Gender Perspective and Actions in the Antarctic Scientific Expedition of the Chilean Antarctic Institute

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***Summary***

The actions implemented in the Antarctic Scientific Expedition organised by the Chilean Antarctic Institute are described in order to advance towards equality between men and women and offer safe spaces, free of violence and discrimination.

***Background***

Since 2019, the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) has been formally mainstreaming the gender perspective in its scope of action, through the establishment of commitments that have been incorporated into the regional gender and ministerial agendas, which seek to advance towards equality and reduce existing inequities, barriers and gaps, especially in the area of science and the world of work.

The first INACH Gender Agenda (2019-2022) focused on the collection of information, the analysis of the dynamics that exist in the scientific community, the incorporation of the gender approach in communications and the promotion of an organisational culture in based on equality between people and part of the results were previously reported in IP 43 of ATCM XLIII (2021).

As a result of this work, a high segmentation by sex was evidenced in the choice of careers and that less than a third of those who study STEM careers (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are women; the flight of female talent throughout their professional development; the low representation of women in leadership positions; that throughout life gender biases and stereotypes are assimilated and accumulated that can limit the development of people in their areas of interest and; that in the scientific career there is a higher prevalence of harassment towards women, increased questioning of their family or personal environment, and they are more frequently the object of sexist practices and comments.

Science, and Antarctic science, are not exempt from the reproduction of violent and sexist behaviours, which is why the INACH has implemented a series of measures that seek to ensure that the Antarctic Scientific Expedition (ASE) offer safe spaces, free of violence and discrimination through awareness and prevention actions that promote good treatment, to consolidate a culture of full respect for the dignity of people.

***Actions***

* Code of Conduct: document that seeks to report the expected behaviour of the people who participate in the Antarctic Scientific Expedition, emphasising dignified and respectful treatment and professional and ethical behaviour. It includes a special section to define abuse, workplace and sexual harassment, recommendations for their prevention and instructions on how to proceed if one is a victim or witness of inappropriate behaviour. In addition, the sanctions that may entail the commission of actions contrary to the code are made explicit.
* Procedure for the prevention and punishment of mistreatment, workplace and sexual harassment: Work was done on updating the procedure with the aim of incorporating all the activities organised or managed by the INACH (Chilean Antarctic Institute) within its scope and establishing that the headquarters of our Antarctic bases or other platforms can act as recipients of complaints.
* Personnel selection procedure for logistics activities: The selection procedure was updated by introducing a labour-psychological evaluation within the requirements to fill the positions. In addition, it was defined that the composition of the logistics personnel be equal.
* Clothing and personal protection elements: The number of extra-small and extra-large size garments, technical clothing for women, as well as anti-exposure suits in different sizes was increased in the inventory for the purpose that each person has access to the appropriate clothing to carry out their work and their labour-related dignity.
* Induction for ACE participants: Two modules were added to the compulsory face-to-face induction programme:
  + INACH for Good Treatment (40 minutes): The Code of Conduct is made known, recognising behaviours associated with good treatment and examples of how and when it is applied during the expedition; likewise, it specifies actions contrary to it, granting definitions of discrimination, abuse, workplace and sexual harassment.

Regarding the prevention of workplace bullying, guidelines for its prevention are provided based on the awareness that an attitude that does not cause discomfort to one person can be threatening to another, in the characteristics of consent and the guideline to ask and respect. Exercises are carried out based on stories that help recognise inappropriate attitudes and, together, more appropriate solutions are sought to face situations related to sexual affectivity. Finally, it is invited to reflect by showing a short list of situations that participants from previous expeditions have reported as uncomfortable, unsafe or threatening and they are invited to avoid these behaviours and to channel reports with the base headquarters when they occur, to carry out the corrective actions that are necessary to restore the spaces of coexistence.

* + Procedure for the prevention of abuse, workplace and sexual harassment (25 minutes): It explains what the procedure for reporting and investigating consists of, the reception channels available, the reporting forms and where to find them, the prevention measures to be expected in case of events of this nature, and the penalties that may be applied.

***Preliminary results***

During the Antarctic Scientific Expedition 2022-2023 (ASE-59) 45% of the persons who formed the teams for logistics activities were women and the scope of the mandatory induction was 200 people, including logistics personnel, investigators, the media and guests, who declared that they knew and accepted the code of conduct.

With these actions, the INACH has made explicit the expected behaviour of those who participate in the ASE and its institutional response; this has allowed people to use the available communication channels more frequently in the face of inappropriate behaviour, and the reaction to complaints of workplace, and the spaces for coexistence have been re-established in a more optimal way.

***Conclusions***

Implementing actions to promote gender equality and offering safe spaces, free of violence and discrimination, should be elementary considerations when planning and developing our activities, particularly those in Antarctica.

The generation of these processes makes it possible to obtain systematised information, useful for decision-making and to improve prevention and response, making our tools to deal with inappropriate behaviour more robust.

We encourage all Parties to implement actions in these matters and to share their experiences and results.