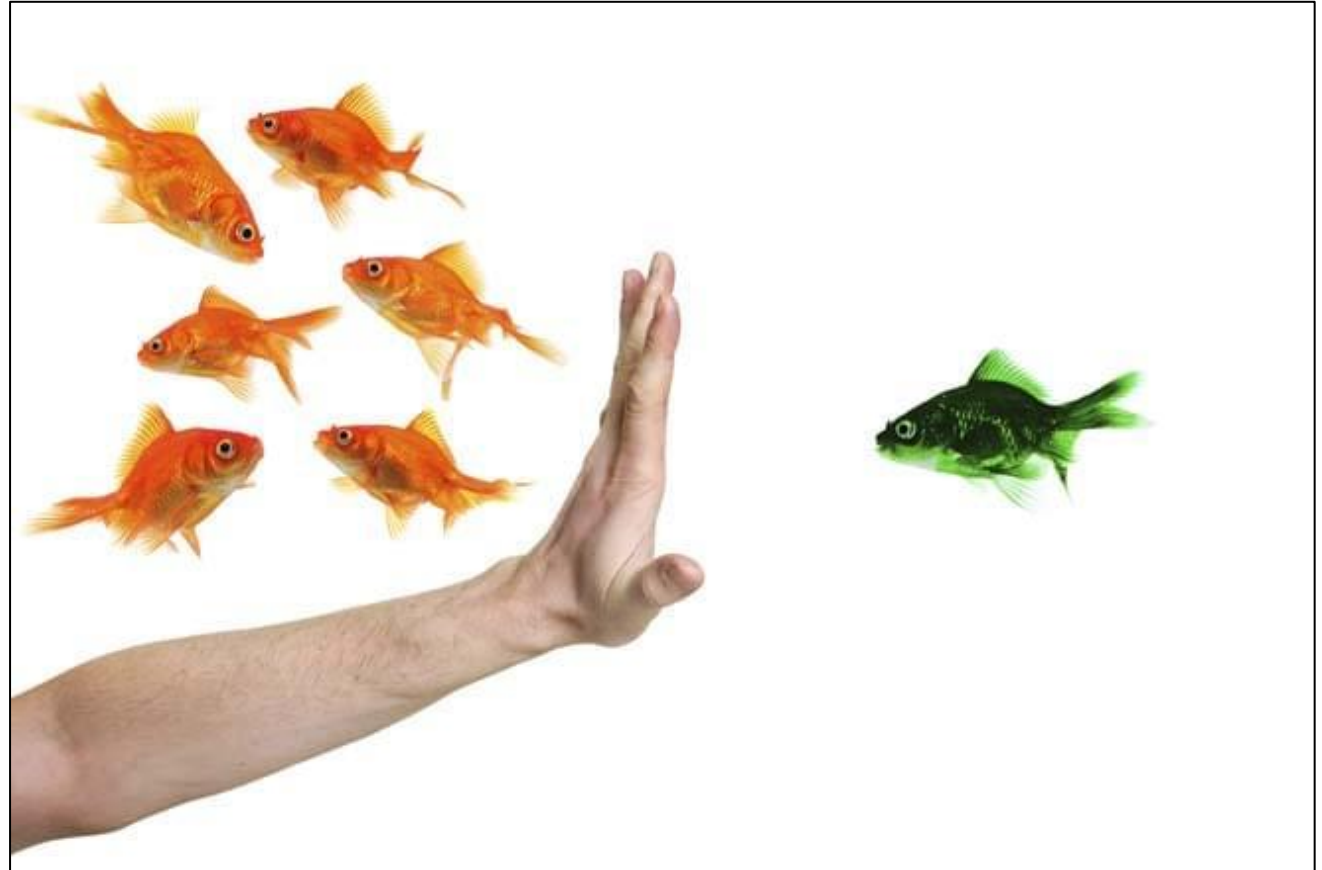
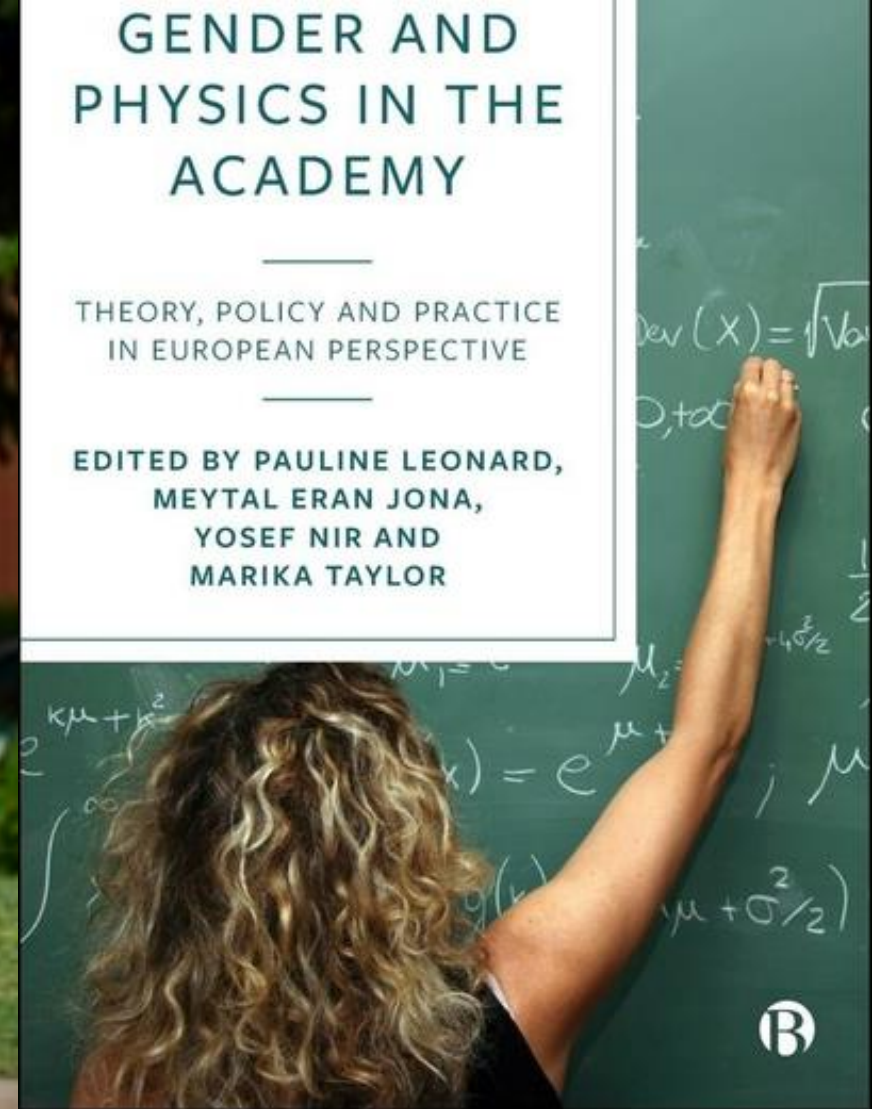


