



# Podcast

## Contre expériences

### [Facilitator's Guide]

2026 | 4 episodes of approx. 20 min. | In FR | EN subtitles  
[Podcast available on [Ausha](#), [YouTube](#), [Deezer](#), [Spotify](#)]

A PROJECT BY THE CNRS RHÔNE AUVERGNE SUPPORTED  
BY THE FUND FOR PROFESSIONAL EQUALITY

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## THE PODCAST AT A GLANCE

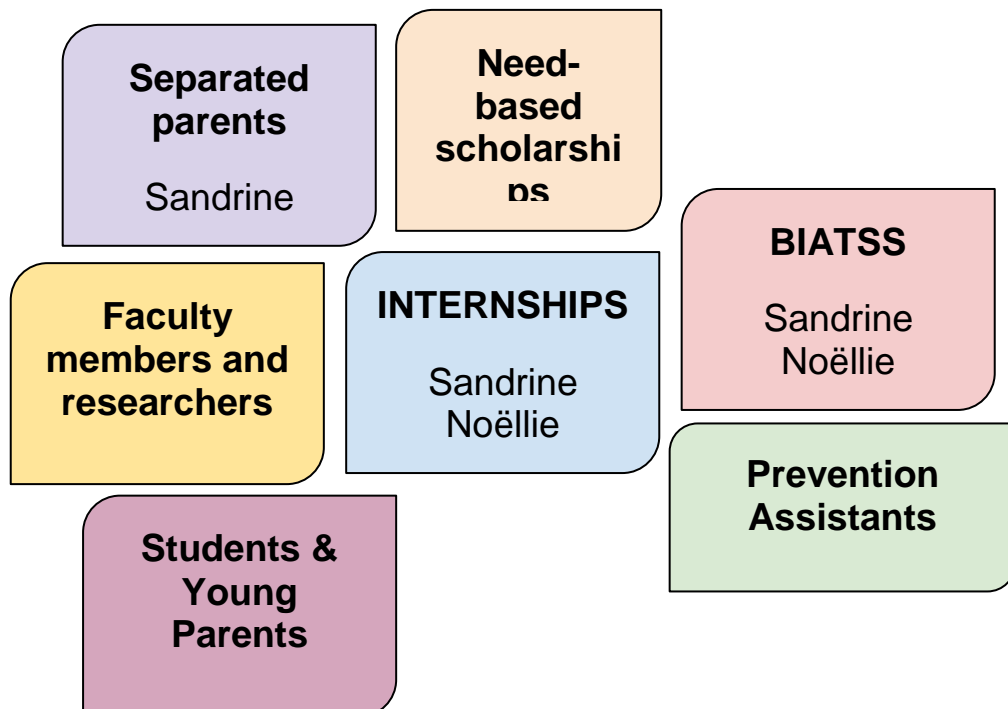
Welcome to **\*Contre expériences\***, the podcast that **highlights non-stereotypical career paths in research**. Each episode offers a glimpse into the daily lives, challenges, and successes of women and men with unconventional career trajectories. The **voices of these women and men—who defy gender norms**, whether consciously or, more often than not, unconsciously—remind us that other paths are possible.

In the **four short episodes available** (averaging 20 minutes each), you'll hear from:

1. **Sandrine**, a design engineer who became a mother at 22 and began her dissertation at 40
2. **Jean-Marie**, and how his daughter's rare disease upended his career as a professor and researcher
3. **Isabel**, a laboratory director and associate professor of language sciences who had to navigate her dyslexia
4. **Noëllie**, who went from a fine arts college to materials engineering—reactive extrusion and the associated machinery hold no secrets for her

**We're counting on you to listen and share!** In doing so, you'll give courage and support to everyone who wants to **pursue their passions and break away from traditional career paths**. Diversity and equality aren't something you can simply decree—they're built over time!

## PROFILS AT A CROSSROADS



## 4 VOICES, 4 STORIES, 4 EPISODES

### Contre expériences - About (2:27 min.)

Why the Contre expériences podcast, and how did it come about? Whose voices will you hear? Lucie Marchal and Romain Sabathier introduce the four upcoming episodes.

### Contre expériences - Ep. 1 - Sandrine (16:06 min.)

Synopsis: Sandrine Denis-Quanquin tells us about her journey. At 22, she became a mother while still in school. Working first as a saleswoman and then as a research engineer at the CNRS, she began a part-time doctoral thesis at age 40. Along the way, a bicycle accident had a profound impact on her health, particularly her mental health. Sandrine is now 50 and already has a rich career behind her. Join us as we explore her ups and downs, what helped her stay strong, and her plans for the future.

#### In this episode, we discuss:

- the impact of motherhood on women's careers
- returning to school later in life
- mental health
- effective managerial approaches to life's uncertainties
- lab culture and fostering a caring, inclusive environment
- sisterhood and the role of a mentor
- strategies for navigating sexism in the workplace
- 

#### Key messages shared by Sandrine:

- Don't hesitate to change roles to thrive: internal mobility at the CNRS makes this easier!
- Don't stay alone if you're feeling down: you can get help; support is available

#### Open-ended questions to kick off the discussion:

- Do you think Sandrine's journey is unattainable given the number of challenges she's managed to overcome, or do you think, on the contrary, that it shows it's possible when the community steps up and you can rely on external support?
- Sandrine mentions that her journey would have been "more manageable if I had been a man," due to the unequal division of childcare for her daughter. In your opinion, how, in practical terms, can organizations recognize and address the differing impacts of parenting responsibilities on the careers of women and men?
- Sandrine had to wait until she finished her thesis to "think about herself" and accept that she no longer had to smile at work. How can we encourage dialogue about mental health in laboratories?

