, why are we wasting so much energy, thinking that

being supported with very supportive male in my life. I had a dad that in the environment that all the peers in my age was looking to like participating in tea parties to get matched. My dad was telling me that you should go to Harvard and get the latest of the science and do good things for the humanity, not just for yourself or for your family. So you want to do this. So I was feeling that mission from early on. And, afterwards you know, I had a partner, again, that privilege to have a very

How it was improved, so and now we're all learning from it and we're all having this conversation, so it's so important to be able to proper!

have said that their contribution in novel ideas has been ignored. Well, this is a shared contribution or even, you know, that has been come with, let's say, a student, a female student, but it has been taken up. So take up your ideas and a step up for what you have your innovative ideas is for you. And take that ownership, which I think is quite important. And the third and last for me is work on your networks, network is quite important. And sometimes it is uncomfortable. If the we wouldn't have that personality of being like extrovert, I would say. And that but that is something that a lot of scenarios is game changer and work on that. This is important.

STEPHANIE:

Yeah, just to follow up from that, I totally agree with the networks and I think that was something else from Homeward Bound that I really valued. We've still got a WhatsApp group with 78 women and people are constantly sharing stories of success, you know, when they might need some advice

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opportunities. I think that has been invaluable for me, for me in my career. Isabelle, did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

(CROSSTALK)

So, maybe... so the next one, UNSW has done a great job of making EDI and gender equity in the workplace a priority. I'm going to say thank you to that person. For organisations with nothing in place to promote gender equity, what would you suggest is the first step for them to move forward? That's a great question for you.

ISABELLE:

Is the question UNSW in general or...

SARAH:

No, so for an organisation with no EDI in place?

ISABELLE:

OK, yes. Well, I think one of the things that we all need to just remember is that we're all mighty in





answers that in a very comprehensive way. But again, I think I have sort of touched upon that. But to make changes, we need to do in bidirectional sort of way, bottom-up and top-down. We need to change ourselves. We need to change our surroundings. We need to change our next generation. And it should be top-down as well. The organisation, the leadership, those that they are making influence now should make changes. And together, that may expedite the changes in future.

STEPHANIE:

Yeah, I think adding onto that as well, we, I guess coming from the what can we do as a from a personal point of view rather than systemic is, you know, we tend to not think of ourselves as



we see the problem, we see the issue, but we are not acting upon that. But what that would be to act, it's very situation dependent and person dependent.

SARAH:

I was gonna say Dane may also be able to comment on general academic leadership training.

with all this is, you need that diversity. And what we have seen from research is that businesses are more successful when they are diverse. So, trying to, I guess, teach these people or try and educate or improve their education with this type of thing and letting them understand and realise that when they can bring and use the diversity of their teammates, they can actually move forward and that can be a lot more successful for their business. So, getting them to understand from the other point of view that it's for all of us, it's not just for women, it's for all of us.

SARAH:

And encouraging women, networking has been shown to be a very successful and important way of encouraging that support and ongoing growth of women in the workplace. So, yeah, Fatemeh.

FATEMEH:

Very quickly about, just about like a personal sort of approach that I would possibly have is that, first off, as Dan suggests, that I would, speak up on that. But maybe beforehand, I would team up. I try to raise that up with my colleagues 'cause you will see that you are not the only one that suffer from the issue. There are quite a diverse number of peoples. And you make your teams and that makes your voice loud. You are not a standing one against everyone. You have a team behind you that makes you more powerful to make changes.

ISABELLE:

Science series, you can do so on our Science EDI website, which is linked in the chat window too.  
And thank you everybody, and have a great afternoon.