# Diversity, Equality & Unconscious Bias in Academia

**Dr. Meytal Eran Jona**  
**Head of Diversity and  
Inclusion Office**

**Weizmann Institute of Science**





Gender and Physics Research

# Personal background



- **Head of Diversity and Inclusion office, Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel**
- **PhD in Sociology and Gender Studies** (TLV University, University of Maryland)
- **Head of INSPIRE CoP** – advancing diversity in European Universities
- **Former Chair, GENERA Network** – promoting gender equality in physics in Europe



# Focus of my talk

- ✓ **What is unconscious bias (UCB)?**
- ✓ **What is the impact of UCB in academia?**
- ✓ **What can we do about it?**




# Large Group Exercise

# Unconscious Bias

## Unconscious Bias Explained

Unconscious bias | The Royal Society

YouTube 



<https://youtu.be/dVp9Z5k0dEE>

# Unconscious Bias DEFINITION

- ✓ Unconscious (or implicit) biases, unlike conscious biases, are the **views and opinions we are unaware of.**
- ✓ They are **automatically activated.**
- ✓ They **affect our everyday behaviour and decision making.**



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**Count words „RED“, version 1**



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## Count the words „RED“, version 1

RED	GREEN	BLUE	YELLOW	PINK
ORANGE	BLUE	GREEN	BLUE	WHITE
GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	BLUE	WHITE
BROWN	RED	BLUE	YELLOW	GREEN
PINK	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	RED

