Today's Women Leaders in International Education

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to interrogate the role of gender in differential experiences of leaders in higher education. Though international education is increasingly diverse, there exists a lack of research on how women leaders negotiate and respond to the challenges of international higher education. This article responds to the need for understanding international education through the voices of women leaders. Drawing from the data collected, we argue that gender bias, glass ceilings, and discrimination are impediments that structure women's experiences in international education. Our data set comprised of a survey with 449 responses from women who hold leadership positions in international higher education at different educational institutions around the world. The institutional and structural barriers faced by women leaders not only limit women leaders' growth within different institutions, but are also important roadblocks in the path of internationalization and globalization of higher education. This paper details the multiple structural inequities reported by women leaders in higher education and recommends action items that will help remove these barriers. It also highlights the positive correlation between increasing diversification and internationalization of the field. We argue that recruitment, retention, and growth of more women leaders are necessary steps toward building global campus and internationalized curriculum.

Keywords: women, gender, international education, survey, higher education, global

INTRODUCTION

Women leaders in higher education, specifically international education, face a unique set of challenges, advantages, and disadvantages in the global workplace. In response to the need for more information on the experiences of women leaders in international education, we developed and administered a survey in Fall 2015. The survey for "Today's Women Leaders in International Education" generated responses from women leaders across the globe. After receiving the responses, our objective was to parse various commonalities and differences reflected in them about women's experience in international education. The responses reflected important matters of concern, such as gender bias, glass ceilings, and discrimination. The findings were presented at the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Conference in 2016, and generated a great amount of interest. The following year, at the 2017 AIEA conference, we held a roundtable to further discuss the findings and brainstorm action items to address them. Our analysis shows that the goal of improving work conditions for women leaders necessitates both institutional and individual responses. Increasing female representation in leadership roles also requires mentoring and relationship building among women professionals. The interconnected nature of various sectors of international education requires multipronged strategies. To conclude, our paper recommends concrete action plans for the next five years to enhance women's advancement in international education, and this in turn will increase the footprint of global education and make international education accessible to more students.

Background and Methodology

As researchers, we came together because of our shared interest in exploring the role of women in internationalization of the academy, globally and locally. When designing the questions for the survey, we wanted to find ways to highlight and explore the role of women in at least three ways:

1) University or institutional leadership and women, i.e. What does effective leadership look like and what are the advantages and disadvantages faced by women in faculty and administrative positions in international education, at home and abroad?

2) Internationalization of the Academy, for women around the world at home and in international partner universities, is there evidence of progress or persistent barriers?

3) The role and effectiveness of the Academy, i.e. How can it address global grand challenges for women, at home and abroad, in research and service?

We created the survey with Survey Monkey, and disseminated it globally via email to the following international education listservs over two months, November-December 2015: AIEA listserv, NAFSA's Leading Internationalization Network, the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) listserv, SECUSSA listserv, and the SUNY and CUNY International Education listservs. In addition, we emailed the survey to our colleagues in our partner universities and the IIE Networks. Through this method, we reached women leaders in all parts of the world.

The survey included the following questions:

- What type of institution do you work for? (university, provider, government agency, other)
- What position do you hold? (President/Rector/Vice Chancellor, Vice President/Dean, Director/Head/Chair, Middle-level administrator, Advisor, Faculty)
- How long have you been in this position? (months? years?)
- What is your highest academic degree?
- How long have you been working in the field of international education? (months; years)
- Where are you located? (North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Australia and Oceania)
- What motivated you to work in the field of international education?
- What are some of the strategies you employ as a woman to be an effective leader at your institution in building global connections?
- What are the advantages that you have as a woman doing your international work abroad?
- What are the advantages you have as a woman doing your international work locally?
- What disadvantages and challenges do you believe you face as a woman when doing international work abroad?
- What disadvantages and challenges do you believe you face as a woman when doing international work locally?
- What do you hope to accomplish for your institution in the next five years with its global and local connections?

The questions were both closed and open-ended. Respondents answered them at the place and time of their convenience. Our examination of the responses included both the quantitative and qualitative analysis, with the latter involving deeper exploration of narrative responses through tracing different themes. The

themes that emerged were then grouped into a smaller number of categories. Such an approach allowed us to categorize the large amount of data, trace patterns, and tease out regional trends in the received responses.

Our Respondents

The survey received 449 responses from women who hold leadership positions in international higher education at universities or other educational institutions around the world. Three hundred and sixty-one (80%) indicated where they live and work, 88 (20%) did not provide such information and preferred to stay anonymous, although the survey did not request any personal information; they left the answer to this question blank (NR). Out of the 361 respondents who told us where they live and work, 61% were in North America, 8% were in Asia, 6% in Europe, 2% in Australia and/or Oceania, 2% in Latin America, and 1% on the African continent.

Our respondents occupy a diverse range of positions at their respective institutions (Table 2). About 14% are working as Vice-Presidents/Provosts or Deans, 57% are Directors or Chairs, whereas 10% are in managerial positions. About 15% of respondents chose to not mention their positions in their survey responses. Multiple factors motivated our respondents to work in the field of international education (Table 3). Personal experience of travel and study abroad (21%), motivation to develop human capacity (16%), interest in international education (6%), teaching experience (5%), and passion for travel (4%) stood out as some of the important motivating factors. Twenty six percent of respondents did not answer this question. Our respondents also indicated a wide range of strategies employed to assist them in being effective leaders at their institution in building global connections (Table 4). Team work (22%), inclusive work-ethic (4%) and good communication skills (18%) stood out as primary tools in their box. Approximately 38% of respondents chose to not share their strategies. Finally, when asked what they would like to achieve within the next five years, participants pointed towards the following goals: internationalization and increase in global footprint for their institutions (26%), departmental and infrastructural improvement and increased funding for departments and students (7%), and facilitation of more intercultural learning for students (9%) (Table 5 and extensive discussion below). About 50% of our respondents did not divulge what they hope to accomplish for their institution in the next five years. The sizeable non-response rate to this survey question does limit our ability to draw more generalized conclusions.

