



CAREER ROCKET

## CAREER ROCKET

Respect, Opportunities, Choice,  
Knowledge, Equality and Training

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Things important to know  
about:

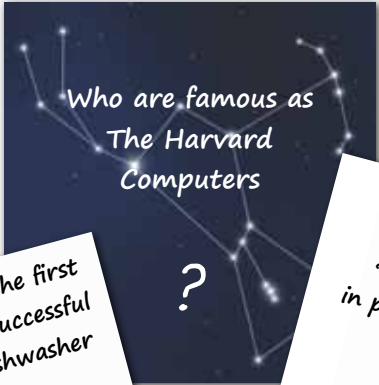
- gender and related concepts
- economic consequences of gender inequalities
- career options in STEM jobs

[www.career-rocket.eu](http://www.career-rocket.eu)

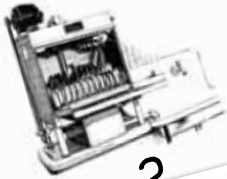


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Who are famous as  
The Harvard  
Computers



Who invented the first  
commercially successful  
automatic dishwasher



?

Who discovered  
the polymer  
"Kevlar" which is used  
in police bullet proof vests?



Who discovered the silicon  
which is everywhere  
in our daily life



Who first developed  
a house with  
solar panel heating



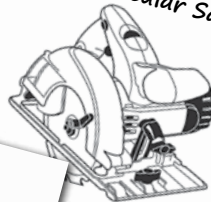
?

Who is the first female  
pilot who overfly solo  
the Atlantic Ocean



?

Who invented  
the Circular Saw



?

Name three women  
holding Nobel price  
for science after 2000



?

## What you should know about.... GENDER related concepts



**Discrimination on the grounds of sex** – Systematic unfavourable treatment of individuals based on their sex, which results in the denial of rights, opportunities or resources.

Sexual discrimination (also known as '**sexism**') is a complex of prejudices and manifestations of discriminatory and/or hateful behaviour to individuals on the grounds of their sex, but the term may also refer to the general division of people based on this criterion.

According to sexist ideas and bias, sexes exhibit basic differences, which pre-determine the different social roles, different degrees of sexual freedom and a different legal status for men and women. These theories refer to various beliefs and models of thinking:

- The belief that one sex is superior to the other;
- The binary understanding of sexes: each person belongs either to one or the other sex and may not possess any features of the opposite sex;
- Stemming from the above, the idea of stereotyping the concepts of 'masculinity' (a gender role) for men (as a sex) and the concept of 'femininity' (a gender role) for women (as a sex).

Sexist thinking, in the general case, is in favor of the male sex but its direction can sometimes be reversed. Women are often believed to surpass men in certain activities (such as housework, raising children, needlework, etc.), while men surpass women in all other areas of life. As a result, women are refused access to certain professions and, in some countries; they are deprived of education and of any social expression.

On a legislative plane, the developed states (mainly Western societies) invest efforts to fight sexist behaviours through anti-discrimination laws, especially concerning the workplace, because, irrespective of development, sexism in social areas and social stereotypes still affects them.

**Sexual division of labour** – Socially shaped ideas and practices, which determine the roles and activities suitable for women and men. This applies to the various types of work done by men and women, as a consequence of their socialisation and the adopted models of work within a certain context.

## What you should know about.... GENDER related concepts



**Gender equality** – Gender equality means that women, as well as men, enjoy the same opportunities in life, including avenues to participate in public life. Gender justice means the equivalence of life results for men and women, recognition of their different needs and interests, which requires a redistribution of power and resources.

Gender equality is also related to the honest and fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept admits that males and females have different needs and capabilities and that those differences have to be identified and resolved in a manner which adjusts the inter-sex imbalances.

This includes the non-discrimination on gender grounds against individuals aspiring towards power positions, fair opportunities, distribution of resources and benefits and the access to services. Therefore, it is very important that society would assess correctly the commonalities and the differences between men and women and the different roles they play.

