



# The State of Women in Tech

2023

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# FOREWORD

**WOMEN  
IN TECH**

# We're getting there!

Being a movement striving for diversity, equity and inclusion in the tech industry, the main question we receive is how our work is going. Are we getting anywhere with our mission to inspire women and non-binary to choose a career in technology - and to retain the ones already here? Well the answer is simple: Yes.

In March this year, we decided to check in with our members both to get a snapshot of where our industry is going and to see if we have gotten anywhere at all.

Previously, 40% of the respondents consistently answered 'yes' when asked if they were considering leaving the tech industry. Despite loving the actual work and the tech industry, they just couldn't see any improvements to the culture. Until now.

In 2023, only 20% of our members answered that they consider leaving the industry - and a solid 93% answered that they like working in tech.

So, what has happened - and how can we continue to work to improve this?

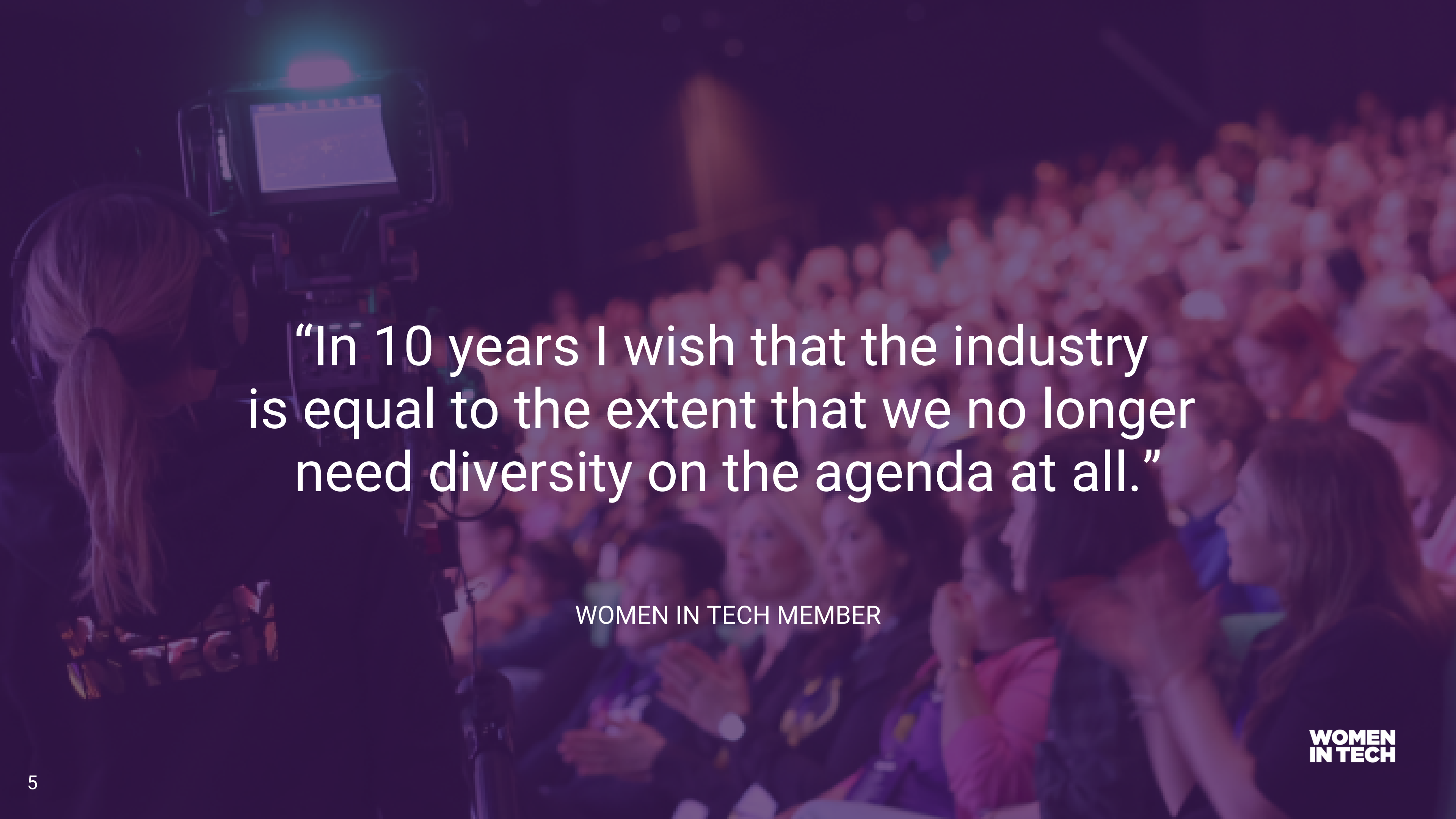
First, we would like to highlight the power of networks - fueling awareness about the DEI through inspiration, joint efforts and community seems to be a game changer.

