2021

EU Tech Chamber
10 Key Recommendations for Successful Women in Tech

European Technology Chamber
eutec.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The technology sector must identify and recognize the need for the inclusion of women by focusing on talent and female education to enable women to excel in all underrepresented positions, rather than promoting women in classical roles and based on political trends.

EUTEC is clearly committed to bring gender equality to the top of the Agenda 2030. Therefore, the WIT Commission helps to create and promote new organization models (e.g. through Best Practices) and, thereby, sustainable opportunities for women, and aims to establish them through and beyond the EUTEC network.

EUTEC is committed to help define systems free of stereotypes and empower women to excel in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and dissolve stereotypes through a strong platform and network.

STEM will be crucial to tackle some of the most challenging issues; bringing women to the forefront of future leaders will not only benefit society but also strengthen Europe's position in transformational technology.

The WIT Commission provides the platform for this cross-cultural and cross-industry exchange in order to provide thought leadership and tangible change.

Academic studies reveal that women are more likely to lead through inspiration, transforming people's attitudes and beliefs and aligning people meaningfully and with purpose .

Since transformational leadership is linked to higher levels of team engagement, performance, and productivity, it is a critical path to improving leaders' performance.

This White Paper will lead, guide, and coach you in building the perfect framework and foundation for establishing organizational structure and diverse culture that welcomes, engages, and includes women.

With great technology comes great responsibility.

Technology Obliges!

The European Technology Chamber is a registered NGO, which enables European businesses to use their technologies for the benefit of Europe and all mankind. The EUTEC Chamber has three major goals and believes that technology is the answer to achieve these goals.

Competitiveness
Strengthen Europe's competitiveness and transformation capabilities in its global positioning

Sustainability
Leverage innovation, key technologies, and business opportunities to achieve the 17 UNSDGs

Growth
Build bridges to international markets and establish partnership for inclusive growth

About the Women in Technology Commission

Designed to support, empower, and create opportunities for women's personal development and professional career growth in European and global technology.

EUTEC Women in Technology (WIT) is fully committed to bring gender equality to the top of the agenda. The WIT Commission provides a platform for in-depth cross-cultural and cross-industry exchange and paves the way for thought leadership, global impact, and tangible change. We are breaking gender stereotypes and minimizing their impact on individual performance through personal and professional advancement.

The mission of the WIT is to empower and support one million women by 2030.

SUPPORT
Drive foundational change in organizational models

CREATE & ESTABLISH
Create opportunities for women's personal development and career growth

DEFINE & EMPOWER
Establish systems free of stereotypes, with a focus on talent, potential, and female education

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METHODOLOGY

EU Tech Chamber White Paper

An EUTECH White Paper serves as an informational document to share knowledge, foster exchange and collaboration, and create value for our advocates and the larger EUTEC community from society to businesses, from industry professionals to technological innovators.

Sharing technology-driven solutions and methods to help solve some of the most challenging questions on how we can improve our lives, providing insights from engineers, experts, and researchers.

A White Paper is carefully curated in collaboration with EUTEC advocates, supporters, and contributors who share EUTEC's vision and values and is published by ETUEC Sections for educational and knowledge-sharing purposes.

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With great technology comes great responsibility.

Technology Obliges!

10 Key Recommendations for Successful Women in Tech

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10 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Remove barriers for women to enter the technology field: Today, only 18% of computer science graduates are women, compared with 37% in the 1980s. In cloud computing, merely 12% of professionals are women. Similarly, in engineering, this number is 15%, and in Data and AI it is 26%. To remove barriers for women to enter the technology field, it is important to prioritize capacity-building and leverage primary resources, such as education and mentorship, as well as to create opportunities for women's SMEs, sustainable business growth, fair trade, financial inclusion, and access to global investments.

2. Create opportunities for women advancement within the STEM sector: Engineering and computer science, two of the most lucrative STEM fields, remain heavily male dominated. Only 21% of engineering majors and 19% of computer science majors are women. Thus, it is imperative to create sustainable opportunities for women's personal development and career growth through role models and mentorships.

3. Address gendered aspects of working in STEM: Promote welcoming work environments, including providing pay equity; flexibility; strong family and medical leave policies; inclusion and anti-bias training; mentorship, networking, and ally-ship opportunities; and strong anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

4. Lack of diversity highly impacts tech companies globally: Giving women equal opportunities to pursue, and thrive in, STEM careers helps narrow the gender pay gap, enhances women's economic security, ensures a diverse and talented STEM workforce, prevents biases in these fields, and increases innovations in the products and services they produce.

