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# Strategies for Closing Three Major Gender Gaps: participation–engagement gap; pay gap; leadership–advancement gap

CONFERENCE PAPER · OCTOBER 2010

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Dr. Irene KAMBERIDOU (Conference Moderator)

Assistant Professor, University of Athens / European Centre for Women and Technology (ECWT)

## CONFERENCE RESULTS



The conference marked the successful conclusion of the EC co-funded project 'gender-

IT', implemented by 7 partners from Cyprus, Greece, UK, Estonia, Spain & Sweden.

### PROJECT LEADER:

[INTERCOLLEGE](#), CYPRUS

### CONFERENCE ORGANISER:

[MILTOS EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES & SERVICES](#), GREECE

### OTHER PARTNERS:

[UNIVERSITY OF TARTU](#), ESTONIA

[ITEC INCORPORATED COMPANY CONTINUOUS VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE](#), GREECE

[SCIENTER SPAIN S.L.](#), SPAIN

[EMMERCE EEIG](#), SWEDEN

[INOVA CONSULTANCY](#), UK

Visit the project website!

<http://www.gender-it.eu>



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## Women Choosing ICT Careers: Influencing Policy from Practice

### Strategies for Closing Three Major Gender Gaps:

(1) Participation/Engagement Gap

(2) Pay Gap

(3) Advancement/ Leadership Gap

The high-performing businesses of tomorrow that embrace diversity - the influx of new perspectives and new skills to eliminate the skills shortage - and the infinite potential of women and turn it into a competitive advantage will be successful in the new global markets. The establishment of an attractive open labour market that recruits and retains women is essential.

According to the European Commission's Women and ICT status report (2010), today on a global level, **there is a shortage of 1.2 million jobs in the ICT sector due to the absence of skilled labor.** In Europe this figure is estimated to be 300.000. Consequently, recruiting and recognizing the largely untapped pool of talent amongst women, getting more girls and women into the science and technology sector is not only a gender equality issue but it is an economic necessity. Many findings support the business case for diversity, according to which **companies that recruit, retain, and advance women (into leadership positions) have a greater competitive advantage and achieve better business results.** (Kamberidou 2010)

Encouraging more women and girls to take up ICT, retaining them in the sector and reproducing female participation requires working together to support an "Education-Engagement-Retention Action Plan"<sup>1</sup> (Kamberidou 2008) that entails: (1) Support of multicultural interdisciplinary gender research networks and collaborative actions that address the three major gender gaps: (a) the gender participation/engagement gap, (b) the pay gap and the (c) advancement-leadership gap. (2) Support of multicultural interdisciplinary gender research to influences mainstream developments in science and technology from a gender perspective, including a better balance of gendered content to change attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes.<sup>2</sup> (3) Interdisciplinarity in education and research in order to formulate new pedagogical methods and approaches that incorporate the gender dimension. Education-training and engagement for teachers and children means extra-curricula approaches, new classroom examples and best practice models. (3) Educating the educators, re-training the trainers: learning, continued training and re-training. (4) Participation in areas of planning,

<sup>1</sup> Kamberidou, Irene (2008). "Training the Trainers-Educating the Educators. Education-Engagement-Retention: the Gender factor in digital illiteracy in Greece". In Proceedings of the European Commission Shadowing Conference 6 March 2008, Brussels "Move out of the shadow! Seize the opportunity!" EC Information Society and Media, Brussels, pp. 51-68. In ITGirls: <http://ec.europa.eu/itgirls>

<sup>2</sup> Kamberidou, Irene & Patsantaras, Nikolaos (2006). Towards a Gender-Neutral Inclusive Information Society: Preserving the European Model in the Information Age. *CORDIS focus online edition*, March 2006, Brussels. In: [http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/directorate\\_g/seminar20060405.htm](http://cordis.europa.eu/ist/directorate_g/seminar20060405.htm)

management, assessment and organization. (5) Family support programmes, flexi-hours, a family-friendly working environment, child care facilities, namely an inclusive work culture. (6) The establishment of an attractive open labour market that recruits and retains women. (7) Gender networking, alliances with women, sharing, mentoring and supporting younger female colleagues in order to eliminate “gender fatigue” (Kamberidou 2010) and encourage women to take a more active role (agency), to keep up with developments, to share information, etc. (8) Social mobility in the structure, i.e. learning the system and how to use it in order to make changes. (9) Best-practice models and mentoring projects: the involvement of professional women (Leaders) already employed in science and technology, the academia, research sectors. (10) Raising the profile of our role models and female leaders as well as the diversity of careers available. We need to inspire women into technology<sup>3</sup> with innovative and different approaches such as the European Commission’s shadowing activities (<http://ec.europa.eu/itgirls>, mentoring programs and so forth. We need to all join forces and work together to accomplish this. For example, the ECWT ([www.womenandtechnology.eu](http://www.womenandtechnology.eu)) and the EUD ([www.ictwomendirectory.eu](http://www.ictwomendirectory.eu)) provide such a platform for collaborations.<sup>4</sup>