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- Sandrine mentions “under-the-radar” remarks that she long accepted as normal. In your opinion, what individual or collective mechanisms explain this tendency to trivialize sexism in everyday life?
- Sandrine says she “adopted masculine behaviors” to gain respect. What do you think about that?

“Gender” insights:

- **student parents**
  - 4.5% of students—about 110,000 people—have at least one child. [OVE, Student Living Conditions, 2016]
- **Parental leave and interruption of studies / unemployment**
  - Among student parents in France, 25% of women report that having a child led them to interrupt their studies for at least six months. For male student parents, this rate is 14%. [INED, study “Studying and Having Children,” 2017]
  - Women are eight times more likely to be unemployed for “family reasons” than men (54% vs. 7% of unemployed men). And the main reason is childcare [INSEE, Employment Survey, 2019]
- **single-parent families** [INSEE, 2025]
  - 23% of minor children live in single-parent families
  - In 85% of cases, this involves a single mother with child(ren)
  - Single-parent families (and particularly those headed by mothers) are more frequently exposed to economic difficulties: higher poverty rates, more frequent overcrowding in housing, etc.
- **mental health and gender**
  - 72% of employees experience stress or burnout (which occurs “often” for a quarter of them), reflecting the impact of professional demands on psychological well-being [Odoxa for the Observatory of Quality of Life at Work, 2024]
  - Women are, on average, twice as likely as men to experience burnout [Santé Publique France, 2019]
- **Unequal distribution of domestic and parenting responsibilities**
  - In a heterosexual family with a child in France, a woman spends an average of 15 more hours per week on domestic and parenting tasks than her partner [INSEE, 2015]
  - “We still have a society that is too forgiving of fathers for being absent and, conversely, never forgives mothers for being so,” Bérangère Couillard, President of the High Council for Gender Equality, June 2025, Senate DDFE hearing
  - On Doctolib, 85% of medical appointments made for children are booked by mothers [Doctolib, 2022]
- **Role models, sisterhood, and mentoring**

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- From the Latin “soror,” sisterhood refers to solidarity among women—analogous to the concept of brotherhood, but specifically designed to acknowledge the shared experiences, discrimination, and challenges faced by women.
- The presence of visible female scientists increases the likelihood that young girls will consider a career in science [UNESCO, *Cracking the Code: Girls’ Education in STEM*, 2017]
- The importance for girls and women of having female role models, solidarity among women, and mentors who can support and guide us is well documented. For example, while 30% of the top-performing female students in mathematics choose science-oriented preparatory classes after high school, this proportion rises to 45% following a classroom intervention by a female scientist [Thomas Breda, Julien Grenet, Marion Monnet, and Clémentine Van Effenterre, “How Effective are Female Role Models in Steering Girls Towards STEM? Evidence from French High Schools,” *The Economic Journal*, 133 (653), 2023, cited by Charlotte Jacquemot in “Perceptions and Gender Discrimination: What Holds Back the Feminization of Science Fields,” 2025]
- Mentoring programs prove their worth every year! The one by [Femmes & Sciences](#), [for example](#)

Possible “HR” focus areas (in collaboration with your HR department):

- support for precarious situations
- part-time thesis
- therapeutic part-time work
- VSS section in the welcome document for new students
- Possible posters related to mental health

## Contre expériences - Ep. 2 - Jean-Marie (21:06 min.)

### Synopsis :

Jean-Marie Favreau, or how his daughter's rare disease inadvertently upended his career as a professor and researcher at Clermont-Auvergne University. Fourteen years ago, he learned that his daughter had a lysosomal disorder. How, then, could he balance his professional obligations with his roles as a single dad and caregiver?

### In this episode, we discuss:

- the role of a father to be negotiated and the choices to be made
- toxic management
- meaning at work and resilience
- professional-personal or personal-professional synergies in the cross-functional skills developed
- mobility/recruitment policies and their impact on work-family balance
- the role of supportive colleagues who know how to “adjust” the collective organization
- inadequacy of working conditions for a research professor who is also a caregiver
- limitations of individual and team adaptations in the face of structural/institutional barriers
- failure to exercise the rights of family caregivers
- flexible hours vs. fixed hours: pros and cons
- lack of listening and empathy from one's supervisor
- leaving the public sector and moving to the private sector
- sexist stereotypes and biases surrounding parenting and caregiving
- HR support
- importance of collective and community engagement
- double standards and the “superhero” syndrome

### Key messages shared by Jean-Marie:

- “To the younger generations starting their dissertations: your professional career will span 40 years, and you can't ask someone to run a marathon at a sprint's pace for an entire career. It's unreasonable.”
- “The pace of university life is so overwhelming, so intense, that it's a trap. We work non-stop. And it's difficult to break out of this rhythm without strong, collective regulation.”
- Beyond the individual or team's ability to adapt to life's events, institutional policies are key—such as the genuine implementation of the right to disconnect in the evenings and on weekends.

### Open-ended questions to kick off the discussion:

- What were the key moments in Jean-Marie's career where those around him or institutional policies could have helped him stay in public research?

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- Jean-Marie mentions that administrative procedures (school, medical staff, etc.) are systematically directed at the mother, even when it is the father who is caring for the child. How can these situations be detrimental to both fathers and mothers in their parenting roles?
- Jean-Marie describes the academic pace as a “trap” where one works without interruption, and wishes to remind younger generations that a career spans 40 years.
- What measures could help break free from this logic of a constant “sprint,” which penalizes people with family or caregiving responsibilities?
- Imagine you had to create a “survival kit” for a caregiver who is struggling to manage their daily life. What items would absolutely need to be included?

