

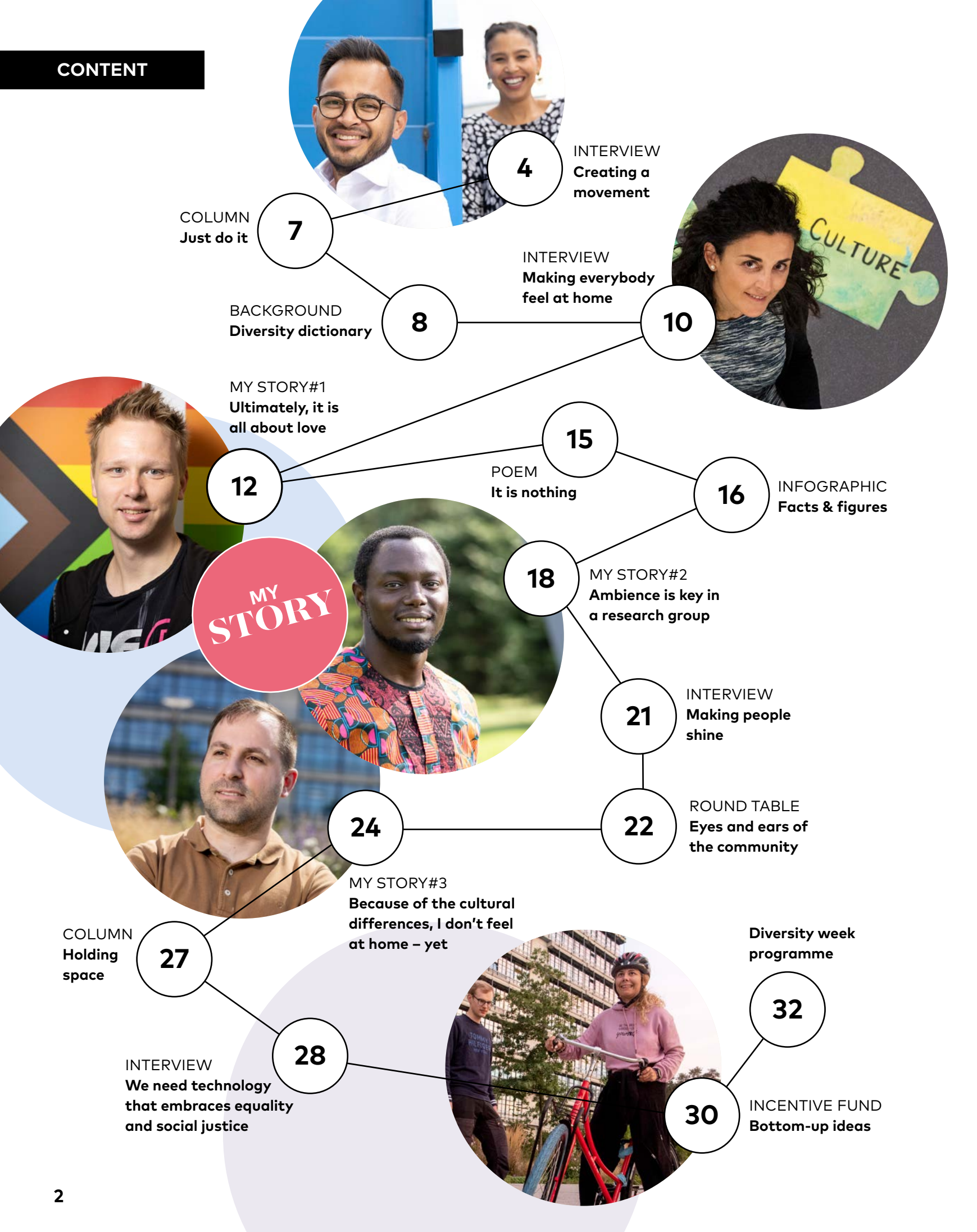
INCLUSION



Creating a movement
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ANOUK GEENEN



A truly inclusive space for all

The University of Twente is formed by an international, multicultural and diverse pool of talented students, scientists and supportive staff. To fully blossom into a thriving community we must promote inclusive practices. This requires more than installing the 'right' policies or addressing systemic biases: it entails creating and fostering spaces for open debate and discussion, where one can bring forward the challenges they face or solutions they imagine. The topic of Diversity and Inclusion is a broad conversation to be held: it concerns policy, structural burdens, and most importantly personal experiences. What does it mean to feel included? To be part of a community, to feel seen, heard and valued?

I am proud to present this Special issue on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) to you, as a first step in opening up this conversation. The current challenges and prevailing issues are too often only known by the minorities that experience them. To move forward in a fruitful manner, it is important to be open and transparent about the challenges that still exist, the unconscious biases we all carry, and the efforts we take to make progress.

I initiated this special issue because I was surprised that there was little to none active discussion on D&I

at the UT. This does not mean that structural and personal challenges do not exist however, and I wondered why there was no noise being made about that. A year has passed since the Ambassador's Network granted this Incentive project, and I am excited to see many initiatives blooming. Slowly but surely, the conversation about D&I at the UT is turning from a whisper at the back of the room to a collective noise moving to central stage. During the past year, the UT has gained two members committed to promoting D&I: Sterre Mkatini and Michael Neys (page 4). The yearly Incentive Fund of the Ambassador's Network is a conception space for many great initiatives, as you can see on page 30. Moreover, the Shaping Expert Group on D&I is making great efforts to embed D&I and all its flavors and facets in the long-term strategy of the UT (page 10).

However, we are not there yet. With only 21 % female professors we see a systemic bottleneck that has been recognized for years, but seems to be hard to overcome. Also challenges for LGBTQI+ to feel truly accepted and at home continue to exist. This Special aims to initiate the conversation and raise awareness of the various aspects that Diversity and Inclusion cover, such as gender, culture, sexual orientation, or physical ability, to name a few. In this magazine you will encounter various perspectives to D&I: personal experience, policy views and research initiatives.

I hope it inspires you to talk to your fellow students and colleagues and think about how we can turn the UT campus into a truly inclusive space for all. •

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Anouk Geenen, PhD Candidate within the Human Centred Design group, and receiver of an Incentive Fund for realizing this special.



They both have 'diversity and inclusion' in their job titles. Sterre Mkatini (Diversity & Inclusion Officer) and Michael Neys (HR Policy Advisor on Inclusion) discuss how and why they want to create a more inclusive UT community.

Text: **Michaela Nesvarova**

Photo: **Rikkert Harink**

INTERVIEW

Creating a movement

What are your individual roles and how do you work together?

Sterre: 'I'm the overall Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) officer for the whole university experience. I'm focused on what inclusion looks like, what we are strategically building towards. I'm here to help, to support, to push and shove, to initiate a movement. Michael comes in for the staff support, to make sure that all employees find an inclusive workplace, feel rewarded and can grow.'

Michael: 'The sense of urgency to work on D&I is already here, which is the first step. My position helps to translate strategy to reality, to what it really means to be inclusive in practice. Inclusion could remain something very abstract. We need specific actions and programmes to make it tangible.'

The position of HR Policy Advisor on Inclusion is brand-new. What do you hope it will contribute?

Michael: 'More than making new policy, I'm here to help create a movement within the community. We first might need to talk about some painful subjects related to D&I, but overall we want to create something positive. From my own background I know how difficult it is to truly see diversity, to be aware of it and include it. I'm of Indonesian heritage and when I'm on holiday in Indonesia, I feel blended, I feel part of the group, but here – even though I was born and raised in the Netherlands – I feel different. People mention that I'm of different colour almost on daily basis. That is another reason why I want to contribute to D&I here, it makes my job more valuable.'

