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**SOCIETY. INTEGRATION. EDUCATION.**

# **THE DIGITAL GENDER DIVIDE: AN OVERVIEW**

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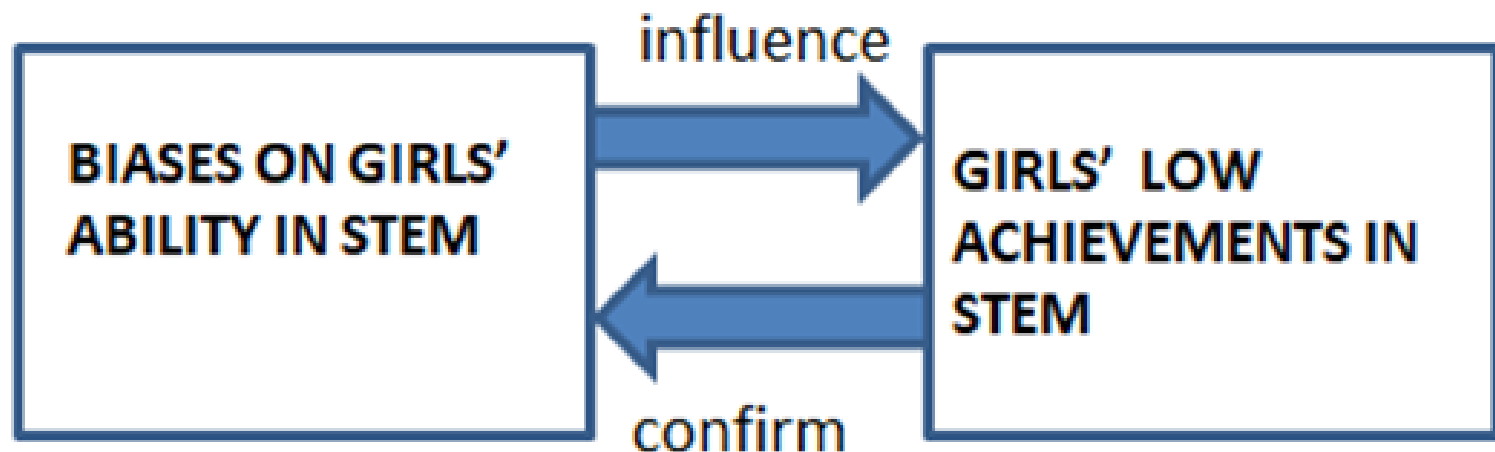
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## The effect of biases on girls' ability in STEM

Biases regarding girls' ability in science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) influence their low achievements, but these low achievements are, in turn, are interpreted as the result of their low ability in STEM





Men are judged to be more creative than women, although in a context in which collaboration and integration of perspectives as well as feminine attributes such as refinement and elegance are emphasized, women can emerge as more creative than men (Abraham, 2016; Proudfoot, Kay, & Koval, 2015).





## **Research methodology and objective**

In our study, we adopted a desk research methodology to obtain a general overview of the factors that can influence the low percentage of women working in the high-tech industry, as well as the barriers that hinder their career advancement in high-tech companies. Data was collected from literature and official statistics. Articles and reports on feminine and masculine occupations were gathered and analyzed, taking into account their period of reference. We attempted to identify the changes in the female working culture and isolate the elements that seem to be persisting.



## Research objective

The primary objective of our research is to establish an interregional network between the Latvian Latgalian region and the Ukrainian Ternopil region in order to increase women's participation in STEM.

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## Feminine and masculine occupations

A recent ILO report, *Women at work* (2016), reveals that occupations are still considered to be either “feminine” or “masculine” according to the skills that a job entails, as well as on the working culture that exists in that field.





## Findings

Research confirms that very often, women are associated with caregiving roles and the family, whilst men are generally associated with the role of “breadwinner” and career building (Sinno, Schuette, & Killen, 2014).





## Women’s leadership: positive and negative traits (source: BASNET project, p. 68)

Positive traits	Negative traits
Precision	Emotionality
Sensitiveness, taking care of others, which helps to keep warm	Difficulties in winning respect
relations with subordinates	Sensitiveness, inability to apply sanctions for subordinates
Disposition towards compromises, avoidance of conflicts	Finicky
More efficient organization of work, ability to save time	Family responsibilities



## Educational challenges in Latvia

In Latvia, the specific situation in education heightens this problem. The *Education and Training Monitor 2018* prepared by the European Commission shows that the Latvian education system is making many signs of progress but that critical issues remain (European Commission, 2018).



## Conclusion

The preliminary research results have revealed that gender equality can have an impact on the development of technology, since women can contribute to bringing a new viewpoint to meeting the needs and demands of society. However, achieving gender balance, especially in the technology sector, will not be automatic.



## Main barriers

From our analysis, cultural factors appear to be the primary cause influencing the low percentage of women working in the high-tech industry, as well as the barriers that hinder their career advancement in high-tech companies. Indeed, negative stereotypic attributions generate serious setbacks for women's in STEM field.



## Priorities

- Improving the digital competences of social educators;
- Investing in the digital media literacy of teachers, especially those who are working in preschools and primary schools.