

The science next door

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“Girls bring unique perspectives that science cannot afford to miss”

How to ignite curiosity and passion for science and technology in teens and stimulate the aspiration for higher education?

This question is the topic of a talk given Friday, October 3, at the **Wired Next Fest** in **Rovereto** by **Dominique Cappelletti**, researcher at **Fondazione Bruno Kessler’s Institute for Evaluation Research on Public Policies (FBK-IRVAPP)**

“First of all,” Cappelletti said, “science must not remain closed in laboratories or relegated to specialists, but must be accessible, close, familiar. It must literally be next door. For this reason, we believe it is essential to propose increasingly engaging projects that will connect schools with the world of research and other local actors, such as companies and businesses. Recent studies show unequivocally that educational policies represent a crucial energy engine of a society that aspires to innovation.”

During the debate in **Piazza Malfatti** conducted by journalist **Tommaso Perrone** with **Anna Berti Suman**, researcher at Luiss University and founder of Sensing for Justice, and **Chiara Fedrigotti**, researcher in Conservation Biology at Trento’s MUSE, Dominique Cappelletti then illustrated [**SPARKLE**](#), a project, coordinated by FBK, to bring science directly to schools and which is being experimented in twelve high schools including Trentino and Veneto.

“In the Italian education system,” Cappelletti said, “trajectories crystallize already at the end of middle school. It is there that it becomes crucial to intervene to ignite the spark of passion towards subjects in the scientific-technological field. This is why FBK, together with partners such as LevelUp, the University of Verona and the University of Trento, has created Sparkle, a project that uses interactive teaching kits with advanced sensors to allow kids to see the invisible and understand the importance of scientific measurements.”

*“There is one aspect,” concluded Cappelletti, “that is particularly close to our hearts: girls are still widely underrepresented in scientific and technological fields. Reducing gender inequalities in **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education pathways is not only a matter of social equity, but represents a strategic opportunity to enrich and diversify the innovation landscape. We must create an ecosystem in which everyone is allowed to make the best choice for their attitudes and desires, free from prejudice and conditioning. Girls bring unique perspectives that science cannot afford to miss.”*

The WIRED Next Fest Trentino is organized by WIRED Italia in partnership with the Autonomous Province of Trento – Department of Economic Development, Work, Family, University and Research – Trentino Marketing, Trentino Sviluppo, Azienda per il Turismo Rovereto, Vallagarina e Monte Baldo, Municipality of Rovereto.

The Scientific Committee chaired by the Head of Content of WIRED Italia works on the construction of the program, with the participation of the University of Trento, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Fondazione Edmund Mach, Fondazione Hub Innovazione Trentino, the Provincial Institute for Research and Educational Experimentation – IPRASE and MUSE – Museo delle Scienze.

More info about FBK-IRVAPP: <https://www.fbk.eu/it/ricerca-valutativa-delle-politiche-pubbliche/>

More info about the SPARKLE project: <https://irvapp.fbk.eu/it/projects/detail/sparkle/>

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