

December 2020

Season's Greetings



Dear colleagues and friends of the WOMENVAI platform,

Reading is part of our lives. It is essential for information, training, and even for getting away from it all. The rush to bookstores as they reopened in May in some parts of our world, as well as the incomprehension expressed by many about their closure during this second lockdown, show how essential literature is to us. How and to what extent does it work? Why are so many of us drawing resources from it? What are we looking for and what do we find there? Especially during this crisis times? And no! Crisis in Chinese does not equal danger + opportunity !... However it is interesting to discuss the issues of opportunities as our Chinese colleagues have been active right from the start of the pandemic: beyond words, like us, Engineers and technicians of the

world, we all need now to call for optimistic actions as we are entering 2021 soon!

More than ever we all need to come with solutions and bring means to accelerate the UN SDGs. Still, we need to think positively and adapt our behaviors for a better future.

Thanks to our 18 co-founding members, our brand new 11 ambassadors and the network of local partners in all regions of the world, WOMENVAI, an international non-profit NGO, created 3 years ago, headquartered in Paris, operates now in 24 countries, and offers a project platform linking our international experts and entrepreneurs with investors in technological innovation for sustainable development with a real gender equality policy.

Find out in this edition who is not so far from you... and have a coffee: no, not a virtual one, please!

And don't forget to bring sunshine in your homes as we are heading to this end of year, celebrate joy around you and see you soon in 2021!

Yvette Ramos, President and co-founding member of WOMENVAI

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Ms. Asma Brini, Cofounder

In charge of Communication and Marketing
PhD in Computer Science from the Paul Sabatier University, Toulouse, France.

Founder and Director of ABSHORE, established in France and Tunisia, a consulting company in Information Technology with approx. 70 employees, who work with the major players in the banking, insurance and telecom sectors to support them

in the Digital Transformation, Business Intelligence projects and Big Data management programmes. Asma is a Specialist in Digital Transformation and IT Systems Transformation, and as one of the cofounders and sponsors of WOMENVAI, she brings her expertise at the service of development regions to build technological solutions for the modernization of their socio-economic sectors - including industry, transportation, tourism, agriculture, etc. At WOMENVAI, she coordinated all digital communication and marketing tools with our dedicated team.

One Woman Engineer, One Day

By Lidia SANTIAGO

Cofounder of WOMENVAI and Professor at the University of Lisboa, Portugal

On October 29th 2020, we took part in a wonderful online event – the 4th edition of the ‘Engenheiras por um dia’ – a project kicked off by the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality, Rosa Monteiro (Portugal).

“When we started to think and design this project, **it was not easily accepted**. Some did not believe that the sexual segregation in educational and career choices is crucial in the inequalities that plague women in everything else. **We persisted**. Today we are here presenting the 4th edition of an increasingly strong project, which is already a mark in the fight against segregation in the educational and professional areas”, the Governor declared.

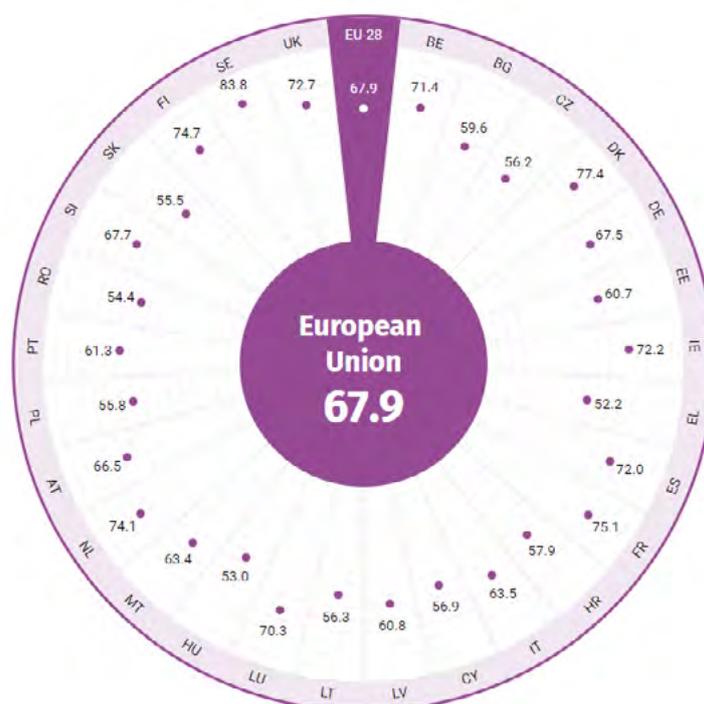
The low presence of women in engineering, namely in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), has been substantiated with other percentages resulting from various studies. “These asymmetries that occur both in the fields of study and teaching, but also later on on the job market, can be explained by a number of factors. It is thought that they stem from the many **stereotypes** rife in our society about gender roles in the workplace: for instance the notion that men and women are better suited to certain professions or others”, Rosa Monteiro explains.