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS / PROPOSALS

### Eva FABRY (ECWT-European Center for Women in Technology)

- What is the issue/problem? To ensure that e-skills solutions offered in universities and ACE have the credibility and standing to accurately validate the knowledge required for the ICT-embedded economy and society at large.
- This is only achieved in the knowledge-based economy with industry participation and endorsement as well as development of a standard that meets the expectations of all stakeholders: industry, government and third sector ACE players, like universities and education partners.
- MSPs to aggregate the various competences and resources of each stakeholder, business, public institutions, and third sector.
- Goal of the Alliance on Skills for Employability to provide access to technology, access to content, and access to jobs to help train people in ICT and other skill-sets required by current and future economic and social developments (e.g. Web 3.0 and media competences!)
- Focus on Women, elder people in need for re-training; people with disabilities; and young unemployed
- How can Gender Mainstreaming in ICT, technology and innovation contribute to the Future of Work in Europe?
- Relevant policies decided, accepted, and IMPLEMENTED at all political levels - EU, Member State, region, city, organization:
  - to attract BOTH women and men to technology
  - to provide eSkills for all
  - to ensure gender mainstreaming in VET for the ICT sector
  - to overcome the technology gender gap (e.g. mentoring, awareness, best practice dissemination)
  - to ensure gender balance in leadership positions in industry and academia
  - to ensure gender balance on governing boards
  - to encourage female entrepreneurship
  - Gender Dimension as Driver of Science Innovation and Excellence in 21st Century (genSET)

<sup>3</sup>Kamberidou, Irene (2010). “The Glass Escalator and Gender Fatigue: Getting Gender back on the Agenda”. In Proceedings of the 5TH International Conference on Interdisciplinarity in Education ICIE’10, June 17-19, 2010, Tallinn, Estonia. Technological University of Athens. “Estia-Earth to Sustain Women’s Careers as Academics, Researchers and Professionals in Engineering, Computer and the Sciences, Lifelong Learning Erasmus Network” ([www.estia.net](http://www.estia.net))

<sup>4</sup>Kamberidou, Irene (2010b). “Inspiring Women into Technology: the EUD Megacommunity”. In proceedings of the 5TH International Conference on Interdisciplinarity in Education ICIE’10, June 17 - 19, 2010, Tallinn, Estonia. ([www.estia.net](http://www.estia.net))

- to ensure the gender dimension in innovation
- to ensure friendly labour market policies (e.g. equal pay, child care, flexible working conditions)
- to provide current, disaggregated statistics (Eurostat, industry etc.)
- Coordinated commitment and support are essential:
  - EC: in policies and funding programmes of relevant DGs - INFSO (Digital Agenda and ICT), ENTR, EAC, EMPL, RTD, REGIO, Eurostat etc.
  - EP: in all relevant committees
  - Member States: in national, regional and local policies and projects
  - In industrial and academic decisions and project
- You can make a difference now by working with your stakeholders. **NOW! so that we can together make sure that this happens!**

**Dr. Soulla LOUCA (Associate Professor of the University of Nicosia, Cyprus)**

- Educate women at any stage on what the field is all about; to raise awareness about the diverse careers and the opportunities offered by ICT
- Set quota; Convince the state for 40-60 in all technical boards;
- ICT should be part of the core curriculum starting in elementary schools and utilize it as a tool for learning;
- Provide the necessary infrastructure in schools;
- Provide flexible working conditions surrounding ICT;
- Provide job shadowing/summer internships for university students;
- Implementation and exploitation of the research through innovation and incentives;
- Allow workers to be involved with innovation;
- The gender inequality in the field of IT will not be self-regulated;
- A set of active policies is needed to correct it. Both men and women should strive for proper implementation;
- Important for us women to understand the importance of and participate in shaping the policy itself to new technologies and the Information Society due to the large dimension of the gender issues to ICT policy and more;
- Support from the friendly and familiar environment.

**Louise NORMAN (European Project Manager at Inova Consultancy Ltd., UK partner in the Gender IT project)**

*How can we encourage more women and girls to take up ICT as a Career?*

- The objective of the EC co-funded project entitled gender-IT is to build a sustainable multi-stakeholder network at a European level which will actively foster gender mainstreaming in VET for the ICT sector.
- Training for career guidance practitioners and ICT trainers;
- Up-to date information about the range of ICT careers and what they can offer;
- Dispel ideas of traditional ICT careers;
- Outreach programmes, including female role models;
- Tackle stereotypes (both of gender roles and ICT); and achieve media exposure;

- There is little or no role models for women in ICT in the media;
- Flexibility in the requirements of ICT training courses, in order to make them relevant to girls' and women's lives;
- Allow ICT trainers flexibility and creativity to match course content to learner's needs and interests;
- Women use proportionally more social networking software than men;
- Make ICT relevant to daily life, e.g. iPods, blogs, software in common use.

**Dr. Panagiotis KARAMBELAS, (Assistant Professor of Information Technology, Hellenic American University, NH)**

- Action from different stakeholders
  - Employers: mentors, flexible training, concrete career pathways, etc.
  - Colleagues: team building, parallel advancement, learning communities, etc.
  - Governments: identify the issue, monitor job statistics, support IT jobs, etc.
  - Educators: flexible programs, change of perception, enrich curricula with technical skills, etc.
  - Family: encourage independency, change toy stereotypes, etc.
  - Women by themselves: be educated, understand innovation and creativity behind IT, etc.

**Angelina MICHAELIDIS (President of IAGME, the Women's Organisation of Managers & Entrepreneurs, Hellenic Management Association)**

Get an ICT Business Plan:

- a. Goal: professional success, make a family
- b. Product/services: Prof. excellence in commercial roles, technical ability, produce more.
- c. Resources/budget: stay with big firms, organize your back-up services
- d. Timeframe: make grids and set priorities, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50+
- e. Coach yourself, monitor progress, make decisions!
- f. Set priorities: PhD or new assignment, breast feeding or meeting?
- g. Make choices: Location of home, level of compensation
- h. Avoid missteps
- i. Conflict IS an opportunity to fine tune, to change, to reposition or to stick!

**Ioanna FERGADIOTOU (Training Manager at Vocational Training S.A.)**

Enhancing Career Planning:

- a. Increase learning opportunities for new ICT skills and applications
- b. Make training a core function of the enterprise
- c. Develop both HRMS and policies
- d. Allow interaction between ICT professionals
- e. Mix learning methods-blended learning