Secondly, more women and non-binary are being offered and taking on important tech roles in major companies, which leads us to another big reason for the shift: Representation, relatedness and role models. With more representation in the industry, we pave the way for even more equality to come - which also reflects on what our members wish for the future.

All in all, this is a truly positive report. Change *is* happening. But it is slow. And DEI is future critical. And we have no reason to believe the change will continue without intentionality in shaping the future to be more equal, diverse and inspiring.

Thank you for reading - and for your continued support!

Elin Eriksson, Director  
Åsa Johansen, COO  
Sara Cederberg, CDO

A woman with long dark hair is speaking at a podium on a stage. She is wearing a dark top. In front of her is a microphone. To her left is a professional video camera on a tripod. The background is filled with a large, diverse audience of people, many of whom are clapping. The scene is dimly lit, with a blueish-purple hue. The text is overlaid in white on the image.

“In 10 years I wish that the industry is equal to the extent that we no longer need diversity on the agenda at all.”

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

**WOMEN  
IN TECH**

# THE STATE OF WOMEN IN TECH

WOMEN  
IN TECH

**1** **Women currently thrive in tech, which is expressed through optimism and positivity**

**2** **The top driver to work in tech is the opportunity to shape the future**

**3** **Since 2018, there is a substantial drop in the number of women thinking about leaving tech**

**4** **Equality and work-life balance are the most important factors for attraction and retention of talent**

**5** **63% of the respondents have experienced being treated different because of their gender**

**6** **'Expectation to do invisible work' is the second most common experience of being treated differently**

**7** **The next generation of developers are enrolled in Higher Vocational Education\***

**8** **Increased DEI is not only business critical, but future critical too**

**9** **Increased representation is the biggest wish from the community to continue the change journey**

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## Women currently thrive in tech, which is expressed through optimism and positivity

Most respondents express optimistic views regarding the industry's state, evolution and changes. The positivity stems from being excited about technology, technological shifts, general opportunities and the opportunity to shape the future.

Regarding job satisfaction, an overwhelming majority of 93.16% of our respondents express a positive affinity for their work in the field.

However, it is acknowledged that tech remains predominantly male-dominated industry. This is raised as a concern among others, like the challenging circumstances in the world including potential layoffs in the tech industry. Regardless of these hurdles, the general sentiment remains positive.

93%

of the respondents express a positive affinity for their work in the field

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## The top driver to work in tech is the opportunity to shape the future

While we obviously can't speak for *all* women, a clear majority of the respondents in our survey express that the opportunity to shape the future is what excites them about working in the tech industry.

Many express positivity in regards to work on something bigger than themselves, and mention being a part of a network, community and positive movement as something truly important to them. It is worth emphasizing that this survey is conducted among members of our community, strengthening the idea that communities matter.

Another strong driver is getting challenged by work, which is strongly connected to the opportunity to solve problems and to continuously learn new things.





“I love that tech is so much about creativity and problem solving. In addition, tech has a tangible impact and can make our lives and society better. It is so important that everyone is represented within the tech industry since everyone is affected by its outcomes.”

