Navigating leadership and diversity challenges through mentorship

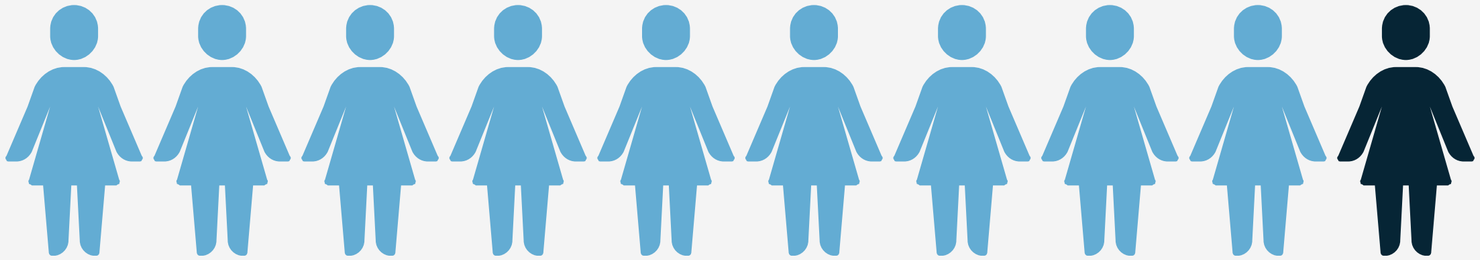
by Karla Merza

www.karlamerza.com

Mentorship
Does it have any value?

Please stand up if

You would have benefited from more guidance during your career



91%

of employees with a mentor feel content at their jobs.

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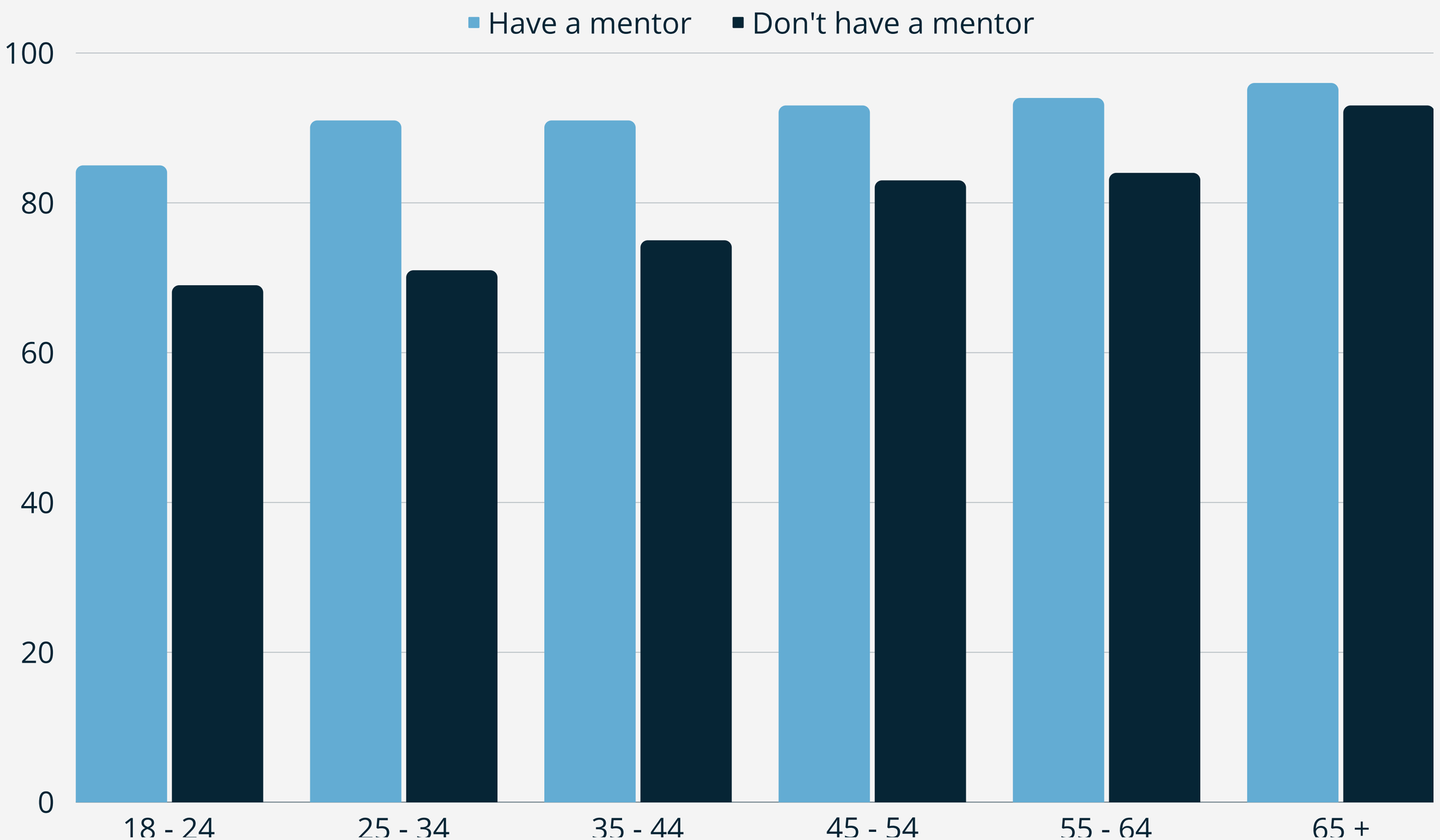
Have a mentor
Don't have a mentor
100
80
60
40
20
0
18 - 24
25 - 34
35 - 44
45 - 54
55 - 64
65 +