Gender Perspectives:

- **Paternity**

- In 2017, 6 out of every 10 children born in France were born out of wedlock. And 84% of children born out of wedlock were recognized by their father at birth. [[INSEE, 2018](#)]
- Paternity and child-reception leave currently stands at 28 days in France, including 7 mandatory days. Additional birth leave is established by the Social Security Financing Act for 2026, effective January 1, 2026. It is in addition to maternity, paternity, child-reception, and adoption leave. Each parent may take the leave simultaneously or alternately with the other. The duration of the leave is, at the parent’s discretion, 1 month or 2 months. [<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F3156> accessed March 6, 2026]

- **Paternity and Joint Custody**

- In 2020 in France, only 11.5% of children of separated parents lived in joint custody [[INSEE, 2021](#)]
- According to the Ministry of Justice and a study of family court rulings in 2012, the main reason for the low rate of shared custody is that most fathers do not seek custody of the child or children. [[DACs-PEJC Study, Ministry of Justice, 2013](#)]

- **caregiving**

- A caregiver is “a person who provides regular and frequent assistance, on a non-professional basis, to perform all or part of the daily activities of a person who has lost their independence due to age, illness, or a disability” [Law No. 2015-1776 of December 28, 2015, Article 51]
- 43% of caregivers are men and 57% are women [BVA, April Foundation, 2019 Barometer]
- 6 out of 10 caregivers are students or employed [DRESS, 2025]

- **Unequal distribution of domestic and parenting responsibilities**

- In France, 86% of women spend more than 1 hour per day on unpaid domestic work. This applies to only 36% of men. [Gender Equality Index, 2020]
- “We still have a society that is too forgiving of fathers for being absent, yet never forgives mothers for being so,” Bérangère Couillard, President of the High Council for Gender Equality, June 2025, DDFE Senate hearing

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- On Doctolib, 85% of medical appointments booked for children are made by mothers [Doctolib, 2022]
- **Impact on gender inequalities in the workplace**
  - In the civil service, the average pay for women aged 40–49 is equivalent to that of men aged 30–39. The main reason is childcare [DGAFP, Annual Report on Professional Equality, 2021]
  - In 2023, 14% of women in tenured positions in EPSTs work part-time, compared to 3% of men [MESRE, Key Figures on Equality, 2026]
- **Men and Feminism**
  - In France, 44% of French men and women identify as feminists (compared to 32% in 2019). In France, 40% of men and 48% of women identify as feminists (in Spain, it is 44% of men and 59% of women). [IPSOS & King’s College London (29 countries), 2026]

Possible “HR” focus areas (in collaboration with your HR department):

- rights related to paternity and child care
- rights of family caregivers
- options—including anonymous ones—for reporting toxic management
- regular interviews related to parenting (for both women and men)

## Contre expériences - Ep. 3 - Isabel (20:11 min.)

### Synopsis:

Isabel Colón de Carvejal, associate professor of language sciences and director of the ICAR laboratory, recounts her journey, marked by dyslexia diagnosed in childhood and an academic path that diverged from the most traditional academic routes. Between financial insecurity during her dissertation, the gradual discovery of the researcher's profession, and learning research management, she describes a path marked by perseverance and adaptation. Her story highlights the importance of support from mentors, role models, and the confidence gained over time.

### In this episode, we discuss:

- The daily life of a lab director and the diversity of tasks in research
- Financial difficulties and precariousness during the dissertation
- Non-traditional paths to scientific careers
- Dyslexia and dysorthography in a writing-centered academic environment
- The key role of doctoral supervision, professional support, and role models
- The question of legitimacy in leadership roles
- The diversity of possible paths without the pressure to become a “wonder woman”

### Key messages shared by Isabel:

- “As a woman with dyslexia on a scholarship, you can make it. I don't have an agrégation, I'm not a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure, and yet I'm a researcher at the École Normale Supérieure. So my first message is that you have to try, dare, and not limit yourself”
- Support from supervisors and colleagues is crucial
- Research isn't limited to writing articles: it also involves project management, team coordination, data analysis, and managing groups. Scientific skills are diverse.

### Open-ended questions to kickstart the discussion:

- What invisible barriers might hinder access to or advancement in scientific careers, particularly for women, and how can institutions better address them?
- What resources did Isabel rely on to advance her scientific career and take on leadership roles?
- Isabel only revealed her dyslexia in 2020, following a highly critical email about a spelling mistake. In your opinion, what obstacles might the scientific environment present for people with learning disabilities, and how might these barriers hinder their career paths?

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- Isabel mentions the question “Where’s the boss?” which is often asked of women in positions of authority. Have you ever experienced or observed similar situations? How can these micro-interactions affect confidence and a sense of legitimacy?
- Isabel says today: “As a woman with a learning disability on a scholarship, we can make it.” If you were to create a “survival kit” for a student from a non-traditional background starting a PhD, what would be the three essential elements to include (tools, resources, attitudes)?

“Gender” insights:

- **Need-based scholarships**

- At the start of the 2024 academic year, 38% of women received a need-based scholarship, compared to 33% of men among programs eligible for the scholarship [MESRE, Key Equality Figures, 2026]

- **Women in the Humanities, Languages, and Social Sciences**

- 71% of master’s degree graduates in the humanities, languages, and social sciences are women, compared to 46% of master’s degree graduates in the sciences. [MESRE, Key Equality Figures, 2026]

- **Women Associate Professors**

- 42% of researchers in the public sector are women, compared to 23% in the private sector [MESRE, Key Figures on Equality, 2026]
- 45% of associate professors are women in 2024. In 2000, women made up 38% of the “Associate Professors” faculty. Among university professors, only 33% are women in 2024 (vs. 17% in 2000). [MESRE, Key Equality Figures, 2026]
- In “Languages and Literature,” 65% of tenured faculty members are women, whereas the figure is 15% in mathematics, 23% in physics, and 24% in computer science. [MESRE, Key Equality Figures, 2026]

- **Governance of Research Organizations**

- The governance of research organizations is predominantly entrusted to men, with the exception of human resources. [MESRE, Key Figures on Equality, 2026]
- At the CNRS, for example, men hold nearly three-quarters of all governance and management positions [CNRS, 2022]. In the CNRS’s Rhône-Auvergne regional delegation in 2019, men held 74% of senior management positions.

