



# Newsletter

ISSUE 4 // October 2013

This is the fourth issue of the Genis Lab newsletter, a web-tool aimed to inform people involved in the project and partner institutions on project activities and on how and what Europe is currently carrying out in the promotion of gender equality in science.

Genis Lab stands for GENDER IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LAB: a EU funded project, financed by the 7th Framework Programme. The aim of GENIS LAB is to create new working conditions in six European scientific organizations by using innovative methodologies of gender mainstreaming.

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[www.genislab-fp7.eu/](http://www.genislab-fp7.eu/)



PARTNERS





## Double Interview. Voices from Genis Lab.

For this issue of our newsletter, we have interviewed Paul Carlsson and Linda Paxling, respectively a lecturer and a Ph.D. student in the School of Planning and Media Design at Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden.

### PAUL

#### 1. What do you enjoy the most about working in the scientific research field?

To be driven by curiosity and that there often is more than one answer to complicated questions, depending on who is asking.

#### 2. Do you think that being a man/woman has had any impact on your career?

Yes. I think that it's probably been easier for me in some ways since we work in a male dominated technical institute.

#### 3. Your organization experienced the gender audit, how was it for you? What are your expectations about it?

It will be interesting to see what comes out of it. I hope that it can give us even more reasons to keep working with the questions of equality.

### LINDA

The learning process. Since beginning my PhD studies I've become more and more interested in knowledge production, how we produce and share knowledge, and how intertwined academia is, or at least should be, with society. With learning comes the process of creative problem-solving for how people and technological objects together can change and improve livelihoods.

I believe so. I think, for instance, that my choices of research subject (mobile technologies for development) and research field (Feminist Technoscience) were influenced by me being a woman, or a deviant from the norm. I also believe that the male dominance among leading positions in the University structure affects my career path.

I left my previous workplace for my current one partly because of discontentment with how women were treated. I feel fortunate to belong to a workplace that is very gender-conscious and where gender is not a discussion element only in research activities but also at the workplace.

It was a good experience. I thought the mixed methods approach of interviews and survey were a good way of gathering information on how gender is experienced within the organization. I still remember one aspect of the report quite vividly and that is how several of the participants in the audit were tired of talking about gender equality. The perception of at least one participant was that Sweden is equal and that we don't need to work on gender equality anymore.



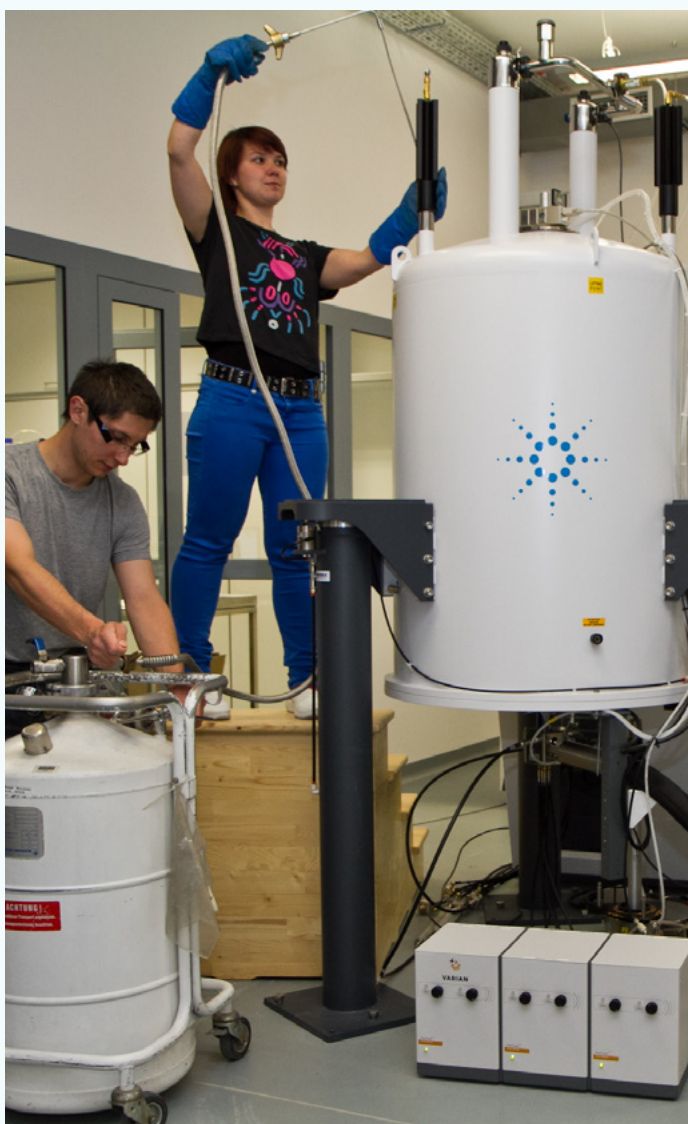
## Partners: National Institute of Chemistry Slovenia

