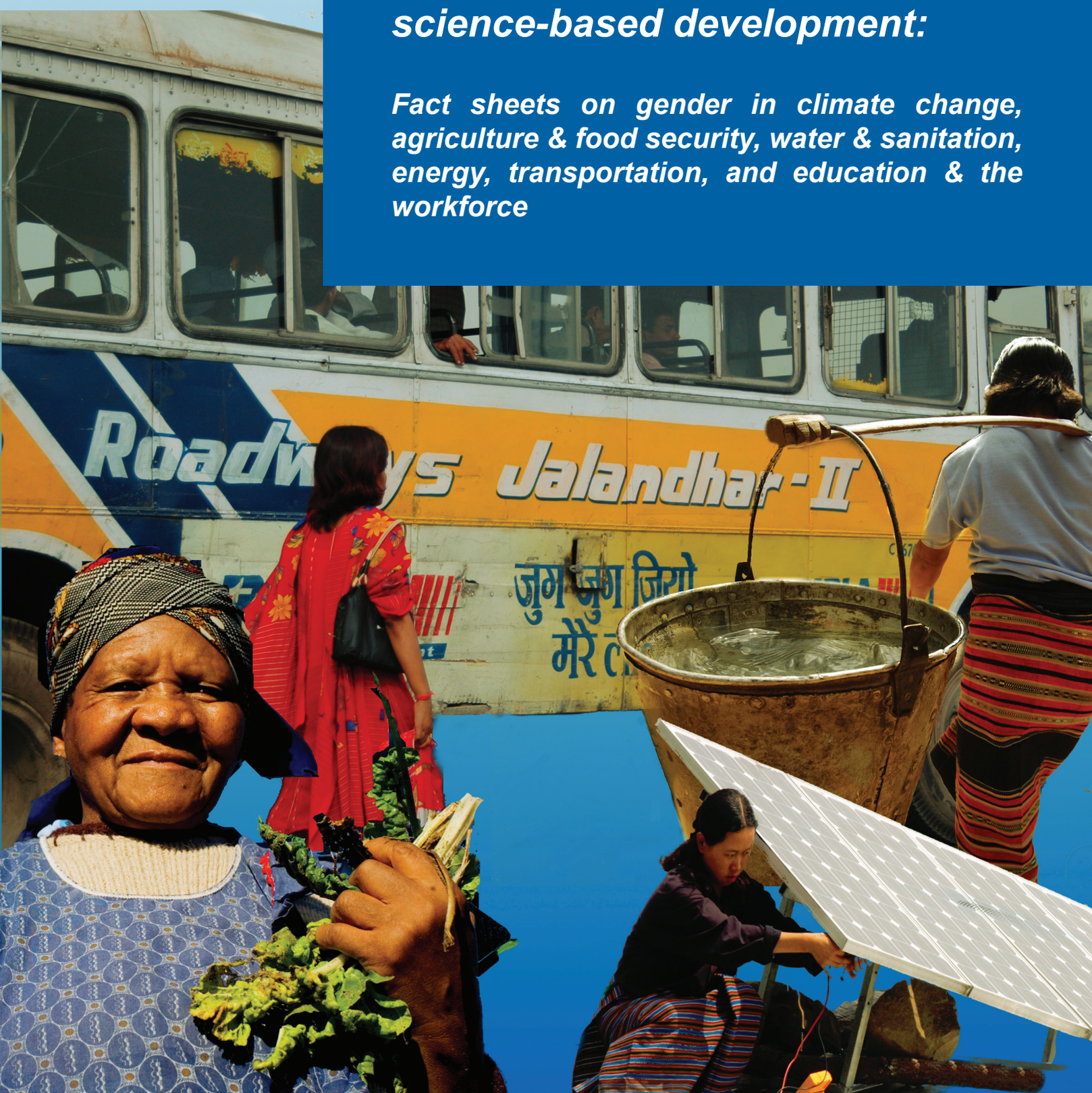
# GenderInSITE

*Gender in science, innovation, technology and engineering*

## *Applying a gender lens to science-based development:*

***Fact sheets on gender in climate change, agriculture & food security, water & sanitation, energy, transportation, and education & the workforce***



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This booklet is produced by GenderInSITE. GenderInSITE is an international initiative to promote the role of women in science, innovation, technology and engineering, and to demonstrate how applying a gender lens to SITE can provide deeper insights, more effective programmes and more sustainable outcomes in the context of development.