Does mentorship have any value?

Picture this:

Karla in 2014

- Broke
- Sad
- Desperate

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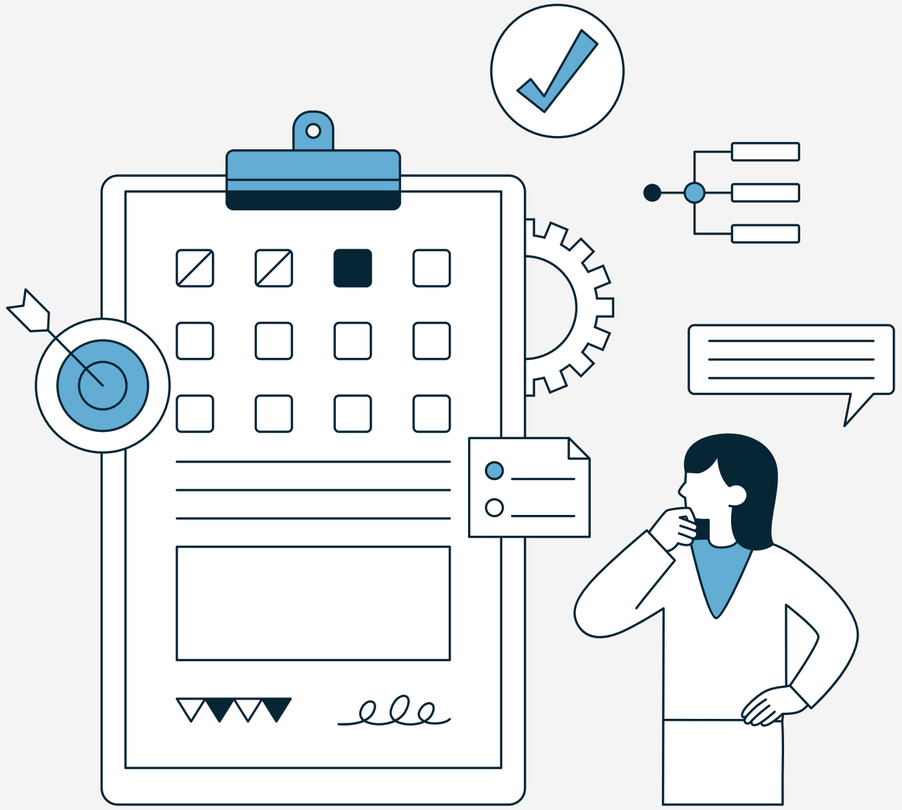
Next years