Key figures were presented, including the 2020 **Gender Equality Index** – an initiative of the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**, a tool which allows to measure the progress of gender equality in the European Union. This tool highlights the areas needing improvement and ultimately brings solutions to policy makers for more effective gender equality policies. Measuring gender equality is integral to effective policymaking in the EU. Since the first edition in 2013, the Gender Equality Index has tracked and reported progress by providing a comprehensive measure of gender equality, tailored to fit the EU’s policy goals. **It reveals both progress and setbacks, and explores what can be improved to induce change.**

Digitalisation is changing our lives. It has made many things faster and easier, but has it improved everyone’s life? The Gender Equality Index 2020 has a special focus on the effects of digitalisation on the lives of women and men. It looks at the emergence of new types of jobs organised through online applications, including ride-hailing services, food delivery, software development, translation or household cleaning services. It also examines the broader consequences on gender equality, from rising cyber violence against women and girls, to gender bias in Artificial Intelligence. We also look at whether technological solutions contribute to a more even sharing of household chores.

As a conclusion, with 67.9 out of 100 points, **the EU has a long way to go** before reaching gender equality. At this pace – 1 point every 2 years – it could take over 60 years to achieve gender equality in the EU. **We need to speed up.** More [here](#)



Report from the **WOMEN'S STRIKE** in Poland

From Krakow, October - November 2020 - By Lidia ZAKOWSKA

102 years ago, just on November 28th 1918, Polish women got the right to vote.



Today, on this very special anniversary, on November 28th 2020, Polish women are taking to the streets of all major cities and towns of Poland, **fighting for their freedom of choice**. The women demonstrators claim they have had enough of disrespect, contempt, and violence against women. Women rights are human rights.

Poland's governing PiS party's support of the **barbaric amendment to the existing abortion bill** has offended and outraged all, women and men alike, as citizens of a democratic state.

Since October 22nd 2020, **women and men in almost 200 towns and cities in Poland and abroad are marching the streets in protest** against the proposed anti-abortion bill, which PiS party had recently advanced to parliamentary debate.

The largest national demonstrations are in **Warszawa**, the capital, but they are also running in most of towns, especially where there are large academic centers. Majority of students and academic community protest also against the proposed drastic changes to the Polish education system, which will affect schools, universities, and vocational training (including the police force and other public services). The picture above shows the protest at the Main Market Square of my city, Krakow.



A vast majority of the protesters are not members of any organized groups and prior to the **#womensstrike** have never been publicly involved in social and political affairs. Although three days after the **#womensstrike**, the PIS party backtracked on the antiwomen and anti-abortion bill, the parliamentary majority has clearly not grasped the significance of the Women's Strike.

Women protesting in Poland know that a civil rights movement was born on a rainy day in October, so we also here celebrate the 41st anniversary of the Icelandic national women's strike on October 24th, when women decided to strike saying: it's time for us to stand up and be counted!

We, the women of Polish academia, are grateful for the support from the European academic community: its many organizations and research groups engaged in international



projects supporting gender equality in research organisations and higher education institutions, which recognize gender equality and freedom of expression as preconditions for both democratic society and modern academia. We thank the academic management, experts, researchers, teachers and students in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Serbia, Slovakia, also from the H2020 GEECCO project team.