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

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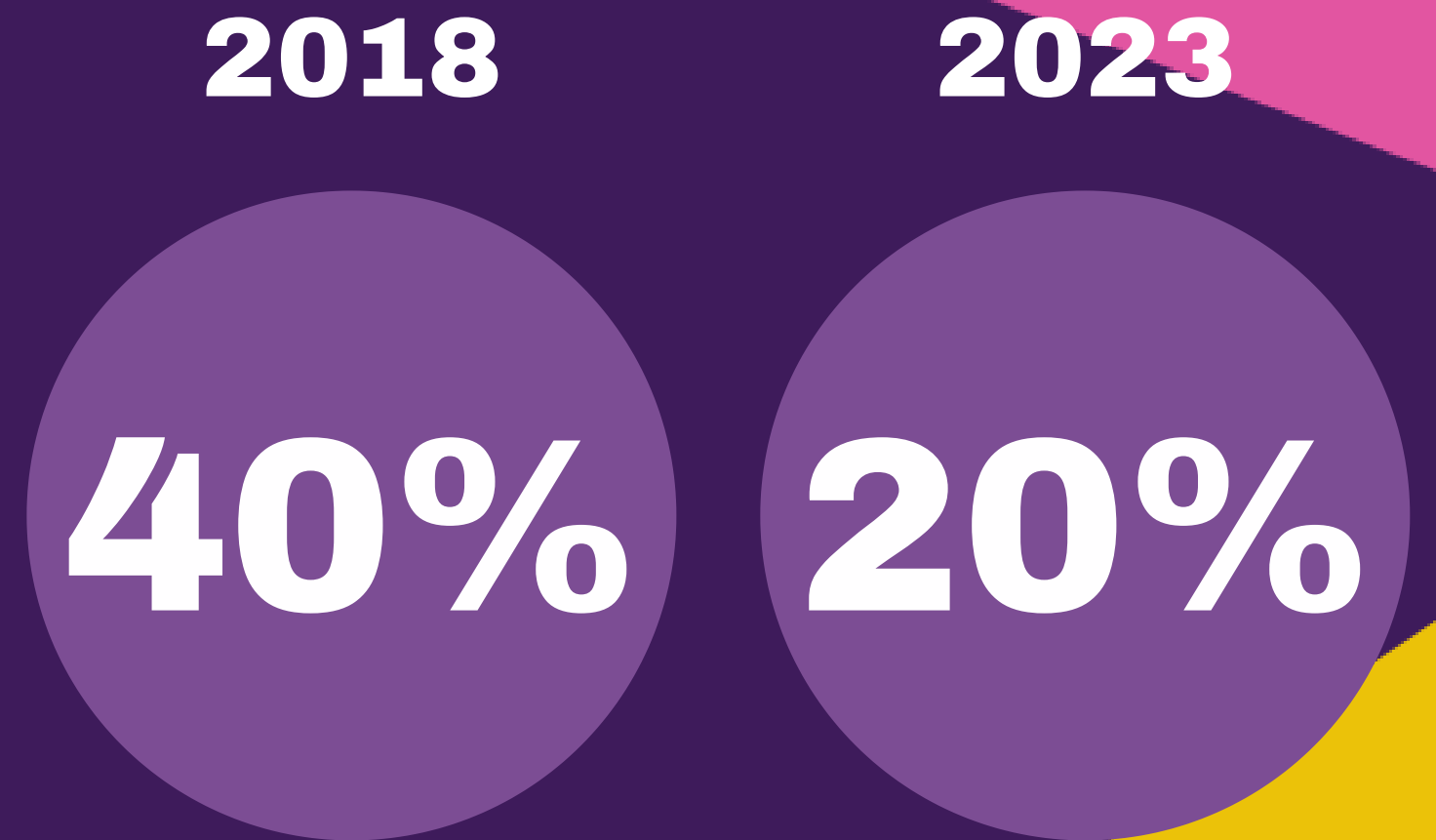
## Since 2018, there is a substantial drop in the number of women thinking about leaving tech

Look at the change happening! Yes, we said it.

In 2018, approximately 40% of our members working in the industry expressed thoughts about leaving tech where the main driver was the slow progress in DEI matters.

However, this year's survey revealed a significant decrease, with only 20% of our members working in tech expressing they had considered leaving. This substantial drop indicates that we **are** making positive progress - and that the efforts made in the past years in fact have been pushing us in the right direction.

This is a number everyone working to increase DEI in the tech community and industry should be really proud of.