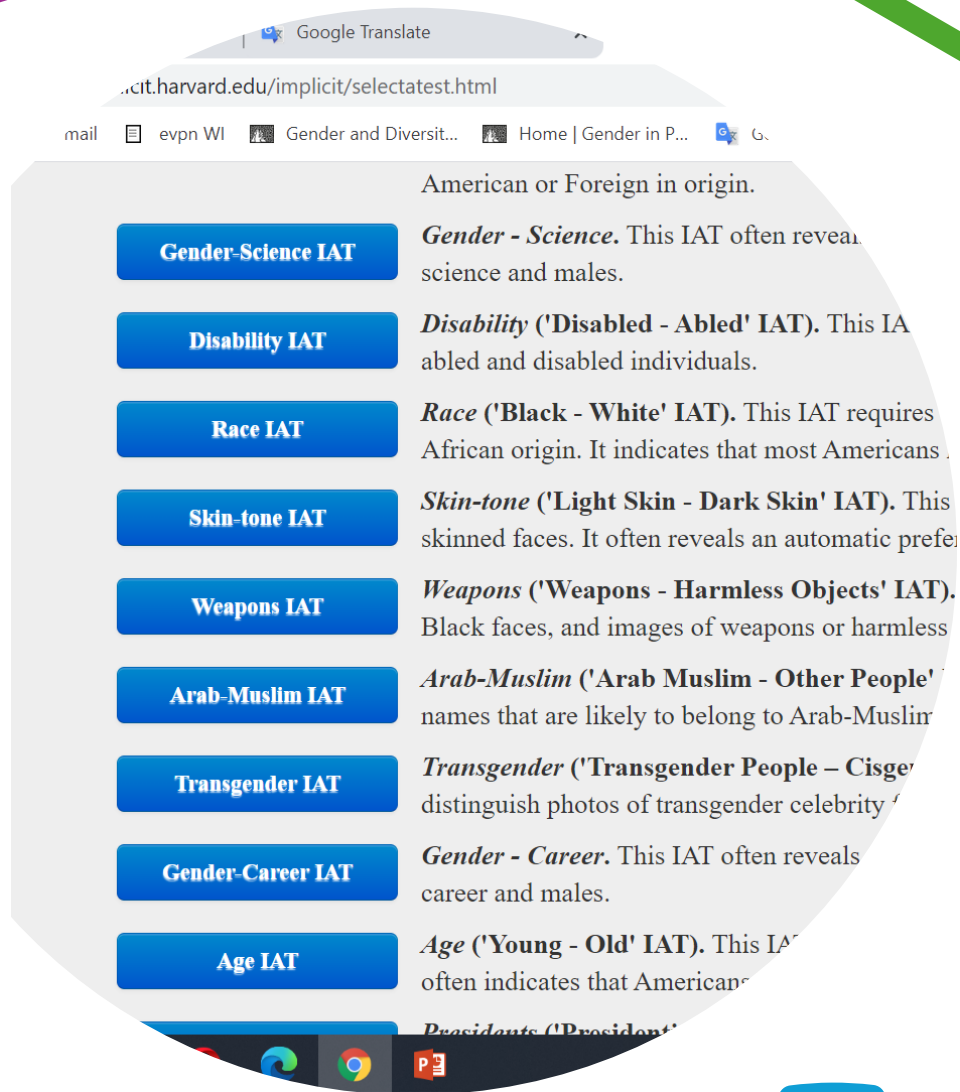
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## Count the words „RED“, version 2

RED	GREEN	BLUE	YELLOW	PINK
ORANGE	BLUE	GREEN	BLUE	WHITE
GREEN	YELLOW	ORANGE	BLUE	WHITE
BROWN	RED	BLUE	YELLOW	GREEN
PINK	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	RED

**Is it easier to identify “RED”  
when it is in the color we  
expect?**

**Is it easier to identify a  
scientist when the scientist’s  
gender corresponds to our  
expectation?**



# Take a test:

## THE HARVARD IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST

# F.R.I.E.N.D.S

## Similarity Bias

- We prefer to surround ourselves with people we feel are similar to us
- We are more open to hiring individuals we see parts of ourselves in



## **Gender Bias**

Judging individuals based on their gender rather than their abilities, qualifications, or personal characteristics







## **Performance Bias**

Those in “dominance” or “in groups” are judged by potential, while those in “out groups” are judged by accomplishments