In Krakow's Market Square, women's strike gathered a large group local community, especially young people with hand-made placards, fighting for their equality and human rights.

Welcome to Our First WOMENVAI Ambassadors from The World

To our wonderful and energetic super Women, we are proud to have you as WOMENVAI Ambassadors in 11 countries where you will promote WOMENVAI activities, and where we will bring resources and means (human, technical and financial) to boost projects in your respective countries... Let's kick off the global adventure all together !

Yassamine KELLALI (Algeria)

Environmental Engineer

I have been working at the Regulatory Commission on Gas & Electricity (Ministry of Energy) since 2011, in charge of GHGE inventory for the electricity and gas sector. At university I studied industrial chemistry and specialized in environmental chemistry. I have both a degree in environmental chemistry engineering, and a master's degree in wastewater treatment processes and environmental protection.

I also recently took a very interesting training on GHGE inventories by the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute and UNFCCC, for which I have been awarded an introductory certificate for Cross-Cutting Issues and a certificate for Energy. I also participated in negotiation sessions organized by UNFCCC, as well as in Climate Dialogue 2020 (Nov. 23rd - Dec. 4th 2020). This event provided Parties to the UNFCCC and other stakeholders with a platform to showcase progress and achievements made on climate change in 2020, especially under the challenging circumstances caused by COVID-19.



Olga CAVALLI (Argentina)

PhD Business Direction, MBA, MSc. In Telecommunications Regulation, Electronic and Electric Engineer

I am an Internet leader, my work has been fundamental for enhancing a relevant participation of Latin America and the Caribbean in Internet Governance. Presently I am a member of the ISOC Board of Trustees and of the ISOC Foundation, co-founder and Academic Director of the South School on Internet Governance (SSIG), ARGENSIG - Dominios Latinoamerica. For seven years I was member of the Advisory Group for the UN Secretary General for the Internet Governance Forum. Furthermore, I am a committee member of: Internet Governance forum of Argentina, the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy group, the GNSO in the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ICANN, among other activities.

I was the Argentina representative at the WSIS – World Summit of Information Society in Tunisia (2005) and a Member of the National Commission on Cybercrime that defined the Argentina Cybercrime Law and the Digital Agenda.



Bénédicte NDEDE (Cameroon)

ICT Engineer

I am an engineer in networks and telecommunications, currently working as a Project Manager in telecommunications for LCL bank subsidiary of the Crédit Agricole Group Bank. Prior to this experience, I was an ICT engineer for a telecommunications operator in France, based in Paris.



Arnelle A. ISAAC (Dominica)

MSc. Crisis and Disaster Management Student

BSc. Geography and Environmental and Natural Resources Management (1st Hons.)

«No matter how carefully you plan your goals they will never be more than pipe dreams unless you pursue them with gusto» - W. Clement Stone.

Being raised on 'The Nature Isle of the Caribbean', Dominica, I was taught the importance of environment and natural resources conservation from a very young age. This led me to pursue a BSc. in Geography (Major) and Environmental and Natural Resources Management (Major). I also studied MSc. in Crisis and Disaster Management, recognizing the criticality of Disaster Risk Reduction.



Paola MARONE (Italy)

Qualified Civil Engineer

I am an entrepreneur and have been the President of the Foundation of the Order of Engineers of Naples since 2018. As the President of CFS Napoli (Safety Training Center) since 2015, I have always worked in the construction industry as a designer and executor. I then devoted myself to voluntary and social commitments. I am currently the administrator and technical director of Impresa Marone, which has operated continuously in the construction sector since 1950 in both private and public work.





Ayanna T. SAMUELS (Jamaica)

Rocket Scientist, B.Sc (MIT); Dual-M.Sc (MIT)

Just as it only takes a spark to get a fire going, never accept a narrative which says as woman you cannot accomplish your most audacious objectives. Just take the first step!