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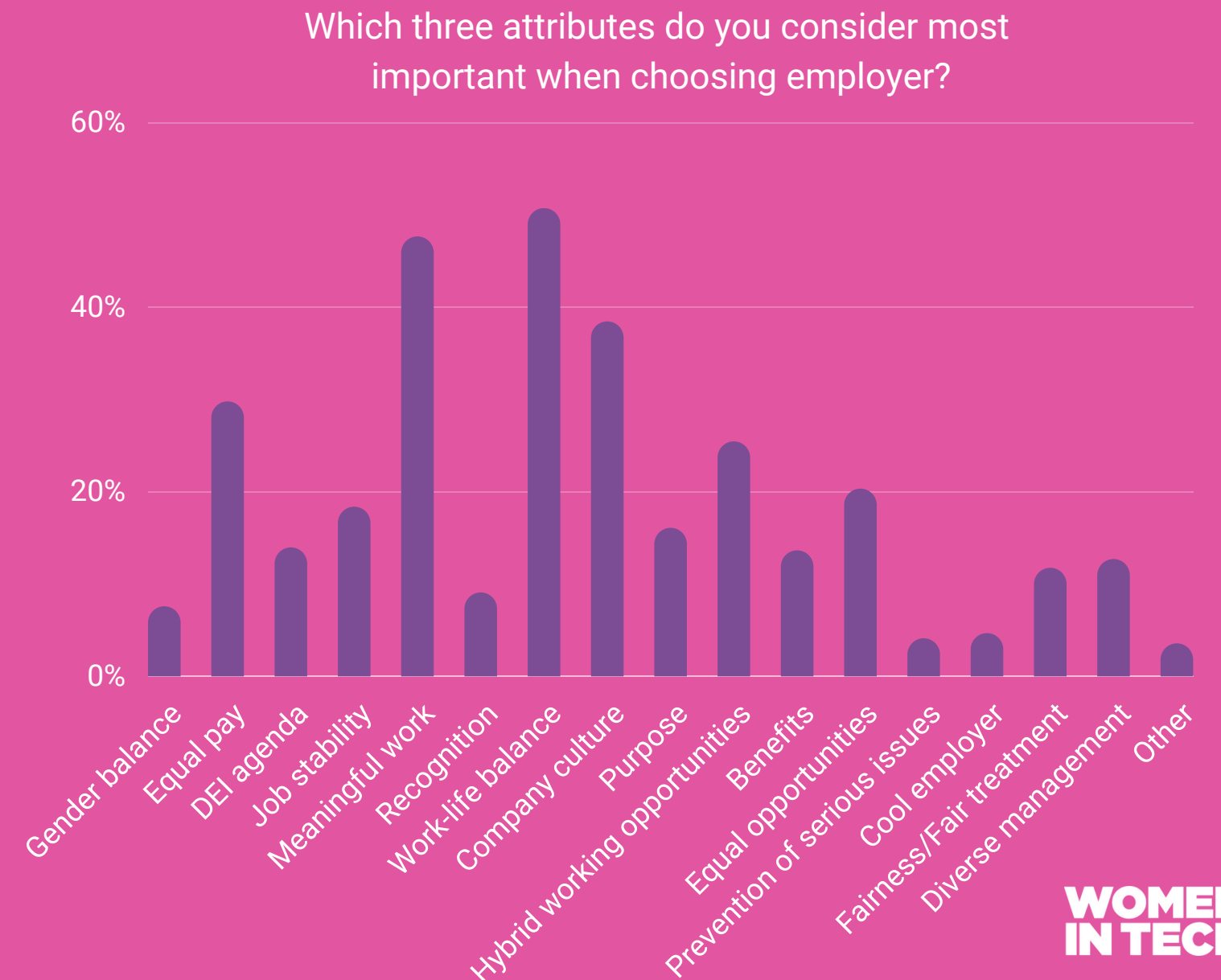
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## Equality and work-life balance are the most important factors for attraction and retention of talent

Work-life balance emerged as a prominent trend throughout the survey, with members emphasizing its importance and recognizing that life encompasses more than just work.