**Gender training** – a facilitated process aimed to increase the awareness and capacity on gender issues, in order to achieve personal or organisational change in the direction of establishing gender equality.

**Gender awareness** – the understanding that there are socially established differences between men and women based on learnt behaviour, which affects the access to resources, including resources of control.

**Gender sensitivity** – the capacity of recognising and emphasising the existing differences between the sexes, the questions of relevance to gender relations and the inequality between women and men, and to consider and adopt suitable strategies and actions.

**Gender-based roles** – are learnt behaviours within a certain society, community or another social group, which results in the performance of activities, tasks and responsibilities, with regard to which a human being is perceived as a man or a woman. Sexual roles are predetermined by age, class, race, ethnic belonging, religion and the geographical, economic or political environment. Changes in the roles of sexes are often triggered by changing economic, physical or political circumstances and they are also related to the efforts in pursuit of development. Both men and women play numerous roles in society. Gender roles are reflected in activities attributed to men and women, based on the accepted differences, which are emphasised by the sexual division of labour. They

## What you should know about.... GENDER related concepts



arise in the course of socialisation of individuals at a very early age in life by identification with specific characteristics related to male and female qualities and capabilities.

**Access and control** – The productive, reproductive and social roles require the use of resources. As a whole, women and men have different levels of access (opportunities to make use of the same thing) both to the resources required for their work and fulfilment, as well as to control over such resources (their ability to define the use of a resource and impose this definition on others). Resources can be economic, such as land and machinery; political: such as representation, leadership; social: care for the children, family planning, education.

**The social construction of sex** – refers to how society identifies values and distributes the obligations, the roles and the responsibilities of women, men, girls and boys. The different assessments create the sexual division of labour and determine the differences in the access to compensations and to the decision-making process, which impacts the power relations and intensifies the roles of sexes. This is done at various levels of gender socialisation including the family, religion, education, culture, peers and media.

**Gender and culture** – Culture is relevant to the manner of life of people, their systems of beliefs, values, rituals, models of interaction and socialisation, which determine the desired qualities, roles, responsibilities and expectations in a society. Culture shapes the demands and expectations of society towards women, men, girls and boys. Thus, culture determines the condition of the power relations between women, men, girls and boys. Gender characteristics result from the cultural context and the socialisation of society. Examples in this respect may be:

- Preferences for a child – a boy instead of a girl;
- The boy is the heir of the family/property;
- The naming of various professions and positions;
- Family practices;
- Gender-based violence

**Gender-based stereotypes** – Stereotypes are structured sets of beliefs about the personal qualities, behaviour and roles of a particular social group. Gender stereotypes are prejudiced and often exaggerated images of women and men which are multiply used in everyday life.

## What you should know about.... GENDER related concepts



**Gender justice** – This is the process for establishing a fair attitude to both women and men. To ensure justice, there is often a need for conditions of compensating certain historical and social flaws, which obstruct women and men, otherwise working in 'equal conditions'.

**Gender issues** – Revealing gender inequality, which is often undesirable; the results of certain types of gender discrimination or suppression. Gender issues arise when there is inequality, injustice or differentiated treatment of particular individuals or a group of people only on the grounds of social expectations and gender attributes. Sometimes, the issues of equality between the sexes are referred to as 'gender issues'.

**Gender transformation** – It describes the situation in which women and men change their manner of thinking from a patriarchal social paradigm to gender equality.

**Gender-based violence** – Every action causing or aiming to cause harm or negative consequences in the physical, sexual, psychological or economic status of an individual, where such actions have been motivated and driven by gender characteristics or by the victim's sexual orientation and identification. The victims of gender-based violence are mainly women and girls, but men can become the victims of such violence as well.