I am an International Development Professional specializing in ICTs for Socio-Economic Development, Technology Policy and Gender-Equality, Aerospace Engineer, International Motivational Speaker, Health and Wellness Consultant, and Triathlete & International Bodybuilding and Fitness Athlete. With nearly 16 years of progressively responsible global experience in leveraging ICTs as fulcras for human development, I also work at the intersection of Gender, Policy and ICTs towards empowering women in Tech. I also have steeped experience working with leading multilaterals and governments, and very keen on improving the quality of life for the most disadvantaged amongst us!

Karen Janett JIMENEZ (Mexico)

Communications and Project Management Specialist

I have been involved in environmental affairs since 1998 and working in the public sector in Mexico since 2004. As a communications consultant for various international environmental NGOs, and as an advocate for the restoration and conservation of natural resources with the aid of environmental education and technology, I am committed, as an independent professional, to contribute to a better society and a planet focused on fair trade. This is a time to reach out to our ancient connection with nature and fuse old and new ideas - a moment to give all we have to save our planet like our lives depend on it, because they do.



Cynthia MENE (Nigeria)

BSc Textile Science and Polymer Technology (Nigeria), MSc. Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management from Imperial College Business School (UK)

As Design thinking Expert and talent builder, I currently serve as the CEO and co-founder of Inspire Africa for Global Impacts Initiative, a non-profit delivering entrepreneurial leadership education to African youth. I previously owned a biodegradable, non-toxic soap business with 10 permanent staff, and a salesforce of 150 women before it was acquired in 2015. Subsequently I launched the Kadosh Production Company (KPC), improving the living standards of 500 female smallholder farmers. I have been awarded several prizes, including the United States African Development Fund Award, Unilever's Sustainable Living Young Entrepreneurs Award, Global Student Entrepreneurs Award, Innovation Prize for Africans Post Prize Awards, and Global Innovation through Science and Technology Awards. Proud to be the 2018 Global Good Fund Fellow, 2015 Mandela Washington YALI Fellow, Mercy Corps Game Changer Awards, UNLEASH Innovation Award, and LEAP Africa Social Innovators Fellow.

Ivy Irene NAKAKYANGO (Uganda)

Mechanical Engineer

I am a Mechanical Engineer by training and founder of the Elucid Energy Global company in Uganda. Also the General Secretary & Treasurer African Shipowners Association Uganda and Chief Strategist for Strategic Smart Partnerships. Previously I served as CEO Uganda Chamber of Mines & Petroleum providing support to the Presidential Investors' Round Table V.



Agness MOFYA MWANSA (Zambia)

Electronics & Telecommunications Engineer

As an experienced leader with over 15 years working in Automation, Control Systems, Instrumentation, Projects and Operations Management, I have extensive living and working experience abroad. I have had wide network among various government, private sector and other stakeholders. I am also a member of several Engineering Bodies, in Zambia since 2004 as Vice Chairperson for the Zambia Women in Engineering Section and a member of the FAEO Women in Engineering Committee, as well as a member of the EIZ publication committee. I am a strong advocate of gender equity and advancement of Women in the engineering fraternity.

Lodrina Nga MASIZAZI (Zimbabwe)

Industrial & Manufacturing Engineer

As a Business & Intellectual Property Manager for a Zimbabwe University Innovation & Incubation hub, I raise revenue for the university and help grow regional impacting start-ups that use ICT, Engineering & Environmental Technologies. I have accumulated experience in Engineering, Business, ICT & Technology products and events, conferences and workshops in Zimbabwe, Uganda, South Africa and the USA. I have been awarded the TechWomen-USA Green Technology Emerging Leader Award which involved an internship in the Silicon Valley, USA.

I serve as a mentor and coach for university, high school & primary school students in collaboration with various international & regional STEM-focused networks. My focus is in extending tech (digital) in Zimbabwe & beyond, promoting innovation and sharing and using knowledge for positive impact on communities.



WOMENVAI team at the 'Artificial Intelligence in Industry 4.0' Workshop

We had the opportunity to take part in the "Artificial Intelligence in the Industry 4.0" workshop held by Inventhys in Grenoble, France.