The obtained data provides us with a roadmap for future actions that are inclusive of educational, geographical, cultural, and organizational differences.

It is important to note that other survey questions also had similar non-response rates, therefore the findings discussed below are not fully representative of all opinions that participants of the survey may have. For example, while 74% of respondents answered the question "What motivated you to work in the field of international education?", only 62% answered the question "What are some of the strategies you employ as a woman to be an effective leader at your institution in building global connections?". The responses to survey questions requesting opinions about advantages and disadvantages of being a woman leader in the field of international education, generated even a lower response rate. Approximately 55% responded to the question "What are the advantages that you have as a woman doing your international work abroad?", and 49% responded to "What are the advantages you have as a woman doing your international work locally?". In addition, our survey received 52% responses to the question "What disadvantages and challenges do you believe you face as a woman when doing international work abroad?", and 47% responses to "What disadvantages and challenges do you believe you face as a woman when doing international work locally?"). These lower response rates are disappointing, but also indicative that not all women were ready to share their thoughts or understood the questions. We might expect that some women felt more comfortable with answering "safe" questions, such as what motivated you to work in the field of international education, rather than to acknowledge and connect their gender identity with the influence it may have on their ability to work in the field of international education. Finally, it was unexpected that only 50% of women leaders shared their opinion when asked: "Utilizing your global and local connections, what do you hope to accomplish for your institution in the next five years?" Again, while interpretation of these results has a speculative character, one may wonder not only what precluded women from sharing their goals, but also to what degree the lower response rate is reflective of the specific institutional context where women work. One could ask whether the response rate reflects a lack of institutional strategy, vision, and planning.

This paper is composed of three parts. The first part introduces readers to multiple motivations, ideas, and strategies of women leaders in the field of international education. In the second part, we delve into closer data analysis, focusing on advantages and disadvantages of being a woman at home and abroad, in the field of international education. In the last part, we offer the five-year goals submitted by our respondents and the findings from the roundtable discussions identified by participants as important to understanding and advancing women's role in the field, as well as numerous action items generated through these conversations.

PART I: MOTIVATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WORK

Motivations for Entering the Field of International Education

We asked about what motivated the women leaders to work in the field of international education, and their responses showed a passion to build a career that fosters global human connections and promotes mutual understanding in order to produce positive impacts on present and future conditions in our local and global societies. In the largest category of responses, 21% of the respondents told us that they were motivated by some kind of personal experience. They studied and lived abroad, or received an early exposure to other cultures through extensive travel, and wanted to share that with others, especially students (see Table 3). Eighty-four percent of the respondents in this category came from North America. While the responses were varied, here are some examples: "My own experiences studying abroad- I wanted to share with young people the experience of interacting with diverse cultures through equitable, empowering exchange." "I personally experienced an international curriculum in higher education, with a PhD abroad. I really appreciated this experience and wanted to share and support other students willing to do the same." "Love of working with people from very diverse backgrounds, my own study abroad experience in college awoke my academic passions that continue." One woman named Sarah1 simply stated "I am a political refugee," and another named Nadia wrote "I have lived, worked, and studied abroad and love working with international students and communities."

Sixteen percent of the respondents indicated a desire to develop human capacity as their strongest motivation. Human capacity development can be defined as the process of systematically upskilling individuals through training and education, in order to benefit society as a whole. They described their work in international education as a pathway to development in their country or city that could make a positive impact on their society through students. It is interesting to note that the women who gave this response came from various parts of the world. One wrote "to create links and collaboration between countries of the whole world, to contribute to a better cross-cultural understanding and respect." Many said that education is the key and a driver for positive change worldwide, and that education is the first step in raising global consciousness and building solidarity. Maria said "I want to help students become globally competitive, but I'm very dedicated to promoting international understanding and experience as a way to make a more peaceful world, to encourage international development and poverty reduction." Farah wrote "I think Malaysia could be a regional leader in medical education" to solve global health problems.

The rest of the responses about motivation fell into the following categories, and represented all of the world regions. Eight percent said that personal and professional development opportunities motivated them, such as a better position and salary, opportunities to network, share knowledge, and collaborate. 19% of this 8% of women were from Asia. Jia wrote "I saw it as a growth area in education, it was an opportunity to expand my knowledge base and contribute to university goals in a new way." Lin "wanted to move out of teaching and into administration." In another category, 7% said that participating in cultural exchange and understanding, their interest in people of different cultures and multiculturalism, motivated them to enter the field. Cara wrote, "I have had a lifelong love of languages, cultures, and people! My studies always revolved around those three subjects." And 6% indicated their intellectual interest in international education and program development as a motivator, "It is a fascinating field. I enjoy the variety of tasks and unique daily challenges as well as the rewarding benefits for students and faculty who participate in IE." 5% said their teaching experience and background in their respective discipline led them to the field of international education. For instance, Mary shared "My dissertation was related to international education," and Theresa noted "My background of teaching European and colonial history led to an interest in IE both are essentially ways of introducing students to global issues."