Until 2019

- Full time employee [8h/day]
- Full time student [4h/day]
- Bachelor’s and Master’s in Automation
- Climbed the corporate hierarchical ladder
- Sad
- Frustrated
- Burned out



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August 2019: becoming an Agile Solopreneur

Culture

Romania

Eastern Europe

Communism

- Top-down management is in the DNA of Romanians
- Collective trauma and depression

Generational Gap

- Older population
- Leadership teams consist of mostly males

Culture

Romania

Eastern Europe

Traits

- Resilience
- Adaptability
- Patriotism

Mentality

- Mistrust
- Strong individual focus
- Cultural tendency to suppress emotions and inhibit open discussions
- Primary focus on work, family and religion
- Rule followers due to unquestioning acceptance of religious beliefs

South Africa

Load shedding

Some power companies reduce electricity consumption by switching off the power supply to groups of customers because the entire system is at risk.

South Africa

The **Broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) law** is aimed to promote economic transformation and enable meaningful participation of black people in the South African economy, through increased participation in ownership and management structures, increasing the involvement of communities and employees in economic activities and skills training.

Ownership and management

- 50% Black people own businesses
- > 25% must be Black women

Skills development

- measures the extent to which employers carry out initiatives designed to develop the competencies of Black employees

South Africa

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Enterprise development

- > 30% suppliers from Black women owned companies
- > 51% Black-owned or Black women-owned procurements

Socio-economic contributions

- Programs that aim to support income-generating activities for Black individuals and promote development in areas like healthcare, education, community training, skills development, and arts and culture.

Other challenges

- [x] Sexism
- [x] Unconscious bias
- [x] Innovation
- [x] Performance
- [x] Engagement
- [x] Communication
- [x] Response to change
- [x] Decision making
- [x] Problem solving
- [x] Enivornment
- [x] Career growth
- [x] Recognition
- [x] Job security
- [x] Transparency
- [x] Conflict Management
- [x] Minorities in Leadership Roles

Please raise your hand if

You had any of these challenges

Does mentorship have value in identifying and addressing challenges?

What is mentorship ?

Mentorship is a relationship in which a person who's more experienced in a particular domain (Mentor) guides a less experienced individual (Mentee).

2021

- I joined WeMentoring Program by Women in Tech Cluj

Mentee

- Personal Branding

Mentor

- Contribute
- Challenge Myself
- Learn to communicate efficiently

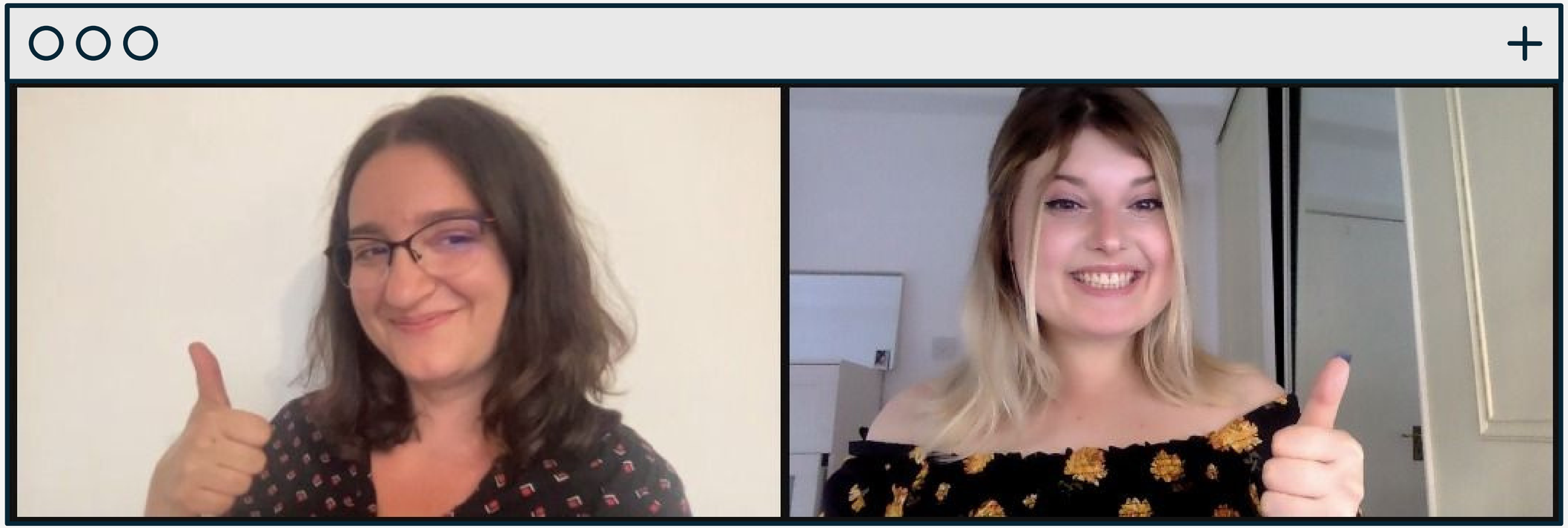
What I got?

