

To all the people who made this event possible,

I want to tell you some words about the most wonderful experience of my life, even though these five days are difficult to be put into words. During the conference, I met Nobel laureates and probably future Nobel laureates from so many different countries. Not only English, but also science was our universal language. We had only little time to get to know each other, but I can say I already miss many people from this event. After being surrounded everyday by 400 people of my age, the first mornings after the conference felt too quiet and the days not very well organized. I still chat on Facebook with lots of people I met there and we all share the same feeling that the WSCI group was where we belonged. I still talk about Physics and literature with Alberto from Mexico. I still share music with the funny Polish guys and Josefine from Denmark still sends us traditional receipts. Minella from Albania contacted me on whatsapp and I became penfriends with a Chinese young scientist (actually email penfriends, because we weren't sure that letters would arrive their destination quickly). Of course, we still chat everyday on the Facebook poster group "Group 18". And just yesterday, Jack from New Zealand told us that he still didn't fully unpack. As you can see, we tried to make the best from this amazing chance to meet each other, to communicate and to share a little about us, our countries, our educational systems and our love for science.

I was indeed very enthusiastic about the conference since I was invited, but the event totally exceeded my expectations. I read the timetable a hundred times and I couldn't believe it's going to happen. That's why now when I look back at the event, I just want to thank anyone who made it happen. It was a dream which came true.

The speeches of the Nobel laureates were extraordinary. I liked very much the fact that, besides presenting us their work, they inserted in their lectures advice and inspirational messages for young scientists. Each of them had an original way to speak about his topic and to get us involved in the presentation. I must admit that I had a favorite speech: prof. Gross's. And that's not only because I'm interested in particle physics and that's what I want to do in the future. Prof. Gross had a way of speaking which caught our attention because we could see his dedication and how much he enjoys his work. During breaks, he stayed to answer all our questions and looked very happy to be surrounded by so many people interested in science. I think it's incredible to see a Nobel laureate so delighted to talk to young scientists. What I found most inspirational was not only the speech itself or the answers, but how available and pleased he was. I believe this is the best description of love of science: you just want to share it with everyone. I will particularly keep in mind the minutes during breaks when he talked to us and took photos with us.

Prof. Kroto's lecture was one of the best when it comes to the interaction with the audience. We all appreciated his sense of humor and we could see that he really liked being there with us. He created a magical atmosphere and even though he didn't use big words, his speech was inspirational because he reminded us about the playful part of science. After all, science is fun and that's why we like it.

Probably the most motivational speech was prof. Shechtman's. His story about not giving up an idea we believe in was impressive and I think we all had something to learn from him. If we are sure that we are right about something, we have to stand against all critics.

Prof. Aumann talked about consciousness, which totally won the audience. That's probably the reason why he had to answer to lots of questions during the panel and after. Once more I observe

that we as young scientists from all around the world have something in common (other than love for science): we are interested in philosophy and we only need to hear the word consciousness and you got our attention for no matter how much time.

Apart from the lectures of the Nobel laureate, what really amazed me was that we had the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. I have never talked to more than 200 people in 5 days before. I met students from all the countries, from Fiji to Denmark, from Mexico to Italy and China. It was a big group of cheerful people where anyone could talk to anyone and where we all found common interests and hobbies. We all learnt a lot from each other in terms of hard work and dedication for our studies. Not only that we shared the passion for science, but I also found people with the same interest for tennis or football. I found people who read the same books as me or watched the same movies. I found Star wars fans. I found people who listen to the same music as I do, from Metallica to Wagner. We even found out that we have the same jokes, even though our cultures and humors were supposed to be very different. Of course I discovered interesting things about traditions, events, education or language in other countries, but what really impressed me where not the aspects that are different, but the aspects that are exactly the same! The cultural barriers vanished when it came to what we like, what we don't like, what we find funny, what is popular. I have never experienced something like this before. Actually, globalization never seemed so real to me before. It didn't matter that we are from Europe or Asia, that we are black or white, that we are Muslims or Christians; we all loved talking about science. We all loved dancing, and taking photos, and drinking lemonade, and running in the water at the seaside. We were all stressed and nervous when talking to the Nobel laureates. We were all tired, but happy after party in Tel Aviv. We were all enthusiastic before the sight-seeing day in the Old city. More than we shared traditions, we shared feelings. We shared emotions. Even though at the end of the day we were sleepy, we still spent some time together every evening. I will keep in mind the great moments we had together, especially with the people from my group. I think that for only 5 days of interaction, we know each other well and I hope we'll keep in touch. We still use the Facebook group we created for working on the poster. Now that everyone got back home (some of them even back to school), we still have lots of things to talk about. Moreover, in the last few days, I added more than 100 people from the conference on Facebook. It's nice to see them all sharing photos from the event and writing about their experience.

I think that, at least when it comes to small groups, the poster competition was an incredible idea. We had the chance to get to know each other before the conference and to work in a team. I never had this opportunity to work on something with people I've never known before. In my opinion, everything related to the poster competition was very useful for our personal development: we proposed topics, we voted, we put our ideas together, we did some research. More than a competition, it was a way to make us work together. We were from different time zones, but we still managed to take part in lots of Facebook conferences before the event. We switched the topic of our poster two times and this was a chance to look for information about topics I wasn't familiar to, such as thorium as source of nuclear power or optogenetics. After talking for two weeks with people from my group, I was very enthusiastic to meet them. When I got to the conference I couldn't wait to finally see them and continue our work. Despite the fact that we didn't win, we learnt a lot from the competition and it was a chance to make new friends. After all, it is difficult to talk to 400 people, but it's much easier to get close to a group of ten people.

Apart from the wonderful experience of meeting Nobel laureates and making friends from different countries, I enjoyed the entertaining activities from the conference. The opening ceremony and closing ceremony were full of surprises: the dance crew, the cultural night and, of course, the mentalist. Also, I loved the 2-minutes discussions from the first day. After the activity, with some of the people, the 2-minutes extended to almost half an hour. If we hadn't been tired, we would have probably continued talking all night long. We were all both very different and very alike and I had the feeling I want to meet everyone and to find more about each one.

Of course, I can't end my WSCI story without mentioning the party in Tel Aviv. The students I met were not only passionate about their work, but they were also in love with parties, dancing and having a good time. And I can definitely say this was the best party I've been too.

If I were to describe WSCI in one word, it would be "inspirational". I got home and after one or two days of "I miss the conference so much", I started to feel very enthusiastic about the new school year. I still have one month of holiday, but I can't wait to be back at university and to continue my way to become a scientist. I hope that one day I'll meet again at least some of the wonderful students from WSCI. I won't forget that in many countries I'll travel to in the future, I have a (future) scientist that I want to see again. And I hope there will be many others editions of WSCI and other young students will have the chance to live what we lived in these five days.

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