COMMITTEE: Gender Equality

TOPIC: How can we combat the underrepresentation of women in digital careers while reducing inequalities in access to technology and promoting their economic empowerment?

CHAIRS: Agnieszka Drozd, Taylor Paakwasi, Thomas Piotte

CHAIRPERSON'S OPENING REMARKS



Hello, dear delegates,

My name is Agnieszka Drozd. I am 16 years old and a student in 11th grade, taking advanced English at the Lycée International de Ferney-Voltaire. I am Polish, was born in Geneva, and grew up in France.
I enjoy sports, especially skiing, swimming, and dancing, and I love to travel.

I have been part of the MUN program since last year. At FerMUN 2026, I participated as a delegate on the committee on the informal economy, where I represented employers from Bangladesh.

This year, I will have the pleasure of leading you, along with my co-chairs, in a committee dedicated to gender equality in the digital sector. The digital sector now plays a vital role in our societies, but women remain underrepresented in technology careers and face inequalities in access to digital tools and training. It is therefore essential that we work together to find solutions that will help bridge these gaps by promoting women's economic empowerment.

I look forward to hearing your ideas and proposals so that we can work together to develop fair and sustainable solutions. I wish you the best of luck with your research and look forward to meeting you in January for a week of enriching discussions!

KEYWORDS

Gender equality: According to the UN, the principle that women and men have the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in all areas of society.

Economic empowerment: According to UN Women, the process of enabling women to have equal access to economic resources, employment, income, and financial decision-making.

Digital careers: All professions related to information and communication technologies (software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, data science, networking, etc.).

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics): A group of scientific and technological fields in which women remain underrepresented today.

Underrepresentation: The fact that a group of people is proportionally smaller within a given group or field than in the reference population.

OVERVIEW

I. Persistent Inequalities in Digital Access

A. Digital Divide That Disproportionately Affects Women

Digital technologies have become a key driver of economic development, innovation, and access to employment. Yet women continue to face significant barriers to accessing digital tools, particularly in low- and middle-income countries such as Senegal, Bangladesh, and India.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), fewer women than men use the Internet worldwide. In 2024, nearly 70% of men used the Internet, compared to 65% of women. [1] This digital divide limits women's access to information, digital public services, online education and training, as well as professional opportunities.

Access to digital devices is also a major barrier. In many regions, women are less likely to have a personal computer or a smartphone with Internet access, limiting their opportunities for training, entrepreneurship, and remote work. Limited digital skills also restrict their access to these opportunities. This digital exclusion directly contributes to the perpetuation of existing economic inequalities.

B. Inequalities That Begin in Education

These gaps emerge very early in girls' educational journeys. Gender stereotypes continue to associate science, computer science, and engineering with male-dominated fields, thereby discouraging many young girls from pursuing these areas. In several countries, young girls nevertheless achieve results comparable to, or even better than, those of boys in mathematics, yet they are far less likely to choose technology-related fields of study.

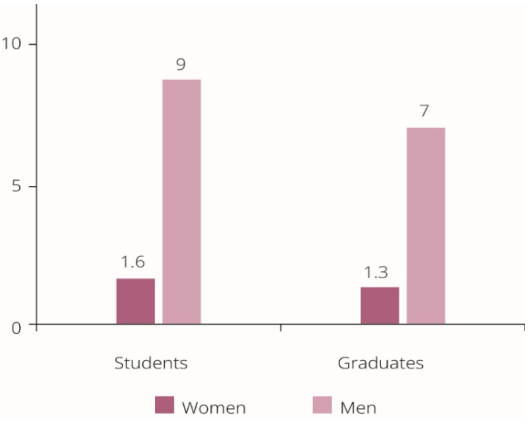
[1] International Telecommunication Union (ITU), *Facts and Figures 2023: The Gender Digital Divide*, 2023.

This underrepresentation in technology-related education fuels a vicious cycle: fewer female graduates mean fewer women entering digital professions, but also fewer female role models capable of inspiring future generations.

II.Persistent Underrepresentation in Digital Professions

A. Barriers to Hiring and Career Advancement

Despite the rapid growth of the digital sector, women remain significantly underrepresented in technology-related professions.