Mentee

- Personal Brand (logo, website, custom email)
- Visual Identity
- LinkedIn

Mentor

- To support & encourage others unconditionally
- To communicate more efficiently
- To trust myself and my abilities
- And got a sense of purpose



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It changed my life.

So I’m paying it forward

- SustainCityHack [2022]
- F&B Business Accelerator [2022]
- Startup Reaktor [2022]
- WeMentoring #2 [2022 - 2023]
- WeMentoring #3 [2023]
- FIX Cluj [2023]
- Consolid8 Hackathon [2023]
- Coordinator of the WeMentoring Program by Women in Tech Cluj since 2022

And I’m not the only one.

- WeMentoring
- Same Agile Coach mentor
- Paying it forward:
  - Moldova Agile Community
  - Tech Women Moldova
  - government program for digitalising Moldova

To pay it forward and have a real impact, we should understand more about mentoring.

Types of Mentorship

- Informal
- Formal
  - Community
  - Company

Please raise your hand

If are you working in a company

Formal Mentorship by Communities

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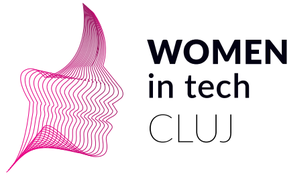

Formal Mentorship by Companies

Since the pandemic, there has been a 30% increase in mentoring initiatives in organizations.

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84%

of **Fortune 500** companies have mentoring programs.

100%

of **Fortune 50** companies have mentoring programs.

#1

focus area for L&D programs in 2023 in the latest LinkedIn Learning report.

1:1

A more experienced mentor helps a less experienced mentee develop

GROUP MENTORING

When three or more professionals share knowledge in different setups

SITUATIONAL MENTORING

Develop a particular skill or solve a specific problem

REVERSE MENTORING

Happens when junior professionals mentor more senior professionals in a specific area

What’s the motivation?

Participants

- Skills Development
- Personal Growth
- Network Building
- Confidence Boosting
- Career Development
- Job Satisfaction
- Communication Skills
- Continuous Learning
- Improved Relationship with Feedback
- Mental Health

Mentee

- Higher self-awareness
- Feeling fulfilled and successful
- Promotion
- Expanding network

Mentor

- Leadership Development
- Giving Back
- Personal Satisfaction

Benefits for a company

- 67% of businesses reported an increase in productivity due to mentoring

Imagine if

In your team would be only women

Unleashing the power of inclusion: Attracting and engaging the evolving workforce

Deloitte University - The Leadership Center for Inclusion

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80%

of respondents said inclusion is important when choosing an employer

39%

would leave their current organisation for a more inclusive one

73,1%

of respondents say their workplace actively supports diversity, equity, and inclusion

56%

of respondents feel that adequate training is what’s needed over the next 5 to 10 years to make real progress for women in tech

