

WOMEN IN STEM FORUM

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

PRESENTED BY

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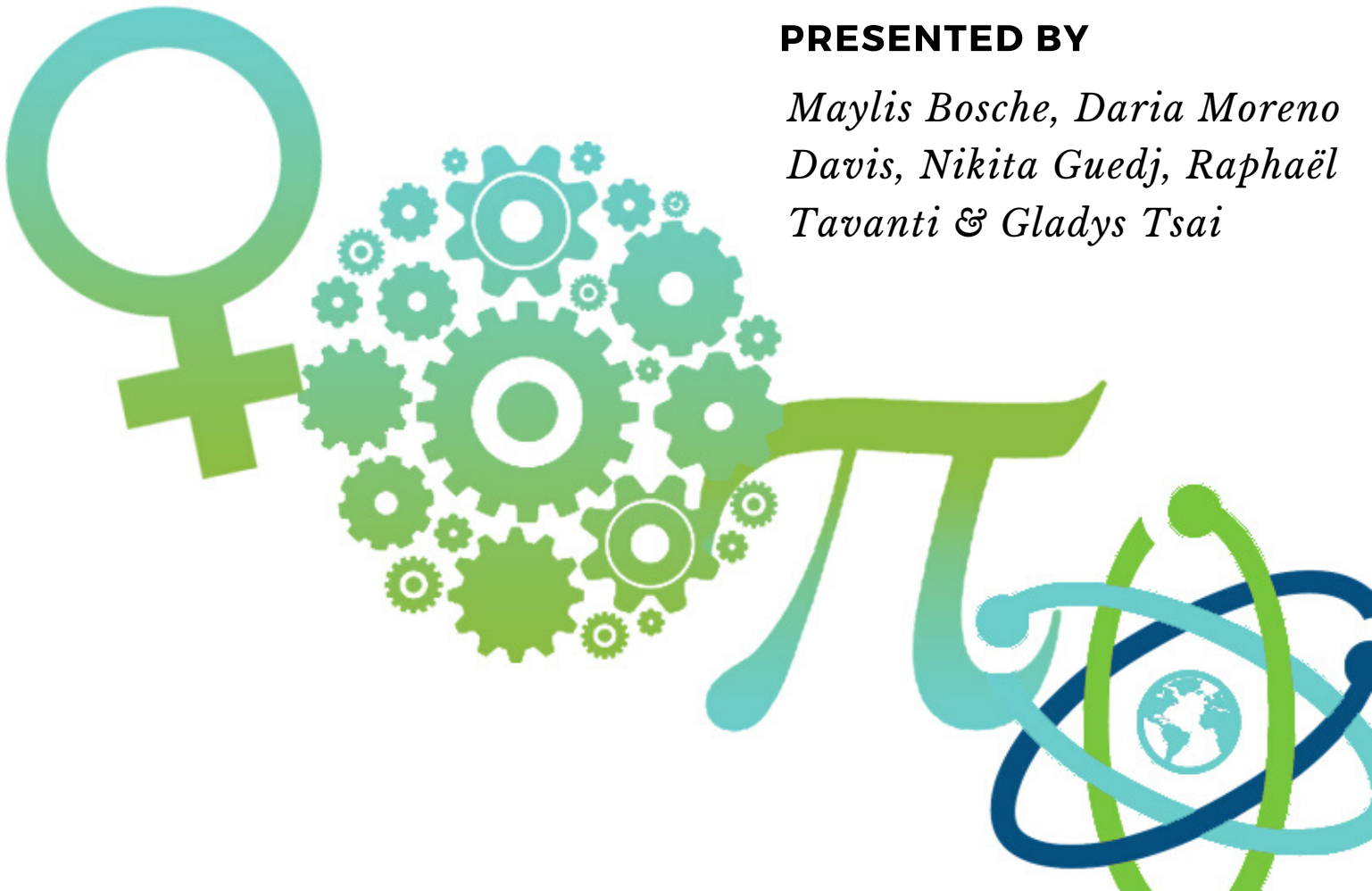


