

# Stewardship Report 2025

## **Dianne Bevelander Fund**



# Introduction

**Professor Dianne Bevelander was a powerful force for positive change at Rotterdam School of Management and throughout the world.**

In 2014, Dianne founded the Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations (ECWO) to empower women and advance gender equality and diversity and many of her former students and colleagues are proud to carry on her work.

Sadly, Dianne passed away in 2021, leaving a legacy that continues to transform lives, especially among people who took programmes at ECWO and her MBA students.

The Memorial Fund, established with seed funding from the Bevelander Family and gifts from individuals who share her passion for gender equality, is already supporting women in academia and business.

Thank you for having played a role in this. And, if you are new to the work of the Dianne Bevelander Fund, can you join us in making a difference through a donation?

Dianne Bevelander was famous for her passion for improving gender equality and diversity



*"Together we can change things because of the way we connect, communicate, collaborate and lead.*

*I firmly believe that groups of people coalescing around an injustice drive the big changes in society.*

*As the suffragists opened the ballot box, women together will open the boardroom."*



Prof. Hanneke Takkenberg,  ECWO Executive Director

*"She taught me that women can lead from wherever they are. Whether you are very young or at the top of an organisation, you can lead through your own strength. And she taught me that women should not only be assertive for themselves but also for each other. **Sisterhood.**"*

*"Professor Bevelander's legacy continues to inspire and drive **meaningful change**. Through ECWO, we remain committed to fostering gender equality, empowering women, and creating inclusive leadership. By supporting the Memorial Fund, you can help the next generation of leaders access the opportunities, resources, and networks they need to succeed. Together, we can build a more equitable and inclusive future for all."*



 Aukje Hassoldt, Dean of RSM



# Dianne Bevelander's legacy

**Over three decades at RSM, Professor Dianne Bevelander put gender balance, equality and diversity firmly at the top of the agenda – not just in Rotterdam but across the international business and academic community.**

Growing up in apartheid South Africa, Dianne worked in administration at a college for black students and was deeply impressed by their commitment to succeed, despite often insurmountable hurdles.

In the Netherlands, her academic research into how male and female students developed networks of trust prompted her to explore gender bias within institutions. Dianne's achievement was to create a centre at RSM for teaching, research and advocacy, building a level playing field for women through pioneering communities for change within organisations.

ECWO was part of EQUAL4EUROPE, an EU-funded consortium project. It had a broad remit ranging from directly working with organisations on company-specific programmes and research to supporting individuals through coaching them to develop tools for personal and professional growth. EQUAL4EUROPE's final conference took place in November 2023.

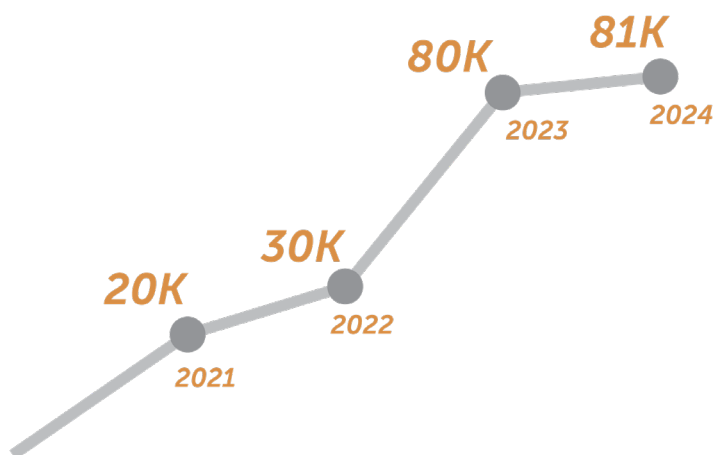
Today ECWO embraces a wider vision of a world of inclusive prosperity by focusing on fostering a sense of belonging and safety for everyone through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), while never losing sight of its original mission to empower women and create communities of change within organisations.





# Donations

The Dianne Bevelander Memorial Fund provides an opportunity for the community that Dianne created – and which continues to thrive and grow – to play an role in continuing the legacy of this extraordinary woman, to ensure that women truly lead from wherever they are.



Over the past four years, many donations have been made to the Bevelander Fund. In 2024, a cumulative total of about 81.000 EUR was gathered.

We are sincerely thankful for the generous donations made to the Dianne Bevelander Memorial Fund. They represent not only a tribute to Dianne's extraordinary legacy but also a shared commitment to continuing her mission of advancing women in leadership. Each contribution helps turn her vision into lasting impact and society.

Support from donors enables the fund to reach more women across geographies and sectors, helping them to develop the skills and courage to lead authentically. This is a key part of Dianne's legacy – equipping women to lead from wherever they are, and to do so on their own terms.

Sustained contributions are essential to keeping this momentum alive. They ensure that the fund remains a dynamic platform for change, grounded in Dianne's belief that inclusive leadership is not just beneficial, but necessary for a better, more equal world.