We build partnerships among GenderInSITE members to identify, understand, and develop strategies to apply the gender lens to SITE in six key areas: climate change; agriculture and food security; water and sanitation; energy; transportation; and education and the workforce. By working with networks of researchers and policy-makers, we are mapping the nuances of local development challenges – and addressing them through information dissemination, tools and resources and awareness-raising activities.

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With the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals dominating the agendas of most signatory countries, leaders of those countries are concerning themselves with how to effect large-scale changes in several critical areas of development, including poverty reduction, achieving food and water security, combatting climate change and preserving biodiversity. Allocating attention and resources across all of these priorities is no easy task; a high level of policy integration will be necessary, which will require difficult trade-offs and decision-making. If policy-makers truly want to fast-track progress towards multiple goals, they would be wise to start with Goal #5: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Across diverse sectors and at all levels of implementation, it has been shown over and over again that taking women's perspectives, needs and abilities into account in designing responses to development challenges leads to more effective and longer-lasting solutions.

Development solutions are increasingly grounded in science and technology. Science produces knowledge to help policymakers understand the scope and scale of a problem and to track progress towards targets; it allows for the creation of more effective tools and technologies that accelerate progress; and it often serves directly as an engine of strong economies. But while there has been growing recognition that science-based approaches to development should be interdisciplinary, participatory, and sensitive to local social and cultural nuances, gender is still often left out of the equation. Women and men are affected differently by development, and yet women's perspectives and needs are often absent from the development process, from priority-setting to planning to implementation.

In this booklet, you will find presented examples of the gender dimension in six areas of development: climate change; agriculture and food security; water and sanitation; energy; transportation; and education and the workforce. We hope that it is useful in illustrating that gender is deeply intertwined with other aspects of development – and that only by applying a gender lens to the entire landscape of global challenges will sustainable progress will be achieved.

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# Climate Change

Climate change is acknowledged to be a universal problem at the forefront of international policy discussions; but its gender aspects are less frequently considered. Climate change does not affect men and women in the same ways; nor will women's and men's responses to climate change and their roles in managing its effects be the same. Climate change is known to widen existing economic and social inequalities[1]; but with gender-aware planning and programming, action to mitigate climate change may instead have the capacity to empower women within their communities and to make them agents of gender-positive change.

## GENDER IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

Women's roles in families and communities put them at the center of climate change adaptation and mitigation. Women and girls are often tasked with providing food for families and collecting fuelwood and water, resources which may be increasingly difficult to find as the effects of climate change are felt; this means that women may be forced to take more time away from education or other productive economic activities[2]. Women are also active in farming and in forestry, and in many places they have developed ideas and strategies for coping with climate change based on their knowledge of local environments, soils, and farming and production methods; but they too often lack the decision-making power within their homes and communities – often linked to land ownership – to make large-scale changes to agricultural or forestry practices, or to push for mitigation measures such as cleaner cookstoves[3] and natural resource conservation.

## GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**14 times more women's and children's lives are lost in natural disasters than men's.**

Source: GTZ, 2010[3]

Women are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods, changing weather patterns and food and water shortages. This is in large part due to the fact that they constitute a majority of the world's poor and rural populations, and typically have less mobility and less access to information and resources than men. Sociocultural norms can also disadvantage women from acquiring the information and skills necessary to escape or avoid hazards (e.g. swimming and climbing trees to escape rising water levels). Dress codes imposed on women can restrict their mobility in times of disaster, as can their responsibility for small children who cannot swim or run[4]. Women are also particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of disasters, as they often do not own or have access to land or other resources to help them recover[3]. Men, too, can be disadvantaged in certain scenarios; cultural conditioning that rewards independence in men, for example, makes them less likely to seek assistance in times of crisis, and they may also be more exposed to risk during disasters due to the nature of their work.

## GENDER EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Policies and strategies that address the gender dimensions in climate change should consider not only how women can contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change, but how the implementation of the strategies themselves can benefit women. Programmes that turn women's existing knowledge or activities into economically viable assets – for example agroforestry, payments for ecosystem services and emissions trading – are one way of achieving this; training women to build, install and maintain solar and other renewable energy technologies is another[3]. Women are also highly effective at mobilizing action in communities, and programmes that acknowledge their capacities in this regard by involving them in community decision-making bodies are likely to see greater success in meeting their objectives, as well as contributing to formalizing women's leadership roles.

# Agriculture & Food Security

Worldwide, women are central to agricultural production; they comprise 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries on average, and are more than half of this labour force in many countries, including Bangladesh and many East African countries[1]. Providing greater support for women in agriculture – by raising awareness about their roles and guaranteeing certain resources – could raise overall productivity and food production, leading to higher household incomes and gains in the health and education levels of children and adults[1].

## ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Women's responsibilities in agriculture vary, but they are most commonly involved in weeding, harvesting, fertilizer application and in food processing and preparation; they are also often responsible for looking after poultry and dairy animals[2]. With the increasing migration of men to urban centres for employment opportunities, women continue to take on a larger number and greater diversity of tasks[3]; but despite their importance in agricultural production, they frequently do not have access to resources they need to increase their output, such as land, credit, technology, information, training and education. It is difficult for women to move beyond subsistence-level farming into more economically-valuable market-oriented agricultural production. Access to land is particularly critical, as access to credit, water rights and other resources are often closely linked with land ownership. Women in developing countries own less than 20% of land on average[1]; in Africa, they own only 1% of land in total, and receive only 1% of all agricultural credit[4].

**The Productivity Question:**

**Many studies of agricultural productivity have shown that women's yields are on average about 25% lower than those of men; but recently, a newer wave of research has shown that this 'productivity gap' disappears, or may even favour women[3], when they are given equal access to land, inputs and agricultural services.**

**Source: FAO, 2011[1]**

## WOMEN AND FOOD SECURITY

**The need to address the specific concerns of women in agriculture is particularly imperative as a growing world population – expected to reach 9.2 billion by 2050 – combined with climate change and other environmental stresses will together contribute to declining crop yields, decreasing arable land per capita, and increasing difficulty in meeting worldwide nutritional needs.**

**Providing women with equal access to agricultural resources could increase their output by 20-30%, helping to improve food security and reducing global hunger by as much as 12-19% according to current estimates.**

Source: FAO, 2011[1]

## GENDER IN AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

The majority of agricultural tools and services are more accessible to men than to women. Physical tools can often be too large, heavy or unwieldy for women to operate efficiently, may not be culturally acceptable for women's use, and are more suited to large-scale farming practiced by men[5,6]. Agricultural extension and technology dissemination programmes also tend to be oriented towards men; women participate in these programmes in very low numbers. One reason may be that staff of extension services are usually male, though studies have shown that women prefer and benefit more by learning from other women[5]. Efforts to mainstream gender analysis into agricultural technology dissemination programmes, particularly in rural areas, can improve women's participation.

## EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH AGRICULTURE

When women are able to have direct control over agricultural production and the income that derives from it, they often gain a greater say in both household and public decisions. With increased self-confidence and valuable knowledge and skills, they may become leadership figures in their communities. Women also tend to prioritize children's education and nutrition to a greater extent than do men, leading to widespread social benefits[1].