## Recruiters only want to hire beautiful people



### **Beauty Bias**

We tend to think that the most handsome individual will be the most successful

## Halo effect



VS

## Horn effect



## Halo effect

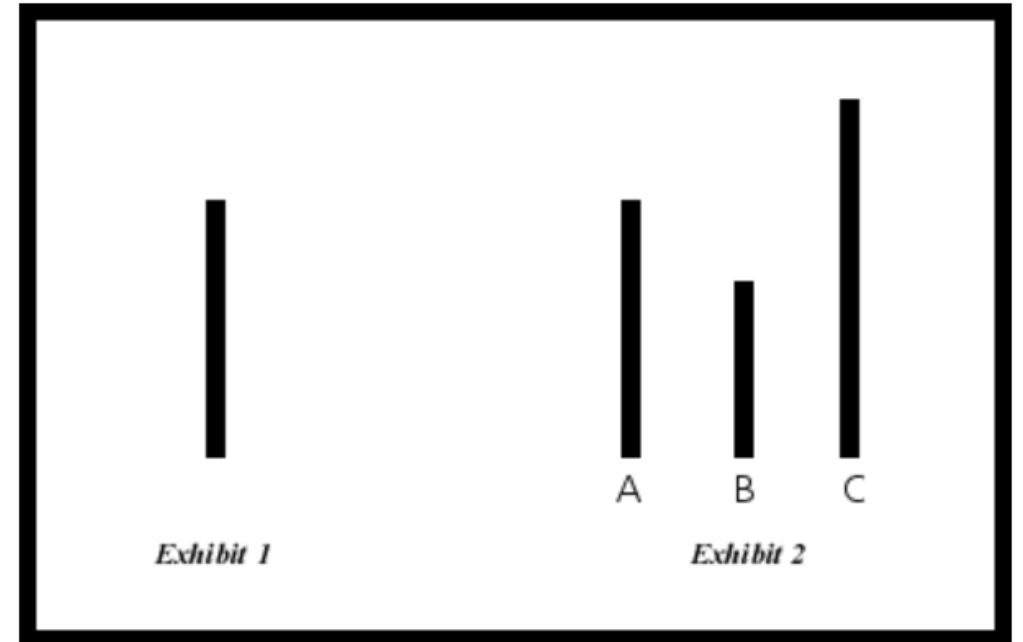
When we notice one great thing about a person – and let the glow of that significant thing affect our opinions of everything else about them

## Horns effect

When noticing one negative trait in a person makes us view everything else about them more negatively

# Conformity Bias

is caused by group peer pressure



**Conformity bias**

Who are we biased against?



People who aren't like us





# Diversity groups vary

In most cases, we focus on minorities and groups that are underrepresented in higher education.



Yonatan Schweiger,  
YWS Diversity program



Meklit Berhe,  
YWS Diversity program



Jamela Abu Ayada,  
YWS Diversity program







How can our  
biases impact  
academia?



# The impact of UCB on women in academia

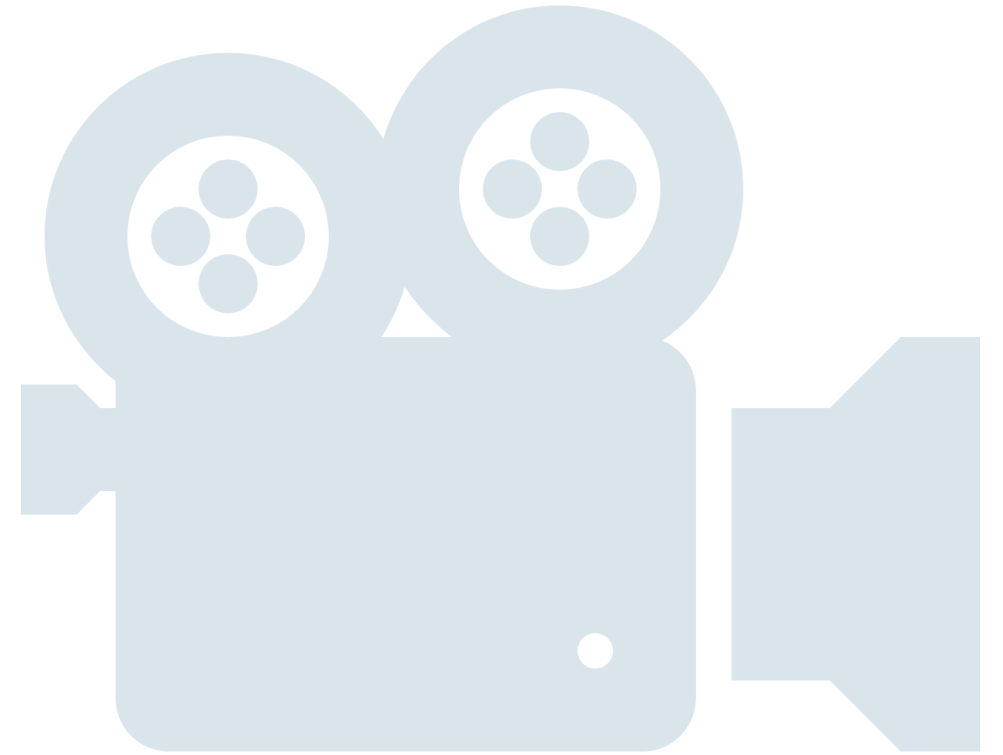
	<b>Working conditions</b>	Pay gap Resource gap Part time positions Precarious contracts
	<b>Recruitment</b>	Gendered advertising of position Assessment methods Selection committees Recommendation
	<b>Career advancement processes</b>	Assessment methods Promotion committees Recommendation
	<b>Research funding</b>	Gender bias in funding rates



