

Numbers and actions.

The Supernova Foundation initiative

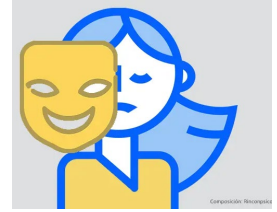
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion – Outreach session

14th Iberian Gravitational Waves Meeting

CIEMAT, Madrid, Spain

24 June 2025 - María Santos Lleó - ESA

Impostor syndrome?



The Supernova Foundation

María Santos Lleó

on behalf of **The Supernova Foundation**,
Paarmita Pandey, Michelle Lochner et al.

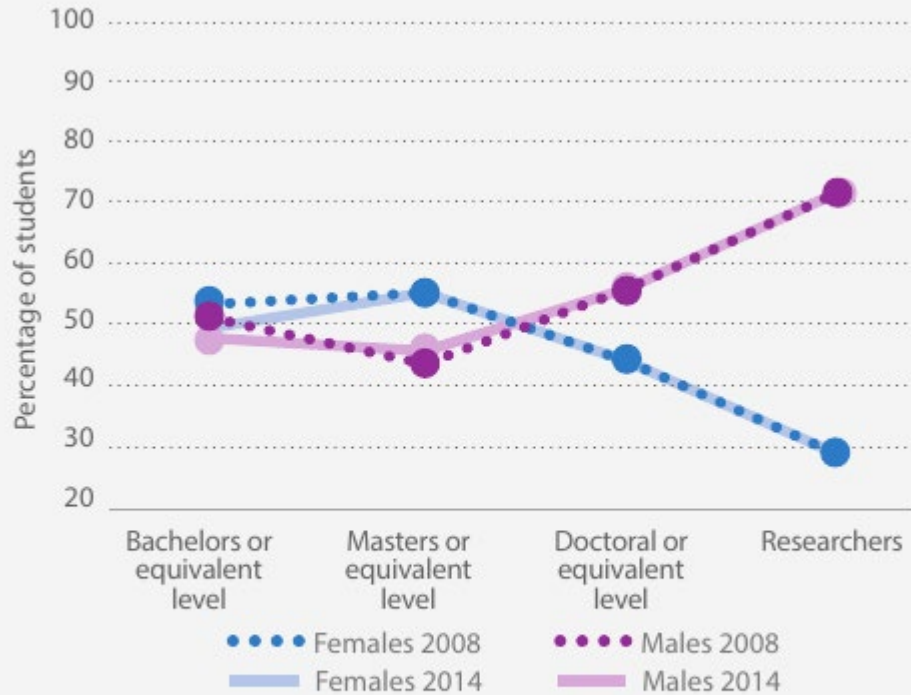
The Supernova Foundation

Mentoring and networking for
women and gender minorities in
physics

Woman. Life. Freedom.



Why do we
need
a mentoring
programme
for women in
physics?



*Gender gap widens significantly among science researchers.
226 countries.*

Data source: UNESCO 2008-2014¹¹

Gender Gap!

Can Mentoring Help?

Connecting women

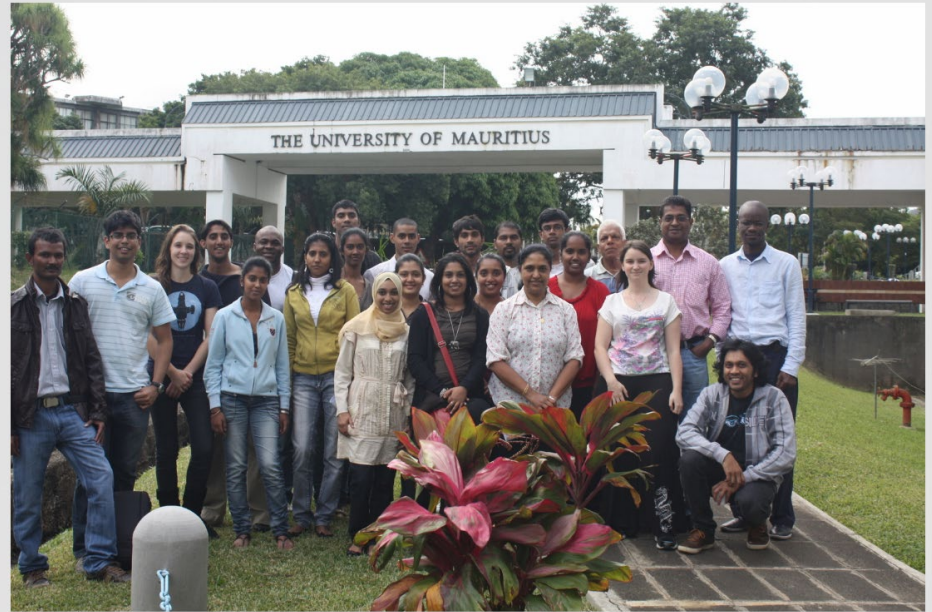
- Mentoring by women role models acts as a “vaccine” against stereotypes and feelings of isolation
(<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2017/05/16/1613117114>)
- UNESCO study into gender inequality in STEM fields finds mentoring could be part of a solution
(<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000253479>)
- Interviews with women graduates indicate the good mentoring was key to their success (<https://physics.aps.org/articles/v13/s53>)

