

WOMEN IN TECH: PAVING THE WAY FOR NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP

We are all praising the UN SDGs especially those relating to solve gender equality and inequality. For they aim at reinforcing the idea of shaping a common and better future we want for ourselves and the generation to come.

Talking about gender equality, the lack of women in the tech industry seems to be the largest problem looming overhead as there is more and more discrimination report on the recruitment and hiring process for women, whether based upon race or gender. Many women are not able to get into the managerial or technical role because they are highly underrepresented in software engineering and computer science-related jobs. Women have a much larger barrier to being hired for technical entry-level positions.

Grace Hopper, an early technology pioneer and computer scientist once said, "The most dangerous phrase in the language is 'We've always done it this way.'" It is true that different backgrounds, experiences, and ideas ultimately help make any business or industry stronger. Maybe Grace Hopper wanted to highlight how using outdated knowledge is harmful to building a product. Rather, she was confident that denying new ideas, especially those from women, will ultimately do more harm than good. This networking session seeks to bring more women into the discussion.

We are claiming to give an expert point of view over the issue relating to women's inclusion in Tech but rather to highlight the fact that we all share responsibility in the faith we are designing for women to become prosperous in the Tech domain and internet-related Jobs, whether intentionally or just by negligence or lack of concern for others. Especially in African and developing countries where most of the girls are still dropping out of school too early. The number of those girls who remain in the system is not encouraged to step into the Tech field.

We should acknowledge that education plays a major role in ensuring women's inclusion in Tech. The problem is how do we make sure that the aid aiming at helping girls to remain in school is being effectively and efficiently used for the greater benefit of women.

It's our collective duty to make sure that we work towards establishing the next new generation of young girls and women who can understand that the issue doesn't concern their egos. Some say women are not being supportive of one another that one of the reasons why the gaps remain.

HOW COULD WE WORK TOWARDS WOMEN INCLUSION FOR THE NEXT DECADES?

These events will be focused on empowering women through conferences that help attendees learn new skills, make valuable connections, discuss innovative trends, promote intersectionality, and access motivational leaders (women). This includes organizing:

- **Conferences** - aiming at attracting the largest number of women while providing that unique opportunity to network and build connections with other professionals who are passionate about diversity in African tech.
- **Summits** - to help feature higher-level executives who have substantial experience in the industry. But this should be a series of regional events.

- **Seminars** - A narrow gathering that focuses on providing 1-on-1 mentorship to women who are looking to more effectively navigate the tech space across Africa.

Why not establishing a global coalition on women inclusion in tech to work with policymakers and governments to help implement the followings or help raise awareness on the importance of:

- providing support in the form of mentors,
- instituting maternity and paternity leave;
- setting targets or goals for diversity in leadership;
- sponsors and resource networks;
- scheduling inclusive networking events;
- And rewarding employees for creativity and innovation.

Policy Questions

How might we make it be possible to help increase women inclusiveness in Tech?

- Advocate for an end to Manals. We need to ensure that women are represented on panels
- We need to have role models for kids to see what women are doing in tech so they can get inspired and empowered to take action
- We need to suggest woman for panels and other jobs or consulting assignments
- We need to work on mentoring women just starting out in tech
- Highlight successful women in the field and use them as models for others
- Show others that you can succeed in Tech without having it all. Take advantage of training opportunities, capacity building activities
- Set a target to increase number of women in Tech and work towards implementing it
- Use different tactics to entice women to join boards or other ways of increasing their visibilities
- Work towards creating gender responsive policies that will promote and celebrate women
- Support competitions such as those run by Girls in ICT, which aims to encourage girls to participate in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Promote Stem programs and get kids interested in math and science at an early age
- Create specific programs geared to women, in some cultures women can not learn tech or coding if there are men in the same class so look at having women only classes, similar to what Afchix does
- consider the gendered impact of technology interventions, as well as the gender makeup of the institutions implementing those intervention
- Create a gender- responsive and participatory project design. A one-size fits all design will not yield results needed so you need to target a project design or a recruitment effort to gear it specifically to women
 - Project design needs to take into account the needs of all — regardless of gender, political, religious, and ethnic affiliations, but in some cultures women are not replying or it is deemed that their thoughts are not as important and so they are overlooked
 - Incorporate women’s perspective in project design

- consider using women facilitators in community and other design sessions, hosting gender-balanced or, where necessary, women-only focus groups to get feedback, and setting out clear targets for effective participation from women, men, and other groups.

How might we organise global coalition for women inclusion in internet related issue and Tech?

- Work within the institutions to change it. ISOC had a women's SIG
- We need to raise awareness
- Work to end the gender digital divide by actively seeking out women. Women tend to think they cannot do a job or a consultancy as they had not done it before, but men have no such lack of confidence and even if they do not have the experience or expertise they apply.
- Women think they have to have all the experience and expertise to get the job done and so often do not apply while men apply and then worry afterward about getting the job done

How might we put together all the initiatives focusing on women empowerment?

- Funding of innovation centers focused on women
- Have gender specific disbursement targets
- Mentoring women

Speakers:

[bio of the speakers](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1PrgyDGdSEUcLts-LXCA5-vVLHyIV3AC8P3lcqUhBqNA/edit#slide=id.ga7331156a5_0_0) : https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1PrgyDGdSEUcLts-LXCA5-vVLHyIV3AC8P3lcqUhBqNA/edit#slide=id.ga7331156a5_0_0

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