

Increasing Diversity in GÉANT Community Activities

Remit

This paper looks to address the items identified under the “community” work area in the GÉANT gender equality plan and to extend this work with potential new ideas for future activities. Within the current plan, there is a commitment to the following actions:

- Embed support for the Community Code of Conduct in all our activities;
- Support actions to increase diversity in GÉANT Community Committees;
- Support for collecting diversity data from events.

Ideas to support these actions are included below, along with aims to stretch into the next phase of gender equality planning.

Overview

GÉANT currently runs a number of successful activities aimed at raising awareness of diversity and inclusion and to support participation for diverse groups in its community. These include:

- Women in STEM campaign;
- Emerging NREN Programme;
- Future Talent Programme;
- Mentorship programmes within GNX projects;
- Support for the Code of Conduct.

Despite the success of these programmes, GÉANT has not been very successful in translating these stand alone efforts into meaningful change within the core community. This paper looks at some of the existing issues, how our current efforts can be better supported and makes recommendations for some new activities to support diversity.

GÉANT Community Representation

One of the targets of the gender equality work at GÉANT is to create meaningful change; not to just meet the obligations of having a Gender Equality Plan nor to put in place arbitrary goals that do not reflect the environment we work in. It is true that a large percentage of our community members would meet a specific demographic, but it is also true that groups within the community are underrepresented in leadership roles and in speaking roles at events. There is also not enough effort to change the status-quo; many processes and procedures have been in place for a long time without question.

A recommended approach to meaningful representation change is proposed by OpenNews at: <https://opennews.org/projects/speaker-rider/>. This has been adapted below to draw out

the areas that are relevant for GÉANT with ideas for what more could be done to address meaningful diversity.

	Requirement	Current Status	Future Ideas
1	You demonstrate your commitment to being meaningfully inclusive across all parts of your event	Difficult to assess as no specific strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask event organisers to build in a light-touch diversity review when building programmes • Showcase diversity at previous events on event websites • Consider sign-language, real-time captioning • Consider accessibility requirements where possible for events - on websites and at venues • Provide clarity on audiences within event portfolio
2	You gather speaker demographics and make the data easily accessible	Not currently collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start collection optional data, ensure that this is well worded • Include this data in the Compendium
3	Your speakers are diverse	<p>Significant issues with showcasing speaker diversity across all events (see statistics examples)</p> <p>Effort has been put into ensuring TNC keynotes are diverse</p> <p>Have multi low pressure opportunities for people to speak</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of blind reviews for TNC • Review CfP documents to make them as welcoming as possible to new speakers • Consider training for new speakers • Support diverse programme

			committees
4	You make sure people from marginalized backgrounds are not all talking about their identity	TNC has had an issue with this approach in the past, with well meaning intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid use of “big platform” events to have token conversations on diversity and instead address diversity through a meaningful strategy (this proposal)
5	You budget for and clearly publicize meaningful, needs-based financial support for attendees who cannot afford to pay their own way	No current mechanism for people outside ENP or FTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider asking GCC to have a budget for scholarship applications for events
6	You budget for and clearly publicize meaningful, needs-based financial support for speakers who cannot afford to pay their own way	Emerging NREN programme and Future Talent programme are good examples of this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider asking GCC to have a budget for scholarship applications for events
7	You ensure an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space	No specific attempts made to address inclusivity at events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and include information on accessibility of the venue for TNC, TFs and SIGs • Ensure events have appropriate “down time” • Ensure community groups are not exclusive and are welcoming to new members (101, use of language etc)
8	You have a strong, enforceable code of conduct with a thorough response plan	Achieved	Achieved

Speaker Statistics

We do not have a very good overview on statistics of speakers and attendees at GÉANT events as data is not collected. The following examples are a very crude approximation of assumed gender roles.

For TNC23, the table below shows presentation submissions for the main programme and looks at number of presentations received from women (F) out of the total in each area, and then looks at the number of talks given a place on the programme. The number of presentations received in all areas is roughly around the 30% mark, but this is not reflected well in the awarded talks area which shows a significant decline in representation.

In order to combat this, the current PC has recommended that we give clearer guidance on diversity and representation to the PC before the marking process, and trial blind marking.

