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International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2026

On February 11th and in commemoration of this International Day for Women and Girls in Science, ICFO launches of a full month of activities.

February 11, 2026

More than a decade ago, the international community recognized that science cannot fully thrive while portions of the world's talent remain underrepresented or undervalued. In 2015, the United Nations created the International Day of Women and Girls in Science to highlight the indispensable contributions of women and girls-and to underscore the progress still need to achieve true equity within the scientific community.

February 11th is not only a day to celebrate role models and achievements, but also a reminder that gender gaps, structural barriers, and invisible biases remain deeply embedded in scientific education, careers, and leadership.

At ICFO, this recognition became a starting point rather than a conclusion. To push the conversation beyond a single day, the community launched IC**FOnians for Women in Science Month**, a month-long period of action and reflection that spans from February 11th to March 8th. Throughout these weeks, ICFOnians come together to question the status quo, share experiences, and develop tools to support women in science. The initiative is part of ICFO's Diversity and Inclusion program and serves as a collective call to rethink how science is taught, practiced, and led-so that future generations of scientists do not have to overcome the same barriers that persist today.

As part of this month's agenda, ICFOnians will engage in outreach activities throughout Catalonia, in classrooms and virtual settings, to actively promote visible, relatable role models for girls and young women in science. A detailed list of the activities that will occur both at ICFO and outside are included below:

Talks and outreach activities

Cientifiques: This year, 15 ICFOnians from different research groups and units will participate in this enriching activity, engaging with students and sharing their scientific journeys.

Photonics in 5 Minutes: ICFO researchers will present their work and discuss their

motivations and career paths with students, highlighting the relevance of photonics for society.

Women in Science We Admire Campaign

From February 11 to 27, ICFOnians are invited to nominate a woman scientist who has inspired them or significantly contributed to science through research, advocacy, leadership, or enthusiasm. Cis and trans women nominations are welcome. The nominated scientists will be celebrated in an exhibition starting March 2 in the NEST Hall.

Professional Development and Dialogue

Professional development and dialogue aim to help individual empowerment and collective reflection. Training sessions, workshops, and open conversations help women build confidence, visibility, and leadership skills, while also equipping the broader community to recognize and address systemic barriers. Creating spaces for dialogue allows experiences to be shared, challenges to be acknowledged, and institutional practices to be questioned and improved. For this month, the following sessions have been organized under this topic:

i¿½How to Brag Nicelyi¿½ Workshop (Feb 12): A motivational session focused on empowering women to highlight their achievements and promote their ideas.
Women in Science Month Colloquium (Feb 25): From Data to Action - How MIT Transformed Itself for Women in Science, with Eboney Hearn (MIT), exploring institutional strategies for gender equality.
WiS Book Club (Feb 26): Discussion of Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong - and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story by Angela Saini, hosted by ICONS.

A Month for Reflection and Collective Responsibility

Women in Science Month was created to confront persistent gender disparities, particularly in leadership positions, and continues to evolve as a platform for shared responsibility and action.
ICFOnians are encouraged to participate actively in the discussions and activities throughout the month, contributing to a scientific community where diverse voices and perspectives drive innovation and excellence