According to UNESCO, women remain significantly underrepresented in professions related to science, engineering, and information and communication technologies: they accounted for less than 25% of professionals in these sectors in 2022.[2]

Percentage gap between women and men among computer science students and graduates in Europe, 2018

This situation is partly due to discrimination during the hiring process, but also to the challenges women face throughout their careers. Women are less likely to reach leadership positions in technology companies and are less frequently offered promotions or given strategic projects that could support their professional advancement. For example, Google found that women in technical positions were less likely than men to ask for a promotion, which could limit their opportunities for career advancement.[3]

[2] UNESCO, *2024 Global Education Monitoring Report: Technology on Its Own Terms*, 2024.
[3] Google, *Focusing on diversity*, 2016

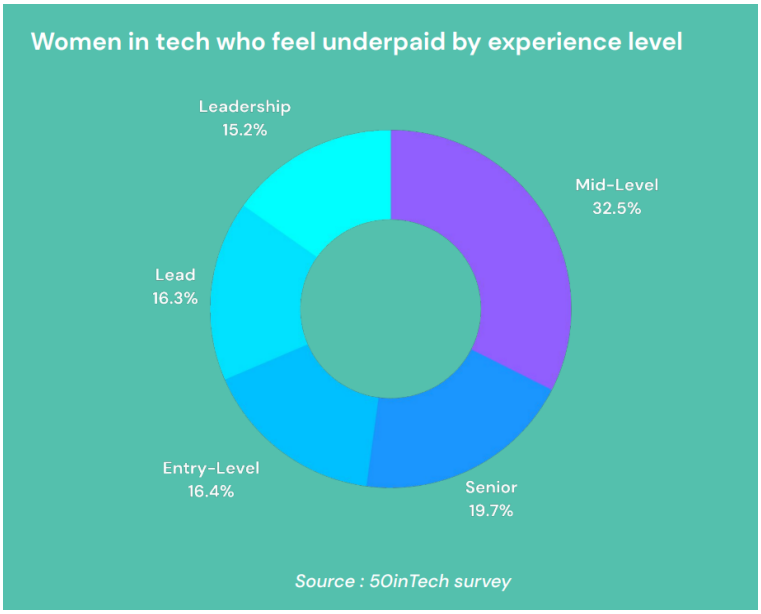
According to the World Economic Forum, women remain underrepresented in jobs related to artificial intelligence, where they account for approximately 25% to 30% of the global workforce in this field, despite growing demand for AI skills.[4]

B. Pay Gaps and Their Consequences

Inequalities do not only concern access to employment but also working conditions.

In countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, women working in technology-related professions earn lower salaries than men in comparable positions. This pay gap results from a combination of factors: limited access to the highest-paying positions, slower career progression, career interruptions related to family responsibilities, and persistent pay discrimination.

The graph also shows that this feeling of being underpaid affects women at different stages of their careers. 32.5% of mid-level women feel that they are underpaid, compared with 19.7% of senior women. Even among women at the beginning of their careers, this figure reaches 16.4%. These figures therefore show that pay inequalities persist throughout women's professional careers.



Women in the technology sector who feel underpaid relative to their level of experience in France

These income disparities limit women's economic empowerment, as lower salaries reduce their ability to be financially independent, save for housing, and cope with unexpected expenses. In the long term, these income gaps can therefore reduce their ability to invest and exacerbate wealth inequalities.

[4] World Economic Forum, *Women in AI*, 2025.

Furthermore, the lack of women in leadership positions can discourage young girls from pursuing careers in the digital sector. The absence of female role models can reinforce their fear of not belonging in a field that remains predominantly male, leading to greater self-censorship and demotivation.

III. Promoting a More Inclusive Digital Transition

A. Developing Women's Digital Skills

In response to these challenges, many international organizations emphasize the importance of developing girls' digital skills from an early age.

Mentoring programs, such as Girls Who Code in the United States, as well as scholarships and specialized training programs, help encourage more young women to pursue studies in science and technology. Several countries also offer training programs for adult women to facilitate their transition into digital careers.