Sterre: 'Until I started in my position, D&I was a subject housed under the HR department, but it wasn't a full-time role and it was primarily focused on gender diversity. Once I started working, I realized that HR is such a big part of the puzzle. We need someone to get things rolling in policy. That is why I advocated for Michael's position. Moreover, our staff

influences our students – the people who we are developing into the future leaders. We help to create their frame of mind, we influence the next generation. That is why HR is so important! I see HR as the heart that gets the blood pumping.'

Michael, you only started working at the UT in July, but do you already see subjects that you definitely want to focus on in your new role?

Michael: 'The main theme is simple: gender. We need more women in management and work toward gender equality. Accessibility of buildings is another issue that needs to be solved. There are so many topics we want to address, but we need to prioritize.'

How do you think the UT is doing in terms of D&I overall?

Michael: 'I see that the university wants to develop. If you want to call yourself 'people's first university', diversity is a topic that cannot be denied. I think hiring Sterre was a great start. Hiring a D&I officer is a huge step. When you recognize that you need to change, then you can make the next steps. We are at the beginning, but the beginning is very important.'

Sterre: 'It sets the tone. I'm also wondering: Michael, you grew up in the area. Does it make sense to you that the UT is in the process now or would you expect it to be further along?'

Michael: 'It feels very logical to me that the UT is at this stage. It was always a very male dominated environment and that only started changing quite recently.'➔



“How great would it be if every new employee gets a D&I workshop as part of their onboarding?”





“We need more women in management and work toward gender equality”



◀..... **You mentioned that you'd rather create a movement than only write policy, but how do you move from a plan on paper to an embedded culture?**

Michael: 'That is the challenge: to reach everyone on a personal level. Everyone needs to have a personal link to the topic of D&I, otherwise it remains something for the others.'

Sterre: 'We don't have to reinvent the wheel here. We can start by looking at existing policy and how inclusive it still is. Take parental leave, for example. How inclusive is it for people who are not in the standard 'male-female' partnership? Does it work for rainbow families? We need to ask those questions. And how great would it be if every new employee gets a D&I workshop as part of their onboarding? That is how you start creating culture. Set a standard and others will slowly join in.'

Michael: 'It's like the viral video of a guy who just starts dancing on his own. First everyone thinks he is crazy, but slowly everyone starts joining in.'

Sterre: 'And maybe not everyone wants to dance. That is okay! But they should have the opportunity.'

At what point can we say that the UT is fully diverse and inclusive?

Michael: 'If we are successful in our jobs, then our jobs will not be needed anymore.'

Sterre: 'Exactly. When the ombudsperson and confidential advisors have almost nothing to do, or even when D&I topics become less intense and move away from serious issues. You cannot really measure D&I. For us it's all about people's stories. Do they feel safe here? Do they feel they belong? The more people answer yes to that, the further we are on this journey.' ●

Just do it

I want to talk to you about the word “along.” Specifically, the word “along” as it is used in such words as “come along,” “play along,” “think along” and “decide along.” Everyone must be able to come along, play along, think along and decide along, regardless of where your roots may lie, what religious beliefs you may have, what colour your skin may be or what disability you may have.

Honestly? I sometime struggle with all those “along” words. That has to do with my physical disability.

Where does that love-hate relationship with the word “along” stem from? I actually really enjoy thinking, coming and deciding along, especially in my role as communication advisor. My colleagues will undoubtedly agree with me. I will explain why that is in a little bit, but first I want to give you a bit of inside information.

I already told you I am a communication advisor. It is also no secret that I am disabled. I have cerebral palsy, to be exact. This means my muscle tension is always too high, I have trouble getting around and I have poor balance. It won't get any better than this, although it will likely get worse.

Although I don't like talking about my disability too much, it is a constant factor in my life – even when it is not the topic of discussion. It is always there; when I am talking to you about my children's escapades at school, when I am developing a communication plan, writing a news article or starring in the latest corporate video. My disability dictates how I see and experience the world around me and everyone and everything in it. It makes me visibly different from everyone else and that state of “being different” colours my perception of the world. I don't necessarily think that is a problem; it is simply a fact of life for me.

“I do not always want to come along or play along with the rest”

.....
 Linda Pasqual-van der Landen,
 Communication advisor on Diversity & Inclusion

LINDA PASQUAL



What I do struggle with from time to time is the prevailing belief – the outspoken expectation, even – that I, as someone with a physical disability, always want to and even have to participate in our society – one which has been and is primarily designed for and by people without any physical disabilities. That sounds logical and perhaps it is. Such people make up the majority of the population, after all. Still, it doesn't always feel right to me.

Yes, I am proud of the fact that I can earn my own money doing a job that I absolutely love. Yes, I am incredibly proud of our children. Yes, I feel privileged to be able to cook our own dinner in our own kitchen in our own house. And yes, I count myself lucky to live in a country where I can – albeit sometimes with great difficulty – get the help I need to live a safe, healthy and independent life. I know that is a luxury and certainly not a given.

But no, I do not always want to come along or play along with the rest. I would rather just come or play. Follow my own rules, without feeling every single day that I have to conform to all manner of (sometimes self-imposed) expectations and ideals. Not that this is impossible, mind you. I am usually able to meet these expectations, but at what cost? How wonderful would it be if there were more times when you simply don't have to? When you don't have to play along with others but can make your own plans instead and everyone – including you – is okay with that? To me, that is what feeling at home and belonging somewhere are all about. Don't we all feel that way? •

Talking about diversity in a respectful and accurate way can be daunting. Here is a list of terminology related to the LGBTQ+ community and other realms of diversity to help you along.

Diversity Dictionary

Di-*ver*-si-ty: The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural and geographic background, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment.

In-*clu*-sion: Embracing all people regardless of their background and characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural and geographic background, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.

E-*qua*-li-ty: The right of different groups of people to have same possibilities and receive the same treatment. Equality means that each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

E-*qui*-ty: The quality of being fair or impartial. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Dis-*cri*-mi-na-tion: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of human beings based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they are perceived to belong. People may be discriminated on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation, as well as other categories.

Bias: Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Sex: The label you are assigned at birth based on your anatomical features, chromosomes and hormones.

Gen-*der*: Social construct that is assigned based on the person's biological sex. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman or a man.

Gen-*der* ste-*re*-o-*type*: The ways we expect people to act and behave based on their biological sex.

Gen-*der* i-*den*-ti-ty: A person's self-identity, how they feel and express their gender. Gender identity does not need to align with the (biological) sex assigned at birth.

Sex-*u*-al o-*ri*-en-*ta*-tion: How a person characterizes their sexuality in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually or romantically attracted.

LGBTQ : The acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer." There are other variations of the acronym such as LGBT+, LGBT*, LGBTx, or LGBTQIA where I stands for intersex and A for asexual/aromantic/agender.

Gay: A sexual orientation that describes a person who is emotionally, physically or sexually attracted to people of their own gender; commonly used to describe men.

Les•bi•an: A woman who is emotionally, physically or sexually attracted to other women.

Bi•sex•u•al: A person who is emotionally or sexually attracted to more than one gender.

Cis•gen•der: A gender description for when someone's sex assigned at birth and gender identity correspond in the expected way e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, and identifies as a man.

Trans•gen•der: A person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

A•gen•der: Someone who doesn't identify as any particular gender.

A•sex•u•al: Refers to a person who is not sexually active, or not sexually attracted to other people. It may be considered a sexual orientation or the lack thereof.

Pan•sex•u•al: A person who can be attracted to all different kinds of people, regardless of their gender identity.