5. Potential that women can bring to tech companies and tech organizations: Diversity generates more revenue, as men and women see things differently and bring unique ideas to the table. This enables better problem-solving, which can boost performance at the business unit level. To help a company realize its full potential, gender diversity and inclusion of women needs to be a business priority.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Leverage women's inclusivity to enhance economic diversification: Cooperation and Collaboration—women leaders discussing global tech trends, inspiring fellow women in tech, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth lead to growing businesses globally.

7. The best approach towards organizational culture and transparency on biases: Remove Systematic Barriers—create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in technology, leadership, and entrepreneurship for women in STEM.

8. The best communication style for women and men to collaborate more effectively: Engage men as Allies—engage men to help advance women in the workplace; priority focus on discussing equality, inclusion, and diversity.

9. Empower women to engage more as C-suite leaders, board **of directors, and decision makers**: Support, Define, and Empower—support women through networking, mentorship, and professional growth; define stereotype-free organizational cultures; empower inclusive, diverse, and welcoming organizational models.

10. Call for global attention to prioritize women's self-care, health, and well-being during the pandemic: WIT Focus and Impact on UN SDGs—Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Reduced Inequalities; Peace, Justice, and Strong institutions.

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1. Eliminate barriers for women to enter the technology field

It is important for both men and women to embrace technology as an opportunity partnership rather than a commodity. Together, we can contribute equally to the workforce for the growth of business and economy. Research reveals that there is a strong link between gender diversity when it comes to profitability and innovation (Stone, 2017).

The PWC 2021 report reveals that companies that embrace inclusivity and diversity by using and tapping into female talent are 45% more likely to report improved market share. In addition, through the promotion of gender equality in their workforce, organizations can enhance their own social license by achieving greater acceptance, credibility, and trust from interested stakeholders. **In short, evidence is mounting that companies that promote female representation are more profitable than those that do not. Similarly, economies that promote and embrace women outperform those that do not.**

Today, women account for only 18% of computer science graduates, compared with 37% in the 1980s. In cloud computing, merely 12% of professionals are women. Similarly, this number is 15% in engineering and 26% in Data and AI. To remove barriers for women to enter the technology field, it is important to prioritize capacity-building and leverage primary resources, such as education and mentorship, and to create opportunities for women's SMEs, sustainable business growth, fair trade, financial inclusion, and access to global investments.

There are a lot more women in the technology world today. Despite the progress, there remains a wide gap and under-representation of women in the emerging tech space. Therefore, it is imperative that we close the gender gap and imbalance by helping and supporting women to embrace technology. To remedy this imbalance, it is necessary that government, business, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the community work together to change the status quo. The goal should be to educate, equip, and empower women and youth with the necessary competences and self-confidence to explore careers in the tech space and be successful in STEM fields.

Equally, female role models play a crucial role in encouraging and changing perceptions. Seeing other women in both public and private sectors, particularly in the tech leadership space, will help in changing perceptions and driving change both for young women as well as making men become more accepting of women as leaders and taking on a mentorship role to assist and empower women in the tech space as well as across other industries.

Today, almost every business is a technology company. Furthermore, with the pandemic accelerating digital transformation, there are no signs of slowing down the momentum now. This fast-paced digital-first environment will require small to medium-size businesses as well as entrepreneurs to re-evaluate their businesses. During the pandemic, small businesses, particularly women-owned businesses were hit hard, as most of them focused on in-person training. Many did not plan to digitize their business, as they lacked the skills and resources—such as capital or access to funding—to develop a digital platform. Thus, no company can afford to ignore the gender gap, the lack of inclusivity and diversity, as well as the lack of technical skills that are required for small women-owned businesses to be successful.

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2. Create opportunities for women advancement within the STEM sector

Engineering and Technology—two of the most lucrative STEM fields—remain heavily dominated by males. Only 21% of engineering majors and 18% of technology majors are women. It is imperative to create sustainable opportunities for women's personal development and career growth through role models and mentorships.

1. Women in Tech program for girls in schools K-12: Companies must build a community program and get their women engineers and tech specialists to participate in and run the following type of programs:

A: Introduce workshops to inspire young girls to take up engineering and technology. Showing young girls' practical applications of engineering and technology will raise their confidence and get them to try it out. This will increase their awareness that the field of technology and engineering is a good career option. It is important to begin early, as studies have shown that girls lose confidence by the age of eight years. Building their confidence using coding could help them become resilient, be open to taking risks, embrace failure, and learn to express themselves.