The State of Gender Equity in Tech

Women in Tech’s 2023 Report

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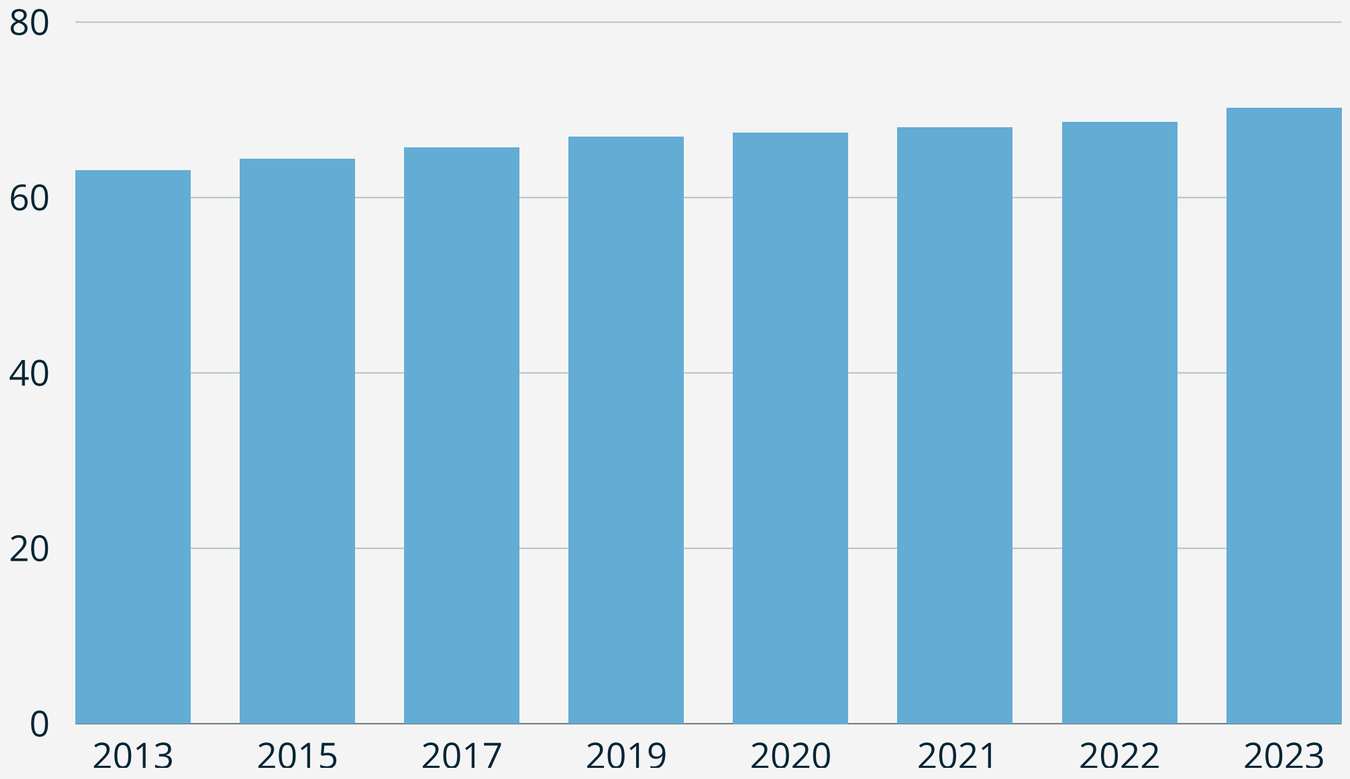
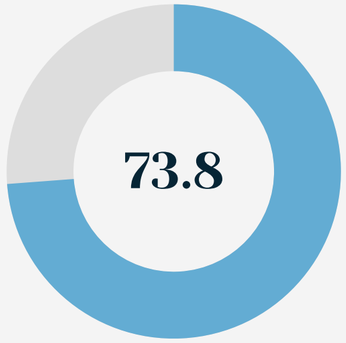
Gender Equality Index

The Gender Equality Index is a tool to measure the progress of gender equality in the EU, developed by EIGE. It gives more visibility to areas that need improvement and ultimately supports policy makers to design more effective gender equality measures.

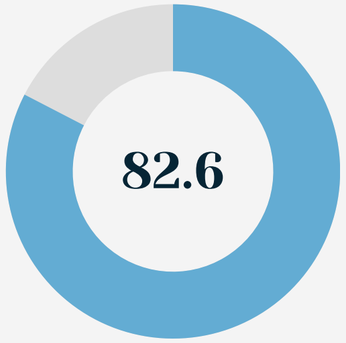


* The data for 2023 Index is mostly from 2021 and 2022.
** The Gender Equality Index gives the EU and the Member States a score from 1 to 100. A score of 100 would mean that a country had reached full equality between women and men.

