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International Women in Engineering Day: How to Get More Female in Engineering

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Ikram Chbicheb, Trainee estimating team at Bouygues

Energies & Services

Ikram Chbicheb, Trainee estimating team at Bouygues Energies & Services explains her aspiration and first working experience in engineering field.

Gender diversity is an issue before we even start employment. As a child, I wanted to be an engineer; however, when it was time to start my university studies I hesitated, because for me the engineering was a profession with a masculine connotation. To overcome this gender challenge, it is really important that **women stand up**, in order to get young girls to pursue a career in engineering. Young women need to see people like them being successful if they have the same ambition.

I started a medical studies degree, but soon realised I wanted to go back to my original plan of studying engineering. Working abroad is an extremely rewarding experience personally and professionally. Currently I am studying Electrical, Electronic and Automation Engineering at Claude Bernard University in Lyon, France. I really like the idea of working for an international company and the opportunity of an internship at Bouygues Energies & Services has given me a chance to familiarise myself with the electrical engineering industry and improve my English.

Getting my experience abroad

My experience at Bouygues Energies & Services has been incredibly positive. I am the only woman in the estimating team, however, I don't feel any discrimination. We work as a team and I see plenty of skills and qualities in my colleagues that I can learn from. I think like everywhere, it's necessary to find confidence, to earn respect by preparing well and to have a clear understanding of the subject so you can walk on site or into work without feeling intimidated. **Just be yourself!** It can be a good idea to find yourself a mentor within the company who should be available to provide you with support and answer any questions you may have. With so many men in this field, their support and advice are invaluable.

The challenges, and opportunities to learn are constant; all contributing to the pride felt from seeing a project come to reality. My biggest aspiration as an engineer is to directly contribute to projects that could change people's lives for the better.

Celebrating **"International Women in Engineering Day"** means a lot to me, it is an awesome initiative. Indeed, in the world only 20% of technical jobs are occupied by women therefore I think it is important to mobilise women around this field and develop their taste for science and technology. Not only does talking about the different engineering professions allow women to learn more and follow their interests, it will break stereotypes and bring renewed confidence to girls who wish to pursue this career.

When asked for advice for any women who want to choose a career in engineering, I am full of positivity: **Not only does engineering offer a huge variety of career choices and opportunities, these jobs are rewarding and fulfilling. If you want to work as an engineer, don't hesitate. Besides, I would say - don't consider yourself to be a female engineer, just be an engineer!**