Antonietta Rizzo is researcher at the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development (ENEA); she is responsible for the regional Traceability Laboratory for nuclear technique application on food safety and analytical traceability.
Lesson learned on the engagement of women in nuclear science and technology

Antonietta Rizzo

Methods and Techniques for Nuclear Safety, Monitoring and Traceability Laboratory
Nuclear Safety, Security and Sustainability Division
I started my professional life discussing my final PhD thesis on nuclear techniques application while breastfeeding my first child…

This situation gave me a special perspective and I will carry this perspective with me forever.
In view of the Italian disposal siting, ENEA Traceability Laboratory is considering which matrices will be useful and representative for the *environmental specimen bank*.

The archiving techniques includes the extraction of the *representative matrices* for a better *representation* and *preservation* of the information along the time.
Representative matrices……
Starting well….but…..

Gender distribution in ENEA Nuclear Safety and Sustainability Division

UNDERGRADUATES
M 47%
F 53%

PHD STUDENTS AND POST DOC
F 25%
M 75%

….. OUR STAFF
F 26%
M 74%

Total staff
M 38%
F 62%

Gender distribution at ENEA

STEM staff
M 68%
F 32%
Two main questions I was asked when I joined Nuclear Science:

1. What do you want to do in your life?
2. Are you sure?

1. ……Should I answer NOW?
2. ……and you? Are you READY?
Early departure from Nuclear field jobs

- family reason
- job location
- working conditions
- time oriented programming of the activities
- underestimation of own competences
- women are sometimes less competitive in the early stage of work experience
- discrepancy between activities timeframe and real life
- nuclear fields are considered one of the highest technological application → women tend stepping back
### OBJECTIVES
- Broadening participation
- Equitable Workplaces and pay load
- Leadership and recognition
- Representative scientific community

### TOOLS
- Education and training
- Flexibility minds for the human resources management
- New approaches in the evaluation and recognition (result oriented programming of the activities)
- Involving → engaging → empowering

### LESSON LEARNED
- Seek out people who are passionate about what they do
- Be open to different opportunities relaying on your own competences and not on the other judgement
- Process and procedure can be changed
- Science and Technology are building our future and we have to play our role in this process

Involving is not enough, we should find and give tools for empowering women
Let’s take the “…responsibility to face the ways in which systemic bias impacts who gets to do science, whose questions science answers, which communities benefit from (and are harmed by) scientific discovery and whose findings get recognized” (cit. Heather Metcalf in Nature Human Behavior)