# Water & Sanitation

Worldwide, women play an important role in the provision, use and management of water. However, water resource management and other international water and sanitation programmes have often lacked proper mechanisms for taking into account women's needs and concerns with respect to water, failing to recognize the different ways in which women and men use water as well as the ways in which water and sanitation programmes can reinforce existing gender inequalities. Changing rainfall and other climate patterns, a growing global population, and growing competition for water in rapidly industrializing countries, along with other factors will make it increasingly important for programmes to integrate women into the design and implementation of water resource management programmes in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of such programmes and to guarantee water security.

## GENDER IN WATER PROVISIONING

Women and girls are usually responsible for the collection of water, which particularly in rural areas can be time and labour-intensive. Where there is no source of water within the home, the task falls to women in 64% of households to collect it[1]. They may walk for several hours for water; according to one United Nations estimate, in sub-Saharan Africa 40 billion hours a year are spent collecting water[2]. This places a great degree of physical strain on women and exposes them to the risk of violence in transit[3], in addition to taking time away from girls' education and women's economically productive work. Providing access to clean water for the 783 million[1] people who lack it is critical to improving gender equity in the developing world.

**A typical water-collection vessel in Africa weighs 18 kg (40 lbs).**

Source: IFAD, 2007[3].

## WATER AND LAND RIGHTS

Women's access to water in many places is closely tied in with their access to land; water usage rights and participation in water management initiatives and development programmes are typically linked to land ownership, which may be very difficult for women to obtain. This particularly restricts women's say in the use of irrigation water supplies, for which women often have different preferences than men.

Source: IFAD, 2007[3].

## GENDER IN WATER USE

Women use water in different ways than men. They are the primary users of water for domestic purposes such as cleaning and preparing food, washing, and maintaining sanitary facilities, as well as for some agriculture, while men use water more exclusively for agriculture, including irrigation and livestock watering. Water management programmes have often not taken into account these multiple uses of water, and low participation of women in water users' associations (WUAs) reinforces this trend[3]. Supporting women's participation in water management and offering training in water and sanitation-related careers can help ensure that women's concerns are being met while providing them additional economic opportunities[4].

## GENDER AND SANITATION

Waterborne and other preventable diseases that spread through poor sanitation and hygiene conditions are responsible for more than 2.2 million deaths every year[4], and women are at greater risk from these diseases due to their roles in water collection, in caring for the sick, and in the construction, maintenance and repair of sanitation facilities. Girls' school attendance after puberty is also often dependent on the presence of proper sanitation and hygiene facilities for menstruation.

**More than 35% of the world's population does not have access to improved sanitation.**

Source: World Health Organization, 2008[5].

# Energy

Access to energy has repeatedly been shown to be a critical factor in enabling economic growth and development and relieving poverty. Similarly, the links between poverty and gender are well defined. But attempts to close the circle between energy and gender have received relatively little analytical focus, and even less attention in practice. A recent study found that countries with greater energy access have greater gender equality, regardless of their overall poverty levels[1]. There is therefore a need for greater exploration of the gender dimensions of energy in both research and policymaking.

## ENERGY FOR EDUCATION & ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

In the developed world, the introduction of electric appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers freed up women's time and allowed them to enter the workforce in greater numbers. The same is true in the developing world — electricity reduces the amount of time women spend performing household duties and enables them to participate in microenterprises and other economic activities. In rural areas of Brazil, access to energy and ownership of a washing machine were correlated with 10% and 33% higher incomes for women and men, respectively; in South Africa, electrification contributed to a 9.5% increase in women's employment; and in rural Nicaragua, women were 23% more likely to work outside the home when they had electricity[1]. Improved energy also reduces the workload of girls and allows them to attend school in greater numbers, in part because reliable lighting during evening hours allows them to spend more time studying.

