



An International
Network of
Women in
Supramolecular
Chemistry:
**Creating a
Community**

Marginalisation is hard

In 1988 Traweek described the laboratory as *"a man's world"* (Rosser, 2004). Things have moved on since then, but women and those from minority backgrounds are still underrepresented.

It can be isolating to be a member of a minority group whatever your career stage, but particularly as a graduate student: *"storming the tower is a lonely business, as any academic woman who has tried can tell you."* (Stiver Lie and O'Leary, 1990:1)

One way to combat these feelings of isolation is for women to establish their own networks to help themselves and each other.

What WISC want

WISC aspires to be an agent of change. Since its launch in late 2019, the network has created an international community of graduate students and early-to-mid career researchers. This is helping form a sense of kinship for those who are marginalised within the field. WISC has an inclusive intersectional ethos, with events open to all.

In 1979 Audre Lorde, a self-proclaimed Black feminist, poet, and warrior, said if we want to change things, we need to do them differently. Although scientists are not always willing to try things that challenge assumptions of concepts such as rigour and validity, WISC has taken a creative and reflective approach to their ongoing projects, to humanise the reasons why equality and community are imperative.

References:

Rosser, S. (2004) The science glass ceiling: Academic women scientists and the struggle to succeed. New York, NY: Routledge.
Stiver Lie, S. and O'Leary, V. (1990) Storming the tower: Women in the academic world. London: Kogan Page.
Caltagirone, C. et al. (2021) An Area-Specific, International Community-Led Approach to Understanding and Addressing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Issues within Supramolecular Chemistry *Ang. Che.*
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/anie.202015297>



What WISC are doing

Our website **www.womeninsuprachem.com** has details of events, our mentoring programme, and lots of resources and links.

Our **mentoring programme** runs with groups of 3-4 peers with a more senior mentor organising meetings every month. Our mentees give us very positive feedback.

Our **support clusters** provide safe spaces for people to connect, share experiences, and learn. We have a **Parenting Cluster**, a **Disability/Chronic Illness/Neurodivergence Cluster** and will be launching a **1st Gen Cluster** in September 2021.

Our **research** includes:

Our first **WISC paper**, published in **Angewandte Chemie** in March 2021, has already attracted a wide readership and received global attention.

An open **survey** exploring lived experiences through Covid-19

<https://kent.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/wisc-network-survey-2>.

An ongoing **collaborative autoethnography** is looking at experiences of women Principal Investigators and researching into how teams can increase communication and creativity.

@LabXX, a Public Engagement project shedding light on 'behind-the-scenes' life in a lab.

Our **programme of events** includes **webinars** co-hosted with vMASC (the Royal Society of Chemistry Macrocyclic & Supramolecular Chemistry Special Interest Group) and the **1st WISC Skills Workshop** Cagliari, Italy Sep 2021
<https://convegni.unica.it/1stwiscworkshop/>

For more information on how to access our community or to find out more please contact WISC at info@wisc.network or follow us on twitter @suprachem