- **Role Models, Sisterhood, and Mentoring**

- From the Latin “soror,” sisterhood refers to solidarity among women—analogous to the concept of brotherhood, but specifically designed to acknowledge the shared experiences, discrimination, and challenges faced by women.
- The presence of visible women scientists increases the likelihood that young girls will consider a career in science [UNESCO, Cracking the Code: Girls’ Education in STEM, 2017]
- The importance for girls and women of having female role models, solidarity among women, and mentors who can support and guide us is well-documented. For example,

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while 30% of the top-performing female students in mathematics choose science-oriented preparatory classes after high school, this proportion rises to 45% following a classroom intervention by a female scientist [Thomas Breda, Julien Grenet, Marion Monnet, and Clémentine Van Effenterre, “How Effective are Female Role Models in Steering Girls Towards STEM? Evidence from French High Schools,” *The Economic Journal*, 133 (653), 2023, cited by Charlotte Jacquemot in “Perceptions and Gender Discrimination: What Holds Back the Feminization of Science Fields,” 2025]

- Mentoring programs prove their worth every year! Take the one by Femmes & Sciences, for example [Femmes & Sciences par exemple](#)
- **Dys disorders, disabilities in the workplace**
  - Between 5% and 7% of children have “dys” disorders [Inserm, 2017]
  - Approximately 80% of disabilities are invisible, which can lead to misunderstanding or stigmatization in the professional world [Agefiph, Disability Statistics in Employment, 2022]

Possible “HR” Focus Areas (in collaboration with your HR department):

- Recognition and accommodation of dys disorders in academic environments
- Support for doctoral students without stable funding and prevention of precariousness
- Mentoring and role model programs for women and students from low-income backgrounds
- Research management training for future team leaders
- Preventing feelings of illegitimacy in accessing leadership positions
- Valuing non-academic skills (project management, coordination, mediation)

## Contre expériences – Ep. 4 – Noëllie (28:10 mins)

### Synopsis:

Noëllie Ylla is a research engineer at the CNRS in a polymer materials engineering laboratory in Villeurbanne. Her career path was far from straightforward: having started out at a fine arts university, she gradually discovered materials science and entered public research almost by chance. She now works on reactive extrusion to design more sustainable materials, whilst managing technical facilities and supporting researchers and PhD students. Her story illustrates the importance of opportunity, perseverance and sisterhood in scientific careers.

### In this episode, we discuss:

- unconventional paths into scientific careers and bridges between artistic, technical and scientific disciplines
- the transition from the private to the public sector
- reactive extrusion and the manufacture of new, more sustainable materials to tackle environmental challenges
- the proactive role of two women in Noëllie's professional circle: Jocelyne in HR and Jannick, the director of the IMP laboratory
- being a woman in a male-dominated world: mechanics
- the role of engineers and support staff in scientific research
- power dynamics between researchers and BIATSS staff
- levers for improving working conditions in public research: high autonomy; flexible working hours and 80% working week; health and safety services with workplace adaptations during pregnancy and work-friendly exercise (yoga for Noëllie)
- sexism in the workplace: from sexist behaviour to a case that could be classified as sexual harassment
- heavy physical workloads and team solidarity

### Key messages shared by Noëllie:

- "There are no problems, only solutions"
- career paths are not linear: "I have often imagined life as a short walk in the forest with several paths open to us. At every junction you will have to make a decision and whatever you choose will always be the right choice. "

### Open-ended questions to kick off the discussion:

- If you had to choose just two words that embody Noëllie's journey and messages, what would they be and why? (*NB: facilitation tip: hand out two Post-it notes to each person to write one WORD per note. Then ask them to come and stick them on the flipchart or another surface. Group similar or related words together and ask one or two volunteers to explain their choice of words to kick off the discussion*)
- Noëllie mentions imposter syndrome twice – "with experience, I realised I wasn't an imposter. This helped me gain self-confidence, making it easier for me to cope today". What is this syndrome and how can it be countered?

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- Noëllie recounts having to “raise her voice” when a colleague crossed the line. How can organisations better support victims of inappropriate behaviour without forcing them to bear the burden of reporting it alone?
- Jocelyne, the research director, played a key role in bringing the job vacancy to Noëllie’s attention. Why are informal mentoring relationships so important for inclusion? If you had a magic wand to encourage mentoring practices within your organisation, what would you put in place?
- Noëllie spent four years on fixed-term contracts and periods of unemployment before finding her place. How can research organisations better support transitions between the private and public sectors, and/or reduce the precariousness of contract workers?
- What barriers and drivers to gender diversity in the workplace and equality emerge from this episode on Noëllie’s career path?