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INTRODUCTION

At a time where the fourth SDG goal is entitled “gender equality”, less than 30% of scientific researchers are women. UNESCO data shows that only 30% of female students choose fields related to STEM (sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics). According to PISA 2015 results, 4.8% of boys and 0.4% of girls expect an ICT career. In on-screen STEM careers roles, men outpace women 7 to 1. All of these statistics point to a structural problem we would like to tackle: women’s information and access asymmetry in STEM jobs, emanating from certain mentalities and sociocultural stereotypes (i.e. representations) about what women are destined to do or not to do. Which little girl has not heard in primary school: “boys are good in math, girls in literature”? For a long time indeed, gender prejudices and stereotypes have been driving girls and women away from this highly rewarding field. Our initiative does not pretend to eradicate the problems that women face, nor even women in STEM, but will hopefully serve as a meaningful step towards achieving greater representation, and hence greater workplace equality. We propose to organize a quarterly Forum in partnership with the UNESCO, taking place in different cities in France where we would invite various women speakers who would talk about their jobs, hence getting recognition and inciting young women in these careers. If the concept proves successful, it would be extended to further European cities and, in the long run, globally.

OUR CONCEPT

Our goal is to create a nationwide event in France that would promote scientific careers to young women from every part of the country. It would be extended throughout Europe and globally if it proves to be successful. As we have already argued, gender inequalities are everywhere in the STEM fields. Science being often considered as embodying “progress” in all of its forms, this comes as an even bigger issue. Our aim is to invent and develop several episodes (forums) that would tackle the gender issue in STEM by following the UNESCO’s 3 pillars :

- 1. Networking**
- 2. Mentoring**
- 3. Role Models**

WiSTEM stands for “Women in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics”. Our project aims at creating a multi-day Forum, during which young women, ranging from young pupils to newly-hired professionals, would meet scientific actors that could help them discover scientific jobs or academics. With WiSTEM, we expect to generate a positive influence upon Science in general, by sensibilizing both public and private actors to the issue of representation of women in science. The main advantage of a Forum relies in the fact that it generates a lot of visibility, all across the country, but also, if the development is handled well enough, across the globe.

Furthermore, a Forum allows us to concentrate in one place all of the 3 pillars set by the UNESCO. Networking would be achieved by the presence of stands, scenes and spaces dedicated to one actor in particular. One could be dedicated to CNRS, one other to the CNES, one to the Education Minister. Each stand could then provide personalized mentoring, through professionals, advisors, animators. The Role Models aspect would be achieved thanks to the intervention of well-known scientific figures, that would, through their exceptional interventions, share their experiences, and inspire hundreds of women attending our events to pursue their science dreams.

In order to gain legitimacy and visibility, we would like medias to cover our events. The more visibility, the more young women will attend our event, the more our goal is met.

Another major aspect of our project is the location. We want this event not happen once, but to be a “moving experience”, somehow close to what a concert tour would look like. Our target is to host 4 events a year, in different part of France. We do not want WiSTEM to be an experience offered only to Parisians, but to everyone, no matter how far they live. Four different locations would allow us to reach out to more people, and allow WiSTEM to be printed in the minds of everyone. Another advantage and main aspect of WiSTEM that comes with locations would be the existence of “themes”. We believe each region has a specificity that proves to be a major scientific field and could then constitute a way to “differentiate” each Forum, make them unique, while still displaying our main message.

We would start our Forums in these four locations in France:

1. **Paris:** as the capital, Paris appears to be unavoidable. Major scientific organizations and actors are set in Paris, as well as facilities. Our launch will likely be held here. One theme could be the urban transformation.
2. **Toulouse:** Toulouse is known for concentrating all the aerospace industries, which constitutes a major field of science, an inspiring one but also one when women lack the most.
3. **Côte d’Azur:** somewhere along Marseille, this Forum could focus on maritime and natural reserves, and the necessity of sustainable development. By laying the emphasis on biology, this Forum could prove to be an ecological manifesto, amid youth movements that promote planet protection.
4. **Cayenne:** by hosting one of our event in Guyane, we make sure that every population is taken into account, including the ones living far away from the metropole. Plus, Guyane’s interest is twofold. It has the Ariane Launch Base used by CNES and ASE, and it’s a natural environment, one the richest reserves in the world. By having again a focus on ecology, we could have global repercussions, while the Amazon across the border is still burning.