Not all of the respondents intentionally chose to enter the field. Five percent said that their entrance was serendipitous, that they "went with the flow", and that it was not planned. Naomi said "I started off as the secretary of the department, and moved up to my current position." Jeanette said "I was a French/Spanish language teacher and was asked to apply for the position of Director of IE at my college." Nearly all respondents in this category work in North America, although there were also a few respondents from other regions of the world. For example, Andrea wrote "I fell into the role when I moved to Peru, the opportunity presented itself, and the rest is history." Many respondents in Asia wrote that they were appointed or moved to international education leadership positions due to the regular practice of rotating lead administrators, however, women remain a very small minority there in these positions.

Travel is a necessary requirement in the field, and some mentioned it as a motivator too. Four percent said it was their passion for travel and education that led them to enter the field. In addition, a handful cited lifestyle choices that they sought drew them to the field, including greater flexibility of working hours, an opportunity to travel, and to learn about other cultures. Elizabeth said,

"I wanted to pursue a field that might involve travel, and I love learning about and experiencing other cultures."

Strategies for Becoming Effective Leaders

Acknowledging the challenges as well as the benefits of being a woman in the field, at home and abroad, we asked about the strategies used to become effective leaders in administration at their institutions in building global connections. Twenty two percent of respondents said they employed the strategies of teamwork, building bridges, establishing collaborations, networking, and alliance building to overcome the challenges they face (see Table 4). The women who gave this response came from all over the world. Sabrina said, "I try to involve as many people as possible- staff, alumni, embassy and host government, men and women- in our successes and share credit as widely as possible- collaborate, collaborate, collaborate." Oi Yin said her strategies include "building and maintaining great networks-networking and seeking more experienced mentors, male and female- the biggest tool we have is networking. I do not think this is specific to women, but something we all do." But another respondent noted "When I am out in the communities and working with local officials, that is where I find it most challenging to be female. I have had discussions with my male co-workers asking them to defer questions to me and to treat me as a leader when we are in these situations so that they lead by example and others see that I am in a leadership position. In this way, even when men in the organizations we work with try to circumvent me and speak with my male colleagues, my coworkers show them that they should address me." It is clear that women who gave this response believe that cultivating allies, networking, careful listening to the range of viewpoints that exist, and utilizing collaborative leadership methods are effective when faced with challenges, especially to their authority. Building coalitions, networking, staying informed, and speaking up are necessary practices for meeting these challenges.

Communicating clearly and effectively, and concentrating on listening well, were common strategies used by all of the respondents. Eighteen percent specifically said they used good communication, project management, and planning skills, to work effectively and overcome challenges to their work. Here are some of their responses: "I use my excellent communication skills, and multitasking capabilities." "Warm and friendly approach when and where it works." "Diplomacy, perseverance, clear and succinct communication, relationship building, logic, and rationale." "Positive relationship building, effective communication skills, genuine care and concern for partners, knowledge of internationalization process and strategies." They also

emphasized active listening as a strategy. "I try to always be compassionate in my listening and in my bearing toward colleagues" wrote one respondent. Other examples of responses emphasizing listening include: "Be open, listen, trust, have confidence, act within a reasonable time," "The art of listening, leading by example, mentoring others, diplomacy," or "Leading by example; listening; clear and consistent communication; empathy; problem-solving; teamwork." This category included respondents who described their effort to keep a balance between a professional and personable approach, and to utilize active listening skills to be better mediators. "I do think that as a woman I have a level of empathy that men can lack. I also have a good sense of how to defuse a conflict situation and how to communicate with all parties involved. I am not top down as many men can be and as a result I try to determine who all needs to be involved to lead the institution with me leading 'from the side'."

Some of the women, 7% in total, said they felt the need to be extra professional and hard-working to address perceptions of being overlooked or undervalued at times, such as after they went out on maternity leave. "Work extraordinarily hard; sometimes overcompensate for having been out for maternity leave and being periodically out to care for sick children. Keep learning and developing myself." One mentioned the need to be thoroughly prepared, "Being well-researched prior to any meeting or conversation," and another added that "hard work, passion, and being extremely well-informed" are required for success in international education.

It is interesting to note that 5% of women maintained that they do not employ any strategies because of their gender, at least that they were aware of. "I can't say that I use specific strategies as a woman to do my job. My effectiveness comes from constantly educating myself on IE issues, following through with faculty and institutional partners, and maintaining a level of professional presence that inspires confidence with whomever I'm working." Four percent said they work to cultivate an inclusive work ethic to overcome challenges. "I don't consider my strategies to be gender-specific. I try to be as inclusive as possible- taking time to listen and offer a voice to all invested parties. I draw more on inter-personal connections and relationship building to achieve my goals. I have had to learn to be more data driven."

In contrast to those responses, 10% said they make conscious efforts to address women's issues, and support other women coming up in the field. They feel that success will come with solidarity and greater numbers. "I support other female professionals; ensure my voice is heard, particularly when I'm in environments in which I am the only woman; I advocate for women's issues and needs"; "I have relationships with other women leaders in the field; keep on top of developments, articles, and the overall dialogue on female leaders

across industries; re-read my emails and monitor my speech for phrasing that makes me sound less professional." Some said they try to break gender stereotypes in an effort to not allow gender define their work. "I try to adapt my communication style and work style to those above and around me. I make a conscious effort to contain behaviors that may be seen as 'female'- not that I try to act male, but just that I try to temper my talkativeness, for example." They advocate for their female students as a strategy for success "I am always trying to give my best work so that students are able to receive quality international experiences."