Gender insights:

- **Internships and entry into the workforce**
  - 71% of engineering students undertake an internship, compared to just 16% of those on general bachelor’s degree programmes [[Le Monde, Séverine Graveleau, 2025](#)]
  - Internships expand networks, build social capital and facilitate access to a first job (Cereq studies)
- **Chemistry and the Institute of Polymer Materials (IMP unit under the supervision of CNRS, UCBL, INSA Lyon, UJM Saint-Etienne)**
  - 57% of university chemistry graduates are women, 47% of women in materials and process engineering [[MESR, 2026](#)]
  - Chemistry sector in France: around 50% women and men among chemistry research staff [[MESR, 2026](#)]
  - at the IMP in 2021, a UMR (joint research unit) comprising around 200 people of all statuses, with around 45% women in total. 87 permanent staff, of whom 33% are women. In 2025, 85 permanent staff, of whom 31 are women, representing 36%. Among permanent staff, certain roles are highly gendered; for example, 83% of administrative staff are women. 113 PhD students, of whom 55% are women
- **Design/Research Engineers [[MESR, 2026](#)]**
  - Regarding design engineers in France working in research, 54% are women in 2024
  - Regarding research engineers in France, 40% will be women by 2024
  - Generally speaking in France by 2024, 30% of engineering graduates will be women, compared to 22% in 2000
- **Single-parent families [[INSEE, 2025](#)]**
  - 23% of children under the age of 18 live in single-parent families
  - In 85% of cases, this involves a single mother with child(ren)

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- Single-parent families (and in particular those headed by mothers) are more frequently exposed to economic difficulties: a higher rate of poverty, more frequently overcrowded housing, etc.
- **Role models, sisterhood and mentoring**
  - From the Latin “soror”, sisterhood refers to solidarity among women — analogous to the concept of brotherhood, but specifically designed to recognise the shared experiences, discrimination and challenges faced by women.
  - The presence of visible female scientists increases the likelihood that young girls will consider a career in science [UNESCO, Cracking the Code: Girls’ Education in STEM, 2017]
  - The importance for girls and women of having female role models, solidarity among women, and mentors who can support and guide them is well documented. For example, whilst 30% of the top-performing female students in mathematics go on to science-focused preparatory classes after the baccalaureate, this proportion rises to 45% following a classroom intervention by a female scientist [Thomas Breda, Julien Grenet, Marion Monnet and Clémentine Van Effenterre, “How Effective are Female Role Models in Steering Girls Towards STEM? Evidence from French High Schools”, The Economic Journal, 133 (653), 2023, cited by Charlotte Jacquemot in “Perceptions and gender discrimination: what is holding back the feminisation of science streams?”, 2025]
  - Mentoring programmes prove their worth year after year! Take the one run by [Femmes & Sciences, for example](#)
- **Part-time work**
  - Across the civil service, 18% of staff work part-time: 23% of women compared with 8% of men. Part-time work is not merely an individual choice but the result of a gendered division of labour [DGAFP, 2022]
  - At the CNRS, gender disparities are even more pronounced regarding part-time work. Among IT staff in 2021, for example, 19.5% of female IT staff were working part-time compared to 3.9% of male IT staff [[CNRS, 2021](#)]
- **Integrate a gender dimension into health and safety at work policy at every stage to prevent gender-based and sexual violence in the workplace**
  - Resources from the National Agency for Working Conditions: [kit HERE](#)

Possible “HR” focus areas (in conjunction with your HR department):

- clearly identify the network of health and safety representatives and their roles, in coordination and complementarity with the [network of equality officers](#)
- rights relating to pregnancy, particularly workplace adjustments
- rights to part-time work and the impact on pension entitlements
- [women’s health at work, particularly in research units, and the impact of adapted physical activity](#)

# WHY SHOULD YOUR TEAM OR DEPARTMENT LISTEN TO ONE OR MORE EPISODES OF THE PODCAST?

## Learning objectives:

- Understand what a non-stereotypical career path entails;
- Identify gender stereotypes in scientific careers;
- Discuss organisational and structural barriers as a team;
- Discover or rediscover potential HR support;
- Initiate an initial level of engagement and identify allies
- Highlight other possible career paths in science

## DEDICATED EMAIL 6 YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES (INCLUDING PREPARATION)

**Objective:** to invite all your colleagues to discover the podcast and to reach out to you to start a discussion on gender diversity in scientific careers.

**Target audience:** everyone.

## Materials required:

- your colleagues' email addresses
- your email address
- your fingers to copy, paste and send ;)
- the pre-written template email below

## The benefits:

- very simple and quick
- mass outreach possible (from a few dozen colleagues to several thousand)
- at the start of the podcast's life (in the first few days and weeks after episodes are released), helps boost the number of listens and therefore the podcast's visibility
- makes it easier to identify allies to work with
- makes it easier to identify obstacles that will need to be overcome
- can encourage listening in a calm, chosen setting, conducive to active listening

## Cons:

- generates fewer direct exchanges within the work community
- **an individual rather than a collective approach**

## Tips:

- best days and times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9.30 am to 11.00 am

- should the email be sent from senior management or another key email address?

**Sample email to forward to your colleagues:**

SUBJECT: [PODCAST MADE IN CNRS] Subscribe to the “Contre expériences” podcast and let’s discuss it?

Hello colleagues,

In my capacity as Equality Correspondent for the unit, I would **like to introduce you to the “Contre expériences” podcast**, which highlights non-stereotypical career paths in research:

>>> Podcast to subscribe to and listen to on [Ausha](#), [Deezer](#), [Spotify](#)

In each episode, lasting an average of 20 minutes, you’ll hear the voices of Sandrine, Jean-Marie, Isabel and Noëllie. You’ll discover the daily lives, challenges and successes of women and men with unconventional career paths. From now until 14 April, a new episode will be released every Tuesday.

To help us gather initial feedback on this tool for reflection and discussion, **a big thank you in advance for taking two minutes to share your thoughts.:**

- by replying to this email and simply stating “SANDRINE” or the “FIRST NAME” of the other episode you listened to;
- and/or by sharing a few lines on what you thought of the podcast.