POSITIVE IMPACTS & RISKS

Through holding Forums for women, we hope to generate both direct and indirect impacts which raise awareness on women’s disproportional representativeness in the scientific domains and will eventually bring a gender balance to improve the status quo. Firstly, this Forum aims to create a face-to-face occasion for women who would like to talk to people with certain scientific achievements. Unlike female-oriented social network or websites, our event emphasizes human contact to establish a physical relation that facilitates an exchange of ideas and stimulates more sensations resulting from successful people’s stories. Secondly, the decision to have Forums in different cities in France allows to raise national awareness on this issue, attracting attention not only from the capital but also from other regions where female scientists are not usually present. Also, the presence of female scientists in the Forum shows the attendants that women do exist and can have remarkable academic achievements in this domain, which will inspire and encourage them to pursue their dreams.

Furthermore, the indirect consequences brought by the Forum are not negligible. To begin with, new jobs will be created thanks to the need of extra helping hands for cleaning, reception, stand installation and so on. Suppliers are also necessary to ensure the smooth proceedings of the Forum.

Besides, inspirations drew from the speeches can sow small seeds into our attendees' mind, giving them a desire to develop a professional career in science and thus creating a dynamism within the field by prompting dialogues and interactions between different genders. Moreover, these Forum events contribute to local tourism development as well. As people come to each regional Forum, they will stay in the city for a couple days, resulting in an increase on accommodation and hotel demands, providing a boost to local commerce, restaurants and expenses for souvenirs or local trips. In addition, a focus on science will be built throughout the Forum since it is the center topic of the whole events. We hope to make it more visible and capture more attention on the latest scientific developments.

Nevertheless, the project also faces some risks. First of all, inviting ideal speakers to fit the schedule of the Forum is a big challenge. As this is a very new program, we have not yet accumulated enough reputation to attract well-known speakers who tend to appeal to a large number of participants. Next, a rather central issue is the funding, which will have to be properly provided and managed. As a matter of fact, high costs will not only arise during the Forum but important amounts of fixed costs for the location, for example, will need to be paid beforehand. In the same way, marketing is crucial to make the event a success and therefore we will need substantial investment a few months before it takes place. To avoid the risk of accumulating and exponentially growing costs, the development of the business plan needs to be as accurate and rigorous as possible. Offers from potential locations, marketing partners and so on will be gathered to assess, in a precise manner, the total costs. At the same time cooperation with funds (from international actors such as the UNESCO) and governments (national or local) will be a great financial support.

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The WiSTEM Forum seeks to provide a space for discovery and exchange, for personal development and empowerment. Our target is to reach women and young girls in key moments of their life to ensure that we achieve our goal to inform, offer the means and tools necessary and accompany women on their paths in STEM related careers.

The Forum explores to approach women in crucial moments of their lives. In order to ensure tangible results, we seek to offer our guidance in three key moments:

1. During childhood - **"Discover a new world"**: This first phase intends to offer information to young girls and help them discover the possibilities of a future in STEM, nourishing at the same time a potentially latent interest already present in some of them.
2. During high-school - **"Build your path"**: This second phase seeks to accompany girls who are interested in continuing their studies in the STEM fields but lack the means or the guidance to elaborate an academic path to reach that goal.
3. During college education - **"Achieve your goals"**: This final phase intends to help women transition into professional life, whereas this means to continue further studies into academia and research or to integrate an industry, company, non-profit organization or even to explore entrepreneurship and activism.