The National Institute of Chemistry Slovenia (NIC) is an internationally recognised public research organisation in the field of pure and applied chemistry and is the leading research institution in the area of chemistry in Slovenia. It was established in 1946 as the Chemical laboratory of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts with the purpose of developing technologies required for processing coal into coke, which was urgently needed in industry after the Second World War. In 1992 it was transformed into a public non-profit organization.

Primary activities of the Institute are basic and applied research, training and education of students as well as activities connected to the industry. Research is focused on five main areas: Structural and Theoretical Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry and Ecology, Organic and Inorganic Materials, Biotechnology, and Chemical Engineering. A considerable share of funds for applied research and development work is obtained through joint projects with the Slovenian Research Agency, industry and European projects in the 7th Framework Programme.

NIC offers high-level research equipment, allowing researchers to engage in research challenges at global level. The latest acquisition of NIC is the Pregl Research Centre, which opened in June 2013 and is exceptionally valuable for fostering scientific excellence in Slovenia. It offers modern laboratories and top-level research equipment, including the transmission electron microscope with chemical analysis, which is unique in this part of Europe.

Research and development activities at NIC are organised within 13 laboratories and 2 infrastructure centres with 278 employees (145 women, 133 men), of which 181 are researchers and 130 of those have PhD degrees (52 women, 78 men). NIC is actively engaged in education of young researchers, with numerous BSc, MSc and PhD theses carried out. Currently 52 graduate students (23 women, 29 men) are being trained at the Institute within the national Young Researchers Programme for the acquisition of their PhD degrees. These data are encouraging and relevant in relation with the aim of Genis Lab project, since women are considerably well represented at NIC.



NMR spectrometer - Photo by Damjan Makuc

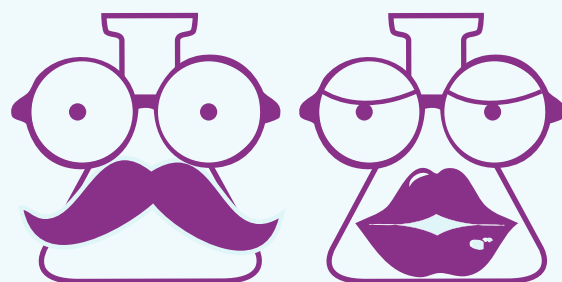


Pregl Research Centre - Photo by Damjan Makuc



Tools: photocontest

## GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE LAB:



## SUBVERT, SMASH, RIDICULE



Next month, Genis Lab is launching its first ever photo contest, titled "Gender stereotypes in the Lab: subvert, smash, ridicule". The aim of the contest is simple: we want to challenge gender stereotypes by making fun of them, using satire, irony, dress-up and caricatures. To participate, all you need to do is take a photo of yourself or your friends in an attire that parodies, ridicules or exaggerates existing stereotypes related to male and female scientists: you can dress up in a lab coat, wear an Einstein wig or a fake moustache. Then, add the Instagram tag #genislab and post the photo to our Facebook page. The winners will be picked by the Genis Lab jury and prizes will be awarded – follow us on our website and our social media pages to see the full regulation.