In•ter•sex/In•ter•sex•ed/In•ter•sex•u•al/In•ter•sex•u•a•li•ty:

A group of medical conditions where there is a discrepancy between the external genitals and the internal genitals (the testes and ovaries). The older term for this condition is hermaphroditism. That is, intersexual people are born with "sex chromosomes," external genitalia, or internal reproductive systems that are not considered "standard" for either male or female.

Gen•der fluid: Not identifying with a single, fixed gender. A person whose gender identity may change.

Queer: Originally meaning 'strange' or 'peculiar', the term was used as a pejorative slur, but it has now become an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities who are not heterosexual or are not cisgender.

Pro•nouns: A word used instead of a noun often to refer to a person without using their name. Pronouns can signal a person's gender. Some of the most commonly used pronouns are she/her, he/him and they/them.

Dead•na•ming: Saying the name that a transgender person was given at birth but no longer uses.

Mis•gen•de•ring: Referring to someone in a way that does not correctly reflect their gender identity, typically by using incorrect pronouns.

Al•ly: Someone who advocates for and supports members of a community other than their own, reaching across differences to achieve mutual goals.

Bi•na•ry: The concept of dividing sex or gender into two clear categories. Sex is male or female, gender is masculine or feminine.

Non•bi•na•ry: Someone who doesn't identify exclusively as female or male.

Drag: The act of dressing in gendered clothing as part of a performance. Drag Queens perform in highly feminine attire. Drag Kings perform in highly masculine attire.

De•co•lo•ni•za•tion: Decolonizing the curriculum means creating spaces and resources for a dialogue among all members of the university on how to imagine and envision all cultures and knowledge systems in the curriculum, and with respect to what is being taught and how it frames the world.

Cul•tu•ral ap•pro•pri•a•tion: The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society.

Cul•tu•ral sen•si•ti•vi•ty: The knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures and others' cultural identities. Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value – positive or negative, better or worse, right or wrong.

Black Lives Matter: A political and social movement originating among African Americans, emphasizing basic human rights and racial equality for Black people and campaigning against various forms of racism.

In•ter•sec•tio•na•li•ty: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage".

First ge•ne•ra•tion stu•dents: Students who are the first in their family to attend a university. •

Text: Sandra Pool

Photo: Frans Nikkels

Making everybody feel at home

As an Erasmus student, Laura Vargas came to the UT from Spain. Today, she can look back on a 27 year career at the university. She started out as a physicist in the TNW faculty and recently joined the Shaping Expert Group (SEG) on Inclusion. 'Shaping is exactly how I would do it myself.'

'In all my years of working here, I have seen and heard a lot,' Laura Vargas says. 'Like the issues that plague researchers, and students who do not feel at home at the UT. I have spent a lot of time talking to students, PhD candidates and my colleagues. When I was asked to contribute to implementing a new corporate strategy for 2030 called Shaping2030, I jumped at the chance. I feel involved in the UT and the way Shaping2030 approaches different matters appealed strongly to me. That is exactly how I would do it myself.'

Now, Laura is in charge of SEG Inclusion, one of a total of six expert groups that were formed to put the Shaping policy plans into practice. 'We provide a UT-wide approach, monitoring various themes and initiatives and providing support where it is needed.' One of the questions that Inclusion focuses on is how the UT can make everyone feel at home in the organisation. 'We gather information by talking to people and one of the recurring themes is that of tailor-made solutions when problems arise. That was possible to offer as the UT was originally a small-scale institution, and that's wonderful, of course but the question is whether that is still feasible today as the number of students and staff continues to grow.'

Together with her SEG, Laura would therefore like to work towards a more proactive approach within the organisation. 'I'm talking about protocols that meet individual needs. Let's say a supervisor is approached by an employee who – for whatever reason – does not feel at home at the UT. What options are available to them to help that person out? Perhaps a new student signs up who uses a wheelchair on campus. In that case, you want to have a protocol in place to ensure that e.g. the timetable compiler is aware and books accessible lecture halls to reserve. It is about anticipating, solving problems proactively, not after the fact.'

It is also the Inclusion SEG's mandate to bring a broader perspective to the UT, which is home to an exceptionally diverse community. 'We are taking an intersectional approach, looking beyond merely male-female ratios or international staff, including also issues such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity. I would love it if everyone feels like they belong here. Next to this, it is also important to raise awareness on inclusion. We invite everyone in our UT community to play their part because when we are all involved, we can make great strides.' Getting to where we would all like to be will require some patience, she notes. 'We are just getting started on the Shaping2030 implementation and it will be a while yet before the various solutions are all in place, but the desire to find them and make everyone feel at home at the UT is certainly there.' ●



OTHER SHAPING EXPERTS GROUPS ARE:
[INNOVATION OF EDUCATION](#)
[\(CITIZEN\) SCIENCE](#)
[INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS](#)
[DIGITALIZATION](#)
[SUSTAINABILITY](#)

Ultimately, it is all about LOVE

Text: Jelle Posthuma
Photo: Rikkert Harink

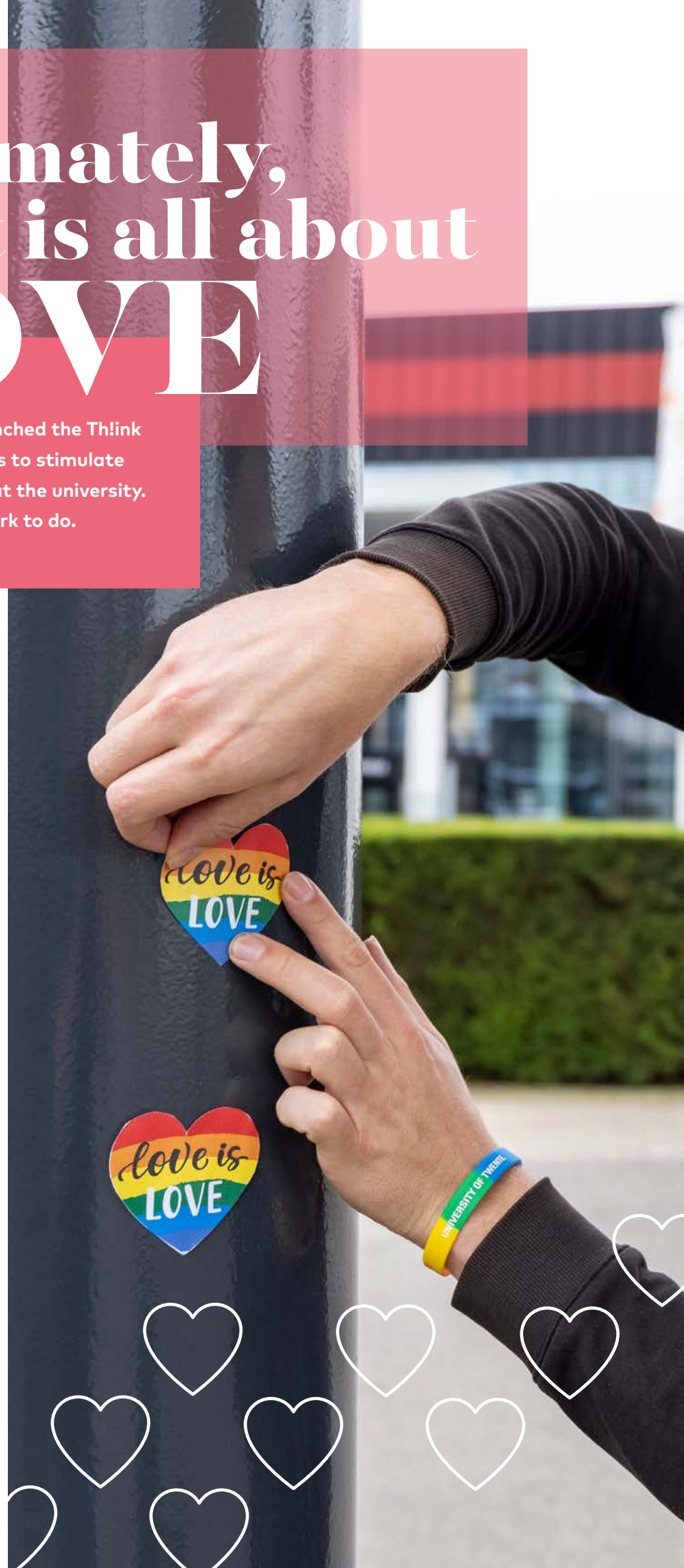
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In 2019, UT timetable compiler Alex Jonkhart launched the Think with Pride initiative. With this platform, he wants to stimulate the discussion about diversity and inclusiveness at the university. After all, Jonkhart says, there is still plenty of work to do.