To summarize, the survey results indicate that women leaders employ the following strategies to combat disadvantages they face doing their work in international higher education settings: They build relationships; hone their communication and listening skills; become experts on the issues and matters at hand; are always prepared for meetings and other opportunities; develop leadership skills in negotiating, solving problems, and setting clear goals; collaborate with partners and colleagues; expand professional networks; utilize a friendly and assertive approach; and show empathy.

PART II: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF BEING A WOMAN IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION – AT HOME AND ABROAD

Advantages of Working in the Field of International Education at Home

Survey respondents cited different advantages to being a woman when doing their international work at their home institution and country. Being viewed as more approachable and non-threatening than men, or being perceived as a "cultural insider", are given as advantages by respondents, that help women to more easily break cultural barriers or establish contacts with students, staff, other colleagues and/or partners locally (9%). The theme of being part of a community of women has emerged in several responses and in different ways. For many women (8%), opportunities for mentoring and working with other women increase when working at home. For others, connection to community and leveraging its resources were important advantages of working locally. Working in a familiar space, meant for some women that they could mentor other women and have better work-life balance. For women in more segregated societies, doing international work at home is an opportunity to do work that is meaningful to them. At the same time, a large group of respondents (13%) did not perceive that there are any advantages of being a woman working at home in the field of international education.

In Asia and Africa, some respondents indicated that cultural contexts often determine the power a woman has while working locally. Amina affirms that she is "considered a cultural insider being married successfully to a local" and this provided her with unique insights when working in the field. Having a better understanding of local women's culture was identified as playing a crucial role in women's experiences while they work locally. A respondent from Nepal said that the "cultural traditions of respect for women" help women leaders. Roquia from South Africa stressed that as a woman she is "informed and sympathetic to the needs of both community and her institution."

Working with other women locally, being part of a women's community, was also seen as an asset; women have found encouragement from other women, as mentors, friends, and role models. A strong sense of commitment to women's empowerment was reported, not only just by local women leaders, but also by expat women working in Asian countries. Talking about her experiences in Pakistan, Roy says that she is "proud of having created a safe and happy work environment for educated young women in a country where this is too rare. I have the satisfaction of feeling that I am a role model for young women in my host country." Our respondents from Japan, Malaysia, Morocco and Lebanon, pointed out that being a part of the local community while engaging in international work, helped strengthen women's own position within that community. These respondents perceived such an increased visibility not only in personal terms, but also as an achievement of a community and a country as a whole.

Similar sentiments were echoed by North American respondents who saw the strong representation of women in the field of international education as an asset. Laura shared, "Locally in the U.S. my work team and organization as a whole are dominated by women. Because of this, I can empathize with personal and professional goals (and potential problems) related to gender in the workplace." Others echoed this perception by claiming that it is easier to work with women and that this leads to less sexism in the workplace. Indeed, some respondents pointed out that as women they are viewed as more sympathetic towards people and situations, and underscored the importance of emotional intelligence that women do possess and often use in their leadership roles. Kathy pointed out that being seen as having "…emotional and social intelligence, beyond being a subject matter expert" is a crucial asset from her point of view.

When working locally, some of the women reported that they have been more successful than their male colleagues in galvanizing help from local agencies in supporting international learning programs. Women reported that their connections, networks, and partnerships within the community help other

women who are involved in international education. Friendships often turn into partnerships as women listen, build consensus and adopt various networking behaviors to reach their goals. Some respondents underlined how their presence as leaders reinforces the positive women's role in a society. Jamila from Morocco testifies how her work allows her to "be respected" and "admired" by her community: "[to] be supported by women around me [allows me] to always do better and act positively. Be able to understand the difficulties of people around me and help support everybody, with no distinction. Listen to all patiently and assist those in need. Give my country the pride it deserves to have women who are contributing locally and globally in a positive way." However, as some respondents pointed out, this may not be the case in countries where there are fewer women in the leadership position, like in Japan, where women leaders reported that they are invited to meetings only for representational purposes.

Advantages of Working Abroad in The Field of International Education

A large group of respondents believe that being a woman and having unique characteristics, and sensibilities as a woman (being seen as a mother figure, having high emotional intelligence, or being considered as more approachable) help them when engaging in international work abroad (20.5% of the responses). Others cited (19.6%) the important role of interpersonal and social skills that they possess and saw them as an asset for doing their international work abroad. Building global solidarity networks, both at the local and global level, is an underlying motivation for about 8.8% of women respondents working abroad.

