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Promoting Women in Physics in South Africa

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Recent attention to the declining number of women studying physics at universities in South Africa motivated the authors to launch a poster campaign to tackle the issues. The project focused on 7 female physicists from PhD students to professors, in South Africa.

Through interviews and photography the authors created a series of posters to be sent to over 200 high schools, each presenting a portrait of the physicists, some background about their careers and research, and their message to young people. The campaign intends to influence and motivate female high school students to study physics and consider a career in research, and to break down stereotypes of physicists and careers in physics to both girls and boys and to the general public. The process behind the campaign will be presented, along with the findings from the research and interviews on the situation of female physicists in South Africa, and an evaluation of the project.

The project was sponsored by the University of Cape Town (UCT), the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) and the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) Women in Physics in South Africa (WiPiSA).

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