Today, mastering digital tools is a valuable asset for achieving economic independence. It can facilitate access to skilled employment, but can also enable women to create and develop their own professional activities. Digital technologies can therefore provide new opportunities for financial and social independence.

B. Building a More Equitable Technology Sector

To make the technology sector more equitable, various measures can be implemented, such as more inclusive hiring practices, mentoring programs, and more transparent promotion procedures.

In France, the "Tech for All" program is one example. This free program is aimed at young women aged 15 to 25 who wish to explore careers in the digital sector or pursue higher education in this field. It supports them in developing their career plans, finding training opportunities, and succeeding in their studies, while also facilitating their entry into the workforce.

This program is particularly valuable for young women because it allows them to discover a sector that can sometimes seem difficult to access. It also provides them with resources and support to help them gain confidence and consider a career in technology.

Diversity is also important within teams that design new technologies. Having people with different backgrounds and perspectives, particularly more women, makes it possible to take a wider variety of viewpoints and needs into account. This is especially important in the field of artificial intelligence, as it can help limit the reproduction of certain biases or forms of discrimination in technology.

Finally, international organizations such as UN Women, UNESCO, and the ITU encourage governments to strengthen women's digital inclusion. The aim is to ensure that technological transformation benefits the entire population. More balanced participation of women in the digital sector can therefore contribute to reducing economic inequalities and fostering innovation.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Encouraging Girls to Pursue Careers in the Digital Sector

To reduce inequalities in the long term, it is essential to take action starting in education. Governments can encourage more young girls to choose STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields by developing awareness-raising programs, offering scholarships, or launching mentoring initiatives with women professionals in the sector. It is also important to provide digital skills training to adult women seeking to change careers.

Promoting a More Inclusive Digital Sector

Companies have a major role to play in promoting gender equality. They can implement more inclusive hiring policies, ensure transparent promotion procedures, and develop mentoring programs to improve the representation of women at all levels of responsibility. Equal pay for work of equal value must also be guaranteed.

Reducing the Digital Divide

In many countries, women still face difficulties accessing the Internet and digital tools. These inequalities are particularly evident between urban areas, which are better equipped and connected, and rural regions, where Internet access and digital devices can still be difficult to access. International cooperation could therefore help fund infrastructure, facilitate access to equipment, and develop digital skills training, particularly in the most disadvantaged areas.

Combating Discrimination

Governments and companies must strengthen policies to combat discrimination and harassment both in the workplace and online. It is also necessary to promote greater diversity within the teams developing new technologies in order to better take different perspectives into account and prevent digital tools and artificial intelligence systems from reproducing certain forms of discrimination.

International Girls in ICT Day[5]

Organized annually by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), this day takes place on the fourth Thursday of April. It encourages young girls to take an interest in technology and pursue careers in science and digital fields. It also aims to develop their skills, introduce them to careers in the sector, and promote greater gender equality in the field of ICT.

[5] About the initiative – International Girls in ICT Day Overview – International Girls in ICT Day

UN TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS

ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration

In 1951, ILO Convention No. 100 established the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which also applies to digital jobs where pay gaps between women and men may exist.

ILO Convention No. 111 Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation

In 1958, ILO Convention No. 111 prohibited discrimination, particularly on the basis of sex, in access to employment, training, and career advancement.

United Nations 2030 Agenda (2015)

Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 9 also promotes innovation and equitable access to technology.

ITU – Digital Inclusion Resolutions

These resolutions aim to reduce the digital gender gap by improving women's access to technology and digital skills.

Intensification of Efforts to Prevent and Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls : The Digital Environment

This resolution focuses on online violence against women and girls and the need to make digital spaces safer.

Guiding Questions for Research

1. What is the level of digital development in your country? Is access to the Internet, fiber-optic networks, computers, and smartphones sufficiently developed and accessible to the general population?
2. What is the situation of women in digital professions in your country?
3. Has your government implemented policies to encourage girls to pursue studies in science or technology?
4. How does your country combat discrimination in companies in the digital sector?
5. What measures could improve women's access to digital tools and technology training?
6. Does your country participate in international initiatives promoting digital inclusion for women?

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