

# HANAE BOULEHJOUR

Hanae Boulehjour is a PhD student at the University of the Basque Country and Donostia International Physics Centre.



## Where did you study?

I am from Italy so I studied there. I did my Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry at the University of Turin. Afterwards, I went to the University of Bordeaux (France) where I obtained my Master's degree in Theoretical and Quantum Chemistry. And currently I am doing my PhD at the University of the Basque Country in Donostia.

## Did you have any models when you were a kid?

I really liked **Marie Curie**. She has been an icon as a woman in science.

## Was it difficult to learn science being a girl?

Personally, I did not have any difficulties in learning science being a girl.

## Are you happy with your actual work?

I actually am. I know it is not the case for everyone, but in my case I was very lucky because my supervisors are very young, and I am their first PhD. I am treated very well and if I have any questions they are available.

## Why is chemistry important?

The interesting thing about chemistry is that everything around you is chemistry. Everything is made up of molecules and atoms, therefore everything can be broken down into chemistry. But I would not say that chemistry is more important than other fields.

## Why did you come to Donostia?

I discovered Donostia in 2022. I came here to do an internship for six months. But I fell in love with The Basque Country and the Basque Culture and I had the opportunity to do my PhD here, so I accepted the offer. But definitely, because I loved the Basque Country.

## What is the most difficult thing in your job?

The most difficult thing is to figure out what changes you have to do to improve in order to get what we want. You can spend a week just reading literature about what people before you have done to understand what you can improve.

## Which is the best place for a scientist to work?

That is a very wide question. There are schools that have more reputation, but it really depends on the field. I know that there are a lot of universities in the USA and Canada which got a lot of fame, but honestly the level of Europe is quite high. And also in Japan they are very advanced on things we are working on.

## Do you earn the same salary as a man?

I never thought about this, but I guess so. In my case, since it is a grant from the government it is the same for everyone. In this case, there is no difference between men or women.

## What advice would you give to a girl who wants to become a scientist?

The advice that I would give to everybody is to be really curious and to believe in yourself.

## Did your family support you with your studies?

Yes, they did. My parents gave me a message which I want to share with you; "you have a lot of choices, you have a lot of open possibilities and no one is better than the other".

## Who is your favourite scientist? Why?

**Marie Curie!** She discovered the X-ray and she was a woman. As a woman in science, I feel more related to her. But all scientists are important because you have to take into account all the work has been done before, so it is like a collective effort.

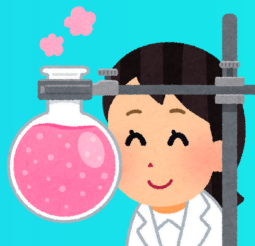


Donostia



KIMIKA  
FAKULTATEA  
FACULTAD  
DE QUÍMICA

50  
URTE  
AÑOS



Amezketza

BY  
ZUMADI  
SCHOOL