B: Special week-long workshops should be organized for girls in Standards 9—12, which is close to the time for them to take a decision on which subjects to take at university. The workshops should show them the various options available after opting for STEM. The workshops could be related to building robots, programming an app, tinkering with microcontrollers, mixing chemicals to see the outcome, DNA testing, etc. There is a broad range of options within STEM and even within the engineering and technology field. Showing them the various aspects of each will help to trigger their interest. As an example, in game development, there are professions for developers, game artists, designers, programmers, and producers amongst others. This broad range of possibilities should be highlighted in such workshops.

2. Technical track mentorship programs: For the women already on a technical path within the organization, talent should be identified early and nurturing and mentoring via a formal mentorship program with mentors from senior leadership who will help them grow in their career via opportunities to learn and have access to senior technical positions. The mentorship program should provide a development roadmap that tracks their progress and readiness for the next milestone in the career. In this manner, early entrants will have already charted a path, have the help they need for professional development, and obtain access to roles that nurture and build desired skills so that they are prepared to assume senior positions within the organization. It is a win-win situation for both the company and employee.

3. Spotlight on role models in the industry: 'See it then be it' is the mantra mentioned by 10-year-old Avanti Sharma, Pre-Teen Technology Specialist regarding the need for role models. Companies should highlight and feature the women in engineering and technology both within and outside their organization so that it appears like a 'normal' thing for young girls. Seeing others like them will inspire the younger ones to consider taking this up as a profession. This could be done via newsletters, conferences, awards, social media campaigns, etc. An opportunity to interact with women in leadership positions via lean-in circles or other professional networks should be provided. As women often take additional responsibilities in their life, such as being mothers and caretakers for parents, speaking to others who have managed both work and life could give them a good perspective and the courage to aspire others.

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3. Address gendered aspects of working in STEM

Promote welcoming work environments, including compensation equity, flexibility, strong family and medical leave policies; inclusion and anti-bias training; mentorship, networking, and ally-ship opportunities; and strong anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

The world is shifting and elevating women. The global economy will enjoy a noticeable benefit when women participate fully in the labor force. We can begin by acknowledging that there is a gender equality problem and then commit to solving this problem. This is the first step to supporting and empowering women.

The next step is inclusivity—invite women to have a seat at the table so that they can pull their brains together and come up with concrete ways to address the issue permanently.

We really need to consider the role that women play; women lead as effectively as men. Women can play a vital role in creating and designing technologies that could shape the world for a better future.

Women need equal space to play and to engage in actionable dialogues to advance the narrative by

1. *using diverse platforms to push for equality in STEM;*

2. *developing strategies that meet the needs and promote general policies that focus on activating women's role in STEM;*

3. *being incredibly effective as changemakers and innovators to create different kinds of opportunities for women and girls.*

Diversity in leadership is good not only for business but also for technology advancement. Here's a great quote from the UN Women's interview in this regard: 'When we have diverse leadership, we make better decisions and we are more aware that we need to be able to put ourselves in each other's shoes', said Prime Minister Jakobsdóttir.

'For leaders, the most important thing is to be able to talk to a very different set of people and know that you always need to have diversity in mind as part of your vision, not just in leadership, but in everything we do'. According to The Harvard Review, research has shown that firms with more women in senior positions are more profitable, more socially responsible, and provide safer, higher-quality customer experiences—among many other benefits.

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4.Lack of diversity highly impacts tech companies globally

For women to be present in STEM we must promote the inclusion of women in organizations and companies, encourage support in scholarships, secure funding so that they can pursue careers or technological training, design socio-cultural plans for women and girls where opportunities represent not only the visibility of women in science and technology but in the digital economy and society of the future.

To become more diverse and inclusive, tech companies must invest into retaining women and establishing a gender-balanced workplace culture.

Giving women equal opportunities to pursue, and thrive in, STEM careers helps narrow the gender pay gap, enhances women's economic security, ensures a diverse and talented STEM workforce, prevents biases in these fields, and increases innovations in the products and services they produce.

Diversity is critical in technology, as it enables companies to create better and safer products that take everyone into consideration, not just one section of society.

In the current decade and with the goal of commitment to sustainable development agenda UN 2030 is increasingly representative of the importance of the role of women and their current situation in gender equity in STEM. Undoubtedly, the construction of fairer and more inclusive economies must be the objective of world and national leaders through countries that support the globalization to instill gender parity in all areas and contexts: education, health, politics, culture and all forms of participation that are possible.