Violence against women and girls is mainly rooted in the unequal power relationships. This is the pure manifestation of the subordinate social status attributed to women and girls. Society has created many different norms and expectations about the behaviour and roles to be assumed by men and women. Women are expected to deal mainly with housework, to be obedient, to serve others and be patient. Men are expected to work outside their home, earn the living and ensure the protection of their family. They are expected to be powerful and strong.

**Violence is used as an instrument of solidification and maintenance of gender roles and for punishing defiant women. Domestic violence is considered justifiable if women do not observe their 'maternal' or 'wife becoming' duties.**



## Things that are important to know about.... economic consequences of gender inequality



**Family duties and career.** Women are faced with harder challenges in combining their professional life with family life. The family duties such as taking care of children, of sick and elderly members have not yet been equally distributed between women and men. Women are still primarily responsible for the care of children. The number of women deciding to take a childcare leave is way greater than that of men. Irrespective that having a part-time job is a matter of personal choice, women most often resort to it in order to balance between employment and family duties. All of this has a negative impact on women's opportunities and impairs their chances for career growth.

**Distribution of family duties.** In the general case, women are almost entirely entrusted with household work and the care of infants. This, on the one hand, results in a disproportionately long working day and the lack of free time for women, and, on the other, it impedes their career development because they often have to make a 'compromise in the name of the family' and this is considered quite the norm.

The perception of family roles also exerts pressure on men, who, once assuming 'the head of the family' position, are burdened with the responsibility to earn income and support their family. Therefore, men, whose wives/female partners have higher incomes, are not regarded with much of respect by others. It is assumed that a man must be in charge of supporting the family, running a business, pursuing a stable professional career, making decisions or going to the gym.

**Gender inequality in education and career development.** The behaviour, which is deemed to be 'socially acceptable' often influences our decisions about our future, even if we are unaware of it. Education is an important factor and it is worthy of special attention, because it opens the doors to a youth's career and labour market perspectives. Many girls and boys from the vocational and mainstream schools still prefer to pick a career reflecting the traditional (socially accepted) roles of women and men.

Thus, girls are often encouraged to choose specialisation areas conventionally perceived as 'feminine' and, thereby, enjoying a lesser social standing and, respectively, a lower pay. (In almost any country) girls prevail in university departments teaching majors like teacher training (education), healthcare and social work, the humanities and arts. Boys choose mainly areas like engineering, IT subjects; production and construction.

Even if the level of educational proficiency of men and women shows no obvious disequilibrium, the gap opens in their subsequent capacity for professional placement. On the one hand, we have different choices of educational and professional areas where the female-dominated sectors are traditionally underpaid.

## Things that are important to know about... economic consequences of gender inequality



However, even in education, which is a traditionally low-pay professional choice, the positions enjoying prestige and high pay are occupied by men. In Bulgaria, women comprise over 80% of the staff employed in the system of primary and secondary education, while more than half of the employees of colleges and universities are males. On the other hand, there is unequal accessibility to the reputable and highly paid positions within the same profession.

**Sexual division of labour.** The sexual division of labour is effected as a set of socially established ideas and practices, which predetermine the roles and activities suitable for men and women. It refers to the different types of work men and women do, as a consequence of the adopted models. On account of such generally accepted models, certain professions (such as the teaching profession) tend to get feminised, because they are perceived as requiring typically feminine qualities and characteristics (empathy, considerate attitude, communicative abilities, etc.).

**Pay gap.** Women are often payed less than men for doing a job of the same value. One of the main reasons is the manner in which women's and men's skills are assessed.

Any work, which requires similar skills, qualifications and experience, is usually underpaid and undervalued when done primarily by women.

**The glass ceiling** (the invisible barriers). Women's career development and access to highly paid positions is impeded by the so called „glass ceiling“. Women are denied access to leadership positions because they are believed to be more emotional, indecisive and impractical than men. Nine out of ten members of the managerial boards of the biggest companies are men. The so called „glass ceiling“ is an invisible barrier to highly educated and qualified women in their pursuit of high-level positions in various professional areas.