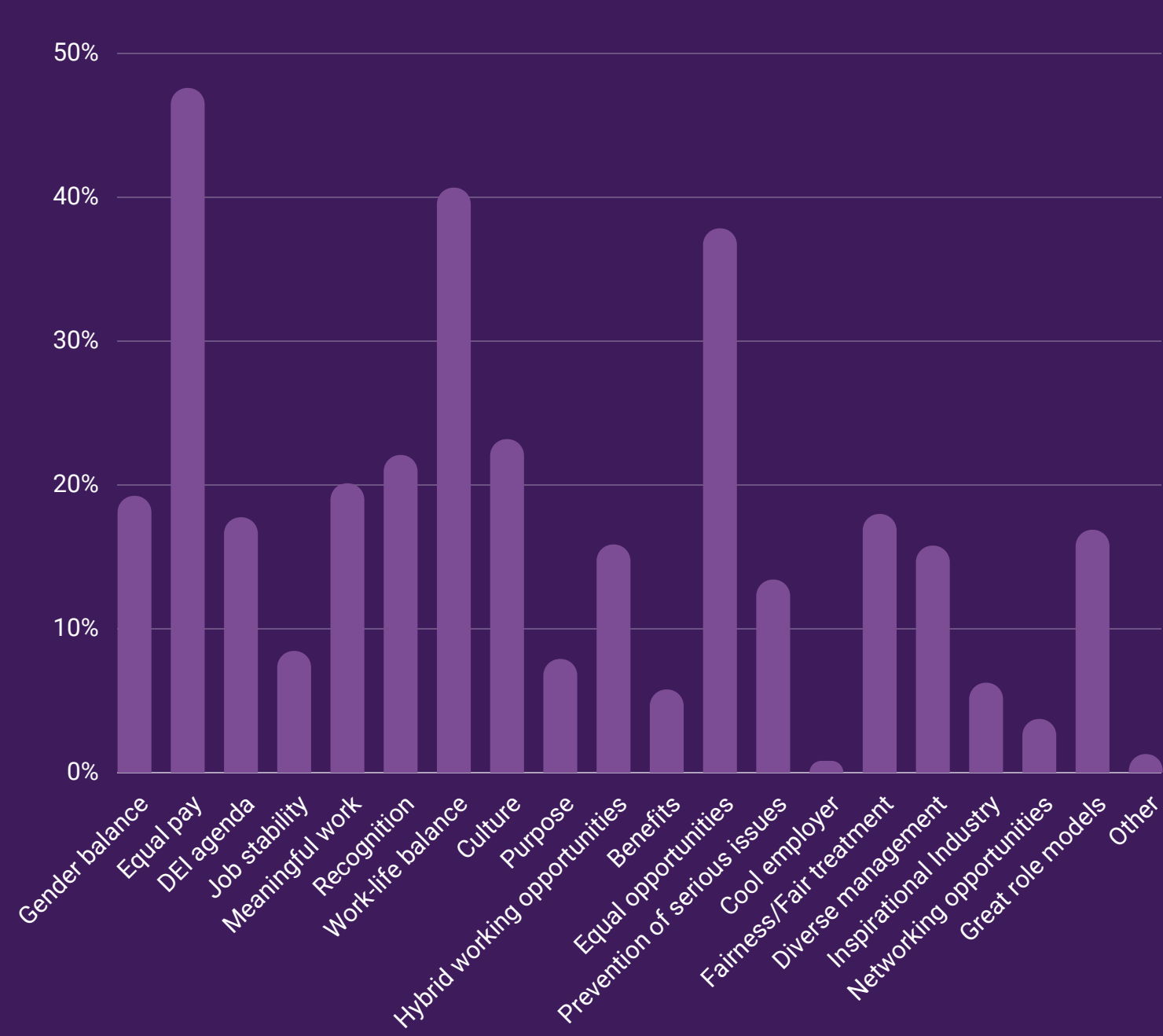
When choosing an employer, 50.71% of the respondents prioritize work-life balance followed closely by meaningful work (47.64%) and company culture (38.43%).

To attract more women and non-binary individuals to the industry the identified crucial factors were **equal pay, work-life balance and equal opportunities**. These three elements were also considered the most effective ways to encourage sustained presence in the tech industry.

