

The Mind the STEM Gap Manifesto for Girls [and Boys]



MIND THE STEM GAP IS A PARTICIPATORY PROJECT, AND IT NEEDS YOU!



Watch out for stereotypes

Stereotypes are old-fashioned ideas. They act unconsciously and become self-fulfilling prophecies. The idea that science is for boys is a stereotype, a cultural construct that is outdated and dangerous, because it undervalues and hinders the work of women scientists of the past and present. Let's learn to recognise stereotypes, question them, and help others to do so.



Critical thinking

Certain images and content offer simplified, empty visions of differences and of the specific qualities of individuals, and particularly, many backward ideas about women. When we find them in the media, on the internet or on the social networks, let's analyse them, take a critical look at them and choose not to adopt them.



Behavioural models

Prejudices and stereotypes support unjust practices: taking care of children and housework still seem primarily as women's work. Let's use our creativity to come up with gender-neutral behavioural models, and imagine new ways of doing things that will inspire people and show them that it can be done. Let's take action ourselves to allow everyone to express themselves freely.



Self-confidence

There's an inequality we need to rebalance: from an early age, girls tend to consider themselves less talented at mathematics and the sciences than boys. Confidence in one's abilities starts with play and is reinforced at school. Going beyond the division between "toys for boys" and "toys for girls", we want everyone to be free to discover what they like since their childhood, and challenge themselves at school without coming up against preconceived ideas, with inclusive exercises, simulations and experiments.



Language

Words describe the world, but they also form it. There are proverbs and idiomatic expressions that more or less explicitly degrade women, such as "act like a girl", or "it's a boy thing". Let's choose our words carefully, and use inclusive language; let's try and avoid language that reinforces the cages and fences within which people are forced to live.



Together, all over

Going beyond the stereotypes and coming up with a more inclusive version of science is a challenge for all of us. There's a lot we can all do to make this happen. Let's put the points of this manifesto into practice every day, at home, at school, with our friends, and with the involvement of our whole community! That's how things change.

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Bridging the gender gap in STEM disciplines



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