In order to host an event like this it is important to establish a pertinent management strategy. The team will be divided into Task Units to ensure a correct consolidation of the project on each step of the way; a Coordinator will manage each T.U. All the Coordinators will meet on a weekly basis on a General Management Board that is tasked to safeguard the values, goals and the correct development of the event

The different TUs will be:

1. **Content Coordination.** This TU is tasked to elaborate the contents of the event: Choose and invite the speakers. Determine the different activities to be held during the Forum (Conferences, Debate Panels, Workshops etc). Adapt each event to the region where it is being held. Be updated on pertinent topics related to STEM.
2. **Partnerships and sponsors.** This TU is tasked to seek, strengthen and operate our relationships with governmental, private and public partners and sponsors to ensure their participation during the event as well as their different forms of collaboration with us. This unit will closely work with the Funding and Financial Management one.
3. **Funding and Financial Management.** This TU must pursue, develop and manage our funding and financial stability. From donations, to public funding and grants and even the leasing of the stands during the event. This unit will work closely with the Partnerships and sponsors one
4. **Communications and Brand Image.** This TU is in charge of the media strategy. External communication is key to ensure the success of the event. This TU will manage every media channel, get in touch with potential influencers to promote our event and engage in an open dialogue with the digital community to motivate them to join us on our project. This unit must determine the deployment of the different stages of marketing and communication. Closely before the event, this unit must coordinate press interviews and media presence. Furthermore, to keep in touch with our visitors and all those who have closely followed our project, this TU will have a customer relations service and deliver a newsletter to establish WiSTEM interest in the long run and create loyalty.
5. **Event Management and Logistics.** Before the event this TU will select a venue adapted to each region and track down the necessary suppliers for the correct unfolding of the event. It must prepare all the fundamental logistics and coordination needed for the different activities and stands, as well as the coffee and snack areas in the Forum. During the event, this TU will have team members on the field to coordinate security, technical needs, logistics, staff and audience management (hosts, guides, guest control). This unit will work closely with the Content coordination one.

MEDIA STRATEGY

As it's been stated before, the WiSTEM Forum is a new project, therefore establishing our position in an already Forum-filled context is of essence. We are well aware that in terms of Forum type events, the offer is quite diverse, nonetheless, the particular nature of the WiSTEM will allow us to differentiate ourselves and therefore, to create interest amidst the public. Thus, an effective media strategy is essential to secure the building of our reputation and to connect with our desired audience. Hence, the creation of legitimacy and visibility are the main goals to keep in mind. The nature of our project offers a wide range of possibilities in regards to media coverage, thus we have determined our targeted audience and therefore, consolidated a message according to it. To ensure that our message reaches our desired audience we choose to focus on multiple approaches:

1. **Traditional Media :**

- Radio & TV: We will seek to be present in programs aimed at kids, teenage and young girls. The mention will be delivered through a paid pre-recorded message or add and through the invitation of one of our team members to talk about the event in depth.

- Press: We will deploy a display presence through adds in strategic magazines such as (not all of them each time, but these examples respond to the profile we are looking for): *J'aime lire, Je lis déjà!, Petit quotidien, Mon quotidien, Youpi j'ai compris!, 1 jour 1 actu, Astrapi, Curionantes des sciences, Discovery Box, Images Doc, Julie, Le Journal des enfants, Le monde des ados, Sorcières, Tout comprendre Junior, Wapiti, Cosinus, Geo Ado, Tout comprendre.* As well as: *Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Parenthèse, Parents.*

2. **Social Media:** We will also be present on social media through digital display and profiles on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. The strategy on social media must integrate not only the broadcasting of the information but also engage in an open communication with the digital community. A Community Manager shall ensure this task.

3. **Partnerships :**

- We will create strategic partnerships with already existent women driven networks on LinkedIn, RéZoé and Féminalink to broadcast our event.

- We will work alongside our main partners like the UNESCO, the CNRS and the CNES and the local governments on each region to relay our event.

- We will reach out to different institutions such as schools, to be present during the "Foire des universités" and events of similar styles; Centres de Loisir, and even other events like the Salon de l'Étudiant.

We will also try and convey cooperation with museum like the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie de la Villette, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Palais de la Découverte, Musée des Arts et Métiers.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

First and foremost, our event is non-profit based. Therefore, our aim would be to find an equilibrium between our costs and benefits.