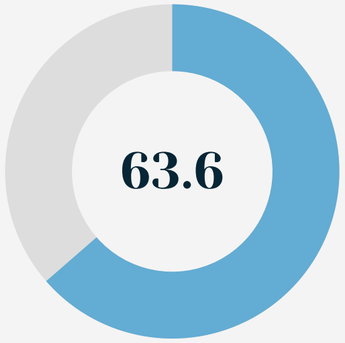
2023



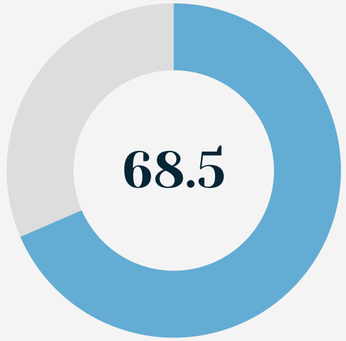
Work



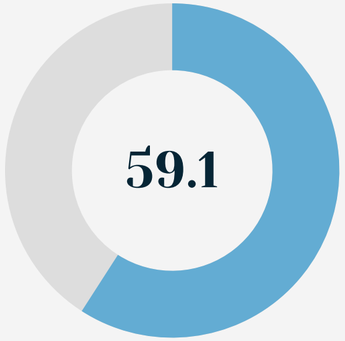
Money



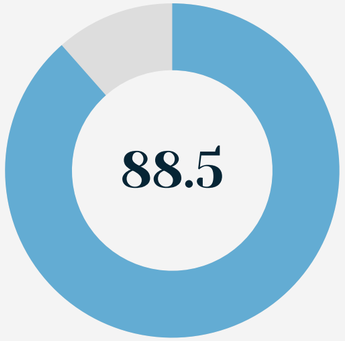
Knowledge



Time



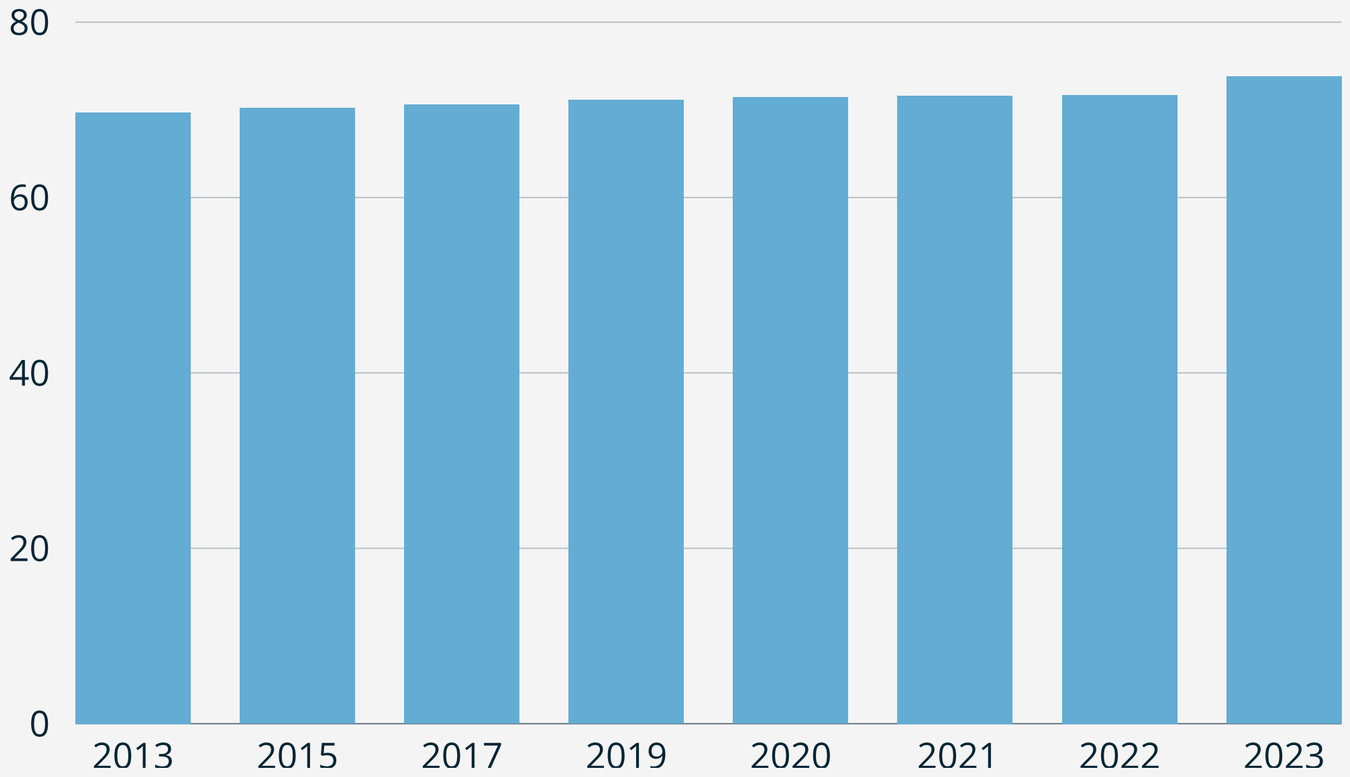
Power



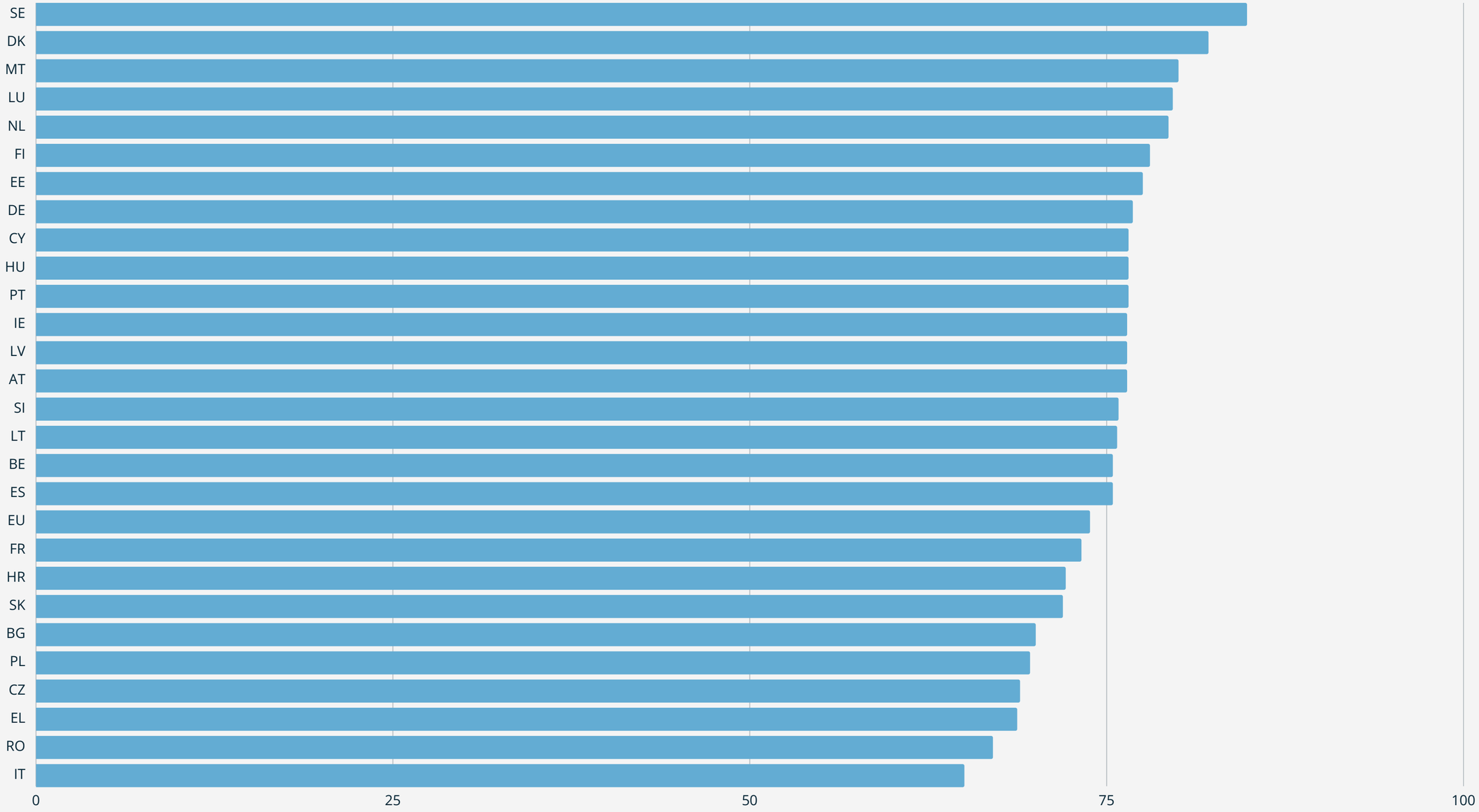
Health

Work

- % of people working full time
- How long they remain in the workforce
- Gender job distribution
- Quality of jobs
- Career prospects
- Job stability
- Opportunities for advancement
- Workplace growth



Work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75
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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

How can we improve it with mentorship

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Diversity is the goal for a workforce to be made up of a broad variety of people.

Equity means ensuring that everyone has fair and impartial access to opportunities, resources, and support so that they can achieve equality and fairness.

Inclusion is a method to ensure everybody is equally factored into that group.

Increasing diversity, equity and inclusion is challenging, but not impossible.

Effective approaches for improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Companies that have racially diverse leadership teams are 33% more profitable.

