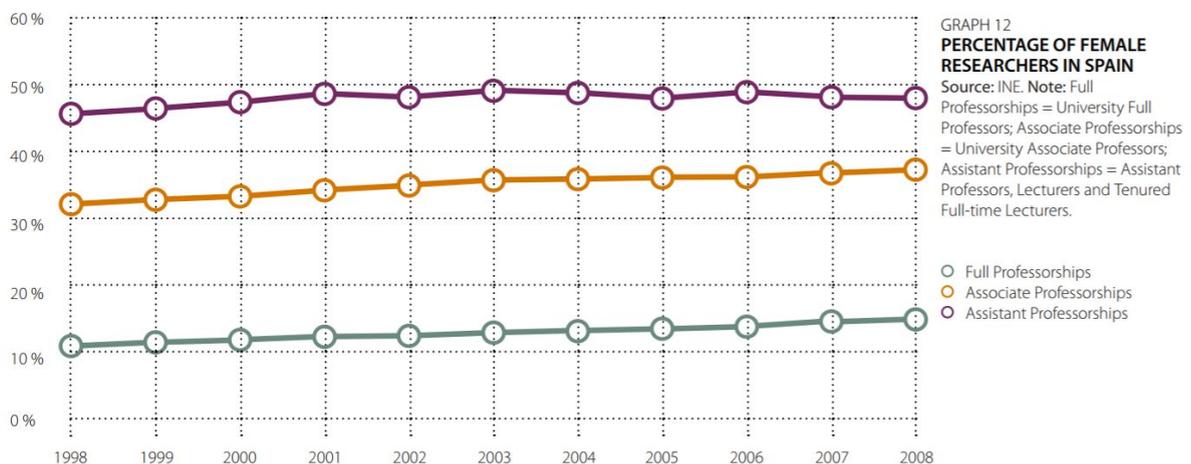


Title: *The Leaky Pipeline Gets a Tune-Up*

Catch phrase for twitter: There is a change a'coming; and hope for this world of #GenderInequality ! In this blog, we share some #inspirations across the nations: examples of initiatives that are changing the world for #womeninSTEM

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Gender inequality in science generates wasted opportunities in knowledge, technology and innovation. More than the 70% of full professors worldwide are male, despite female scientists holding the majority of graduate positions, a phenomenon known as *The Leaky Pipeline*. The [graph](#) below highlights the situation of different professorship hierarchies in Spain displaying an almost constant 35% dropout rate of women from assistant to full professorships.



These numbers are echoed around the globe; for example in the Arab world (specifically Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) two thirds of university science students are women; but only 39.9% continue to the workforce and even fewer towards upper echelon positions. But it's **not all doom and gloom**.

"Highlighting success stories will encourage qualified Arab women to pursue careers in science" says [Lihadh Al-Gazali](#), a clinical geneticist at the United Arab Emirates University.

Lihadh, **we fully agree**; what follows is our selection of encouraging and inspirational initiatives from around the world. There is change a'coming!

Global Cooperatives and Governmental policies

Programs are reaching out for international comrades in their quest for equality in the sciences. The [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) in Canada has pledged millions of dollars to provide quality maternal health care, enhance economic opportunities and promote mobile banking to women in low income Latin American communities. The US

State Department funds a similar program called [TechWomen](#), which connects women professionals in STEM in the US with the “next generation of women leaders in STEM” in Africa, Central / South Asia and the Middle East.

Global sustainable development goals of the United Nations include a commitment to gender equality. North American and EU organizations are developing programmes to prevent bias in institutional practises for women in STEM. “Interim Evaluation: Gender equality as a crosscutting issue in Horizon 2020”, is a comprehensive [report](#) that aims to identify possible improvements in the implementation of gender equality in the EU.

Not only that, the recent [developments in Iceland](#) show we are heading in the right direction; as of 1. January 2018 it is the first country to **prohibit unequal salaries** between men and women.

Funding

Cooperations between political, institutional and industrial bodies are supporting women pursuing leading positions in STEM careers through financial assistance. Between 2005 and 2017 the German state launched several [initiatives](#) including the **Programme for Women Professors**, the **National Pact for Women in STEM Careers**, the **Performance-related allocation of funds** or general **research funding** by the [German Research Foundation](#) creating new professorships, commencing **Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality** and giving financial support for women at all qualification levels; resulting in an [increase of female professors](#) from 14,3% to 22,7%.

Similar [funding opportunities](#) are observable all over the globe providing awards, grant money and fellowships animating women to apply to higher positions such as the [UNESCO-L'Oréal Grants for Young Women Scientists](#).

Public Representation

The cause of female attrition in the scientific workplace includes lack of role models and mentors, something closely linked to **female underrepresentation in academic symposia** both as speakers and conveners.

Several initiatives have sought to remedy this discrepancy by suggesting quotas for events, campaigning, providing childcare (ameliorate the balancing act between academic and family life) or suggesting **commitment to [boycotting conferences](#) that refuse to adjust the gender imbalance** of their panels.

Additionally, organisations such as the Australian '[Male Champions of Change](#)' strive to host a platform for open support of women in STEM as well as providing practical actions to take. With men occupying most higher research positions, it is **imperative they become advocates for gender equality**, but not always clear the manner in which to do so.

Organizations on the other end of this pendulum swing include [The Scientista Foundation](#), developed by two sisters at Harvard working in biological research. They connect established all-female chapters across college campuses and affiliates in a common

database in order to **share resources from female scientists, to female scientists** -- notably hosting an annual Intercollegiate Research Symposium.

Outlook

Here is a small snapshot of the global good for women in STEM, but we have a ways to go... equal representation in the sciences is paramount as we all have an equal stake in the sciences. Our differences endow us with strengths, while our similarities provide us with a common goal -- furthering global knowledge, and improving livelihood of patients.

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