'Let me begin by telling my own story. Everyone should be able to be themselves and feel safe. Unfortunately, that is still not always the case in today's society. Words like 'gay' and 'faggot' are used as insults in the Netherlands. This automatically creates a negative association, which makes you question whether you are somehow inferior to others. During my time in secondary education, I was afraid to come out for a long time. That was a difficult time for me. I wasn't always happy. Other people who were going through the same thing even told me that they were depressed.

For years, the Netherlands was one of the ten safest countries in the world for members of the rainbow community. Nowadays, that is no longer true. In recent years, people have become less tolerant. That concerns me. Earlier this year, my partner and I were verbally assaulted as we were walking around our own neighbourhood. That happened right here in Hengelo. It feels like we are back at square one.

Something like that is unlikely to happen at the UT. That is not to say there aren't any issues when it comes to acceptance and diversity. I know plenty of examples, such as project groups where male students refuse to be in the same group with female students or a female lecturer who told her students that she and her girlfriend are having a child together, only to be met with a lack of understanding from one of her students. These are the kinds of things we should be talking about more.>



MY STORY #1





“When I finally saw those big rainbow-coloured letters, it made me feel truly amazing”

member of Workplace Pride since 2020. This organisation advocates the emancipation of LGBTI people in the workplace. Furthermore, we are putting on a play during the Coming Out Week, a gender-neutral toilet is being realised and we have launched our platform, which will contain all the information about Th!nk with Pride and where anyone can go with their LGBTIQ+ questions.

◀..... Our goal for Th!nk with Pride is to stimulate the discussion about diversity. Our events create visibility. Just look at the Diversity Day, which we organised together with Saxion and ROC van Twente. The big letters spelling 'University of Twente' were transformed to read 'Diversity of Twente' in rainbow colours. It was a daring idea, but we received help from many corners. When I finally saw those big rainbow-coloured letters, it made me feel truly amazing. I feel at home at this university.

Visibility is incredibly important to the people in our community. A rainbow flag during the Kick-In, for example, lets new students know that the campus supports the members of the LGBTIQ+ community. It makes students feel welcome here. There are other initiatives as well. For example, the UT has been a

The UT is home to an enormous variety of cultures. That is great, of course, but it also leads to differences between people. It is important to bring these differences up for discussion. For example, homosexuality is not done or even punishable by law in some cultures. By talking about these issues, we hope to make it easier for students and staff in the future to identify with the message we are spreading, which is ultimately all about love and equality.' ●



It is nothing

*It is my grandfather allowing his daughters to study
for a decent ladies' profession and only taking my brother out
on excursions, climbing the Euromast with the son
he never had himself.*

*It is the scholar in confusion with my name
– thinking he'd be talking to a male –. He changes
his voice but has no choice but to discover while we chat
that I understand him better than he himself ever had.*

*It is the expectation aroused by skirts and frocks, that
if you won't pause for a second look, makes a girl seem vulnerable
even if she's stronger than her brothers, and more capable.*

*It is not a game. It is nothing –
or it should be nothing anyway.*

BAUKE VERMAAS



Bauke Vermaas,
freelance science writer
and UT alumnus

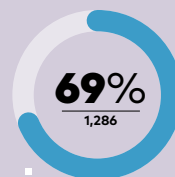
Facts & Figures

Did you know that the UT has:

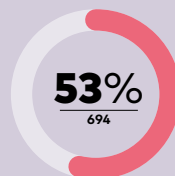
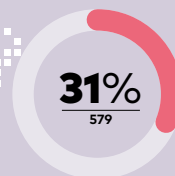
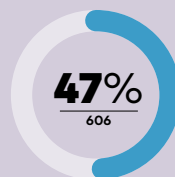
8 CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

60 SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS

ACADEMIC STAFF



SUPPORT STAFF

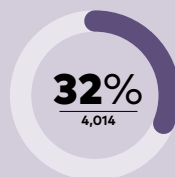


Total (fte) 1,865

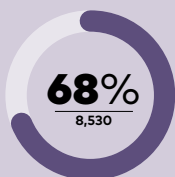
Total (fte) 1,300

INTERNATIONALISATION OF TOTAL POPULATION IN 2020

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



DUTCH STUDENTS



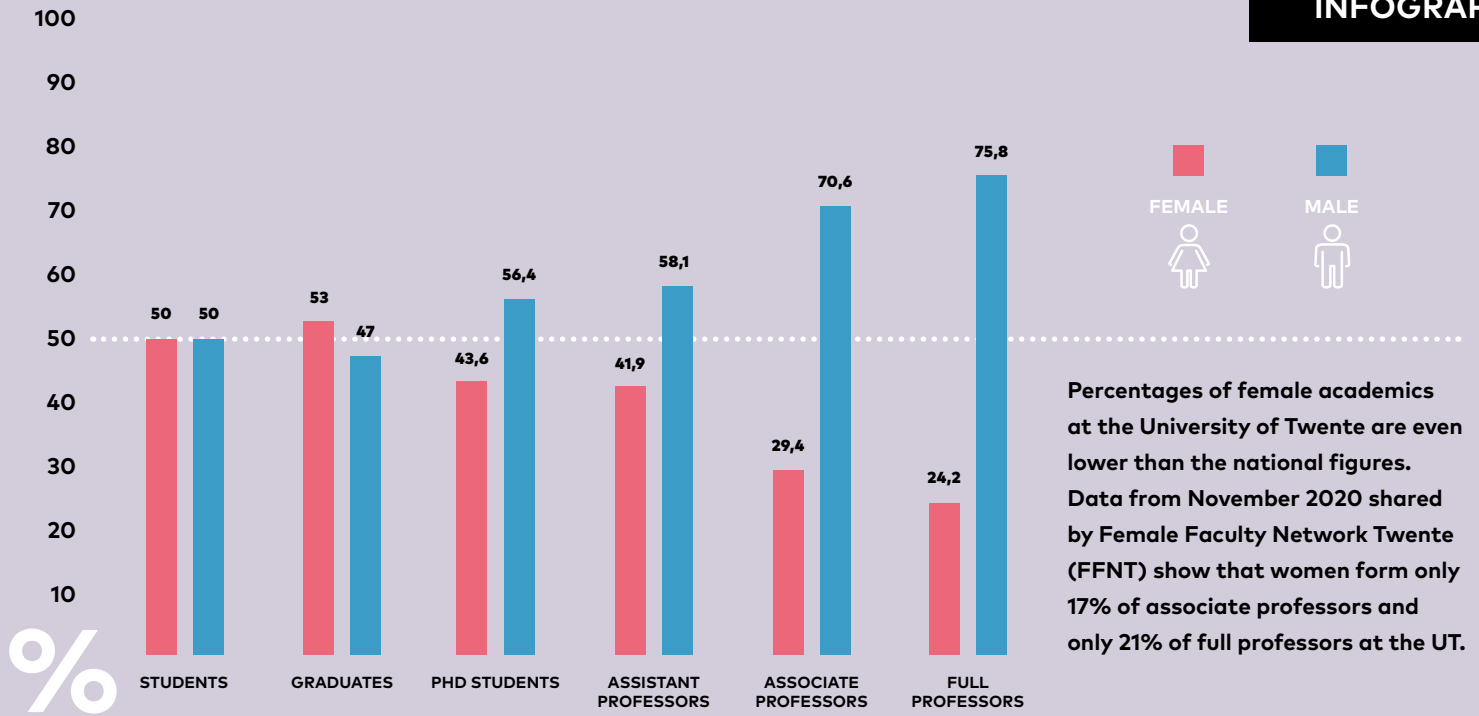
ENROLMENT NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2020

