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(I) Equality and diversity in Physics: A UK perspective (flipped)

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Physics is widely recognised as a subject which often does not recognise the diversity of the societies in which it is practised. There are differences between countries, but there are many parts of the world where female participation at all levels in Physics is 20% or below. In the UK specifically, there is also low participation by some groups either ethnic groups or lower socioeconomic groups. It is clear that for Physics to be a success and to build teams to solve the key challenges in Physics, we need the participants to fully represent the diversity of the society in which they are based.

I will present some of the activities of the Department of Physics at the University of York in the UK, in attempting to open up Physics to all. In particular, I will focus on actions intended to address gender imbalance and the recognised higher drop-out rate of women at all levels in Physics. At York, we hold Athena Swan Silver and Project Juno Champion status which are two schemes in the UK to recognise Physics departments in their equality activities. I will outline key aspects of our action plan to ensure a level playing field. These have been welcomed by all staff as they recognise issues such as work/life balance and part-time working which are of relevance to all. I will review aspects of recruiting and how avoiding unconscious bias is being put at the centre of our approach. I will review the data which shows the significance of this work and the impacts that it can achieve.

While there are many avenues to take in tackling challenges of inclusion, outreach can play a very strong role. I will discuss some aspects of our outreach programme. We engage with many different groups, at different levels and different ages. This starts with hands-on astronomy for schoolchildren at primary level and for local scouting groups such as cubs and brownies. Our outreach programme covers more advanced material for those in the final years of high school. For example, an online nuclear physics masterclass which has proven very popular and with audiences significantly more diverse than our own student cohort. I will also provide examples like the Physics outreach stand taken to the York Pride event. Finally, I will discuss a knowledge exchange programme with two historically disadvantaged universities in South Africa, supported by the UK Global Challenges Research Fund, which has seen many students from SA visit York for hands-on training and allowed the setting up of two detector development laboratories in South Africa.

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