Overall gap
According to the WEF 2020 report, we have a 31.4% gap in gender equity globally. One of the most representative gaps is the difference in Economic Participation and Opportunities with 57.8% and if we look at the gap in Educational Achievement and Health and Survival the gaps are even bigger with 96.1% and 95.7% respectively.

The obstacle in the employment of women in the most dynamic and in-demand professions is that women are underrepresented, being mentioned in eight outstanding micro-groups with the highest growth rate: (people and culture content production, marketing, sales, project managers, data and AI, engineering, and computing/cloud computing).

Impact and representation of women in the pandemic.
On the other hand, the COVID19 pandemic has highlighted pre-existing inequalities in gender equality, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems.

The fragile participation of the female labor force, emphasizing the large percentage of women in the informal economy, makes it essential to design inclusive training, mentoring and economic support programs. Digitalization and technology are part of the opportunity for women in a more adaptive representation in the future.

5. The potential that women can bring to tech companies and tech organizations

Diversity generates more revenue, as men and women see things differently and bring unique ideas to the table. This enables better problem-solving, which can boost performance at the business unit level; To help a company realize its full potential, gender diversity and women inclusion needs to be a business priority.

Now more than ever, **creating tech systems with a diversity of perspectives is crucial**. In the fields of AI, machine learning, and data science, we see time and again how products and systems can be flawed when they are created by one homogenous group of people and the downstream risks that this poses to the businesses that create and deploy these products. Similarly, we have also seen the limitations of companies that are led by homogenous leaders. While demographic diversity is important, it is equally important to hire people from diverse backgrounds to work on and manage the creation of tech products. Thus, diversity not only benefits companies but also benefits our societies.

The greatest advice for organizations in the area of gender parity is for them to **back up their words with sound policies, uplift women from diverse backgrounds, remain committed to retaining them in their roles, and offer them pathways to succeed and surpass those roles**. It can be tempting for companies to outwardly say that they value women, but when you look at their boards and senior leadership, it tells a different story. These days, consumers expect some moral continuity from brands. Future talent wants to see that future-oriented companies embody the values of progress and forward momentum. The number of job losses for women due to the pandemic has been disastrous and this offers companies across all industries an incredible opportunity to drive change.

The world is changing and inclusivity is the future. Companies must show that they are not just committed to empowering women in tech because of how it impacts their revenue but also because **hiring the appropriate women across all levels helps them build more well-rounded products and organizational practices that appeal to more people overall.** This has compounding benefits that well surpass financial benefits. The benefits of gender diversity need to be separated from the impact on revenue. We are talking about human beings that constitute half the world. We need to see the conversation shift from 'We're doing this for revenue!' to 'We're doing this because it's the right thing to do. Now, we have to create inclusive workspaces that work for everyone so that women don't have the burden of clawing their way into leadership themselves'. It is about **creating an environment that allows them to succeed now and these commitments must come from the top down**.

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6. Leverage women's inclusivity to enhance economic diversification

Cooperation and Collaboration: Women leaders discussing global tech trends, inspiring fellow women in tech, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth can grow their businesses globally.

As the world is more frequently engaging in discussions on diversity and inclusion (D&I), we see a lot of solidarity being shown to historically marginalized and overlooked communities and certain actions are being taken for their upliftment. We see lots of articles and speaker events addressing questions such as 'Where do we begin with this work?', 'What can leaders do to increase representation?', 'How can we better support women in workplaces?' However, often, these questions and curiosity are not followed with the action and impact that is required.

How do women contribute to the economy?

There is a huge lost opportunity from product and service diversification as well as the revenue perspective due to the lack of understanding of the value that women bring to the table. Here is what you can do today:

1. Ensure representation. Have a look around your boardroom, your personal circles—which voices are not represented in these spaces? Do you feel comfortable in these circles because no one tends to disagree or bring controversial points into your discussions? Do you also know that groupthink or lack of cognitive diversity costs your business in terms of lost opportunity and revenue? Look around every room you enter and ask yourself, whose view is not being represented or heard?

2. Create a no-interruption culture. A recent study published in the Journal of Language and Social Psychology found that men interrupted women 23% more than they interrupt other men. According to Brigham Young University and Princeton, men dominate 75% of the conversation during conference meetings. How are you ensuring that you have heard everyone's contributions and that everyone's contributions are of equal import?

3. Build bridges. Networking is a huge part of the professional skillset and landscape. However, we are often drawn to people who look and think like us. Build such relationships with people who look, think, and experience the world differently than you do. Listen to their stories to learn from them, build bridges, and amplify their voices. Do you have the privilege to be in a space where certain demographics are not present or perhaps systematically excluded? It is your responsibility to bring their voices into this space.