**In one Brazilian study, girls in rural areas with electricity were 59% more likely to graduate from primary school.**

Source: The Atlantic, 2015[1]

## ENERGY AND HEALTH

Different energy sources have differential health impacts on women, men, girls and boys. Many recent energy initiatives have focused on large-scale technologies and areas, while overlooking rural areas where women make up the majority of the population. Household energy in these rural areas is generated largely through the burning of biomass (plants or plant-based materials such as wood or agricultural waste). Biomass is the primary fuel source for 38% of the world's population[2], although most methods of burning biomass – in traditional three-stone fires, mud or other stoves lacking chimneys or hoods – are known to cause major health problems as well as to be environmentally damaging. According to the World Health Organization, more than 4 million premature deaths are caused every year as a result of air pollution caused by burning biomass indoors[3], more than are caused by malaria or tuberculosis; and girls bear the brunt of these respiratory impacts as they spent greater time indoors. Reliable lighting can also improve girls' and women's safety when traveling at night, which in turn allows them to participate in a greater range of educational and economic activities.

**"We believe that women should be transformed from passive victims into active forces of good to bring changes in their lives and the communities in which they live."**

**- Grameen Shakti founder Dipal Barua**

**Source: MakingItMagazine.net, 2010[4]**

## WOMEN IN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Engaging women as active agents of improved energy initiatives can make these efforts more successful as well as contribute to the economic empowerment of women; Grameen technology centers in Bangladesh and the Barefoot College in India, for example, have trained women as technicians and engineers, teaching them to build, install and maintain solar energy sources. In countries all over the world, involving women in the design of more efficient and safer biomass cookstoves has also resulted in greatly improved and more sustainable methods of cooking. Women's roles should be fully considered in every aspect of energy development, from the planning stages of energy access programmes to implementation, to their needs and concerns as end-users of energy. Applying a gender lens to energy policy will help to ensure not only that the benefits of improved energy accrue to both men and women equally, but that proposed energy strategies are efficacious and sustainable.

# Transportation

Transportation is often thought to be gender neutral; but men and women travel with different frequencies, at different times of day, and with different priorities. In general, existing transport systems and schedules worldwide have not been designed to meet the needs of women and men equally. In addition, many public transport options are not safe or culturally appropriate for women and girls, including routes that are poorly lit or not well-monitored and buses or trains that are dominated by male passengers. Improving the mobility of women and girls requires taking their specific needs and concerns into account when designing transportation policies.

## GENDER PATTERNS OF TRANSPORTATION USE

In both developed and developing countries, women tend to make shorter and more frequent trips during the day than men (who more commonly travel to and from one job) and to travel outside of standard workday hours[1]. Fare structures are often not designed to support the kind of "trip-chaining," or combining of multiple trips, that women favour[2]. Women are also often accompanied by children or elderly relatives, and use public transportation to carry goods and household items to and from the market in connection with their domestic responsibilities. They are therefore more likely to place greater priority on flexibility and proximity to their final destination in choice of transport, whereas men tend to place more importance on speed and punctuality[1]. Women are also more likely to be deterred from using overcrowded public transport as it is more difficult for them to board with children or heavy items.

## GENDER IN TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Safety and security are greater concerns with respect to transportation for women than for men. Women may choose not to travel at night due to the risk of violence, and they may avoid crowded buses and train cars where they might be groped or harassed. They are more likely to be perceived as easy targets for thieves, particularly when traveling with children or packages. Providing adequate lighting or security cameras on transit routes and in stations, offering flexible drop-off points during off-peak hours, and designating women-only transit lines or separate carriages are all potential ways to mitigate these risks. Safety is also a concern for men, who are the victims of more motor vehicle accidents, and also suffer more health problems associated with the inhalation of exhaust fumes[1].

64% of women ages 20-40 have been groped on public transit in Tokyo according to one recent study[5]. Many cities have begun to experiment with introducing women's-only bus or train lines or separate carriages for women, including Tokyo, Mumbai, Mexico City, Jakarta and Kathmandu.