Dutch	1,906
German	428
Romanian	97
Indian	65
Chinese	59
Bulgarian	36
Other	626
Total	3,217

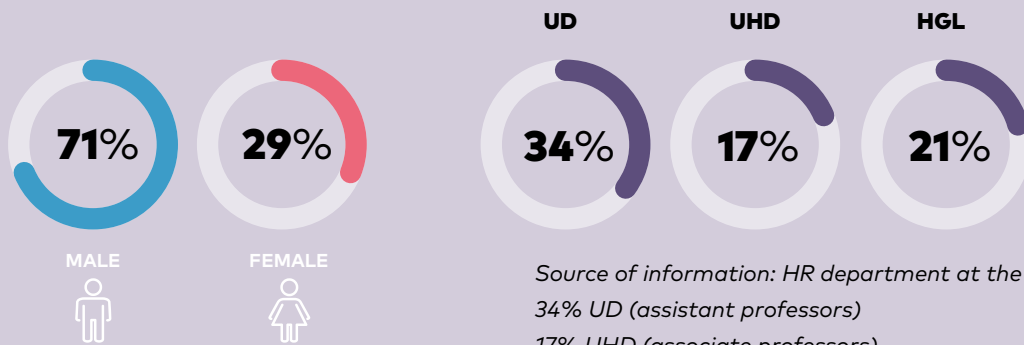
Did you know that more than half of the graduates at Dutch universities are women? But, on average, female scientists constitute only 24.2% of full professors in the Netherlands?

Below you can find detailed numbers provided by The Dutch Network of Women Professors in their report Women professors monitor 2020. More than half of the graduates at Dutch universities are women (53%). 43.6% of PhD students is female and 41.9% of assistant professors, 29.4% of associate professors is female and 24.2% of the full professors. Despite the growth in each job category, the proportion of women per step on the career ladder is still strongly declining.

The University of Twente has a [Female Faculty Network Twente \(FFNT\)](#), the professional network of female academic staff members. It is their vision to establish and maintain the current culture and the practices of diversity in UT. The FFNT's mission is to promote female academic leadership and help shape policies that increase gender diversity.



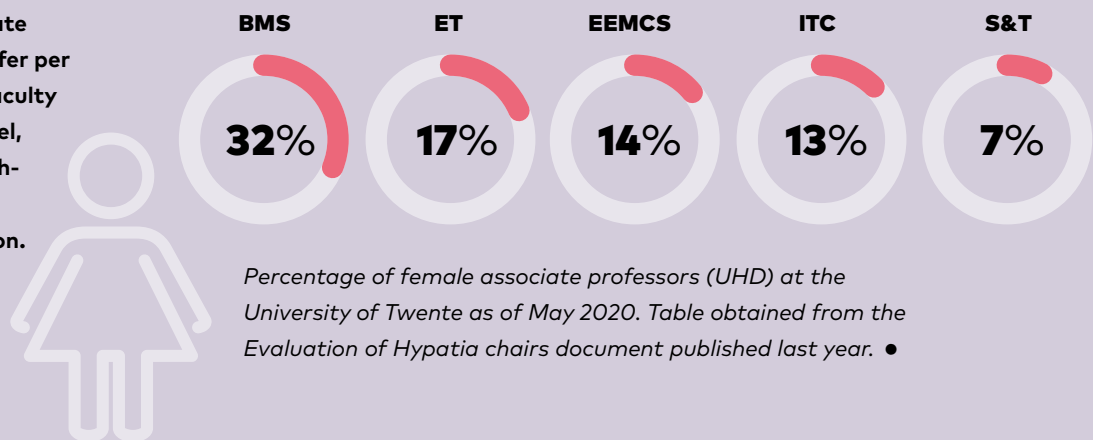
University of Twente in 2020



Source of information: HR department at the UT.
 34% UD (assistant professors)
 17% UHD (associate professors)
 21% HGL (full professors)

Female associate professors

The numbers of female associate professors at the UT vastly differ per each faculty. While the BMS faculty has 32% of women at UHD level, the Faculty of Science and Technology faculty only has 7% of female scientists at the position.



Percentage of female associate professors (UHD) at the University of Twente as of May 2020. Table obtained from the Evaluation of Hypatia chairs document published last year. •

Assistant Professor Femi Ojambati (34) feels at home at the UT. But he knows quite a few colleagues for whom that is less true. Ojambati shares his thoughts on diversity and inclusiveness, and shares what he believes needs to be done. 'If something unacceptable happens, someone has to speak up.'

Text: Jelle Posthuma
Photo: Rikkert Harink

Ambience *is key in a research group*

Femi Ojambati

'Let me start by saying that the UT is quite diverse in terms of nationalities. When I was a PhD student, one of the highlights was making friends and learning about people from many different countries. But in case of diversity of race and inclusion, there is still room for improvement. It is not just enough to be diverse; it is equally important for everyone to feel at home at the university. I felt very much at home at the UT during my PhD, even though there were very few black students on campus. The research group I worked in created an ambience that gave everyone a voice and that encouraged participation, irrespective of who you are or where you are from. We had coffee and lunch breaks together, and even the professors joined in.

Adjusting to a new country and a new culture is always very hard. An inclusive environment can make a huge difference. That is why the day-to-day working environment in research groups is essential. My own good experiences also ensured that I now act as an ambassador for the UT: I tell people that the UT is a good place to go. Unfortunately, this is not the reality of some of my

African colleagues. And we should tell their stories as well. I have heard about their bitter experiences with colleagues and sometimes professors. They experienced both covert and overt racism, subtle and direct insults, passive aggression, and bullying.

The situation is particularly challenging for PhD candidates. Their research has its own challenges and difficulties, and it is a lot heavier when people have to combine the workload with the negative attitude of their colleagues, combined with loneliness, homesickness, adjusting to the Dutch culture and weather, and many other factors.

Amongst several biases, minorities are often faced with attribution bias. This happens when actions or behaviours are misinterpreted. Minorities are more likely to face this because they might have habits that are different from the Dutch or other nationalities. For example, a friend of mine once gave a passionate presentation about his own research and his gestures were interpreted by a colleague as aggressive and angry. I found this ridiculous. We can prevent this bias by not making too many assumptions, and by accepting that people from different backgrounds sometimes do things differently. Try to look at others with an open mind and do not judge too quickly.

I too have encountered difficulties in my academic career. For example, when colleagues expect me to prove my abilities, which I find surprising because this is not expected from other non-black colleagues.➔

*“In case of diversity
of race and inclusion,
there is still room
for improvement”*

MY
STORY
#2





FEMI OJAMBATI grew up in Nigeria, where he studied physics/electronics. He won a scholarship for his master studies at the Abbe School of Photonics, University of Jena, Germany. Ojambati completed his PhD (*cum laude*) in 2016 at the Complex Photonics Systems group at the University of Twente. He was awarded a Rubicon fellowship to fund his postdoctoral research at the University of Cambridge. In January 2021, Ojambati started as a tenure track assistant professor at the UT and he is currently setting up an independent research group at the Nanobiophysics group within the Soft Matter and Applied Nanophotonics clusters.