ECWO Conference 2023:  
Creating inclusive  
organisations

# Initiatives making an impact

**The Dianne Bevelander Prize recognises people who are already progressing gender equality at work and supports them to amplify it further within society.**

## *Dianne Bevelander Grants*

Through the Dianne Bevelander Travel Grant Scheme, female students, applicants, researchers, and academics can be supported to attend events or conferences that further the cause of gender equality in society.

ECWO's Executive Director and a Bevelander family representative assess the commitment of applicants to the advancement and inclusion of women in society, the potential impact of their attendance and financial need.

After the event, successful recipients submit a brief report that is used to profile the impact of the travel grants. In the years that it takes place, they will be invited to ECWO's annual conference and may be asked to give a talk about their experience.

Since its inception late 2024, the grant scheme has already awarded six grants including contributing towards a Kenyan academic presenting a paper at a conference in South Africa on financial inclusion and women empowerment, and a Dutch PhD candidate attending the Summer School programme "The Art of Scientific Writing" at the University of Ghana.



ECWO Conference 2024:  
Pathways to inclusion



## Meet the first prize recipients



**Geke Rosier** (2022) Founder of RightBrains, bridging the gender gap in tech. She met Dianne on a Women in Leadership Open Masterclass at RSM.

*"In 2015, we launched the RightBrains Digital Leadership Programme, designed to educate managers about the latest technologies and their impact on strategy, business models, marketing, organisations and leadership. When it got underway, I felt very proud and more than 120 talented women have taken the programme. Leaders need to invest in their future digital talent pool."*



**Karen de Sousa Pesse** (2023) Senior Executive at Salesforce, an activist for change, currently engaged with AI bias and gender perspectives in tech. She grew up in Brazil and is now based in Brussels.

*"People are so often unaware of the system that they live in and how inequality affects people within it differently. I tell them it's like air – you don't see it but it exists and once you know that fact, you cannot not be aware of it."*



**Georgina Lara Booth** (2024) While a Master of Laws student, she established two award-winning start-ups. Femalid promotes gender equality in healthcare through equitable medical design; CaseCanvas uses AI storytelling to empower female victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

*"Although women have made significant progress, society still has a long way to go to achieve systemic change globally. It means the world to me to receive a platform through this prize to bring attention to my efforts to drive systemic change for women."*

## The next Dianne Bevelander Prize will go to...

2025 will see the selection of the fourth winner of the Dianne Bevelander Prize, who will be announced in the last quarter of the year.

The prize will be awarded to another individual who has furthered gender equality within

their organisation.

A big part of Dianne's mission was helping women already working in organisations to "lead from wherever you are".

The award will be chosen by a jury that includes Professor

Hanneke Takkenberg, ECWO Executive Director, Bevelander family representative Dr Natalie Cleton, Professor Nicola Kleyn, former Dean of Executive Education at RSM, and Prof. Angela Maas, Emeritus professor of cardiology for women at Radboudumc.



# The ECWO Community

**Reflecting on ECWO's first decade – and looking to the future. In 2024, ECWO celebrated its first ten years. Over that time, it delivered nearly 25 in-company programmes and nearly 900 people took part in the Centre's signature three Open Programmes.**

To mark this milestone, more than 100 professionals gathered onboard SS Rotterdam in November for a day of inspirational talks and presentations.

Keynote speakers included adventurer and storyteller Laura Killingbeck, researcher of medical ethics Dr Hafez Ismaili M'hamdi, and Professor Angela Maas, who is a pioneer for including women in healthcare research.

The conference also featured breakout sessions on topics surrounding workplace inclusion and healthcare, all exploring real-life experiences and practical solutions. It concluded with ECWO's Dorothy Grandia declaring: "We don't want to end these discussions today, we want to begin them..."



**Isabellita Lie Fong**

Manager Billing and Collection at Lease Plan

*"It's not about being right, but about doing the right thing. This workshop is not only about empowering women but inspiring, energising and really executing the things we have to do to maximise our potential as women."*



**Aggie Cooper**

Group Leader, PDU at Aramco Europe

*"My journey with RSM's Women in Leadership programme was second to none. It provided unparalleled insights into women's career progression and challenges. Key learnings emphasised inclusivity, mutual support and advocacy."*



▲  
Meet the members  
of the ECWO Community

◀ Prof. Bevelander guided  
ECWO to its current  
position as a leader and  
innovator in its field

# *Did you know? Gender inequality and gender bias in the 21st century*

**According to the World Economic Forum (2015), women perform 66% of the world's work and produce 50% of its food, yet they earn only 10% of the income and own only 1% of the world's property.**

Are women really bad musicians? Before the 1970s, fewer than 5% of players in the top five US orchestras were

female. Yet, once a screen was put between the performer and the decision-makers in the audition, the likelihood that a woman would progress further increased by 50%. (Gladwell 2005, referencing Goldin and Rouse 2000).

Do women feel chilly in the office more often than men? The thermal model that informs the temperature setting for

many buildings is based on the metabolic rate of a 70kg, 40-year-old man. Females tend to have a lower metabolic rate, which can make you more sensitive to the cold.

In an interview shortly before her death, Professor Bevelander described her professional journey as a "privilege and an absolute blast". ▼

