



GAIA Ambassadors Network

GAIA is a Network of Women Geoscientists in the Netherlands. GAIA was founded in 1998, and provides a platform for meetings and networking, geoscience-related activities, and support in career development by empowerment of women and forging contacts with employers.

In 2002, GAIA initiated an extensive study of the experiences and expectations of geoscience graduates and their employers. It was concluded that female graduates are under-represented in the workforce, especially at the intermediate and senior levels, and at all career stages leave the geoscience jobs at a higher rate than their male colleagues. This under-representation exists despite negligible differences in ambition between women and men, and the fact that both generally have at least a 0.8 fte position.

The results of GAIA's survey led to the 2004 formation of a "GAIA Ambassadors Network" (GAN) by 10 Dutch employers of geoscientists. The objective of GAN is to advance the careers of women (geo)scientists and their development towards intermediate and senior functions through

- Regular meetings with representatives of all participating organisations to further discuss, develop and implement each organisation's challenges and action items;
- Empowerment activities (career development workshops, networking events, etc) for female technical scientists of all GAN-organisations, as well as members of GAIA.

GAN currently consists of 3 universities, 4 research institutes, and 3 consultancy and oil & gas companies. Each organisation is represented by an ambassador (director, dean or board member) and a contactperson (employee of the organisation and member of GAIA). With e.g. directors as ambassadors, the GAN objectives, activities and new policies will be directly promoted and encouraged at all management levels within the organisations. GAN has improved the awareness of under representation of female geoscientists, and the causes that lead to differences in male and female careers: The organisations are now actively working on career development and empowerment of talented, technical female scientists.

The GAN activities are organised by a committee consisting of volunteers from GAIA. Financial support is obtained from contributions from all participating organisations. In 2006-2007, GAN was also supported by the European Social Fund EQUAL-II.

More information: www.vrouwen.net/gaia/ and <https://public.deltares.nl/display/GAIA/>

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