This part is based mainly (but not only) on LERU report: “Implicit Bias in Academia” (2018)



Let me take you  
behind the  
scenes



# The impact of UCB on women in academia

- ✓ **“Implicit Bias in Academia”** (2018) LERU report
- ✓ **“Does Gender Bias Still Affect Women in Science”**  
(2019) Rachel Roper (in the USA)



# Gender Bias by Math Teachers Has a Long-Term Effect

- ✓ Students were studied from **sixth grade** through the end of **high school**.
- ✓ **On 6<sup>th</sup> grade** they were given two exams, one graded anonymously and another by teachers who knew their names.
- ✓ **In math – the girls outscored the boys** on an exam graded anonymously but the **boys outscored the girls when the teachers knew their names!**
- ✓ The researcher found it **had a long-term effect on their attitudes toward math** at high school.

# Bias in Professors Response to Students at The Gateway

- **6,500 professors, from 259 top American universities**, from all disciplines, responded to students' email seeking advice before applying for PhD studies.
- Names of students were randomly assigned to signal gender and race.
- Professors were more responsive to:
  1. **White male**
  2. **White female**
  3. **Black**
  4. **Hispanic**
  5. **Indian or Chinese**

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What Happens Before? A Field Experiment Exploring How Pay and Representation Differentially Shape Bias on the Pathway Into Organizations, Milkman, Chung and Akinola, 2015.



# Recommendation Letters are Gender Biased

**1,224 recommendation letters**, submitted by recommenders from **54 countries**, for **postdoctoral** fellowships in the geosciences over the **period 2007–2012**.

✓ **Female applicants are only half as likely to receive excellent letters.**

## Letters for men



- Longer
- language:
  - > Brilliant
  - > Trailblazer
  - > One of the best students I ever had

## Letters for women



- Shorter
- Language:
  - Solid scientist
  - Doing good work
- More references to personal life
- More “doubt raisers”

# Gender Bias in Academic Journal Review

- Double-blind review was introduced by the journal “Behavioral Ecology” in 2001.
- This brought to a **significant increase of 7.9%** in female first-authored papers.



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Budden, Amber (2008). Double-blind review favors increased representation of female authors. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*.

# Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students

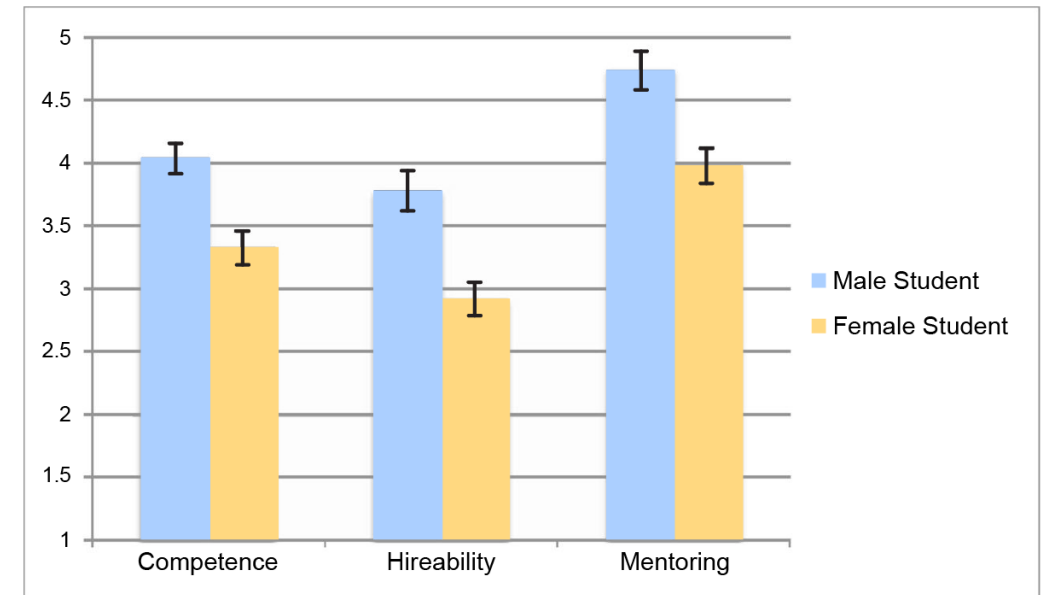
A sample of biology, chemistry, and physics professors ( $n = 127$ ) evaluated the application of an undergraduate science student for a - laboratory manager position.