The challenges women are faced with when looking for jobs and applying for top positions are related to the suspicion that women would be incapable of fast and critical decision-making or might take a maternity leave. Also, it is believed, that women are more predisposed to emotional decisions, which are not in favour of the business.

The stereotypes consolidated in our minds ensure an advantage for men, irrespective of the qualifications and skills of the women applying for a certain position.



## Things that are important to know about.... STEM jobs



**Unemployment.** Women make up the better part of the unemployed labour force worldwide, while those who work, pertain to the informal sector. Moreover, they have to invest greater efforts than men in order to balance their personal and professional lives. According to an estimate of the World Bank, almost 1/3 of the world's Gross Domestic Product is generated through women's unpaid domestic work.

The roles of the woman as a mother and a housewife are dominant in the general perception of the female sex, whereby, a woman is expected to spend longer hours at home where her main responsibilities and duties cluster. This is the reason for women's impeded access to the labour market and for the lower payment they get for doing work of equal value to that of men.

The gender-based division of professions and activities is a fact, which many tend to accept mechanically, without any consideration.

**However, skills have no gender:** the aspiration towards knowledge and self-perfection has no gender and the exceptions from the rule for the choice of education and professional fulfilment can prove this, which is fortunate for both men and women.

### **What is "STEM" and why is It Important?**

If you follow the news, chances are you've heard educators, politicians, parents or business leaders talking about "STEM" and its importance. So what is it and why should you consider a STEM career?

STEM is an acronym referring to the academic studies of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, and is usually brought up during discussions about education policy and curriculum. STEM-related fields have gotten more attention in recent years as essential components of today's competitive global economy. If you are seeking information about STEM careers, please take a look at these reasons to consider a career in STEM.

### **Reasons to Consider a STEM Career:**

**1. You get to live and work on the cutting edge.** STEM professionals are aerospace engineers, civil engineers, astronomers, software developers, roboticists, computer scientists, materials scientists, food scientists, physicists and chemists, as well as science and math teachers, among many others. Each of these occupations is pushing our understanding of the universe and literally building the future. STEM professionals designed and built the Hubble telescope to peek into the universe; created the internet; built the tallest buildings in the world, and continually push our understanding of diseases and new medical treatments.

## Things that are important to know about.... STEM jobs



Experts predict that even traditional “non-tech” industries will rely more heavily on professionals with STEM skills as technology becomes even more pervasive.

**2. You can count on more job security in a STEM career.** No job is 100% secure; however, because of growing demand, professionals working in STEM fields are less likely to be unemployed than their non-STEM counterparts. This fact can mitigate hesitation to take out student loans for an undergraduate or master’s degree. Most students graduating with STEM degrees find themselves immediately employed.

**3. You learn transferable skills.** While it might be difficult to transition from being a geologist to being a software developer, the core focus on both a high level of technical skill and a rigorous approach to problem-solving remains the same in all STEM fields. Additionally, math, science and programming are universal languages that enable teams from around the world to collaborate on difficult problems, allowing individuals to move from project to project. Employer surveys also show that hiring managers are eager for employees who can problem-solve and think analytically - skills at the heart of STEM studies.

**4. You will find that there is something for everyone.** What ties all STEM fields together is the focus on solving problems and creating new knowledge, and in that, there is something for everyone. Start thinking about how and where you like to spend your time: is a laboratory an exciting environment for you, or would you prefer to be in the field? Do you like to build things or de-construct them? Are you interested in the human body or in far-away galaxies? Geologists spend a lot of time outdoors, whereas chemists spend more time in the lab. Microbiologists examine tiny organisms while astrophysicists consider the universe and all its contents. Many current STEM professions didn’t even exist 10 years ago (e.g. autonomous car engineer), and ten years from now there will almost certainly be jobs we can’t imagine now.