Origin Story

2015: Mauritian Mentoring
Programme,
by Prof. Bruce Bassett and
Michelle Lochner

2017 Supernova Foundation

JEDI Mauritius, 2013



SANGEETA UJJWAL



Country: India
Research Field: Physics
Institute: University of Delhi
Position: Postdoc

SATYA GONTCHO A GONTCHO



Country: United States of America
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Position: Project Scientist

SHAZRENE S. MOHAMED



Country: South Africa
Research Field: Astronomy
Institute: South African Astronomical Observatory and University of Cape Town
Position: Faculty

SIPHEPHILE NCUBE



Country: South Africa
Research Field: Physics
Institute: University of the Witwatersrand
Position: Postdoc

SIYI ZHOU



Country: Sweden
Research Field: Theoretical Physics
Institute: Stockholm University
Position: Postdoc

SUDESHNA BORO SAIKIA



Country: Austria
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: University of Vienna
Position: Post doctoral researcher

SWARNAMALA SIRSI



Country: India
Research Field: Theoretical Physics
Institute: University of Mysore
Position: Associate Professor (retired)

VALERIA PETTORINO



Country: France
Research Field: Astrophysics and Cosmology
Institute: CEA
Position: STAFF Scientist

Ghazal Geshnizjani



Michelle Lochner



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Dee Knights



PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATOR

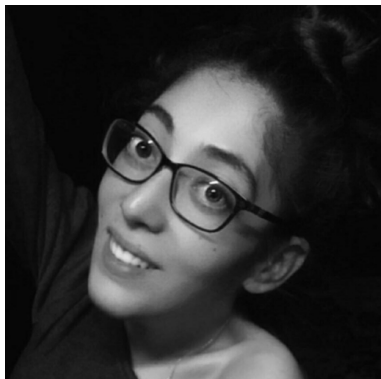