Female - **Jennifer**

Male – **John**

Male applicants were rated as significantly **more competent and hireable**

Offered them **higher salary**



# What can we do about it?

Gender equality and diversity initiatives on campus





WIS Diversity and Inclusion Office

**A proactive approach to equal  
opportunity and diversity**





# Training scientists for fair and bias-free admissions process

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Advanced Workshop for a Fair  
and Bias-Free Admission Process

Level 2

Math and CS Faculty Admission  
Committee,  
Weizmann Institute of Science

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**Meytal Eran Jona, PhD.**

Head of Diversity and Inclusion Office  
February 2025





Creating a tool to assist scientists in writing a fair recommendation letters.





Programs to increase diversity in student enrollment



# Unconscious bias training for PIs

How do WIS women scientists, experience unconscious bias in our daily scientific life?



[https://www.dropbox.com/s/6aqdelm80v699vn/unconscious bias.mp4?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6aqdelm80v699vn/unconscious%20bias.mp4?dl=0)

**Ben Wishlizky**, Director



# The Numbers

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## **200%**

The number of Arab graduate students increased by 200% in five years.

## **50-70%**

Most of the YWS student's who apply for WIS are accepted to the MSc program, vary by year.

Few of them have already continue to PhD. at WIS.



# Supporting Minority Groups on Campus



Honoring diverse traditions

March   מרץ 2025							אוד - ניסן תשפ"ה
SUN-ראשון	MON-שני	TUE-שלישי	WED-רביעי	THU-חמישי	FRI-שישי	SAT-שבת	
23	24	25	26	27	28	01	Remembrance (not month)
02	03	04	05	06	07	08	International Women's Day
09	10	11	12	13 The Fast of Esther	14 Purim Hol	15	Shushan Purim
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Intl. Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
23	24	25	26	27	28 Summer Clock	29	Eid al Fitr
30	31						Eid al Fitr

April   אפריל 2025							ניסן - אייר תשפ"ה
SUN-ראשון	MON-שני	TUE-שלישי	WED-רביעי	THU-חמישי	FRI-שישי	SAT-שבת	
30	31	01	02	03	04	05	Eid al Fitr
06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Passover Eve
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Passover
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Easter Protestants Catholics/Orthodox
27	28	29	30	01	02	03	Holocaust Remembrance Day Nabi Shrawh Nabi Shrawh National Remembrance Day National Remembrance Day

\* Jewish holiday      \* International day      \* Christian holiday      \* Lunar/Chinese/Vietnam holiday      \* General  
 \* Muslim holiday      \* Muslim holiday      \* Chinese holiday      \* LGBTIQ  
 \*\*Subject to change according to the appearance of the moon

Diversity Awareness Calander



LGBTQ association at WIS



<https://www.genera-network.eu/>

# Promoting Gender Equality in Physics in Europe: The GENERA Network



# We should all step up!

- **Recognize and Challenge Bias** – Educate yourself, speak up against stereotypes, and ensure women’s contributions are valued.
- **Amplify Women’s Voices** – Support female classmates in discussions and credit their ideas.
- **Promote Equal Collaboration** – Avoid gendered task division in group work and share opportunities.
- **Engage in Inclusivity Efforts** – Attend diversity events, advocate for fair representation.
- **Call Out Discrimination** – Speak up against sexism and harassment, fostering a respectful environment.