Area	Submissions no.		Talks no.	
Networking	8 F of 33	24%	3 F of 15	20%
Supporting R&E	8 F of 33	24%	3 F of 18	17%
Comm&Collab	5 F of 17	29%	2 F of 9	22%
Security	7 F of 14	50%	2 F of 6	33%
T&I	6 F of 22	27%	0 F of 6	0%
Total	34 F of 119	29%	10 F of 54	18%

For the Task Force and SIG areas, the following table shows a review of gender diversity in speakers looking at the last meeting run by each group. Again, this is not representative or a fair review, but is intended to give a flavour of a typical year. Please note, the groups may have had another meeting since this data was pulled. A more consistent and fair approach than this is needed, but the table does highlight an imbalance.

	M	F
Marcomms	9	5
NOC	18	1

ehealth	3	2
DLT	2	0
CISS	9	1
MSP	9	2
NGN	8	0
EDU	1	4
CSIRT	23	1
ISM	5	2
Total	87	18

GÉANT Committee Representation

It is important that the decision making bodies within GÉANT reflect the diverse backgrounds within the community and have a diverse range of opinions and experience on the table to avoid decision making reflecting single mindsets or falling into meritocratic approaches. An overview of the processes for selecting current committee members is shown below. There are limitations to changes that can be made but there are opportunities for improving processes.

Current Processes

	Members #	Chair Appointment	Member Appointment	Member Make-up
ARAC	5 to 7	by committee, must be Board member	by Board	3 non Board subject matter experts
REMCO	at least 3	Is Chair of Board	drawn from Board	must be non-exec board members

GCC	6-8 members	must be an NREN rep, elected by GA	appointed by BoD	subject matter experts
Oversight	4 members	members of Board, appointed by Board	members of Board, appointed by Board	Board members
GPPC	7 to 11 members	elected by GA	elected by GA	cannot be Board members
NIAC	7 full members plus 1 liaison (NIAC)	elected by GA. Must be a GA member??	appointed by BoD	"community members"

Without making any major changes to the ways in which committee members get elected, the following recommendations should be considered to start challenging the status quo:

1. Advertise committee vacancies publicly where seats can be nominated from the community, whilst retaining the need for the nomination to come through the GA.
2. Create a registry of people interested in future committee leadership roles and work with these people to help them understand the vacancies and requirements.
3. Review membership across all committees to ensure that specific people / NRENs / areas are not over-represented with one person with a clear responsibility for managing such a review.

Impact of Current Support Programmes

GÉANT has run numerous support programmes over the years to promote diversity. These have been very successful at encouraging a core group of people to attend events and to bring attention to diversity issues, but have not translated into real change in the community. With the introduction of mentorship programmes associated with Work Packages within the GN projects the opportunities available have increased, but the programmes suffer from a lack of coordinated approaches to reaching out for suitable candidates.

Providing more support around programmes designed to reach out to and engage under-represented groups and future talents would be beneficial. More follow up after TNC for the Emerging NREN and Future Talent programmes could also add value to the community, but we are lacking in resource to support this (potentially labour intensive) work.

Recommendations

Short-Term (<1year)

	Recommendation	Status / Actions
ST1	Work with partner relations, the community programme and events team to have a clear picture of event audience and reach and how the event portfolio fits together, including a retrospective study of 2023 events.	To do
ST2	Agree a sensible set of events to gather diversity data from and coordinate sensible analysis. Include speaker flag in registration form.	To do
ST3	Develop a proposal for the GCC to create a scholarship fund for events.	To do
ST4	Coordinate a brainstorming discussion session with event organisers within GÉANT to agree actions impacting events.	To do
ST5	Add accessibility information to TNC website, both for the website and information for the venue	Accessibility for website has been addressed. Accessibility info in Albania will be challenging, has been added to venue assessment for TNC24
ST6	Add diversity reviews to TF and SIG meeting discussions.	To do
ST7	Trial blind reviews for TNC lightning talks.	Trial in place for TNC23
ST8	Change process for advertising for committee members.	Process started with wider advertising for GPPC positions
ST9	Remove use of titles in Indico where possible.	To do

Medium Term (1-3 years)

	Recommendation	Status / Actions
MT1	Introduce a coordinated function for all engagements with students / future talents and a registry of contacts - consider the proposed role of Inclusivity Officer as coordinator.	To do
MT2	Introduce more follow-up for Future Talent programme attendees.	To do

MT3	Look at adding accessibility data to all events where possible.	To do
MT4	Create a registry of people interested in future committee leadership roles with GÉANT and build-up ways of mentoring into appropriate spaces.	To do
MT5	Develop clearer diversity guidelines for TNC PC.	To do