### **What about women in STEM?**

The reality is that there is an alarming shortage of female skilled workers and students in STEM. Stats vary by country and by discipline, but generally speaking, women make up only 15-25% of the current STEM workforce, and the gap is broadening.

### **Why does this matter?**

Well, firstly there’s no evidence that girls are less capable in these fields, but rather that they often ‘feel’ less capable, partly due to stereotyping.

Then there’s the tendency for STEM jobs to be higher paid, meaning that the lack of women in these roles is contributing to gender salary gap.

## Things that are important to know about... STEM jobs



A lack of women in these fields means fewer female role models, both for current female STEM employees, and for girls still forming career choices.

### Future Skills

Although no one can accurately predict what jobs will look like in the future there are seven skills that will be essential to your future success.

- 1. Mental Elasticity and Complex Problem Solving:** The future is going to bring about problems you've never seen before in a world you've never experienced. In order to solve these problems, you'll need to have the mental flexibility to think outside of the box, see the big picture and rearrange things to find a solution. Luckily, this skill is highly developable and simply takes practice. The more difficult problems you tackle, the more bendy your brain will get!
- 2. Critical Thinking:** Technology may be able to automate many of the jobs that currently exist, but you probably wouldn't trust it to do your critical thinking for you; as such your future career will require you to have excellent critical thinking skills. You'll constantly need to be analysing various situations, considering multiple solutions and making decisions on the fly through logic and reasoning.
- 3. Creativity:** Worried about robots stealing your job? The more creative you are, the less likely you are to lose your job to a robot! While robots may be better than you at calculating and diagnosing problems, they aren't very good at creating original content, thinking outside the box or being abstract, yet.
- 4. People Skills:** Listen, machines are going to take over eventually and technology is going to get much more advanced, so us humans have to stick together! If you want to succeed in the future job market, you'll need to learn how to manage and work with people (and robots), which includes getting in touch with your emotions, having empathy and listening,
- 5. STEM:** Even though science, technology, engineering and maths jobs are super hot right now, don't expect them to go away in the future. As technology progresses, you'll need to have more advanced STEM skills to keep up. Also coding. Learn how to code.
- 6. SMAC:** You've heard of STEM but you probably haven't heard of SMAC (social, mobile, analytics and cloud). Catchy, right? Learning all of these skills/platforms will make you stand out in the future job market!
- 7. Interdisciplinary Knowledge:** Your future career will require you to pull information from many different fields to come up with creative solutions to future problems. This skill's easy to work on as well. Start by reading as much as you can about anything and everything that interests you. Once you get to college, consider double majoring or minoring in completely different fields.

# THE PROJECT CAREER ROCKET: Respect, Opportunities, Choice, Knowledge, Equality and Training



**Career ROCKET** is being implemented by 5 partner NGOs from Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece and Romania.

**Career ROCKET** is an exciting opportunity for boys and girls to open largely their career horizons and for teachers to test a new methodology for mainstreaming gender in school curricula

**Career ROCKET** helps girls and boys to overcome gender stereotypes and choose alternative and prospective careers

**Career ROCKET** helps girls and boys to have equal start in professional life

**Career ROCKET** enhances the capacity of teachers and educators to mainstream gender in the entire school curricula and place gender at the core of citizenship education.

**Career ROCKET** enhances the capacity of schools to provide career guidance free of gender stereotypes.

## Target groups and multipliers of the project

Teachers, school headmasters, educators, career counselors, officials from the Ministry of Education, students, parents, youth workers,

## Workstreams

**WS1:** Analysis of school curricula and development of gender mainstreaming guides and training tools for teachers, educators and students.

Baseline study on teachers' and students' attitudes towards gender equality

**WS2:** Trainings on GE for teachers, educators and students

Capacity building seminars for school managers and decision makers on development and implementation of a school policy on equality.

**WS3:** Career ROCKET festivals in schools. Organizing Girls' days and Boys' days.

**WS4:** Promote Gender Equality culture in schools: National competitions for the label "School free of gender stereotypes"

