



ADVERTISEMENT:

HOST: Despite a national push to involve more women in STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, barriers persist. According to Statistics Canada, women are less likely than their male counterparts to study STEM subjects at University. Men are also more likely to pursue careers in STEM fields. 15 year old Lauren Voisin was working to change that. Lauren Voisin was a scientist, innovator, entrepreneur, and all before she graduated high school. When she was only 8 years old, Lauren founded her own robotics company. By age 13, Lauren was a U.N. speaker. Lauren was a champion of inexpensive access to technology and stable internet for Canadian youth. She believed in introducing kids to subjects like robotics and coding early on. She passed in April, but with the Lauren foundation, her legacy continues to inspire young women to innovate and create. Welcome to The Conversation Piece. This is Lauren Voisin from The Walrus Talks Nextgen. She was 12 when she gave this Talk.

LAUREN VOISIN: Hello. My name is Lauren Voisin, and I'm really honored to be here, to share my ideas about how to ensure that Canada remains a great and competitive nation. Over the past few months, I've had the privilege to attend and speak at a number of conferences ranging in topics from medical advances to educational forums and discussions on Hill argumentation. I was the only enrolling Canadian society. All of the conferences involved in incorporating technology. Oh, wait. We've got too many slides there. I founded a robotics company when I was eight years old. Oh, wait, am I the right one? I don't think I am. Okay. Yeah. I founded a robotics company when I was eight years old called RO sorry. Cloud robots are fun. The underlying principle of my companies that I think introducing robotics and code at a very young age, reinforcing the idea that technology is a tool and a great educational process. I learned a lot. They put my first robot together and I think that these lessons can be applied to a number of different subject areas ranging in topics. Sorry, messing up a little bit.

The most important lessons are in business. You have to be innovative and competitive to achieve the best results. You have to be supportive and collaborate with your fellow business peers, because that allows you to build a good team of motivated and goal focused collaborators. You need to provide products to give solutions to problems in the world, do some solve a problem and to help others. So, if we start thinking about collaboration, competitiveness, innovation, and problem solving at a young age in and out of the classroom and continue to nurture that environment. Then I think that we would see amazing things being developed by Canadians at all ages, which I think is really exciting.

I have experienced gender-based discrimination, but I didn't know that it had such an effect on women and girls until last year when I met Gloria Steinem, she's seen as a celebrated feminist, but really she just wants equality for everyone. Recent studies show that girls start to think that boys are better than them at age six. Why is this happening? We need to encourage everyone to participate at all levels so that the next generation of Canadians can make Canada a better country than it already is. Recently, I attended a conference called geeky summit. It was a celebration of women in technology, and there were a lot of encouraging stories and interesting workshops. It was great. However, a few days later I was at a pitch clinic and out of about 40 adult participants, there was only one woman. So, this appears to be a problem and I'm doing my best to help change this.

By encouraging women and girls to become, to, to balance this out because in the end, I think that any end, the ratio should be equal.



STEM learning, which means science, technology, engineering, arts mathematics has been gaining popularity in educational systems and programs. I find this really exciting because these are programs which encourage girls to become more interested and remain interested in STEM related fields. But I think there's more we can do. I wish I could add another ear for entrepreneurship that might give us more incentive to become more entrepreneurial, sorry, and promote mixing different aspects of business, like art medicine, and architecture with technology to better ourselves as Canadians and provide products that give solutions to problems in the world. How can we help the next generation - my generation do this?

There we go. We need to remove barriers to allow children to be able to connect with technology more. The internet can be a valuable tool to access technology related information, but internet access and data is expensive. So I said, we need to be sure that Canadian children have inexpensive access to reliable internet services. Elon Musk, for example, is doing something about this and making a net of satellites to give the whole world reliable internet, maybe even a computer lending program so that so that everyone can access the information that they need. Wouldn't it be great if Canadian children had inexpensive access to technology, I realized that I'm really lucky to have the research resources I do, plus access to internet and maker-spaces and mentors, but not everyone does. I think that would be great for everyone to have access to a maker-space either at school or library or even a national maker center. I think the first one to be in Calgary.

The maker-fair in Calgary was the first place that I got to share my ideas with others. It was exhilarating to make our community really fosters collaborations so that there is a very supportive group of makers and collaborators. I think we should be fostering support systems for kids, for instance, schools that are designed to support risk taking and entrepreneurship and incentive and inventiveness. I know today just don't handle zeros, but in kids are still made to understand that they are a failure if they don't get the grade. And what if you're a girl and you already think that you're not as good as the guys, and then you get a failure in school someone's stead of from wanting that kind of thinking. I think we should be teaching that. Failure's just one very important part of the learning process for both boys and girls. I think that it's very important for kids to get a second chance. I've run an acronym that I made up to help me stay focused and never to give up. I say to myself, a fail is a first attempt in learning, but then I have sale a second or successful attempt in learning

Whatever comes first. This tells me I just have to keep going and keep learning. It is important that kids have role models that they can look up to. There are quite a few people who inspire me for example, Elon Musk, Robert Thirsk, James Dyson, Roberta Bhandari, and Chris Hadfield. He's needed to know more about people like these and others. I think having more mentoring programs and connections for students is important. Having a metric can help give you context with the skills you were learning And just maybe with support and good models to follow and inspired, motivated, and innovative young lady or men will take their place in a long list of Canadian inventors who had made significant impact on the wellbeing of the world. Yep. Okay. There's a quote that sums up my feelings for NEC Canada's next generation by Chris Hadfield - "You're never really alone there. Your dreams are always waiting big, just waiting. They're dreams with the kind of person you want to be. Wonderful dreams of what the life you will live and dreams that actually can come true." So that's my wish for Canada's next generation to grab - that idea flies to the stars and make that dream come true.

The Conversation Piece Podcast: Lauren Voisin from The Walrus Talks



HOST: Dedicated in Lauren's honour, the Lauren Foundation is a fund that encourages young creators and innovators to bring their ideas to life. To donate, visit [laurenfoundation dot ca](http://laurenfoundation.ca) and click on the GoFundMe link - The link is also in our show notes.