## Numbers: 15

15 is the number of female winners of the Nobel Prize in scientific fields: Physics, Chemistry and Physiology or Medicine. This prestigious award is widely considered one of the greatest recognitions for scientific achievement, and while women's contributions to science have historically been overlooked, a number of high achieving female scientists has been acknowledged for their outstanding work.

The first woman to ever receive a Nobel prize was Marie Curie in 1903 in the field of Physics, and she was also the only female Laureate to be awarded a second Prize, again in 1911 in Chemistry. In addition to Madame Curie, only one other woman has received the Prize in Physics and three more in Chemistry, whilst the Prize in Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to ten women. To make a comparison, male Laureates are 193 in Physics, 161 in Chemistry and 197 in Physiology or Medicine.

As the gap between women and men working in scientific research narrowed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women's contributions began to be more widely recognized, as nine of the 15 Nobel Prizes for science were awarded after 1980.

However, in comparison with the increase of women in the scientific profession, the number of women Nobel Prize winners today remains proportionately small. Evidence shows that female scientists are seldom nominated for the Prize due to reluctance from both women and men to put women's names forward, prejudice that results in women being held up to a higher standard than men for their achievements to be considered, lower visibility of female scientists and other forms of discrimination.

## FOCUS: Françoise Barré-Sinoussi

Dr. Françoise Barré-Sinoussi is a French virologist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2008, together with Luc Montagnier, for their discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Dr. Barré-Sinoussi was born in Paris in 1947 and joined the Pasteur Institute as a researcher in immunochemistry in the 1970s. She worked at the National Institutes of Health in the US, an experience which helped foster her belief in the importance of networking for scientific research. When she returned to the Pasteur Institute, she was part of the team led by Professor Luc Montagnier which was responsible for the discovery of HIV, published in the journal *Science* in 1983. Their fundamental work was recognized with the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2008 awarded to Barré-Sinoussi and Montagnier.

Dr. Barré-Sinoussi became the head of the Regulation of Retroviral Infections Unit at the Pasteur Institute in 1992. She has worked extensively with developing countries in Africa and Asia to promote scientific cooperation in the fight against AIDS. Since 2012, she is the President of the International AIDS Society, a leading association of HIV professionals.



### SOURCES

<http://www.significancemagazine.org/details/webexclusive/886603/The-Nobel-Prize-gender-gap.html>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/18/women-nobel-prize-winners-science-award\\_n\\_3541686.html?utm\\_hp\\_ref=stem](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/18/women-nobel-prize-winners-science-award_n_3541686.html?utm_hp_ref=stem)

<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/12/162813929/is-the-nobel-prize-a-boys-mostly-club>



## Networking

A brainstorming meeting on strengthening gender equality in the classroom was held on 18<sup>th</sup> October at the European Commission in Brussels. At the meeting, organized by the Directorate General for Research and Innovation, Genis Lab was represented by Barbara De Micheli of Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini, who gave a presentation on gender stereotypes and illustrated the aims and activities of Genis Lab.



## News from Genis Lab

The Genis Lab third transnational conference will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at the National Institute of Chemistry. The conference represents an opportunity for partners to receive updates on project activities, discuss Tailored Action Plans implementation and participate in a "Focus on Excellence" training. The new Genis Lab photo contest will also be presented at the event.



## Challenging gender stereotypes in science starts at a young age!

A step forward was made last month with the release of Professor C. Bodin, Lego's first female minifigure scientist. The Scientist is described as a brilliant and tireless researcher, who even won the "coveted Nobrick Prize for her discovery of the theoretical System/DUPLO® Interface". The new minifigure scientist has been welcomed as a positive change in children's toys, which all too often tend to reinforce gender stereotypes. Lego's latest addition to the minifigure series is particularly refreshing as it offers a positive portrayal of women in the STEM field.





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## Genis Lab goes social



Genis Lab is now on Facebook and LinkedIn!

Join the discussion, be a part of our network and receive updates on our activities by following us on:

**f** <https://www.facebook.com/GenisLab>

**in** <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Genis-Lab-5171652>



For further information please check out our website:

[www.genislab-fp7.eu](http://www.genislab-fp7.eu)

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