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Changing the Culture of Science, Together

Gender & Diversity work at ESC — Engineers and Scientists for Change, Korea

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WHO WE ARE

ESC: a citizen network of scientists and engineers, since 2016

Education & culture

Rooting the rational, open culture of science in Korean society

Alternative research

Science and technology as a public good for citizens, not only for elites

Action & solidarity

Working with civil society to solve social problems and design a sustainable future

Open to anyone who agrees with the ESC Declaration: researchers, teachers, students, communicators, writers, journalists. **Diversity is a stated core value.**

THE GENDER & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Raising gender and diversity questions, the ESC way

July 2019

Launched as a special committee

Second term

Became a standing committee

Today

Its role is carried by the ESC Board

Chair, 2 vice-chairs and 20 members

Our three commitments

1. Dismantle the sexist culture that remains in science and technology
2. Encourage more women to enter and stay in STEM
3. Find concrete, realistic alternatives that embrace diversity

Commitments from the committee's statement on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Feb 2020

WHAT WE DID

Our work at a glance, 2017–2023

2017

ESC's first crowdfunding: transgender health study

2019

Committee launched

Pregnant researcher survey & lab-coat campaign

Science, Society & Women

2020

Statements for Women in Science Day & Women's Day

National Assembly policy roundtable

ESC-Live talks

2021

Online talks on diversity

Survey, town hall & forum: asking scientists

First member diversity report

2022

Statement on disability discrimination

Member diversity survey

Film night: Picture a Scientist

2023

Survey, town hall & forum: asking citizens

Film night & book concert: Marie Curie

Three threads: evidence, conversation, and policy

ROOTS · 2017

ESC's first crowdfunding paid for a transgender health study

438
backers over 60 days

167%
of the fundraising goal (₩16.7M raised)

282
transgender adults surveyed, the largest such study in Korea

Outcomes: presented at APHA 2017, the Fenway Institute and the Williams Institute (UCLA) · peer-reviewed paper in *Epidemiology and Health* (2018) · a book for general readers





ESC Crowdfunding Committee × Jogakbo (transgender rights group) · Research led by Prof. Seung-sup Kim, Korea University

EVIDENCE · 2019

Labs were not designed for pregnant researchers

413
pregnant or formerly pregnant STEM researchers responded

97%
said maternity lab coats are needed

58%
worked in labs with no equipment for pregnant researchers

54%
could not reduce physical work during pregnancy

Then we acted: a campaign that gave maternity lab coats to pregnant researchers.





BRIC × ESC Gender & Diversity Committee, sponsored by Merck · Online survey, 21 questions, Oct 22–31, 2019

CONVERSATION

Opening the conversation beyond the lab

Science, Society & Women · 2019

A Barbara Kruger exhibition read through art history, graphic design, science and fiction. 26 of 36 participants were non-members.

ESC-Live talk show · 2020

Women scientists' careers and care work; how home economics and household technology were born.

Online talks · 2021

Science and diversity; the sexist remarks researchers hear, shared openly.

Film nights · 2022–2023

Picture a Scientist; a Marie Curie film with a book concert.

ADVOCACY

Speaking up as scientists, in public and in policy

Public statements

- International Day of Women and Girls in Science, 2020
- International Women's Day, 2020 and 2021
- Remarks for the anti-discrimination law campaign, 2021
- Science Day and disability discrimination, 2022
- Women's policy roundtable at the National Assembly, 2020

What we asked for

1. Remove the sexist culture in science
2. Let researchers work regardless of their identity
3. Make research compatible with family life
4. Government research and policy on gender discrimination in S&T

Asks from the International Women's Day statement, Mar 2020

FROM EVIDENCE TO POLICY

Women in S&T policy: ask, listen, then propose

Survey
Collect what people experience

→

Town hall
Discuss the results in the open

→

Policy forum
Turn them into proposals

Round	Survey	Town hall	Forum
2021 · Asking scientists	Aug 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021
2023 · Asking citizens	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Oct 2023

THE PROBLEM IN NUMBERS

Women enter science, then the pipeline leaks

<30%

Women's share of Korea's S&T workforce, falling further at every step up the ladder

Researchers in employment, by age

Age	Women	Men
20s	75.3%	—
30s–40s	~60%	90%+
50s	55%	90%+

Government statistics (2020), as cited in ESC statements

LOOKING INWARD

Before asking others to change, we measured ourselves

November 2021

First ESC Member Diversity Report

[Key finding, e.g. gender, age or career-stage balance of members]

October 2022

Follow-up member diversity survey

[What changed since 2021, or what we did with the results]

WHAT WE LEARNED

Three lessons from seven years

01

Count first

413 responses turned familiar stories into evidence that policymakers could not dismiss.

02

Reach beyond the choir

Art, film and informal talks brought in people who would never attend a forum.

03

Close the loop

Survey, discuss, propose, then act — even with something as small as a lab coat.

FOR THE NEUTRINO AND NUCLEON-DECAY COMMUNITY

Large collaborations can lead the way

Count who is in the room

Collect diversity data for collaborations and meetings

Design for every body

Labs, shifts and site work that allow for pregnancy and care

Work with us

ESC welcomes partners for joint surveys and talks

NNN26 · THANK YOU

Better science, better society — together

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