**We’re counting on you to listen and share!** In doing so, you’ll offer encouragement and support to everyone wishing to pursue their passions and break away from conventional career paths. Diversity and equality aren’t imposed—they’re built!

Thank you!

Best regards.

**BINGO – YOU HAVE 90 MINUTES (INCLUDING PREPARATION)**

*30 minutes’ preparation*

*60 minutes of live engagement*

**Objective:** to enable some of your colleagues to discover a podcast episode live and discuss it immediately using a “Podcast Bingo”

**Target audience:**

- team meeting
- lab council
- general assembly

**CONTRE EXPÉRIENCES, When Gender Roles Are Reinvented in Science  
Facilitation Guide**

- lab seminar
- New staff induction day
- etc.

**Equipment required:**

- ability to stream the selected podcast episode either as audio on Ausha, Deezer, Spotify (FR) or via YouTube (with EN subtitles)
- as many “BINGO PODCAST” sheets for the relevant episode as there are estimated participants
- pens if not every participant has one
- a printout of the Facilitation Guide + the Transcripts document
- a sheet of paper and a pen to note down any questions that arise
- possibly a display board – flipchart, whiteboard, etc. - to note down the opening question, key figures, keywords, or questions that arise and which you can address live or later

**Typical sequence for a team meeting or laboratory council (up to around 30 people):**

- reminder of your role, the context of the podcast (see “The podcast in brief”, “Why embrace the podcast” “The podcast team” and Episode 0 “Foreword”, which sets the context) and an overview of the session (5 mins)
- hand out the “PODCAST BINGO” sheet and explain the instructions (3 mins)
- individual review of the bingo grid (3 mins)
- listen to the episode (16 to 28 mins)
- propose an initial round of question-gathering OR launch open-ended questions + discussion (drawing on the elements and insights from the Facilitation Guide) (20 to 25 mins)
- conclude by summarising the key messages and reminding participants of useful contacts – see “Don’t stay alone” below with key contacts (5 mins)

**PODCAST BINGO Instructions:**

Brief introduction to the podcast, the context and your role

“Same principle as traditional bingo or lotto.

Whilst listening, tick a box **only if you hear a passage that matches the item** listed in that box. Please note, some boxes need to be filled in.

You can jot down a few keywords in the box to help you remember the passage. This bingo game is a starting point for discussion afterwards.

BINGO means keeping your ears open and listening actively!

Happy listening”

**Typical sequence for a general assembly, etc. (from 30 to several hundred people):**

- **variation for large groups:** form groups of up to 6 people so that, once the listening session is over, a discussion can take place about the podcast, either freely or using the suggested open-ended questions and insights found in the Episode-by-Episode Facilitation Guide (a copy of the facilitation guide must then be distributed to each group). Allow 10 to 15 minutes for a summary of key messages in the large group and a reminder of useful contacts – see “Don’t stay alone” below with key contacts.

## GET YOUR CREATIVE MINDS WORKING – YOU HAVE HALF A DAY OR MORE

As you will hear, each episode is rich in content. There are therefore numerous possibilities:

- ask each person to bring headphones and their smartphone and, in groups, to listen to an episode. Then, in a second phase, to “pitch” the episode to another group in 3 minutes, focusing on the barriers and drivers to gender diversity in the workplace and equality, for example.
- Choose a single episode and then debrief it using a quiz created with the ‘gender insights’ elements found in this guide.
- Select extracts from the transcript document to address a specific issue.
- etc.

Listen to one or more episodes as a group, then let your imagination run wild!

### 4 key points to bear in mind:

- your main concrete and measurable objective (to be noted clearly and/or explained to give meaning to the discussion)
- timing (appoint a timekeeper)
- a detailed plan of action, including any necessary materials
- and the trust-building rules established for the framework of your discussions

### Example of trust-building rules to establish a framework:

- active listening: listen to understand, not to respond; do not interrupt
- shared responsibility: the success of our discussions will depend as much on our facilitation as on your contributions and questions
- kindness: non-judgemental and respectful dialogue, even if we disagree (and that is possible)
- Mindfulness regarding the gendered distribution of speaking time (everyone must be able to speak if they wish to, regardless of gender or other discriminatory criteria)
- Equality: regardless of status, every voice counts as one

# WORDS MATTER - GLOSSARY

## Sexism

The Council of Europe established the following official definition in 2019: “Sexism is any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written remark, practice or behaviour based on the idea that a person or group of people is inferior because of their sex.”

It stems from a gender system of hierarchical dichotomisation between men and women and between the values associated with the feminine and the masculine.

## Gender diversity in the workplace

According to INSEE, a profession is considered gender-diverse when it comprises between 40% and 60% women and men. Gender diversity does not imply parity, let alone true equality.

## Parity

A 50/50 sharing of representative and decision-making power between women and men in France (since the 1999 constitutional revision and the so-called parity laws of the early 2000s, which authorised ‘quotas’—also known as temporary special measures or positive action). Whilst the long-term goal is a 50/50 split, transitional measures may involve minimum thresholds (e.g. a minimum of 40% of each gender).

## Gender equality in the workplace

Refers to the principle that women and men must enjoy the same rights, treatment and opportunities in employment and work, particularly regarding recruitment, pay, training, promotion and working conditions, in order to ensure genuine equality and eliminate discrimination based on sex.

## Gender

Gender can be understood in several ways.

Gender as a system refers to social gender relations, which involve both binary categorisation and a hierarchy between men and women and between the values associated with the masculine and the feminine.