◀..... You are often not believed when you say something, but when a non-black colleague says exactly the same, they believe them immediately. I try not to let it bother me too much and continue to do my job as best as I can, hoping that they will be enlightened at some point.

In some cases, it led to colleagues spreading gossip and rumours about me, which in turn led to exclusion by others. When doing experimental based research, this is actually a big problem. We often need to collaborate and work together. But in a toxic environment, working together is very difficult. It requires a lot of inner strength and motivation to survive, and this has happened to me and other minorities, which is, of course, very sad.

A platform for discussion at the UT, where people share their ideas and experiences, could help. But action is also needed. In this case, I think the UT should come up with tailor-made solutions. We shouldn't copy other

universities. I myself am working on a mentorship and counselling initiative where we can help PhDs from a minority group by linking them with senior researchers from similar backgrounds for support. Allies are also very important. If something unacceptable happens in a group, or somewhere else on university, someone has to speak up. This will make you feel supported.

I remember that during my PhD, there were only two Africans in the building where I worked, and that includes myself. The other guy also happened to be from Nigeria. When we saw each other in the corridor, we often had good and long conversations. It felt very nice to see someone that looked like me. Besides the feeling of identification, diversity is also good for the university in general. Several studies prove that diversity improves creativity and the overall output.' ●

Text: **Bauke Vermaas**Photo: **Rikkert Harink**

She is the dean of the Science & Technology faculty and also, together with Tanya Bondarouk, sponsoring dean of the Shaping Group Individuals and Teams. What are Jennifer Herek's thoughts on inclusive leadership?

• Making people shine

'Being inclusive means more than recognizing that diversity is of great importance to the UT community. It is about making students and employees feel safe and valued, regardless of their social, economic, religious or ethnic background, or their gender. We also want recognize and value differences in ambitions, career paths and professional interests That is why I like to speak of 'inclusive excellence'. We strive for a culture where we can make people shine by giving them every opportunity to realize their potential,' says Herek. 'This sometimes means we must be creative and open, must think one step further. The fact that the UT has formed not one but two shaping groups in which diversity and inclusion are a central theme, shows that it is truly at the heart of our strategy.'

The manifesto of the Shaping Group Individuals and Teams fully embraces the university's people-first vision. 'There is a clear vision of how we want to deal with people,' said Herek. 'It is not just about recognizing value and giving opportunities, but also about being aware of what we have to offer to each



"We strive for a culture where we can make people shine by giving them every opportunity to realize their potential"

other and to society. A safe working environment also means that people feel free to see and take advantage of opportunities themselves, and that they dare to do things differently. We are creating the possibilities for shaping your own career path, without blindly sticking to the UFO profiles. We are developing specific tools to make that even easier. But mindset is equally important. It's great to see our culture changing right up into the highest organizational levels.'

Herek sometimes compares diversity with internationalization, she says. 'We could ask ourselves how long it will be necessary to have special attention for the theme. For me personally, having an eye for

individuals, regardless of their background or origin, is self-evident, but as long as that is not the case everywhere at this university and in society, the extra attention will continue to be necessary. That is why I am pleased that inclusiveness and diversity are so anchored in the UT strategy.'

She points out that the UT is even taking a leading role, nationally. 'We are the first university to integrate its diversity and inclusion policy with the Recognition and Rewards movement in Dutch academia. The fact that we are relatively small and dynamic means that we can be more adaptive. Of course, even we are not there yet, but everyone sees the need for a more inclusive university. Now is the time to make it happen.' •

Text: **Stan Waning
& Rense Kuipers**

As part of the Shaping Expert Group Inclusion, UT students **Laulinda Massunda (Communication Science)** and **Kihndé Ait El Kadi El Morabti (ATLAS)** are familiar with both policy making and practical obstacles. Through four statements, they share their perspectives on diversity and inclusion at the UT.

Eyes & ears of the community

STATEMENT 1:

From day one I felt welcome at the UT

Laulinda: 'Very welcome! My very first moments on campus weren't overwhelming or scary, but exciting. I came here from Germany, together with my sister, and we stumbled upon a colourful campus with a lot of different nationalities and a very diverse and welcoming study programme. Maybe my extravert personality helped in certain a way, but I had zero problems fitting in. Especially later on, when I discovered all the different committees and associations, I found more ways to integrate. UT activism definitely influenced my sense of belonging.'

Kihndé: 'Obviously, every first day is very awkward, since you don't know anyone. My study programme – University College ATLAS – is very diverse nationality-wise, so I felt at home quite quickly. Over time, I did start to notice that both students and teachers can react defensively once you take a firm stance about a heated diversity-related topic like racism. Especially when you bring concepts like colonial mindset into a discussion to explain certain be-

haviours you've noticed, people can take things quite personally. That can definitely cause some friction.'

Laulinda: 'I think feeling at home is also really tied to someone's personality. However, I did encounter some friction before my first day here, when I was looking for accommodation. The housing culture made me feel like there were differences and difficulties, but I didn't let it discourage me. What I'd recommend to anyone is to get accustomed to a culture, even before day one. So, how do you get housing? How do you get around campus? What's expected from you, language-wise? If you prepare yourself practically and emotionally, it helps to not feel overwhelmed.'

Kihndé: 'A good starting point is also to accept that you won't be friends with everyone. And that's okay.'

STATEMENT 2:

With my perspective as a student I contribute to improving D&I at the UT

Kihndé: 'I sure think so! At least, when it comes to identifying issues and obstacles – and we're still very much in that process. For instance, when it comes down to literal access to facilities, you have to make sure that all buildings can welcome people with physical disabilities.'



“Let's hope that we will always be thinking about diversity and acknowledge that it requires a permanent change of mindset”

Or providing better information to international students about student activism at the UT. I believe that adding a student perspective to these issues particularly helps in identifying specific issues that would be unseen or oversimplified otherwise.'

Laulinda: 'Since we're both part of the Shaping Expert Group Inclusion, I think our student perspective can absolutely be beneficial. We are the eyes and ears of the community, so I think we have a good understanding of when an initiative is prone to be successful or not. When I first became part of the Shaping Expert Group, I was mostly listening to all these experts and professionals around me, talking about very broad concepts. But as time progresses and actions become more concrete, that's where we can step in and really contribute.'

Kihndé: 'It comes down to finding the balance between all these perspectives. What really matters in the end, is translating these abstract thoughts into action.

Making sure that the policies or other decisions to promote D&I at the UT don't feel forced, but just remove the obstacles that disable it from occurring naturally. And that's again where I believe we as students can be a linking pin.'

STATEMENT 3:
The UT still has a long way to go in the field of D&I

Laulinda: 'Absolutely. The UT has been international for so long, but the subject has only recently been put on the agenda. D&I should not be about policy and words, but about actions. Fixing problems around D&I takes time. Hopefully by 2030 we will not only have formulated a policy. Instead, I hope we build an intrinsic value around inclusion rather than an instrumental norm. From my experience some, of us are still culturally unaware. To illustrate with an example: the UT offers intercultural workshops for teachers, but these mainly attract international teachers. Dutch lecturers often do not consider these workshops as necessary. Making these workshops mandatory is not an option, but the question of 'Am I aware of Diversity & Inclusion' should be on everyone's mind. As long as this is not the central focus, we have a long way to go.'