Leadership Team

Valeria Pettorino



Leïla Haegel





Anna Chrysostomou



Claudia Mignone

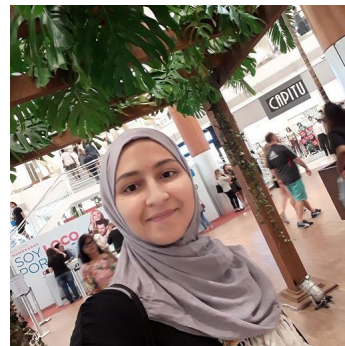


Rutuja Pilgar

Social Media Team

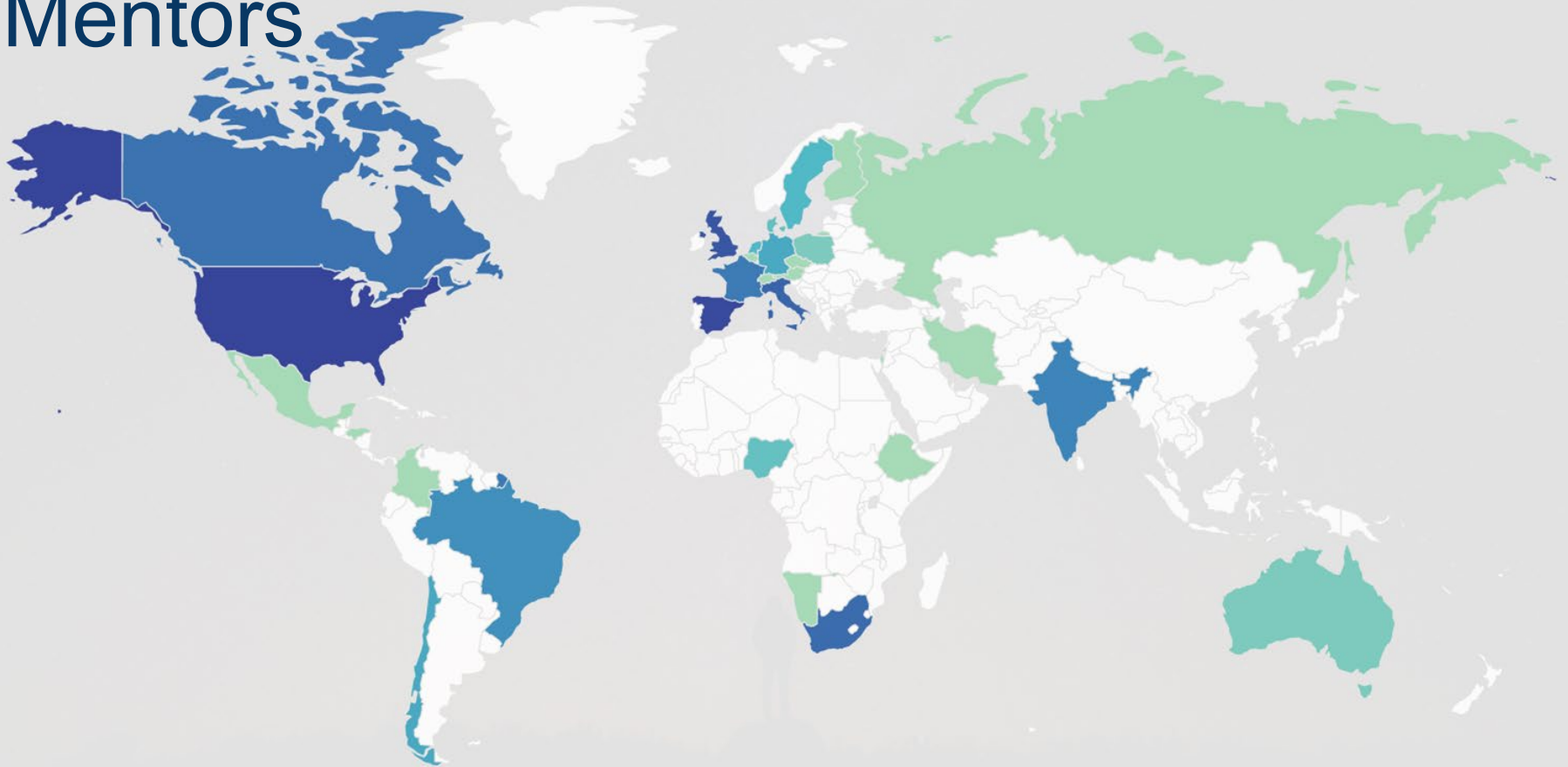


Priya l Bordia

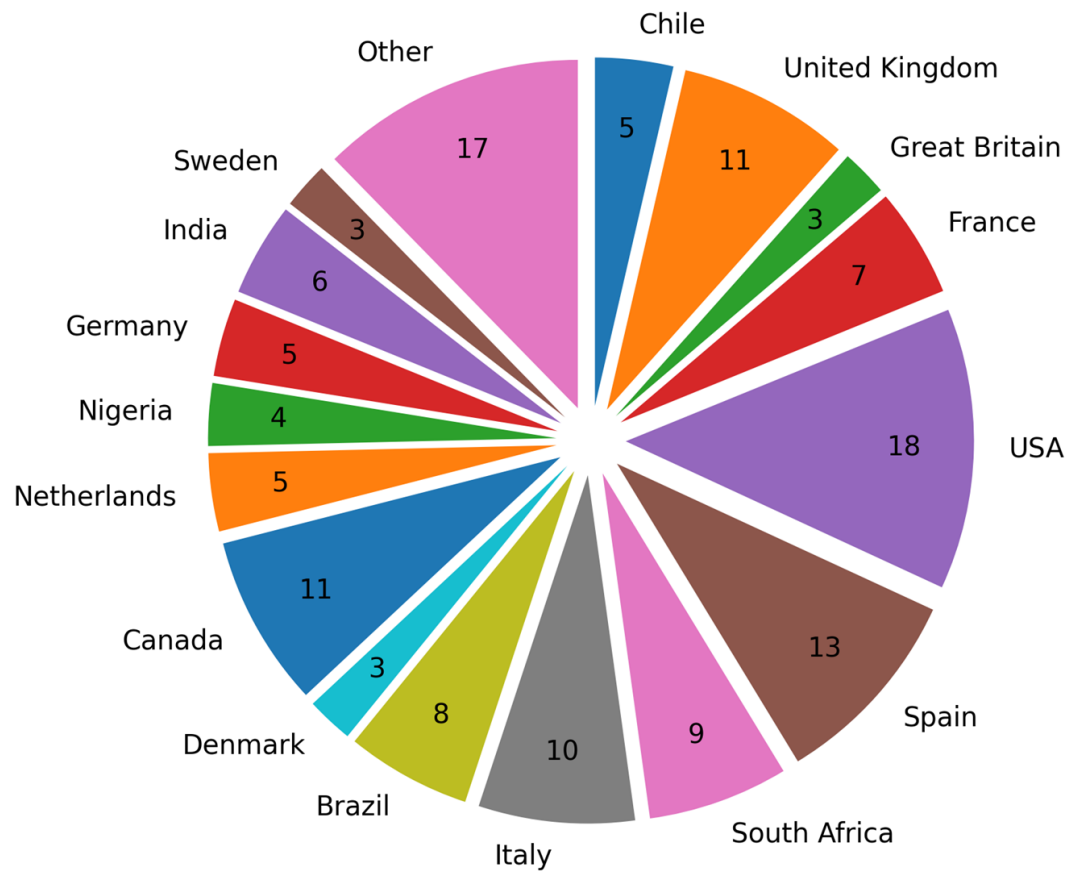


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Mentors

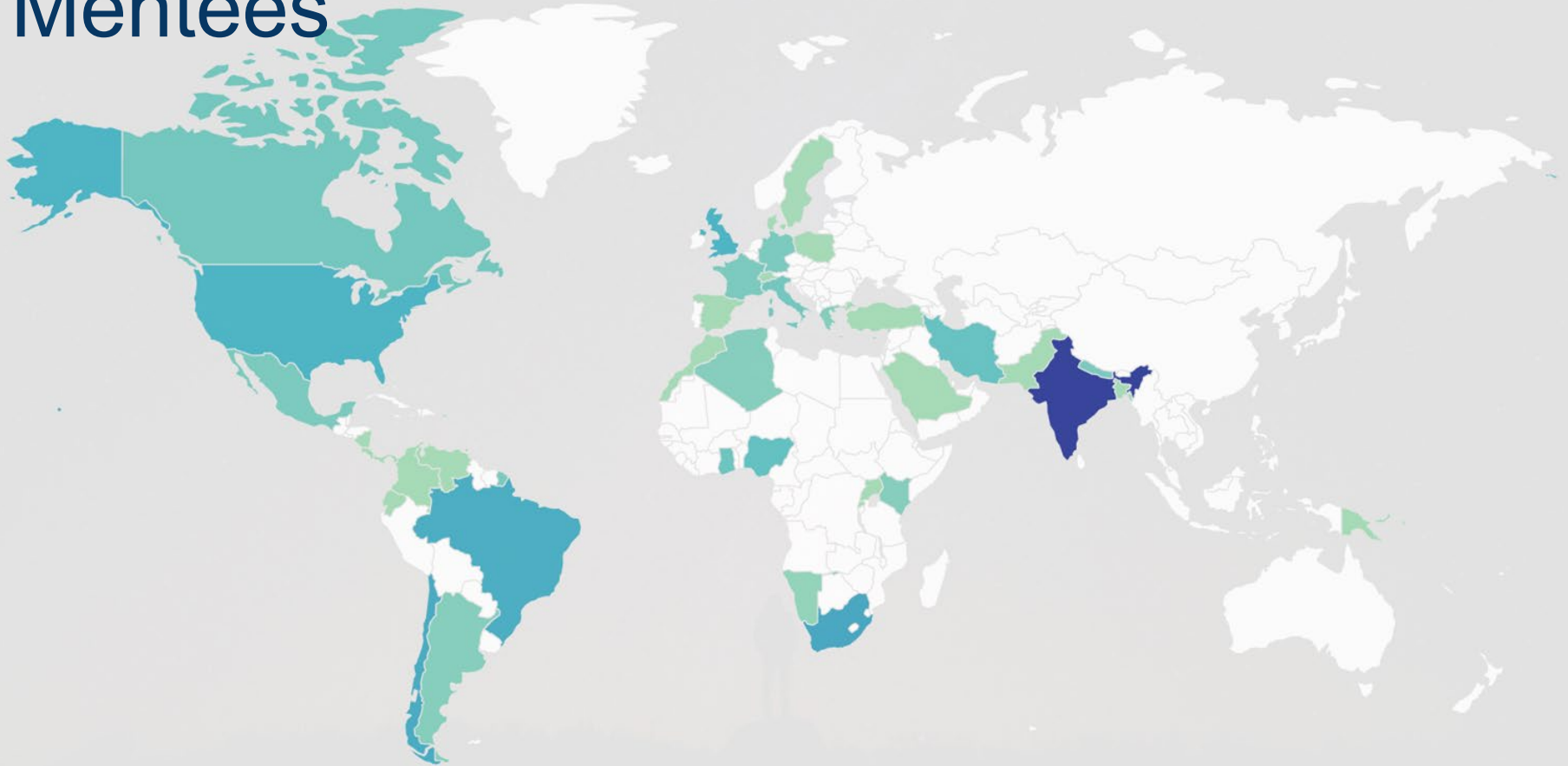


Mentors

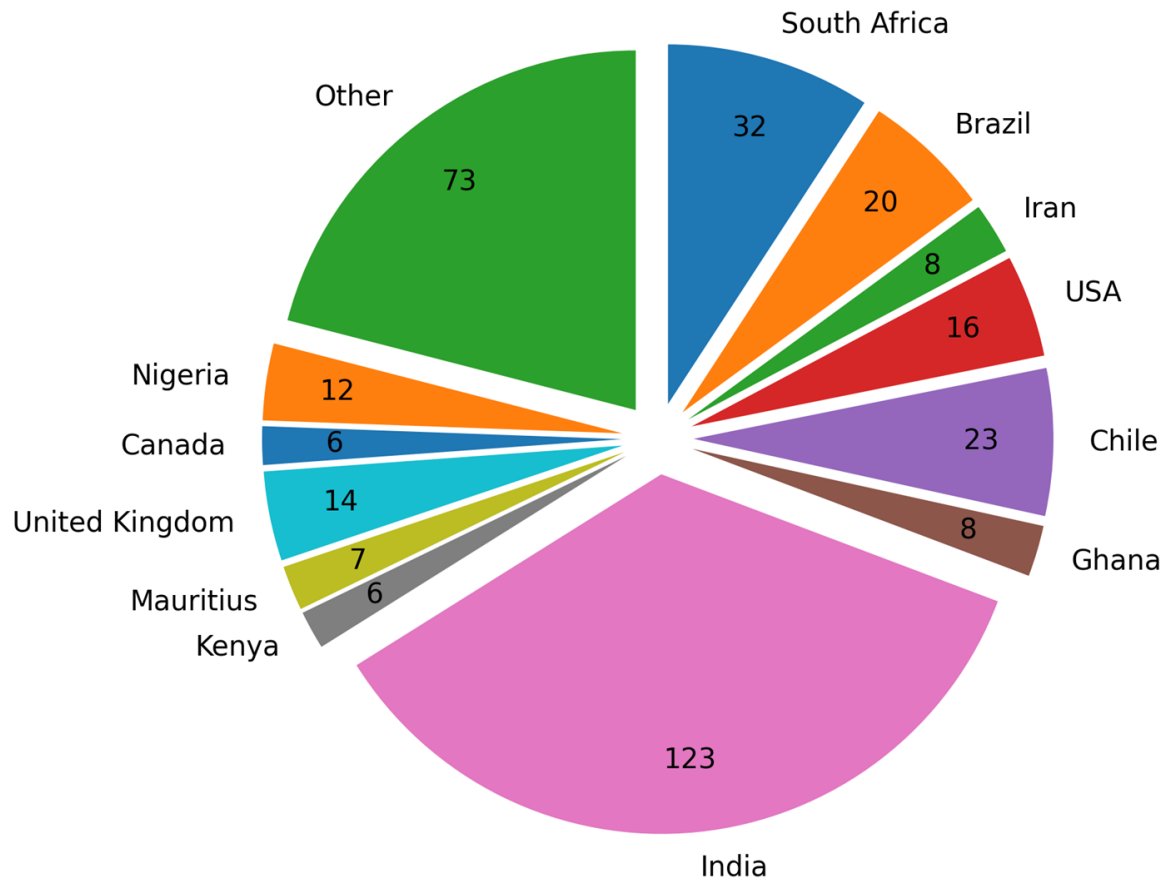


Breakdown by country (as at 03/02/2022)