- The Council of Europe (2022), in its glossary on gender equality, states that “gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for women and men”.
- The High Council for Gender Equality (2014) states that “gender is the system of hierarchical and hierarchising norms of femininity and masculinity. These norms are distinct, constructed in opposition to one another, and valid within a given culture and era.”

Gender is also to be understood as ‘social’ sex, which is distinct from biological sex. So-called social sex refers to the gender with which a person identifies. This may or may not correspond to the gender assigned at birth.

It encompasses both a person’s identity and the socio-cultural structures, representations and expectations linked to sex, for example in the form of gender roles and stereotypes.

## **Sex roles / gender roles**

Gender in practice: gender roles correspond to the behaviours, functions and activities socially expected of women and men (“providing financially for one’s family and pursuing a career”, “raising one’s children well and running the household” ...)

## FAQ

### **Q: Why the title “Contre Expériences”?**

**A:** To highlight journeys that challenge stereotypes that remain deeply ingrained. Becoming an engineer or a manager as a woman, or taking on the primary role of caring for a child as a man, still means, consciously or not, going against the grain of dominant norms. And in doing so, we pave the way for other possibilities for those who follow in our footsteps.

### **Q: Why this podcast?**

**A:** Even today in France, only around a quarter of professions are gender-balanced, meaning they comprise between 40% and 60% women and men. There are still so-called ‘male’ and ‘female’ professions, and the glass ceiling persists in management roles. The world of research is no exception. For example, at the CNRS in 2022, the research workforce consists of 65.3% men and 34.7% women, and men hold nearly three-quarters of all governance and management positions.

This podcast aims to give a voice to diverse individuals who embody alternative paths beyond gender stereotypes.

### **Q: How did you identify and select the interviewees?**

**A:** The selection of interviewees was carried out in the field over several stages and in a participatory manner. A questionnaire was sent out in June 2025 to the network of 80 equality correspondents in research units within the Rhône-Auvergne Regional Delegation.

Around thirty people were pre-identified. Then 12 were collectively shortlisted. Following a brief interview with each of these 12 people, and taking into account their availability and diversity criteria, four people were selected.

## DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE! CONTACTS

Feeling unwell, need someone to talk to or support, or have a question about your rights ?

Don't suffer in isolation. A trusted person can listen to you and offer guidance.

**Institutional and voluntary sector contacts shared by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research:** <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles-ressources-utiles-89328>

**Ombudsman:** <https://www.antidiscriminations.fr/>

**At the CNRS or your institution:**

- **equality officers** may be available nearby to offer a listening ear, information and guidance in a supportive and anonymous manner (it is up to you to decide whether to take things further or not)
- **other support services** are available, such as **medical and social staff** bound by professional confidentiality, or helplines, such as France Victimes for the CNRS (an independent and professional helpline available to CNRS staff on 01 80 52 33 77 / [cnrs@france-victimes.fr](mailto:cnrs@france-victimes.fr))
- Finally, a **reporting unit** exists to report incidents and assert your rights to health and safety at work. At the CNRS, the unit can be contacted in French and English at [signalement@cnrs.fr](mailto:signalement@cnrs.fr) (more information on the safeguards of this reporting procedure is available on your intranet)

## THE PODCAST TEAM

**The CNRS, its Rhône-Auvergne Delegation, its Equality Mission and its network of Equality Correspondents in research units**

The [CNRS](#) is one of the world's largest research organisations, with over 30,000 staff: researchers, research and design engineers, administrative staff supporting research, PhD students, etc.

The [Mission for Women's Advancement \(MPDF\)](#) at the CNRS leads the organisation's gender equality policy and drives the creation of equality networks at regional level. The network of over 80 [Equality Correspondents in research units](#), coordinated by the CNRS Rhône-Auvergne Equality Mission, is one of the oldest and most active within the CNRS today.

## COOP-EGAL

[Coop-Egal](#) is a team of professionals that uses interactive methods and active learning to support organisations in their transition towards equality. Their support includes conducting

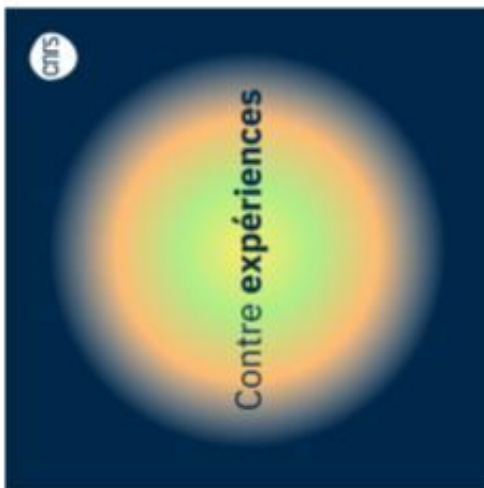
studies and surveys, providing professional training, and offering facilitation or consultancy services.

## Studio PLUS HUIT

[Studio](#) founded in 2014 in Lyon. Specialising in creative sound design and original music composition. A compact and efficient space, right in the heart of Lyon, offering creative input to help you find the right sound vocabulary to suit the spirit of your project and its audience.