Kihndé: 'I agree with those words. I did research on racism during my study programme and it showed that racism still exists at the UT, as well as general exclusion towards internationals. On the other hand, I think the UT can be an example for the region when it comes to D&I. In cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam,

the population is more diverse, so there is more awareness and familiarity on the topic there. Here, a large part of the local population is not directly confronted with diversity and multiculturalism and only follows the subject via the biased lens of television and social media. The UT can play an important role here by supporting and promoting dialogue between these very contrasting realities and living experiences, and build bridges towards common ground and understanding of the subtleties and nuances of the topic. Laulinda: 'I would like to add that it strikes me that the UT is often very neutral in politics. During the Black Lives Matter protests, for example, the UT should have spoken out. Be powerful and not distant.'

STATEMENT 4:
In 2030 D&I will no longer be a point of discussion

Kihndé: 'I don't think it is a good thing if D&I is not a topic for discussion in 2030. In fact, it would be wrong. It is true that the discussion is currently rather dominant, and I believe that it would be good if the topic would be normalized by 2030. Let's hope, however, that we will always be thinking about diversity and acknowledge that it requires a permanent change of mindset at the UT if we want to make concrete, long-lasting improvements in this matter.


Laulinda: 'It would be rather ironic if we spent years trying to improve diversity and then, in 2030, the conversations suddenly stopped. The subject must become part of the UT's identity and that means open discussion must take place. As long as that discussion steers towards a fruitful direction and we aim to reduce problems, we can stay optimistic about the results.' ●

"I think we have a good understanding of when an initiative is prone to be successful or not"



MY
STORY
#3





Because of the cultural differences, I don't feel at home – yet

Yeray Barrios Fleitas

'I'm originally from Spain and I moved to the Netherlands after my husband got a professor position here. I've been working at the UT since 2018 and so far it's been great. The first time I visited Enschede, I realized very quickly that Dutch people have a different lifestyle than ours. People are friendly and most of them speak English, but there is of course another side to the story. It was quite a culture shock for me. Dutch people are very direct. Sometimes they misunderstand being honest with being inconsiderate. They think they can always say whatever they like, but they should also take other people's feelings into account.

Adapting wasn't always because of my culture shock. The head of my department likes to organize social

gatherings with colleagues. I really appreciate this initiative, but those events are usually related to eating out. I struggle with that a lot. Firstly, I am not passionate about food and generally do not like to try new dishes in front of other people, which makes me very embarrassed because people may think that I do not appreciate the invitation to eat. On top of that, my English was not the best at first, and so I was scared I was not going to understand anyone. I was trembling when I had to go for the first dinner. That day something happened that seems funny to me today. I enjoyed talking with people at my table, I understood them, and the food was also delicious. And yet, I was unlucky enough that a small piece of meat got stuck at the end of my esophagus that allowed me to breathe normally but not continue to eat or drink. I was so embarrassed that I spent most of the night in and out of the bathroom trying to fix the problem, only to not recognize that I needed to go to the hospital. I couldn't share it with my colleagues, because I felt like they would not understand what I was experiencing.➔

Yeray Barrios Fleitas is PhD
Candidate at Formal Methods and
Tools group, Faculty of Electrical
Engineering, Mathematics and
Computer Science (EEMCS)



*“I feel like I’m part of
the UT system,
part of one big team”*

Having someone who is in the same position as you really helps. When I was interviewing for my current job, I had a bit of crisis. I was afraid I was not good enough, that I was not ready for the PhD position, so I rejected my last interview. They were calling me, but I was afraid to answer. In the end I picked up the phone and someone started talking to me in Spanish. He said I should come by, that it would be okay, that he could talk to me after the interview. That convinced me. Having somebody there as support was enough for me. Knowing that we shared the same culture and language made me feel safe.

The university has made a big progress in terms of intercultural sensitivity, but the UT is a bubble in which we are protected. Because of the cultural differences, I don't feel at home – yet. But I'm happy and proud to work here. I feel like I'm part of the UT system, part of one big team. I miss my country, but I believe at some point I will feel at home here! ●

◀..... I just didn't want them to think that I was leaving because I was not comfortable with them.

Being gay has never been a problem for me at the UT. Two of my friends at work profess a religion that does not accept homosexuality and yet they accept me and my husband as we are, so we feel very comfortable with them. I don't feel judged here, but I must admit that it is more difficult to make Dutch friends. I have the feeling that it is difficult to enter their lives. After three years, I still don't dare to ask my supervisor about his children. He is an interesting person and I want to know more about him, but I fear that this may go beyond what is comfortable for him. It is hard to know how people will react, because you are no longer in your own country, you are in a foreign context.

*“For me the pursuit
of inclusion is
about bridging gaps”*



AMINATA
CAIRO

Holding space

Don't be so sensitive. Well, you know you have white privilege, right? Ever heard one of those exchanges? Unfortunately they are uttered rather often in futile attempts for people to come together across cultural barriers.

They attest to the sensitivity and irritation that often are involved in these kinds of interactions. And language such as this tends to increase separation rather than bridge the gap.

You see, for me the pursuit of inclusion is about bridging gaps. I have yet to run across somebody who cannot justify that this is not a worthwhile idea. However, when it is time for action, specific language tends to hinder, rather than help the effort. You see, for me the goal of inclusion is to bridge the gaps that we have in terms of how we relate to each other. These gaps are maintained through a myriad of mechanisms, including language.

In our intellectual academic world we focus on awareness, analysis, and understanding. We fall short in doing, but can surely come up with theories as to why this is so. Here is one. The actual work to achieve inclusion is about doing, feeling, being brave, vulnerability, etc. These are not the standard qualities that are celebrated in academia. In an arena where intellect is the prime directive, goal, and validation measure, anything feeling-related is downplayed, ignored, looked down upon or suppressed, even. Interestingly, intellect is one of the least required assets in the pursuit of inclusion. Well, that is not entirely true. There is the need for knowledge, but embodied knowledge, a different kind of intellect. Ironically then with a high level of cognitive, academic intellect, one can fail in the pursuit of inclusion, miserably.

Which brings me to the next point as to why the pursuit of inclusion is difficult in an academic culture. This is a culture that thrives on achievement, getting it right, and receiving accolades for accomplishments. Hence, we don't do well with criticism, making mistakes and would choose to look over or run by those as opposed to standing still, diving in and moving through them to get to the other side. At best we avoid, at worst we deflect, lie or plagiarize, anything to not deal with defeat. Now, there are those who as part of their intellectual pursuits use failures as important building stones in developing subsequent research, but we don't apply that principle in general. Best practices, successes and triumphs are still where it is at. Thus, we keep reproducing the same inequality as we keep striving for the same type of outcomes with the same kinds of tools.

What it requires then is to step outside our box. It requires acknowledging that our academic knowledge is limited and insufficient, in this case. It requires vulnerability, humility and grace. It requires being purposeful about allowing ongezellig, uncomfortable spaces where people are allowed to makes mistakes and we don't run from them. It requires forgiving each other and ourselves for the multiple mistakes we are guaranteed to make along the way. Anybody still interested? Let me know, I will be Holding Space for you until you are. •

Aminata Cairo (PhD) is an independent consultant and the former lector of Inclusive Education at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. She is the author of Holding Space: A Storytelling Approach to Trampling Diversity and Inclusion.

We need technology that embraces equality & social justice

Text: Michaela Nesvarova

'I strongly believe that scientists need to take into account the perspectives, values and biases they bring into science,' says University of Twente researcher Cristina Zaga, who specializes in developing responsible design methods. She discusses the importance of making science more inclusive.

What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

'I identify as intersectional feminist. That might sound like a big or bad word, but it essentially means that I believe in society where everyone has equal access to the societal podium, where everyone has equal opportunities. That is something I work on in all aspects of my life.'

How can we make sure that design is inclusive?