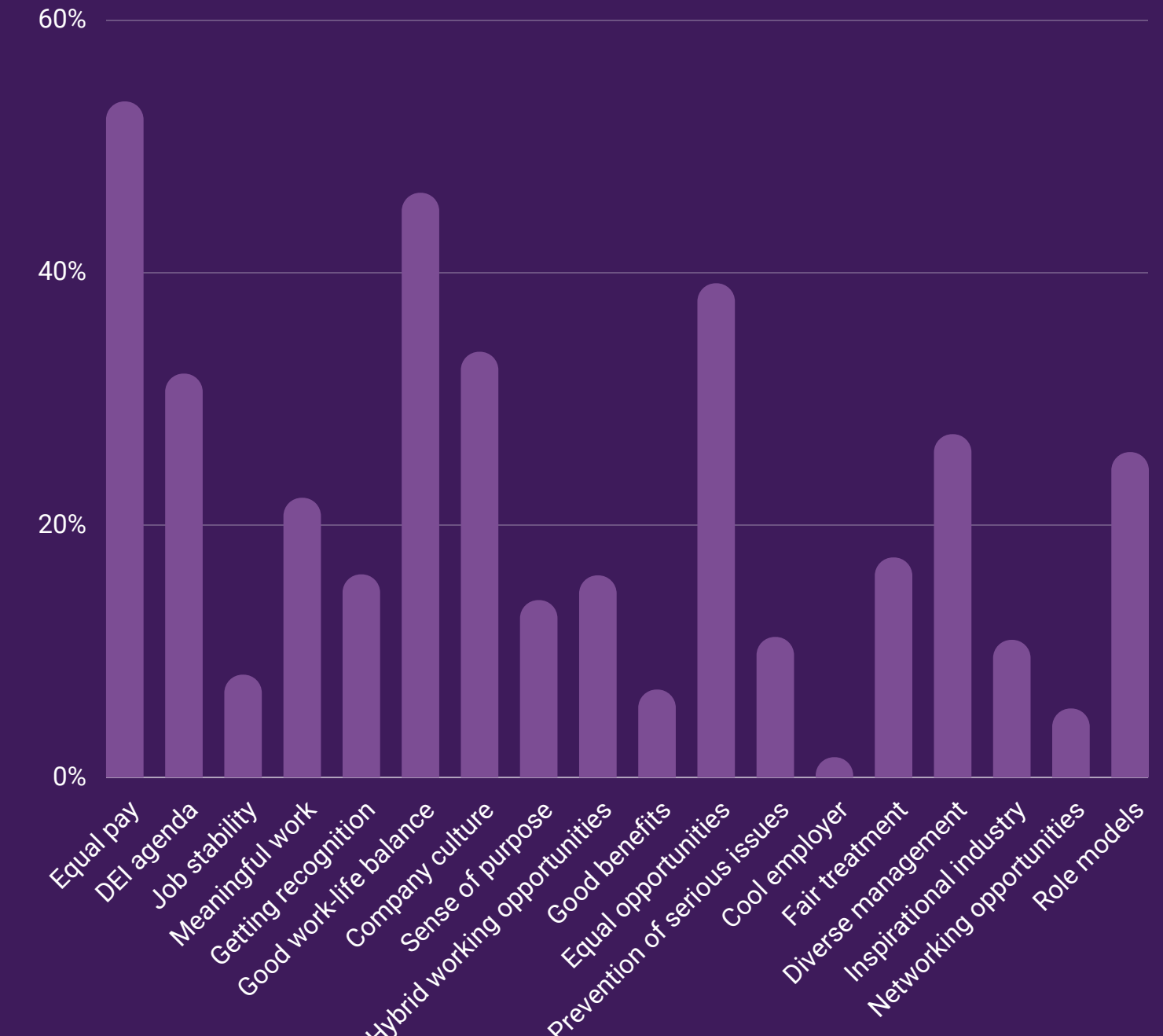




Which three alternatives do you believe are the most efficient ways to have more women/non-binary stay in the tech industry?



Which three alternatives do you believe are the most important to attract more women/non-binary to the tech industry?



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## **63% of the respondents have experienced being treated different because of their gender**

A gnarly number, yes. Especially since the vast majority of respondents express being treated differently in a negative way. But the good thing about knowing is that there are tons of things to do to mitigate its continuation.

This number is truly a call to acknowledge that cultural biases against women and non-binary most likely exist in every workplace - and a call to continue the DEI efforts we know so many companies are doing and taking seriously.

But then, also, DEI needs to be a priority for the whole organization and not just an initiative from the HR department. At the end of the day, DEI is a choice - and it could be a choice prioritized by so many more.

# 63%

of the respondents have experienced being treated differently because of their gender at work

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## 'Invisible work' is the second most common way women are being treated differently in tech

Asking in what ways the respondents have experienced being treated differently than men in their workplaces, 53.77% choose 'Pay and compensation' closely followed by 'Expectations to do invisible work' which 45.62% of the respondents have experienced.

This puts a spotlight on the importance for organizations to acknowledge and identify invisible work in their workplaces, as a part of the general DEI agenda. Avoiding this might be a cause for women and non-binary to experience a workplace as less equal than numerical statistics and measurements will show - and that an acknowledgement call for more complex measurements of DEI in organizations.



# What is 'invisible work'?

Invisible work refers to labor and contributions that disproportionately fall upon women and non-binary, which are often undervalued or unseen. It encompasses the essential tasks and responsibilities that in fact *are* crucial but frequently relegated to the background or dismissed as insignificant. Invisible work involves unacknowledged efforts in all areas and covers everything from emotional labor to expected support in traditionally female coded tasks.

Invisible work is rarely rewarded more than possibly mentioned and causes gender disparities in recognition, career advancement and pay. Raising awareness about invisible work highlights the need for equitable recognition, fair compensation, and inclusive practices within the tech industry - but also the need for men to step up, acknowledge and take ownership for the invisible workload that exists in every workplace.


## How to mitigate 'invisible work'

Never assume that anyone likes to do the household office chores or being emotionally available at all times.

Acknowledge and expect the same efforts from everyone.

Keep a rolling schedule of who is responsible for social activities.

Bring visibility to the invisible work by tracking the efforts done.

A hand is holding a smartphone. The screen shows a video player interface. At the top left of the screen, there is a red timestamp '00:00:19'. Below the timestamp, the text 'WOMEN IN TECH' is displayed in a stylized font. The video content shows a group of people on a stage, likely a panel discussion. The background of the entire slide is a dark purple gradient.

"I have experienced that there are negative assumptions about my knowledge of tech - and an expectation that I would be less competent than my male co-workers despite being the most senior in a team. This becomes obvious as people turn to my male co-workers to get confirmation on things I have said."