This programme allowed us to understand what cutting-edge AI is; in simple words, it is the combination of IT and artificial intelligence. AI algorithms are processed locally on devices, and algorithms use data generated by devices. This allows lower costs and latency and increased security.

Additionally, we learnt the steps to develop a state-of-the-art AI solution. From the definition of the requirements to the selection of appropriate sensors used to develop the solution, as a first step. The second step is cleaning and analysing label features extraction to choose the relevant data and to determine whether an AI algorithm is applicable or not. The third step is to build the AI algorithm and the validation of the model, the fourth step is to convert and optimize the code for the microcontroller or mobile. The last step is the validation of embedded AI model performance in real-time with actual equipment, before putting the solution or device into production.



Left to right: Inès Aivazian, Yvette Ramos, Isabelle Excoffier, Denise Salas

Of course, each step has its own difficulties and challenges - e.g.: application of lineal algebra, calculus and statistical data modelling. These disciplines are crucial in successfully executing the tasks and making good decisions for any cutting-edge AI project.

Kicking off Youth For Challenge Benin Project

WOMENVAI is honoured to have signed a **MOU** in September 2020 in Benin with its partner "Youth For challenge" (YFC), a NGO founded in August 2018 in Lokossa, 100 kms from Cotonou, Capital of the Benin republic.

By 2030, YFC is set to be a leading organization in the profound transformation of Africa by strengthening the capacities of its youth and promoting quality education for all. YFC's mission is to impact young people for a sustainable transformation of Benin communities through quality education, effective leadership and entrepreneurship. YFC aims to intervene throughout the national territory and even Africa in the following areas: education (school, civic, financial and digital), capacity building in entrepreneurship and leadership, environmental protection and promotion of sustainable agriculture. More information [here](#).



Through one of YFC Members, **Ms. Bachiratou ISSIAKO** (pictured) - one of our "Amazones du Digital" alumni (First Edition of the workshop WOMENVAI in Cotonou under the leadership of the Digital Economy Ministry of Benin, back in October 2019) - WOMENVAI has now the privilege to engage in other local activities, which will be held online. These will be detailed in our next Edition.. Stay tuned!

APPEL A
CANDIDATURES
LEADERSHIP FÉMININ ET
CRÉATION DE VALEUR AU BÉNIN

Une série de formations pour les femmes et jeunes filles sur le renforcement des capacités entrepreneuriales

LIVE Google Meet zoom

Inscription jusqu'au 15 Novembre via le lien <https://cutt.ly/QgkfskW>
Novembre 2020 à Février 2021 96600694 - 66405135

Kicking-off the Roscidet Ivory Coast Challenge

WOMENVAI and its partner in Ivory Coast, national NGO ROSCIDET Environment has put together a coaching programme for female entrepreneurs on the topic of Sustainable development and new technologies. The programme will be kicked-off in January with 10 webinar sessions throughout Mars 2021, and will conclude with a face-to-face workshop in Abidjan - if the sanitary conditions allow. Stay tuned!

Le ROSCIDET et WOMENVAI

Organisent dans le cadre de l'initiative
Leadership Féminin et Création de Valeur
en Côte d'Ivoire (LFCV-CI)

Une série de Formations pour les femmes et Jeunes Filles

Thème:

«**Entreprenariat Féminin dans le
domaine des technologies durables**»