Motherhood was especially critical for women in leadership roles on the African continent, as women saw that role as commanding respect as an authority figure. As described by Aisha [she is] "perceived as a mother in [her] role" and "in some cases it provides access to officials." Respondents mentioned that differences in cultural practices, language of communication (often speaker of "American English" had more "clout" in an international setting) or nationality of the women leaders were important factors in determining the advantages women had in doing international work abroad. Racial and cultural identity, along with gender and nationality often also determined the goals women set for themselves and were seen as an asset. As a Latina woman, Adela, saw her role as going beyond just building networks, but rather "building communities." Being a minority woman from Latin America living in the United States, she felt that she was not perceived "as intimidating" and this helped her to build bridges. Women of color working in the United

States, have felt that they can connect better "with other women abroad, particularly in South and Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and MENA and sub-Saharan Africa" as explained by Kristie. In Ann's view, American women and women from the Global North, often do command respect. But some women reported having to strategically use their title in order to assert themselves and gain respect, and to counterbalance being perceived only as "friendly". According to Kathy, "Titles are important in most countries, so I use my "Dr." title to provide a counterbalance to my friendliness and openness. I listen well abroad and try to perceive the underlying meaning or concern when in dialogue with colleagues from around the world, particularly those whose communication pattern is indirect vs. the US direct. I am patient, consciously, to allow for non-work dialogue to befit the local environment (vs. the U.S. let's get down to business) attitude." At the same time, European women noticed that for a woman to have a voice is important. As Barbara indicated "in countries and societies driven mostly by men [it] is hard; for example, in some countries we talk only with men while women serve tea (Japan)."

Geography and "where you are coming from", was also highlighted as playing an important role, although it can be seen as having both, a positive and a negative impact. Especially respondents from the US and Europe have observed "deference" toward them among "international constituents." Jennie pointed out that "as an American woman, they allow me to be an expert when women in their own country may not have the same advantages." We also observed that women from North America/Europe who went as leaders to more conservative countries/regions were viewed differently in an organizational setting than local women. As Aliya says, "in Muslim areas, I have been treated as foreigner first which allowed me to work in ways that local women could not."

Our respondents seem to believe that their flexible, intercultural approach as women is important when engaging in partnership-building with different institutions. According to Amanda, in her experience, relationship building with another institution is easier when there are women present in the team. Thus, increased representation of women in negotiating teams tends to be a positive factor in building strategic and successful relationships with other universities. Respondents from South America and Asia joined their North-American colleagues in underlying how cultural competency translates to building relationships with other women, even in societies that are defined as "machismo" and "male-dominated." According to some respondents since international education is a "relational" field, women see building relationships as critical and they thrive in developing such connections while doing international work abroad. Laura wants to build "strong networks of other

professional women (and allied men) who support one another personally and professionally."

Some respondents described the benefits of having access to women in gender-segregated societies. A respondent from Africa emphasized how being a woman helped her to reach out to other women in ways that men cannot. Another, Amina opines, "I am able to access (and thereby share with students) women's spaces and facilitate meaningful discussions about the unique challenges women face in this society." Others, from North America reported that they can more easily "connect with female students on the campus" and also with "other women more easily across cultures than perhaps a male [colleague] would in certain settings." The unique ability to access segregated spaces leads to the possibility of networking with other women and mentoring women to enhance their ability to gain confidence. An interesting point raised by Magda from Europe is how increased visibility of women in educational spaces encourages women with different religious convictions to enter the workplace, as they are "more comfortable working with other women." This sentiment is echoed by respondents from Asia who appreciated networking with other women internationally. They considered this as an affirmation of their hard work and potential. Indeed, women reported being perceived as more trustworthy and accessible, especially in the Global South and as Valeria, from Latin America added, this perception can be very helpful when doing research, especially with students in the students' communities.

These results paint a complex picture where a wide range of personal, cultural and context-specific characteristics determine the advantages women might enjoy when working internationally. The increase in gender diversity also brings an increase in racial and cultural diversity. Our respondents believe they bring unique sensibilities to the work place and are considered more approachable with high emotional intelligence, with unique ability to connect with "women students and colleagues overseas" that increases engagement in "international dialogue." Geographical regions, family support, culture and age are important determinants in women's experience in international education.

Disadvantages of Working in the Field of International Education at Home

Many of the challenges and disadvantages that women reported facing in doing their international work locally were similar to those faced when doing their work abroad (discussed in the next section); however, with a number of important differences that highlight a worrying trend of gender bias and sexism

in local university and other organizational cultures pervasive among many respondents' home institutions.

Similar to the gender bias faced by women SIOs in their work abroad, feeling equal to their male peers and proving credibility at home is a challenge (15%). Put simply, one respondent declared "very similar to abroad: not being seen as capable or knowledgeable". Other respondents mentioned "Not being "heard" in the room or in the group" and "being dismissed". Organizational structure is also a challenge for many respondents, with a number of women specifically mentioning a lack of access to decision-making and other leadership opportunities. Women reported "still not always invited to strategy and goal meetings" and even when they are invited they "don't have a voice at the table in this institution run by white males" or, as Susan from the U.S. puts it, she is "often the only female at the table. I am sometimes talked over, or dismissed".

This points to another challenge that respondents experience in their local work, which is simply a lack of female role models, mentors, and leaders. One respondent stated that "there is definitely a glass-ceiling. There are more female faculty and staff in the center where I work, but the female representation in the higher leadership positions of the university administration is extremely low." Notably, a number of respondents from the U.S. – which accounted for the largest number of respondents – specifically mentioned that "in U.S. higher education, males dominate positions of power to this day."

This persistent trend in male-dominated leadership in higher education is no more apparent than in the very real, close-to-home "old boys' club" culture that many respondents mentioned (8%). One respondent suggests that the "challenge is probably more with networking within an organization and the challenges of not being part of an 'old boy's network' as a woman. This is still a problem and creates barriers." Another respondent reported challenges "when dealing with local companies/agencies where the "good old boy" culture is still in place." Women being left out of the decision-making process or being denied access to spaces and discussions where business is being conducted is prevalent in university settings and therefore a great concern when noting that the field of international higher education is a growing one for women.