Mentees



Mentees



Breakdown by country (as at 03/02/2022)

In short

- 237 mentees, 115 mentors, 54 countries
- women & gender minorities
- Physics, (++) astronomy)
- Meet once a month for private mentoring
- Regular (~2 months) webinars

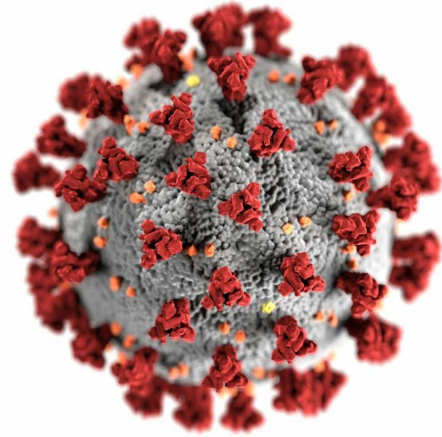
Organisational Lessons Learned

- online community!
- mentors and mentees organise themselves
- BUT it's important to provide training and support, especially when defining expectations
- Everyone needs mentoring at some point

My personal “travel”

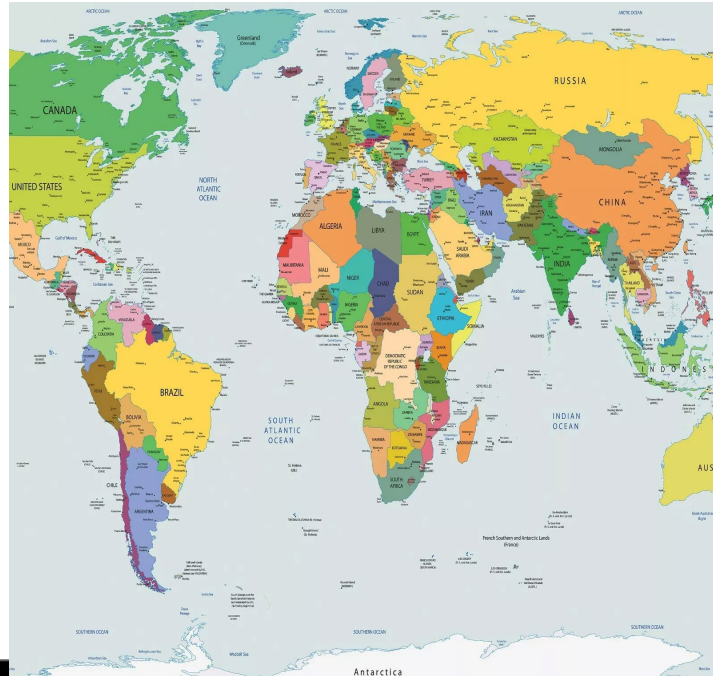
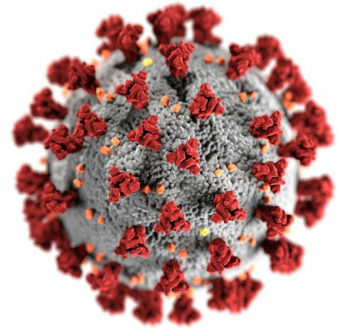


August 2020



August 2020

How to choose?



Hear from some of our members

- make time to listen,
- give me space to explore my ideas while gently nudging me in the right direction when I needed
- create a safe environment to feel comfortable asking questions or expressing doubts ...
- even a single mentorship relationship — when done thoughtfully — can have lasting value



Hear from some of our members

Mentor and mentee both share the same feeling:

“ I am really grateful ”



Want to be involved?

Sign up to be a mentor or mentee at:
<http://supernovafoundation.org>

Share on social media:

-  https://www.instagram.com/supernova_mentoring/
-  https://twitter.com/SF_mentoring
-  <https://www.facebook.com/SFmentoring/>
-  <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-supernova-foundation>



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