



Perspective

**International Women's Day 2020:
An equal world is an enabled world – in science, too**

Stephen A. Matlin

[International Women's Day, 8 March 2020](#), has adopted the theme 'an equal world is an enabled world' and the hashtag **#EachforEqual**. It aims to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness against bias and take action for equality.

Barriers and biases permeate all areas, including the sciences. While great advances have been made in the extent to which women have been able to participate and to gain recognition, leading positions, and honours for their contributions to science, the situation is still very far from equitable. Girls and women still face barriers and discrimination at all levels and in every aspect of the competition for places, grants, publications and rewards.

The IOCD action group, [Chemists for Sustainability](#) (C4S) has been working in the last few years to promote equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the sciences, in collaboration with IOCD member Vivian Wing-Wah Yam, Professor in Chemistry and Energy at Hong Kong University and an outstanding scientist who received the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science in 2011. Articles by the group concerning EDI have argued that it is essential to take up the challenge of dealing with conscious or unconscious forms of bias and discrimination in the sciences. The chemical sciences can play a leading role in addressing biases, through (1) becoming a model of good systemic practice in policies, processes and actions; (2) developing practical skills through training in cultural competence; and (3) promoting a stronger evidence base, to uncover both the extent of problems and the degree to which approaches to improve equality, diversity and inclusion are working.

Publications on EDI by the C4S group include:

- S.A. Matlin, V.W.W. Yam, H. Hopf, A. Krief, G. Mehta. [Tackling science's gender-parity problem](#). Posted online by **Project Syndicate**, 9 February 2018: this article was syndicated in newspapers around the world.
- G. Mehta, V.W.W. Yam, A. Krief, H. Hopf, S.A. Matlin. [The chemical sciences and equality, diversity and inclusion](#). **Angewandte Chemie International Edition** 2018, 57, 14690-14698, doi: 10.1002/anie.201802038.
- S.A. Matlin, V.W.W. Yam, G. Mehta, A. Krief, H. Hopf. [The need for cultural competence in science: A practical approach to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion](#). **Angewandte Chemie International Edition** 2019, 58, 2912-2913, doi: 10.1002/anie.201900057.
- S.A. Matlin. [It's time to fix the inequality problem in science](#). Perspective, **International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development**, Namur, published online 28 January 2019.
- V.W.W. Yam. [Encouraging women and girls in science](#). Perspective, **International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development**, Namur, published online 7 February 2019.
- V.W.W. Yam. [Experiences making a career in chemistry](#). Video Q&A, IUPAC Global Breakfast "Empowering Women in Chemistry", 12 February 2019.

Stephen Matlin is a visiting Professor in the Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London and Secretary of the International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development, Namur.

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