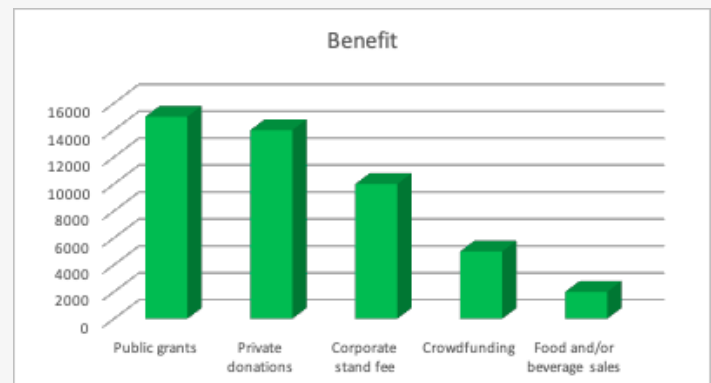
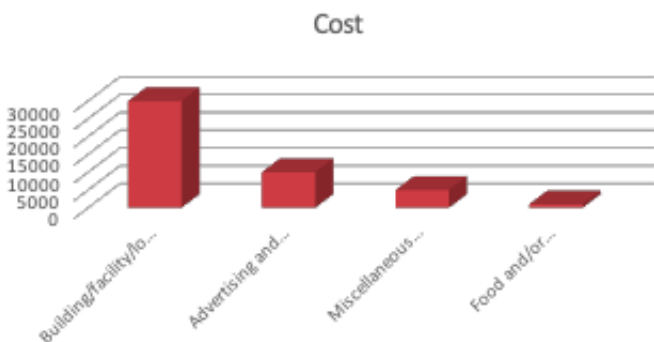
1. **Estimated costs:** The main costs would be incurred during the organisation of the event (ie the venue), even though we hope to find an in-kind foundation or building owner sponsorship. The second biggest costs would be linked to the communication, advertising and marketing prior to the event. Numerous miscellaneous costs are to be taken into account, and tend to be overlooked, namely name tags, signs or t-shirts. As a source of additional revenue, we were planning on selling food and beverages on site. The cost would be minimal and this would add an extra piece of benefits. Lastly, regarding labour costs, we plan on welcoming volunteers' students from local engineering schools, may they be women or men, to allow them to have second-to-none exposure to professionals in the field, promote gender equality in their respective schools, whilst allowing us to save staff costs.

2. **Estimated benefits:** The main benefits of the event would be related to private sponsorships and public grants. Regarding private funds, we plan on conditioning participation on the WiSTEM Forum through a corporate fee associated with holding a stand. This system would allow us to increase our treasury prior to the event. Furthermore, we would run a sponsorship and donations campaign aimed at levying resources from the private sector. Regarding public funds, our event would be eligible to various grants (at the international level through the UNESCO, at the European level through the Erasmus+ program, at the national level through the Ministry of Gender Equality or for Higher Education, and on a local level through the various regions and cities around the French territory where our event would take place). Added to these sources of revenue, we plan on leading a crowdfunding campaign, giving privileged conditions to our most generous contributors. Furthermore, our food and beverage sale would give us extra financial leeway. Finally, we plan on receiving donations in kind (company goodies, gadgets, etc.) that we would give to our attendees.

ANNEX

Finance

Cost Items	Cost	
Building/facility/location (space rental, site use permits, security guards, portable toilets, cleanup costs)	30 000,00 €	
Advertising and promotion (invitations, event programs, publicist costs, event website with a ticket purchase feature)	10 000,00 €	
Miscellaneous (name tags, signs, t-shirts)	5 000,00 €	
Food and/or beverage sales	1 000,00 €	
		TOTAL 46 000,00 €
Benefit Items	Benefit	
Public grants	15 000,00 €	
Private donations	14 000,00 €	
Corporate stand fee	10 000,00 €	
Crowdfunding	5 000,00 €	
Food and/or beverage sales	2 000,00 €	
		TOTAL 46 000,00 €



Our poster



Sources

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WiSTEM