7. The best approach to creating an organizational culture and transparency regarding biases

Remove Systematic Barriers: Create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in technology as well as encourage leadership and entrepreneurship for women in STEM.

For leaders who understand the business imperative for a diverse organization at all levels, it is not only about realizing the importance of having more women on board but also about the importance of building an inclusive culture to welcome diversity at all levels and address biases and stereotypes that might hinder this.

In her book 'Inclusion Starts with U', Sarah Tabet shares her thoughts and observations on the ways in which more women can be successfully brought into the STEM field:

For the Culture:

1. Fight the image: Assert to the youngest generation, early on, that the tech world is everyone's world and that there is something for everyone to pursue and explore.

2. Beware of biases: Remain observant and attentive of conscious and unconscious biases that are built in and are very realistically impacting our decisions to hire, promote, and provide opportunities for women in the STEM field.

3. Stop downplaying the abilities of women: Fight media stereotypes and lack of encouragement for women to explore STEM careers by equally promoting female and male abilities in this field.

4. Assess possible hostile environments: Ensure that our working culture and work environment is accommodating for women.

For the Pipeline:

1. Invest in DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) technologies: Implement more consistent, less biased, and scalable decision-making processes on both the talent acquisition and the learning fronts:

- Search for diverse talent, change job descriptions, and match candidates without bias. Develop blind resumes, profiles, and assessments to reduce bias during the selection process.
- Deliver inclusive behavior training across the board and coach, mentor, and support with action plans for developments. Find, flag, and offer structure to eliminate bias in performance appraisals as well as Talent Reviews identification (discuss employees fit into future positions).

2. Understand engagement and retention influences: Understand the work experiences of diverse groups, conduct specialized survey groups to understand employees and, specifically, factors related to the inclusion of women.

3. Use data analytics: Analyze, establish key performance indicators (KPI), pay equity, and representation analysis. Assess inclusive policies, conduct DEI dashboards, measure KPIs, and quantify the impact of DEI on your business to ensure buy-in at all levels of the organization.

8.The best communication style for women and men to collaborate more effectively

Engage men as allies to advance women in the workplace; prioritize focus on discussing the perspective of equality, inclusion, and diversity.

Listen to each person, do not dominate each other. Something that the groups of people that believe in dominating Alpha figures to drive group success may not easily accept.

Leadership and management equally need to prepare the ground and support the required change processes and

inculcate self awareness where mentoring and coaching programs appear highly recommendable.

Communication is contextual. There is no one way of communicating that will always work under all circumstances because it requires the adaption of personal communication preferences:

•*Face-to-Face communication, 1-2-1 or in groups, communication in written forms*
•*Psychological states, situational conditions, cultural influences, environmental factors*

The key trait is **'versatility'**—that is, being able to read and adapt behavioral and communication style, within the given context.

Diversity has been used in a wide array of contexts. In the socio-psychological context, diversity is linked to the concept of 'social identity'. Shared traits lead to a felt sense of identity, while simultaneously servicing the need to differentiate one group of people from others, based on the same trait categories.

Diversity traits are often grouped into
•*surface-level diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity, etc.)*
•*deep-level diversity (e.g. time orientation and extra-/introversion)*

That dilemma stipulates that teams either work together very successfully and there are creativity gains, or there are losses in creativity and effectiveness due to emerging conflicts and lack of cohesiveness.

What to do to ensure the positive effects of **diversity:**
1. Anchor diversity as a core value in the organization and have the leaders 'walk the talk'
2. Have team leaders and mentors guide the process of understanding and create acceptance for the values that can be derived from a diverse work force
3. Engage minorities within the group—minorities can lead to tokenism (see Elisabeth Ross Kanter), which prevents the emergence of coherence

9. Empower women to engage more as C-suite leaders, board of directors, and decision-makers

Support, Define, and Empower: Support women through networking, mentorship, and professional growth. Define stereotype-free organizational cultures; empower inclusive, diverse, and welcoming organizational models.

If we want to make some changes, we need to begin from the top management, to hire women executives and follow them to see the changes.

It is obvious that the energy and IT sector business has been governed by men mostly because men are highly interested in engineering. However, there are also other major reasons, such as the ones listed below:
1. Gender roles
2. Society acceptance
3. Money and power owing to business related to technology

Examining the sustainability goals of corporations, as well as the environmental, social, and governance criteria helps reaching goals to increase the value of company shares, and reveals that the targets are revolutionary. An example of the current situation on a global level is 20%–30% representation of women on boards.

