

Women of ImpleMendez

On this International Women's Day, we want to celebrate every woman that makes up our network. To this end, we asked the Women of ImpleMendez to share their experiences with us. The result is this collection of testimonies.

Women's experiences in their academic and professional careers are varied and multifaceted. In their stories, we find companionship, support, and challenges that are uniquely characteristic of a woman's journey. Each of the experiences shared below is different, and yet there are common threads that connect them. We hope you enjoy reading them.

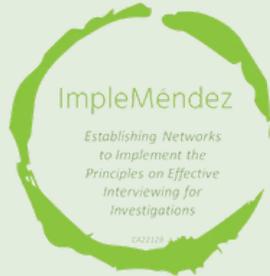
Happy International Women's Day!

Telma Sousa Almeida

As I reflect on my journey in academia, what stands out most is the constant negotiation between ambition and responsibility. Leading research projects, supervising students, securing funding, and building international collaborations are deeply rewarding, but they also require persistence, strategic clarity, and the ability to navigate spaces where leadership is still subtly gendered.

I have often felt that, as women in science, we are expected not only to excel intellectually, but also to carry relational, emotional and organisational labour that remains largely invisible. At the same time, I see tremendous strength in this position. We build teams, we create networks, we mentor generously, and we open doors for those who come after us.

For me, science is not only about producing knowledge. It is about shaping systems to be fairer, more rigorous and more humane. Being part of a network like ImpleMendez reinforces that this work is collective, and that leadership in science can be collaborative, principled and transformative.



Beatriz Dias Almeida

25 years old

One of the most significant experiences in my professional career, both as a woman in science and in my practice as a psychologist, was my work at the Forensic Office of the Ispa Clinic.

In this context, I discovered that aspects of my identity, including being a woman, facilitated trust and openness, especially when working with victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Adriana Reyes Flores

41 years old

My professional experience has shown me that knowledge and expertise are useful when they allow us to understand problems that have remained ignored, thereby giving a voice to those who, due to their disadvantaged circumstances, are not usually heard.

I work with women who are victims of acid attacks in Mexico, and after a conference, one of them told me, "You described exactly what I'm going through, and I didn't know how to express it."

I believe that science serves the community, vulnerable people, and those who lack access to education. Sometimes it falls to us to say what others cannot.

Anonymous

48 years old

I've had the luck to be supported in a wonderful way by both male and female supervisors and more experienced colleagues in my academic research. However, as a young expert I had some unpleasant sexualising and belittling experiences with particularly police authorities (which seem to me, regardless of country, to be rather old-fashioned).

I do hope and believe this is slowly changing. I also think there has been a significant post-me-too change in what is deemed acceptable behaviour at conferences and the like, towards a much better atmosphere where sexual harassment is less accepted.

One claim that I believe might be something of a myth is that women would not support each other. Nothing could be further from my experience. I do know a couple of colleagues (regardless of gender) who are envious and difficult with people but have been tremendously supported by female colleagues of all ages and hope to support all younger colleagues in an equal way.

Patrícia de Oliveira Gonçalves

26 years old

A defining moment in my career was realising, through my work and research, how easily vulnerability can be normalised, especially for women. Working primarily with vulnerable populations, including in contexts of sexual and domestic violence and with neurodivergent people, I noticed a recurring pattern.

Women are often required to justify their experiences in ways others are not. The inequality is not always loud. It is frequently procedural, subtle, entrenched.

Recognising this shifted the way I understand my role as a psychologist and researcher. It reinforced the importance of asking better questions, listening more carefully, and examining not only the systems within which we work, but also the individuals within them.

It is a responsibility I'll consciously carry throughout my career.

Prof. Yvonne Daly

Just this week a graduate of my School came back to speak to our current students. She is now a barrister in England and Wales, having undertaken her undergraduate law degree with us in Ireland. She has no connections in law, no doors have been automatically opened for her, and she has had to work hard to get to where she is.

She is truly inspirational, and spoke openly and freely with the current students, urging them to do as she does, offering them the ladder to climb up behind her. She told them that she does not see any limitations on her, whether by virtue of race, gender, age or anything else.

She places no limitations on her own path or success. Inspirational! We should all take some inspiration from her approach! I was delighted that her undergrad degree with us gave her the springboard to jump higher and higher. I very much believe in the value of education, and it is always rewarding to see someone grasping it with both hands, and really running with it.

Kai Li Chung

37 years old

During the Covid-19 pandemic, I navigated a complicated pregnancy while holding a major academic leadership role during a period of uncertainty. At the same time, my father experienced two strokes, and I was balancing the caregiving demands of being a daughter and a new mother, while still leading teams, supporting students, and keeping academic programmes running through constantly shifting circumstances.

Despite these challenges, I continued my research, secured a prestigious national grant, strengthened collaborations with police practitioners, and contributed meaningfully to my field. I was later promoted to Associate Professor - just five years after completing my PhD. That period reminded me how often women carry multiple roles at once, and how perseverance can create unexpected growth even in difficult times.