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

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## The next generation of developers are enrolled in Higher Vocational Education

Among the student respondents, 42.50% expressed their wish to pursue a career as a developer, making it the most desired role in the respondent group - closely followed by the 16.67% who expressed their dream role to be a designer.

The survey also indicates that 52.50% of all student respondents are currently enrolled in Higher Vocational Education (Yrkeshögskola/YH) in comparison to the 32.50% enrolled in academic studies. This highlights the prominence of vocational education and indicates the importance to engage in talent search beyond traditional academia.

An interesting addition to our survey is that while the number of women applying for IT/data programs in HVE/YH is steadily increasing, the number of women currently enrolled still only estimates to about 1/3\*.

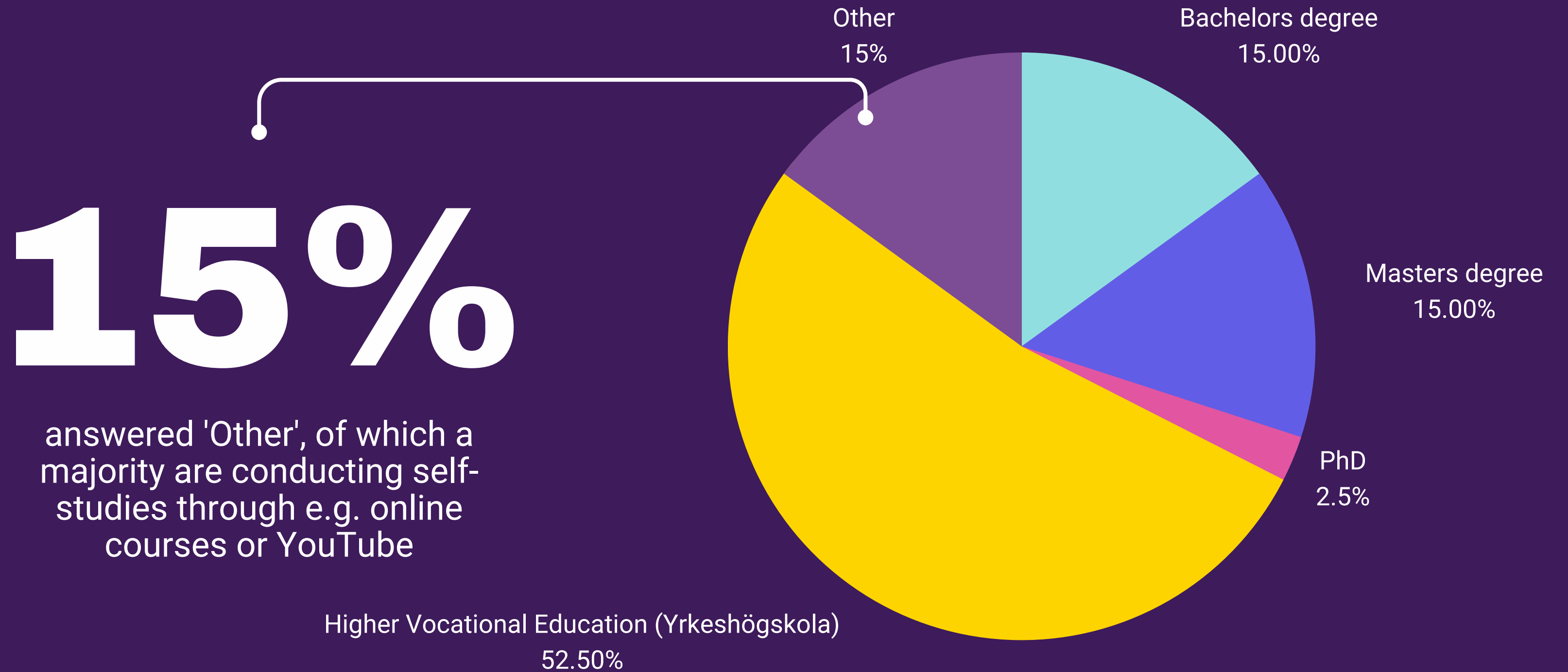


# 52%

of our student respondents  
are currently enrolled in  
Higher Vocational Education  
(Yrkeshögskola/YH)

**WOMEN  
IN TECH**

What best describes your level of studies?



**15%**

answered 'Other', of which a majority are conducting self-studies through e.g. online courses or YouTube

"Only in Sweden, there is an estimated lack of 70 000 head counts in tech\*. To bridge this gap, the industry needs to work even closer with current educators as well as to expand the views on what type of requirements are needed for various tech roles. Many companies still demand academic backgrounds from their applicants while many young people and career shifters choose different routes to gain tech competence."



