

Scientist [she/her/hers]

Many countries in the Middle East and Western Asia have exceptionally high levels of participation of women in STEM fields—a matter for reflection and celebration on International Women’s Day.

Globally, women are vastly underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. But there are parts of the world where the opposite is true.

In most countries in the Middle East and Western Asia, for example, women make up the majority of STEM students. In a commentary published today, Heba EL-Deghaidy discusses the roots of this phenomenon, which new research shows is linked to the congruence of women’s gender and physics identities in these countries (see [Viewpoint: Why More Women Study Physics in Muslim Countries](#)).

To hear directly about their experiences as women in physics, *Physics* interviewed researchers working in Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, and Egypt (see [Q&A: Where Women Scientists Are the Majority](#)). On International Women’s Day, we celebrate these women’s achievements, which will aid in dismantling antiquated stereotypes and in inspiring future generations of

women scientists.

—Matteo Rini, Editor, and Katherine Wright, Deputy Editor



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