'We need to be honest with ourselves. We must take into account the social and cultural structures that are part of our context, as scientists and human beings. My field of expertise is design of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. I advocate that, as designers of these and other technologies, we need to take into account that – even without any malicious will – we bring our own values and biases into our work. We need to put them all on

the table, collaborate, be reflective and have check points throughout the design process. We need to be critical in our design practices, we need constant reflections on what we are building. We need to develop and standardize responsible design methods that are part of the process. But that is not easy.

Responsible design is not only about generating societal impact and justice, it also has facets of bringing scientific knowledge that is really meaningful. We need to bring knowledge that reflects a diversity of races, gender identities, bodies, ages, cultural practices and so on. Scientific knowledge built on homogenous views fails to represent the lived experience of the general population. Therefore embracing diversity, equity and inclusion is not 'just' a matter of social justice, but is actually also good scientific practice. There are no systems in place for this approach yet, but that is something I'm working on.'

Can you explain how you incorporate this approach?

'Responsible and inclusive design in AI and robotics is really hard. The field is built on engineering and on computer science, disciplines that are far from social sciences. Most scientists in the field are extremely sensitive to the topic and they want to work on it, but the methods are not there yet. That is the focus of my work. I want to make sure they can develop new technologies in a responsible way.

I work in the field of embodied AI. In this area we need to think of three aspects when creating an inclusive design: first, algorithms. We need to have fair algorithms, use data that is ethically sourced and that doesn't perpetuate bias. Secondly, we need to think of the behavior of the technology. This type of technology communicates with the user and this communication might be perceived as sexist or racist, for example. We therefore need to think of how the

“We need to take into account that – even without any malicious will – we bring our own values and biases into our work”



CRISTINA ZAGA is an assistant professor, speaker, and maker of robots. At the Human-Centred Design Group (Design and Production Management department) and The DesignLab of the University

of Twente, Cristina’s research bridges engineering, design, and social science to develop technology responsibly. She investigates methodologies, methods, tools, and techniques to connect science and society through transdisciplinary responsible design of technology. She also leads a 4TU consortium focused on bringing DEI to embodied AI.

Her award-winning work in Human-Robot Interaction has received many academic and societal accolades. For example, Cristina was selected as Google Women Tech-Maker Scholar 2018 for her research quality and her efforts to make STEM more inclusive to women and children.



In her recent TEDx Talk, Cristina talked about responsible design and her own awakening to social technology’s dark side.

robot looks and speaks. I always give the same example. If you tell Siri “Siri, you are a bitch.”, she replies: “I’d blush if I could.” Why? Because she is modeled like a submissive woman. Thirdly, we need to think of a balanced relationship between the robots and humans. We should avoid making the AI and robots too similar to humans in order to refrain from comparing robots to humans and applying biases and stereotypes we do with humans.’

What do we need to make this happen?

.....
‘There is a huge interest in this topic, but we are still at the very start. My task is to figure out specifically what people need, what tools and education are necessary to make this responsible design happen. This needs to go further than just discussing it. We need to look at where inequities and inequalities lie, what biases and prejudice there are, and we need to work towards projects and research that don’t perpetuate these biases. We need responsible agents, such as AI and robots, that are designed for human flourishing. We need to work on this in a transdisciplinary way – with different disciplines, but also with citizens, and include as many perspectives as possible. We need technology that embraces equality and social justice.’ ●

FROM CYCLING COURSE TO LAUNCHING A LGBTQI+ PLATFORM

The Incentive Fund is a fund that is managed by the Ambassadors' Network. Using the annually available sum of €45,000, the network finances bottom-up ideas that stimulate diversity and inclusiveness at the UT. An overview of the projects supported by the fund - one of which is the special you are currently reading!

Text: Stan Waning
Photo: Frans Nikkels



Incentive Fund stimulates bottom-up ideas

2021

Franz-Benjamin Moenic, *ITC lecturer*, receives a sum for his study of feminist cartography.

Brechje Maréchal, *Environment & Sustainability policy maker*, gets to use the Incentive Fund to develop a cycling course. She will do so together with the Sports Centre and cycling club Klein Verzet.

Nicole Wright, *Admission and recruitment officer*, received support for her idea to set up a Inclusive workplace.

On behalf of *ET*, the **Th!nk with Pride working group** is developing an LGBTQI+ platform to raise

awareness for diversity and stimulate inclusiveness at the university. See also the interview with *the platform's initiator Alex Jonkhart*, further on in this special.

BMS researcher Daniela Crăciun comes up with a plan to recognise the achievements of novice academics at the UT.

On behalf of *Marketing & Communication*, **Ratna Toering** will work on the “*Conversation Helpers*” project. It is designed to help staff express their wishes and needs towards their supervisors and colleagues.

LISA project manager Niels Ouders focuses on a “*Library as a Living Lab for Inclusion & Diversity.*”



2020

PhD candidate Anouk Geenen has her plan approved. She proposes a diversity week full of workshops, a movie night and a magazine – this one!

Ana Bustamante Duarte, Fenna Hoefsloot and Udipta Boro also receive support from the fund to realise its plans to create “*dialogue rooms*” and launch a podcast.

LISA employee Marcella Claasse gets to use the Incentive Fund to develop an online notice board.

Meanwhile, *ITC employee Parya Pasha Zadeh* receives support to help her set up a workshop about diversity leadership skills for young researchers.

Le Anh Nguyen Long, *lecturer in the Public Administration department*, is developing a plan to introduce an anti-racism training course.

Vasileios Trikalitis, his colleagues and some Greek alumni will receive money for a pilot designed to explore the obstacles that inhibit the entrepreneurship of international students and staff.

Denie Augustijn, *Associate Professor*, received support for his plan “Diversity and Inclusion in Civil Engineering education.” ●

The Ambassadors' Network advises the University of Twente's Executive Board on matters related to its diversity policy. Since 2020, the Ambassadors' Network has altered its course. Whereas the focus used to be on helping women attain higher positions, it has since shifted to diversity in the broadest sense of the word. Consequently, the [Incentive Fund](#) was also given a new purpose.



Colophon

This special issue about diversity and inclusion is a publication of the receiver of the Incentive Fund, Anouk Geenen, the Shaping Expert Group Inclusion and was created in collaboration with U-Today, the independent journalistic medium at the University of Twente.

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U-Today

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DIVERSITY WEEK PROGRAMME

Monday 4 October

9.15 - 10.30 **Opening
Diversity Week 2021**

Main entrance and Vleugel

Tuesday 5 October

12.45 - 13.15 **Workshop
(TostiTalk) history of LGBTQI+**

DesignLab

16.30 - 18.00 **Debate
on diversity** by Studium

*Generale and Think with Pride
Vrijhof (Agora)*

19.00 - 20.00 **Performance**

by Theatre Association NEST
Vrijhof (Agora)

Wednesday 6 October

11.00 - 13.30 **Get your
issue of Special "Diversity
and Inclusion at UT"**

O&O square

19.30 - 22.00 **Movie night:
"Picture a Scientist"**

On campus

18.00 **Think With Drag show**

Saxion Harry Bannink Theater

Thursday 7 October

13.00 - 14.00 **Signing
the UN Declaration of Intent**

Ravelijn (Atrium)

15.30 - 16.15 **Launch**

bèta version of "Prikbord"

organised by Marcella Claase

Online event in Teams

Friday 8 October

10.30 - 13.00 **Be creative!**

Workshop Zine making

by Le Anh Long

DesignLab

14.00 - 15.30 **Why is it so
difficult to talk about race?**

A conversation by
Annah Keige-Huge

Webinar via Zoom

16.30 - 18.00 **Celebratory
closing of our week about
diversity and inclusion**

On campus