Contributing to this embedded gender bias is, of course, that women are often burdened by family needs more than men. One respondent noted that "balancing life -- being a mom and primary home manager -- with the demands of working in this field. It can be very challenging even with a supportive spouse/partner." Many respondents cited similar challenges, noting that despite significant support from a partner, the woman tends to assume the role of primary child care giver, and must balance that responsibility with professional

responsibilities. This was a challenge for all working mothers across countries and sectors. For some working mothers, there is a fear of being stigmatized due to a perception of compromised priorities or lack of reliability. One respondent even went so far as to reveal that "sometimes I'm afraid to mention family commitments or that I have a family at all."

One unique disadvantage for the female SIO is the very nature of international education, and the added stigma of international work that persists on many campuses, according to respondents. Respondents observed that "the portfolio is not given enough of a strategic value so you are often pitted against many challenges" and "career development opportunities are more limited - particularly the opportunity to step up into VC/President level. I'm not sure this is a gender issue so much; rather than internationalization still being considered as important but secondary to the Academic and Research portfolios." This points to the dual challenge for female leaders specifically in international education: that, in addition to a persistent glass ceiling and infrastructures that favor men over women in higher education leadership positions, the field of international education itself still struggles from misperceptions of being frivolous or, as one respondent noted, "a 'feel good' fluffy pursuit".

In this same vein, respondents also noted the added disadvantages of youth and lack of faculty status. One respondent suggested that she faces more challenges due to a lack of faculty title than due to gender. Another respondent stated, "I work in a very male dominated university and not having a Ph.D. and being female creates issues in being taken seriously and having my voice heard. I do think that if I had a Ph.D. these issues would be less apparent." Finally, one respondent noted, "as a woman who looks younger than I am, I find that some people doubt that I have the skills or experience to be able to execute. I find this is more of a problem in the U.S. [at home] and when working with faculty and administrators."

Disadvantages of Working Abroad in the Field of International Education

Despite a number of advantages to being a woman leader in the field, survey respondents cited many challenges and disadvantages as well. In terms of challenges to being a woman in doing international work abroad, the majority of respondents (58%) cited issues relating to gender bias and patriarchy as the number one challenge to doing their work in other countries. The phrase "not taken seriously" was a near-uniform term woven throughout many responses, within the themes of being belittled, overlooked, and underestimated. As a result of being underestimated and overlooked, respondents noted the need to

overcompensate and make behavioral adjustments in order to advance. As one respondent suggested "you have to work twice as hard at times to earn half the credibility."

One of the main types of gender bias experienced by survey respondents was specifically related to doing their work abroad in male-dominated cultures. According to one respondent, "male rituals and hierarchies in some countries make it hard for a woman's voice to be heard and place limits on women's participation". Betsy, a respondent from North America, stated, "women are not seen as relevant in some cultures, at least not in professional circles, and I am aware when I work with partners in some countries that it may be unusual for them to work with a woman. I sometimes feel they do not listen to me because they do not believe I have the authority to speak on the matter at hand." A number of respondents described being overlooked or assumed to be a subordinate when traveling with a male colleague, and often having to – or choosing to- relinquish authority at meetings when traveling with a man.

Another challenge in working abroad was related to organizational structures – whether institutional or cultural – that prevents women from accessing opportunities, or that tends to relegate women to a lower status. Respondents discussed not having a "seat at the table", lack of access to the "old boys' club", and the general absence of women in leadership in certain cultures. Sharon, from the U.S., pointed to the fact that in many meetings abroad she is the only woman besides secretaries or assistants, while several other respondents discussed the issue of cultural norms that may place women in more submissive roles and expect males to take on leadership positions. One respondent observed, "sometimes the way certain societies socialize means that women do not have the same access socially to the kinds of conversations that are important to networking and relationship building." If women leaders are trying to build connections with their counterparts and carry on normal business interactions, it is understandably challenging to do so in a situation where women are not typically present or are unable to participate in male rituals. This in turn has the potential to lead to subpar performance or the perception of underachievement that can thwart women's leadership success.

Several respondents expressed challenges in balancing family and work, especially in performing international work abroad. One respondent described "the limitations to professional growth and career development in a field that involves demanding schedules and a lot of traveling and which are difficult to conciliate with family responsibilities and leisure and family time in general." While this was a challenge for respondents across regions, respondents from Latin America and Asia notably expressed relatively more concern, with 50% of Latin American respondents and 21% of Asian respondents highlighting

family/personal commitments as a challenge, compared to, for example, 10% of North American respondents.

A final challenge for women doing their international work abroad relates to safety concerns. Many respondents discussed concerns with traveling independently, especially in certain parts of the world (although no one mentioned specific countries), and even described precautions that male colleagues might not have to consider, such as the location of a hotel, use of taxis, traveling by train, or accepting business meetings after hours. Safety concerns also ranged from feeling uncomfortable arriving in a country late at night to concerns about sexual harassment and assault.

Two notable variables that respondents described as mitigating or exacerbating gender bias in other countries were age and ethnicity. Respondents discussed letting their hair turn grey as a tactic for appearing older and therefore more authoritative, or being seen as a mother figure and therefore respected. Conversely, several respondents attributed their "cute" faces, young appearance, and unmarried status as exacerbating factors in already gender biased professional situations. Similarly, several respondents described their ethnicity and nationality as a factor in whether they were treated with more or less respect in certain contexts. In some cases, being a foreigner was an advantage in excusing them from adhering to local gender norms, while in other cases it was seen as an exacerbating disadvantage.