Source: BBC News, 2005[4]


## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL AREAS

In rural areas that lack adequate transportation infrastructure and, in particular, reliable public transport options, both men and particularly women spend large amounts of time and energy traveling by foot. Women and girls are also typically responsible for the collection of firewood and water, and for bringing food and other products to and from the market[3]. Because men own and control most vehicles and some other modes of travel such as bicycles or motorbikes are often not socially acceptable for women, these activities are largely done by foot. This takes away from girls' school and study time and the time that women could spend on income-generating activities.

In many rural areas, women spend up to five hours a day collecting water and firewood, and travel an average of 6 km to do so.

Source: Manuh & Sutherland-Addy, 2013[4]

# Education & the Workforce

Although great strides have been made in the education of women and girls worldwide, many countries in both the developed and developing worlds have a shortage of women in SITE fields – particularly in the physical sciences, technology and engineering – and few women represented in SITE leadership or at policy-making levels. Even in countries where large numbers of women are educated in SITE, this often does not translate into equal numbers of women in the workforce; reasons for this "leaky pipeline" need further investigation, but a large part of the trend can be attributed to social and cultural demands on women at home, such as childcare, cooking and cleaning, combined with inflexible workplace policies and norms. Institutional policy reforms are recommended to help women advance at every level of SITE careers.

## HORIZONTAL INEQUALITIES IN SITE

**In the EU, women were 47% of Ph.D. graduates in 2012 overall – but only 42% in science, math and computing and 28% in engineering, manufacturing and construction.**

Source: European Commission, 2015[6]

With respect to the general education of women and girls at the primary, secondary, and even tertiary levels, many countries in both the developing and developed worlds have made significant advances in recent years. With the exception of certain parts of Africa and the Middle East, the education gender gap at the first two levels of school has nearly or completely closed in most countries, and at the tertiary level, women actually outnumber men in many countries[1]. In SITE disciplines, however, women still have far to come. Even in advanced nations with large numbers of women enrolled in college, these women do not tend to enter SITE fields, with the exception of the biological sciences where women can often be a majority. In engineering, physics, and computer science degrees, women represent less than 30% of enrollees in most countries[2]. In some fields such as computer science, the number of women is actually dropping – from 35% of professionals in the field in 1990 to only 26% in 2013, according to one American study[3].

## VERTICAL INEQUALITIES IN SITE

Equal education does not translate into equal participation in SITE careers. Studies show that even in fields with high numbers of women graduates, women remain underrepresented in the workforce, particularly as they rise up the career ladder. As of 2012, women made up fewer than half of researchers in the large majority – 79% – of countries that reported data[4]. Among senior faculty of research universities, members of national science academies and other high-ranking positions, women are even fewer. A 2015 study by the InterAcademy Partnership found that across 63 reporting countries, only 12% of national academy members were women; even in Cuba, which had the highest proportion of women, they made up only 27%[5]. It is clear that expanding educational opportunities for women and girls, while necessary, is not enough to bring about gender parity in the workforce as well.


**Only 1 in 20 deans or department chairs in science in the U.S. are women.**

Source: McCullough, 2011[7]

## CULTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Women who do pursue careers in SITE fields face unique challenges. In many cultures, raising children and tending the home are commonly regarded as women's responsibilities, forcing women to divide their time between work and domestic obligations. Laws and institutional policies concerning time off for infant and childcare often reinforce these roles, providing more flexible leave policies for new mothers than for new fathers, for example. This sets many women back in the early stages of their careers; but even as they advance, women are promoted to fewer high-level faculty positions[2], and are less commonly found as members of scientific academies or in leadership roles in scientific organizations. A number of different factors, such as compounding disadvantages, systemic gender discrimination in SITE fields, and biases in career review processes have been identified as contributing to this discrepancy, suggesting that there is not one easy solution, but that a combination of cultural and institutional reforms will be necessary to effect change.

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