VIOLENCES SEXISTES ET SEXUELLES

1 étudiante sur 3 en
a déjà été victime
dans le cadre de
ses études

TOU·TE·S
CONCERNÉ·E·S



EPF
ÉCOLE D'INGÉNIEUR·E·S

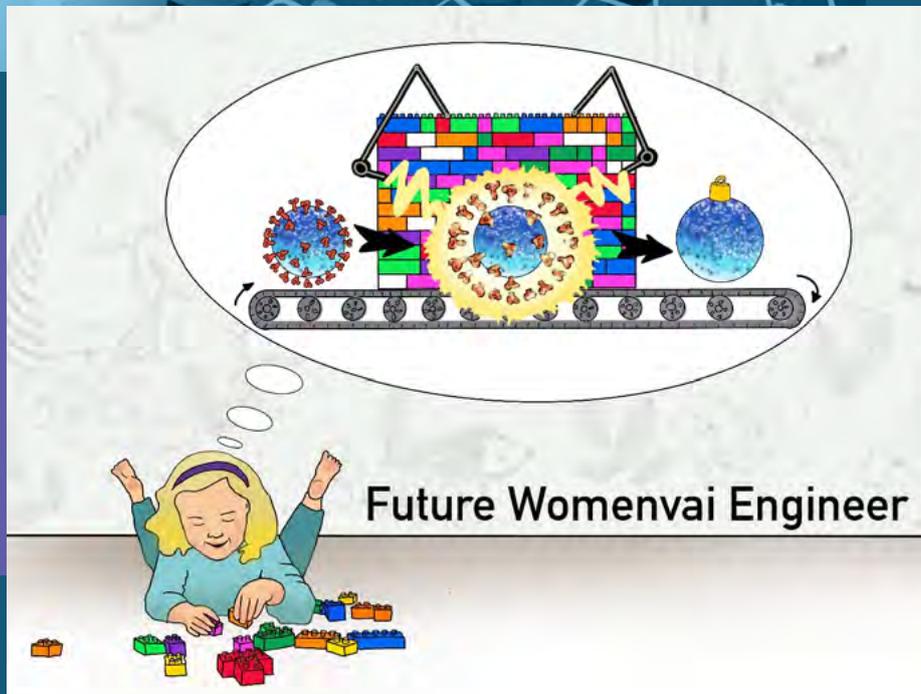
Nov. 25th - EPF Engineering School Poster Competition

November 25th 2020, International Day for the elimination of violence against women, was the opportunity for EPF School of Engineers to organize a poster competition for its students - with an online prize-giving ceremony moderated by Yvette Ramos, WOMENVAI President and EPF graduate, for the top 3 entries.

Beyond the aesthetic aspect, the students, both boys and girls, have defined, from what they have experienced on campus or in their personal lives, anti-sexist messages that will allow everyone to visualize the reality of the higher education environment.

The winner was a male student with his poster presenting strong words such as: **“One female student out of 3 has already experienced gender-based and/or sexual violence on our French campuses. We are all concerned.”**

Let's Have Fun!
(Illustration by Yano)



Thank you to our sponsors

A big Thank You to our new donors, namely EPF, France (formerly École Polytechnique Féminine) and PROCADRES International, Switzerland.

EPF is one of the prestigious French Engineering schools accredited to award Master's Degrees in Science of Engineering. EPF provides engineers with a multidisciplinary profile, spread across all sectors of industry and services. Located near Paris and on two other sites in France, EPF was founded in 1925 to allow young girls to access engineering diplomas and to carry out their studies in STEM. For the past few years it has become a fully equal Graduated school, welcoming young men and women from all across the world.



PROCADRES
INTERNATIONAL

PROCADRES INT, Switzerland, is a key partner to companies and organisations seeking solutions to manage and implement transformation projects, regain control of critical situations or ensure operational continuity in key functions. Based in both Paris and Geneva, PROCADRES provides services across Europe, Africa and Asia through their offices and partnerships with high-quality local operators, supporting business managers confronted with complex projects.

Want to join as a NGO Partner, Sponsor or Ambassador ? Feel free to contact us at contact@womenvai.org

Who we are: the co-founding members

Executive Committee

Yvette Ramos, president, France/Switzerland
Lylían Coelho, vice-president, France/Brazil
Inès Aivazian, treasurer, France
Sophie Magner, deputy-treasurer, Belgium/France
Lidia Zakowska, secretary general, Poland

Ethics Committee

Soizic Vangrevelinghe, France
Denis Aivazian, France,
Sangeeta Wij, India

Communication

Ariane Barbier, France
Asma Brini, France/Tunisia
Camille Coq, France
Guillaume Pahud, France/Switzerland
Denisse Salas, Bolivia/Switzerland

Projects

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