PART III: LOOKING AHEAD AND ACTION ITEMS FOR WOMEN LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Looking Ahead: Goals for The Next Five Years

Women leaders have concrete goals over the next five years for their institutions and their students. The interrelated themes of campus internationalization and curriculum diversification have been repeatedly echoed by many respondents (see Table 5). Sixty percent of women leaders from North America see creating a global footprint as an important part of their five-year plan. With increased global connectivity, about 26% of respondents see internationalization of institutions as a pathway to "stronger institutions." According to women leaders, new revenue sources for research funding should be complemented by increased staff training, professional growth, and more opportunities for students. Departmental and infrastructural improvement and increased funding for departments and students are both short-term and long-term goals for many respondents (5%). Redressing gender, class, racial imbalance and advancing community development are important part of

women's strategic vision for the leaders of North America, Africa, Europe and Asia (4%). Approximately 50% of respondents did not specify goals for the next five years.

A particularly notable element to emerge from the analysis is that in the view of North American women leaders was that in their view student enrollment should be only one part of the bigger project of global education. The curriculum needs to respond to an ever-changing world. Leaders based in North America and Australia emphasize the need for a new educational model, which successfully integrates more global partnerships and internationalization of the curriculum. This will simultaneously create a model for the global classroom and opportunities for international internships.

The theme of curriculum internationalization is also recurrent among European women leaders. In the words of Elsa from Sweden: "I hope that I will be able to help our University [to] become truly international, where the issue [for] internationalization is no longer number of students and the use of English literature in the classroom but where we "produce" truly international and open-minded students and staff that will function as world citizens with a strong sense of the value of human beings, respect and curiosity." Increased opportunities for both domestic and international students is a part of the internationalization of the university. There is a consensus that global education does not exclude the local, but rather aims at integrating the two, by way of incorporating local resources and work for the community.

Amina from Morocco underscored the importance of training new leaders who will "respect the culture of the institution, its mission and goals including those of equality between men and women recruited, flexibility in decision making, openness towards people and excellence in delivering programs and services." Our analysis reveals that respondents from Asia give importance to regional co-operation. Ruta from Asia focused on the "issue of environmental economics within Bangladesh, Malaysia and Japan." This focus on sustainability is equally important for Zilia from Peru. She hopes that her institution will be "a leading research center on sustainable development topics, such as climate change, food security and market accessibility. [In order] [t]o build lasting relationships with our participating communities and extend our scale and scope by teaming up with national and international actors."

Financial concerns, developing new sources for funding and managing the existing ones were among common denominators in strategic thinking among all respondents. The regional differences underscore the current financial climate for higher education across the globe. Many Asian governments offer strong support for higher education, and not surprisingly respondents from Asia

mentioned government support for internationalization efforts. Sunoko from Japan highlighted that "[their] university has been winning competitive governmental grants for institutional internationalization in the past 8 years, and [that] the university administration is very supportive about whatever I do because of my international connections." Irene from Ireland hopes to identify new sources of funding as she explained, "I hope to secure Federal Aid approval for students from the USA to come to my institution and to recruit larger numbers of international students into full programs as well as study abroad. I hope to greatly increase the numbers of our own students studying overseas also."

Many North American and European leaders are working towards revamping their organization's international strategies, too, though they do not necessarily identify a specific focus. Pauline, from France, pointed to the necessity of innovating programs and diversifying destinations more broadly. North American respondents articulated the necessity of streamlining different study abroad projects and creating an interface between academic programs and global aspirations of the university. Martha affirmed: "I would like to create systems for academic and financial oversight for our overseas campuses. I also am working toward having all exchange agreements under one department. Right now, they sit in different areas and that causes problems." Growing the international student population, starting a global studies program at the undergraduate and graduate level or appointing new administrative leadership at the deans' level, were important initiatives outlined in some of the forward-looking plans expressed by the North American women leaders.

Correcting historical gender imbalances and lack of diversity, closing gender gap by providing equal job opportunities, recruiting a more diversified female student body, and building networks for women are all important considerations for women in higher education. As one respondent from Nepal put it, "redressing historical gender imbalances and lack of diversity" is part of her five-year plan. Aiko from Japan wants to focus on "building a network with women who works for international education, international policy and so on." North-American leaders actively engage in increasing accessibility of international education for everyone. Kathy says, "Study abroad students in my area [are] predominantly white females. I hope to better market education abroad to everyone else." Thus, there are concerted efforts to diversify the profile of students participating in international programs.

To conclude, according to our respondents, internationalization and global footprint of any institution requires broad and yet concrete vision that would involve collaborative research, teaching, strengthening of administrative

processes and practices, and increased diversity of students, along with enhanced faculty exchanges and student mobility.

Action Items for Women Leaders in International Education

The authors of this paper convened a roundtable discussion on this topic at the 2016 Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) conference in Montreal and 2017 AIEA Conference Washington DC in order to share initial findings, receive feedback from women leaders in the field, and, most importantly, discuss ways to address the challenges that arose in the research. At the roundtable, approximately 75 women, representing closely the geographical diversity in the survey, discussed a number of major topics including gender bias and patriarchy; female representation in leadership roles, relationship building and sisterhood among women professionals, communications, listening, and other high emotional intelligence skills, family needs, and professional goals. Below are several findings from the roundtable followed by some concrete action steps for the community as a whole.