## THE BINGO CARDS PROPOSED

*To print and distribute to the participants*

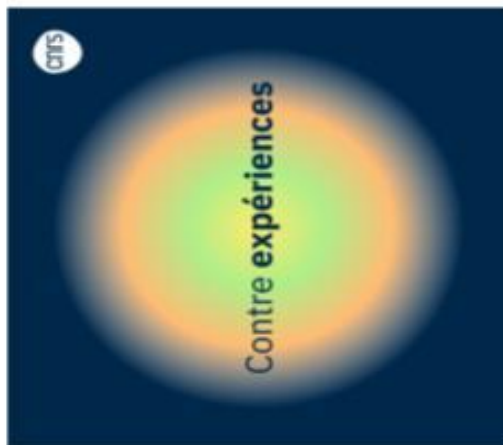


# Bingo!

## Episode 1 Sandrine

<p>"we're clearly not given the tools as women to .....</p> <p>....."</p>	<p>sisterhood: shout-out to her mom, to D....., M....."</p>	<p>housing access issues</p>	<p>being attentive to colleagues</p>
<p>PhD thesis (40%) funded by the CNRS</p>	<p>"Part-time? A 12-hour shift—you can handle it!"</p>	<p>welcome posters by the coffee machine, on the theme of posters : .....</p>	<p>unequal division of child-rearing responsibilities</p>
<p>"I can't afford to break down"</p>	<p>Key role of HR: information, access to rights, support</p>	<p>1 in ... people will experience an anxiety or depressive disorder at some point in their lives</p>	<p>part-time work for rehabilitation purposes</p>
<p>a caring and supportive lab director</p>	<p>by bicycle</p>	<p>Best practices for welcoming newcomers</p>	<p>becoming a parent at a young age, at ..... years old</p>

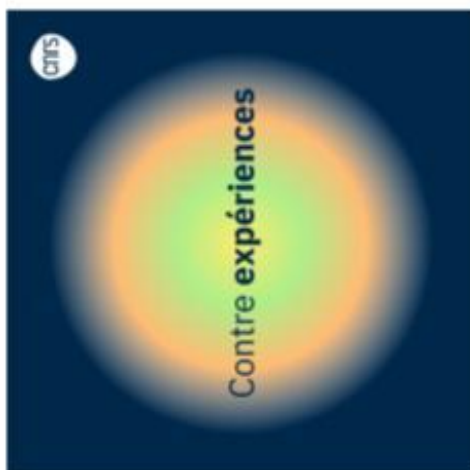
is moving to ..... to be with his daughter	becoming a parent at a young age, at ..... years old	need-based student grant	one of the jobs he had when he was younger: .....-sitter	the right to disconnect	a marathon run at sprint speed
to be an ally	"It didn't work out; it was too complicated"	part-time work	created audio content with his daughter	caring colleagues	
changes labs to protect his health	"Come on, your daughter isn't dead!"	Batten disease	maps accessible to the visually impaired		
"It came as quite a shock"					



*Bingo!*

Episode 2  
Jean-Marie

initial desire to become a speech-language pathologist	role ..... of the thesis advisor	"Having to read and write a lot, plus the length of the thesis topic—it was tough"	"I'll never be as eloquent as he is"
"I don't really have a typical day"	"I have dyslexia"	"When it came to pursuing a Ph.D., I felt like it just wasn't for me."	variety of tasks in research
A moment of symbolic violence (a critical email about a mistake)	scholarship student	"Try, dare, and don't hold back"	..... for five years before becoming a DU
behind the scenes of research	a warm welcome from colleagues	PhD in.... years	"cut down on working in the evenings and at weekends"

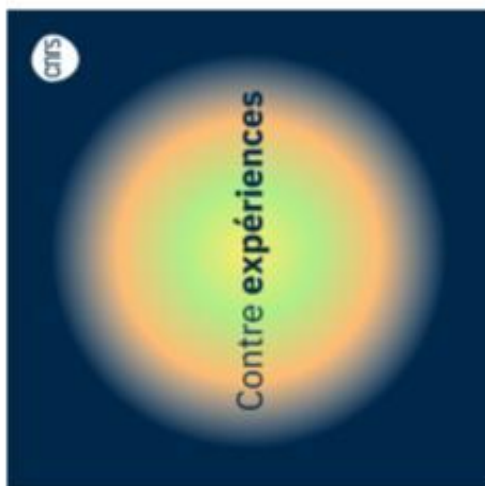


# Bingo!

## Episode 3

### Isabel

“cut down on working in the evenings and at weekends”	A colleague’s crucial role: “Big shout-out to .....	A detour into the visual arts / contemporary art	possible power dynamics between researchers and BIATSS staff
“Long story”: a journey that was by no means mapped out in advance	Flexible working hours as a driver of equality and well-being	Geographical mobility finally accepted (leaving one’s region)	Adapted exercise activities offered at work, such as yoga
impostor syndrome	Dealing with sexist comments or behaviour at work	Parents who aren’t scientists but are supportive	“There are no problems, only solutions”
Don’t censor yourself, even if your profile isn’t ‘perfect’	also assistant to .....	Four years on fixed-term contracts and periods of unemployment	The deadline is .....



*Bingo!*

Episode 4  
Noëllie

# CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Produced by CNRS Rhône Auvergne and Coop-Egal, with support from Studio Plus Huit.

## A. Production

- Produced by CNRS Rhône Auvergne and Coop-Egal, with support from Studio Plus Huit.
  - Coordinated by Lucie Marchal (CNRS) and Romain Sabathier (Coop-Egal).
- Editorial direction: Lucie Marchal and Cyriel Kubala (CNRS) and Romain Sabathier (Coop-Egal).

## B. Writing & Concept

- Scripts and adaptation: Lucie Marchal (CNRS), Romain Sabathier (Coop-Egal), Sandrine Denis-Quanquin, Jean-Marie Favreau, Noëllie Ylla, Isabel Colón de Carvajal.

## D. Production & Technical & Music

- Sound production, recording, editing: Flavien Taulelle from Studio Plus Huit.

## F. Illustration & Communication

- Cover art: Lucie Marchal.
- Communication & distribution: Lucie Marchal and Cyriel Kubala (CNRS) and Romain Sabathier (Coop-Egal).

## G. Acknowledgements

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## H. Legal notices

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