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38%

of employees prefer **traditional 1:1**

31%

of employees desire **1:1 reverse mentoring**

“We need a new diversity – not one based on biological characteristics and identity politics, but a diversity of opinion and worldviews.“

AYAAN HIRSI ALI

(Somali-born Dutch-American activist and former politician)

Mentorship Relationship

Each mentorship relationship is unique.

Please raise your hand

If you think that anyone can be mentored

Responsibilities of the mentee

- Want to be mentored
- Seek a mentor
- Drive the relationship
- Know their goal and expectations, but be flexible
- Demonstrate interest and commitment
- Be willing to put in the work
- Openness
- Communicate clearly
- Respect the mentor’s time
- The outcomes

Responsibilities of the mentor

- Interest and commitment
- Skills
  - Goal setting
  - Goal achievement
- Role Model
  - Others look up to and respect
  - Consistency
  - Integrity
- Honesty
  - No need to have all the answers

Responsibilities of the mentor

- Communication Skills
  - Work methodology
  - Practicalities
  - Boundaries
    - It’s a professional relationship
    - Support between sessions
  - Expectations
  - Learning style
  - Sessions

Responsibilities of the mentor

- Emotional Intelligence
  - Reduce power dynamics
  - Empathy
  - Vulnerability
  - Feedback
- Accountability partner
- **Bonus points:** Know their mentoring style

THE 8 MENTORING STYLES

1. **The Advisor**

-> mentees looking to follow the same career path

2. **The Protector**

-> mentees who are in a state of transition

3. **The Coach**

-> mentees that need more awareness and encouragement

4. **The Connection Broker**

-> mentor connects mentees with suitable experts

THE 8 MENTORING STYLES

5 The Challenger

-> mentees who need to develop strong problem solving skills

6 The Clarifier

-> use their knowledge to help mentees understand the company

7 The Sponsor

-> advocates for their mentee through their position in the company and their network

8 The Affirmer

-> mentees who need to be walked though tough situations and feelings

What's your style?

Find out your mentoring style by completing this quiz.
More information available here.

Successful

Mentorships

Based on

- Mutual respect
- An authentic connection
- Dedication and commitment
- Clear communication
  - Expectations
- Active listening
- Being present
- Constant inspection and adaption

Q & A

Does mentorship have any value?

What is one thing you have learned from this talk?

Share your insights

Feedback

Thank you

Let’s stay in touch!

+40 743 855 606

hello@karlamerza.com

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