Roundtable Discussion Findings

- **Gender is nuanced**. The topic of gender bias, or the inclination towards prejudice against one gender, in this case against women, is much more complex and nuanced than simply male vs. female and includes myriad other factors including race, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, etc. Much further discussion on these intersections is needed to understand the impact on women working in international education.

- **Sisterhood can be empowering.** While sisterhood can be empowering, women must pay more attention to the hierarchy of power even among women colleagues, as sometimes women, too, assume that a female is in a more junior status. They can bolster sisterhood by addressing adverse circumstances for women working in their institutions and directly discussing bias issues. Women should look for connections outside their institution (mentors, coaches), make an intentional point to connect with other women, and recognize their titles and roles, even form a listserv for discussion and support.

- **A greater professionalization of the field is needed.** This will strengthen and grow the contributions women make, and to advance more women to leadership positions in international education that lead to higher positions within higher education institutions. Improve terminal degree attainment for

women at your institution and encourage women to pursue advanced degrees.

- **Women administrators should "cross the aisle" to collaborate with faculty**. This will combine forces to address gender bias in higher education settings.

- **Men should be a part of the conversation**. Significant improvements in attitudes, expectations, and opportunities for women leaders in international education, and in the universities and organizations they work in, can only be made with support and actions by male colleagues and allies who value the wide-reaching benefits that women make to the field.

Action Items

- **Encourage mentorship**: More mentoring of women in the field to guide them in the pursuit of leadership roles is needed, mentoring for women by women *and* by men.

- **Develop advocacy tools**: Advocacy will make women who are in leadership roles more visible, and highlight the valuable contributions women make in the field. Advocacy can help change institutional cultures that perpetuate gender bias, for example alleviate the penalties imposed on women with family obligations or challenges.

- **Leverage international education professional associations**: Connect with international organizations to encourage and create more opportunities for women's leadership programs.

- **Develop expert workshops and webinars**: Provide women leaders with the training, tools, and skills they need to combat gender bias in their work place and advocate for themselves regarding advancement and negotiating salary increases, for example. Create workshops that will bring men into the conversation.

TABLE 1

Distribution by Geographic Region

Country	Count	Percentage
North America	275	61
NR	88	20
Asia	37	8
Europe	26	6
Australia or Oceania	9	2
Latin America	8	2
Africa	6	1
Total	**449**	**100**

TABLE 2

Type of Position Held

Position held	Count	Percentages
Director, Head, Chair (Ladder[1])	258	57
No response	67	15
Vice President, Provost, Dean (Ladder)	65	14
Manager (Ladder)	43	10
President, Rector, or Vice Chancellor	7	2
Faculty (Ladder)	9	2
Total	**449**	**100**

[1] Ladder refers to various administrative positions that respondents hold. For the purposes of the table, it was necessary to establish certain categories. To give an example: Vice President, Provost, Dean (Ladder) includes respondents who occupy titles ranging from Vice Provost, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean etc.

TABLE 3

Motivation to Work in International Education

What motivated you to work in the field of international education?	Count	Percentages
No response	115	26
Personal experience (culture/travel/study abroad)	95	21
Developing human capacity (pathway to development of a country, teach/contribute to society)	70	16
Personal and professional development (salary, networking, knowledge sharing, collaboration)	36	8
Cultural exchange and understanding (interest in people of different cultures, multiculturalism)	33	7
Interest in international education (program development)	25	6
Serendipity (just went with the flow, not planned)	22	5
Teaching experience (background in the subject, ESL, experiential learning opportunities)	24	5
Passion for travel and education	19	4
Lifestyle choices (e.g., flexibility of working hours, opportunity to travel, learn about cultures)	6	1
Other (e.g., advancing country standing in international education)	4	1
Total	**449**	**100**

TABLE 4
Strategies as Effective Leaders within Institution

What are some of the strategies you employ as a woman to be an effective leader at your institution in building global connections?	Count	Percentages
No response	171	38
Team work, building bridges (establish collaborations, networking)	98	22
Good communication and project management skills	82	18
Putting in extra hours at work	33	7
Don't employ any strategies because of gender	23	5
To have inclusive work-ethic	17	4
Being an advocate for students	7	2
Address women's issues and support other women	10	2
Break gender stereotypes (not let gender define work)	8	2
Total	**449**	**100**

TABLE 5
Global Goals for the Next Five Years

Utilizing your global and local connections, what do you hope to accomplish for your institution in the next five years?	Count	Percentages
No response	225	50
Internationalizing and increasing global footprint (of the center, institute, university)	118	26
Increasing opportunities for students for intercultural learning	39	9
Strengthening the infrastructure (within the department and outside)	24	5
Redressing historical gender imbalances and lack of diversity	13	3
Self-learning and professional development	10	2
Retiring	7	2
Obtaining grants and funds	6	1
Advancing community development	2	1
Providing training and development	5	1
Total	**449**	**100**

The **Association of International Education Administrators** (AIEA), a membership organization formed in November 1982, is composed of institutional leaders engaged in advancing the international dimensions of higher education. The purposes of the Association are to:

- Provide an effective voice on significant issues within international education at all levels,

- Improve and promote international education programming and administration within institutions of higher education,

- Establish and maintain a professional network among international education institutional leaders,

- Cooperate in appropriate ways with other national and international groups having similar interests.