The solution is simple. Companies need to establish attainable **gender equality and inclusion targets** for each year. The change is possible with full engagement and step-by-step implementation.

Recommendations:
- *Provide internal training related to gender equality to all workers*
- *Internal process for promoting and /or changing the positions that here should be positive discrimination.*
- *Motivate the managers to hire women, if possible*
- *Initiate internal mentoring programs with the participation of men and women employees*
- *Follow successful role models and companies with high percentage of C-level women*
- *Appreciate and recognize the success of women employees*
- *Develop different projects to complete the energy transition and to train qualified female engineers and technicians in collaboration with women's networks and other corporates*
- *Initiate leadership programs on different topics*
- *Make commitments to implement strategic plans*

10. Call for global attention to prioritize women's self-care, health and wellbeing during pandemic

UN Women has developed a rapid and targeted response to mitigate the impact of long-term recovery benefits, focusing on the following five priorities:

- Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, must be mitigated and reduced
- Social protection and economic stimulus packages that serve women and girls
- People support and practice equal sharing of care work
- Women and girls lead and participate in COVID-19 response planning and decision-making
- The COVID-19 crisis on women and girls needs to ensure that the data and coordination mechanisms include gender perspectives

WIT Focus and Impact on UN SDGs: Good Health and Well- Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Reduced Inequalities; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

Self-care is 'the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health care provider'.

Women have been playing a disproportionate role in responding to the virus, including as frontline healthcare workers and caregivers at home. Women's unpaid care work has increased significantly as a result of school closures and the increased needs of older people. Women are also harder hit by the economic impacts of COVID-19, as they disproportionately work in insecure labor markets. Almost 60% of women work in the informal economy, which puts them at greater risk of falling into poverty.

Women are not only the hardest hit by this pandemic they are also the backbone of recovery in communities. Putting women and girls at the center of economies will fundamentally drive better and more sustainable development outcomes for all, support a more rapid recovery, and place the world back on an equal footing to achieve the UN's SDGs.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Companies with diverse teams are more creative, strategic, innovative, and, ultimately, more profitable. Moreover, with improving gender levels, there is more harmony within the industry even amongst the fiercest of competitors.

Improving the levels of gender diversity within the technology sector has become a priority for numerous organizations. However, what is important is a mindset shift.

A lack of gender diversity carries with it a major opportunity cost, both for individual tech companies and the entire tech sector. This strong positive correlation between higher levels of employee diversity and stronger financial performance has been demonstrated consistently across sectors and industries, and tech is no different.

There are several development steps forward that

companies need to incorporate to empower women and girls to succeed in technology. Tech companies need to ensure that these success factors are in place to maximize the overall impact:

1. Offer inclusive onboarding.
2. Create a sense of belonging.
3. Build confidence in women's abilities.
4. Cultivate a community of supportive peers.
5. Ensure adult gatekeepers (family, teachers, counselors) are encouraging and inclusive.
6. Foster interest in technology education and the technology sector.
7. Create continuity in positive experiences.
8. Provide access to technology and computing experiences.

To improve levels of diversity, companies need to do what is difficult, what is out of the box, what is not comfortable in order to make the shift and create impact.

Maintaining a focus on women's equal representation, with stated goals at the program level, is the only way to avoid replicating the same gender ratios that are evident in tech today.

Leaders should be working with smaller groups inside their companies to develop smaller solutions, perfect them, and then scale them out. As they develop their own best practices, sharing insights and learnings while transforming the organization is crucial.

Further, companies must support strategies and programs that attend to the specific challenges faced by the sub segments of women who are facing multiple forms of marginalization. Focusing on the experiences of those who face the greatest number of barriers will spur solutions that ultimately improve the inclusivity of the tech sector for all underrepresented groups

Together, tech companies have the opportunity to dramatically shift the trajectory of women and girls entering the industry and make tech an exciting career opportunity for all. Getting this right will result in women participating in the tech workforce in equal numbers as men. Achieving greater equality is a business imperative for the sector and the benefits will spread far beyond it.

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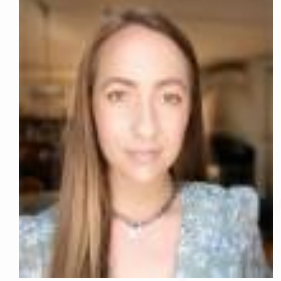Association for Trusted
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