Åsa Johansen  
COO  
Women In Tech

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## Increased DEI is not only business critical, but future critical too

A majority of our surveyed members have witnessed substantial and positive transformations in the past decade, with an emphasis on that more companies than ever acknowledge DEI. When asked to rate the statement *'Gender equality is highlighted more today than 10 years ago'* the average response from our community is a solid 8/10.

From a qualitative perspective, the biggest shift we see as an organization building a movement on DEI is a change from businesses and business leaders to look at DEI as business critical.

While there is a noticeable increase in the representation of women within the industry today, as well as an increase in the number of women studying the field, persistent biases still exist and it is widely agreed that increased efforts are still necessary. Next step is simply to create an understanding that increased DEI is not only business critical, but future critical too.

"The ones excluded today are the ones who will be furthest away from tomorrow, simply because they don't get a chance to be a part of the solution."

ELIN ERIKSSON  
DIRECTOR OF WOMEN IN TECH

# We sure have come a long way

Since 2014, the tech industry has experienced a transformative shift in its DEI approach. Many companies are actively addressing workforce disparities, and as an organization advocating for this change, we applaud these efforts. All our partners have made an active choice to commit to this journey.



Elin Eriksson  
Director  
Women In Tech

However, there is still work to be done. DEI is not yet universally prioritized by entire organizations or management teams, often leaving it in the hands of HR and the individuals affected, such as women in the tech industry.

On the positive side, an increasing number of reports recognize DEI as crucial for business success. Looking ahead, we believe that DEI will become even more vital, not just for businesses, but for society as a whole. To simplify, those who are excluded today will be far removed from tomorrow's opportunities, preventing them from contributing to solutions.

DEI transcends company structures; it shapes the type of society we aspire to build. Therefore, DEI is not only crucial for business but also essential for our future. At the end of the day it is a matter of societal progress and ensuring that everyone has a chance to be part of the solution.

Hence, DEI is not only business critical - it's future critical too.

"I notice more diversity in the workplaces and that women are represented to a higher extent in both specialist and higher management positions than before."

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

"It seems like we are a bit more aware of the inequalities we experience. It's more okay to openly discuss the lack of representation and we are taken more seriously while before we were deemed as 'difficult to work with'."

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

"I think businesses are more aware of the importance to engage in diversity - they can no longer expect to be a part of the growth toward a sustainable future if they don't act to mirror the society within their industries."

WOMEN IN TECH MEMBER

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## Increased representation is the biggest wish from the community to continue the change journey

Our survey shows that our members are hopeful about the future and they find it important to not leave the shaping of the future to only men.

The biggest expressed wish is for increased representation of female and non-binary leaders, as well as greater diversity within all sorts of teams and boards. This reflects a growing recognition of the importance of gender equality and diverse perspectives in driving positive change and innovation.

Still, recent numbers show that only 16% of the publicly listed companies in Sweden have a female CIO/CTO. This correlates well with the expressed wish from our members: While there is more representation than ever, we're simply not *there* yet.

Only  
**16%**  
of the publicly listed  
companies in Sweden have  
a female CIO/CTO\*

Adding to this, research from Gartner highlights that 51% percent of DEI leaders recognize their top challenge to be business leaders failing to take ownership for driving DEI outcomes, resulting in less than optimal and possibly also slower than necessary results from DEI actions taken in organizations.

The effects of this could be noticed in our survey responses too, where many respondents express a wish for faster progress in DEI matters, which calls for increased priority of the challenges from management.

Although challenges remain, our community remains positive to continue working toward an equal tech industry - having seen proof that it is possible to create change as long as we do it *together*.

# 51%

of DEI leaders claim that their top challenge is business leaders failing to take ownership of DEI\*

**WOMEN  
IN TECH**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

# Recommendations

Based on the report - we have summarized some recommendations for organizations who want to take immediate action on the learnings.

Curious to dive even deeper - or share these insights with your team? Reach out to book a presentation.



Siri Andersson-Melin  
siri.a.melin@womenintech.se

## START

- To recognize DEI as something future critical, not only business critical - and ensure the DEI is a priority to all leaders in your organizations.
- To broaden DEI measurement approaches. Look beyond traditional numerical metrics when assessing DEI progress. Explore additional indicators, such as identifying and addressing patterns of inequality or biases in your organization, such as the expectation for certain individuals to perform invisible or undervalued work.
- To explore collaboration with Higher Vocational Education (YH) to expand the general influx of talent.

## CONTINUE

- To keep DEI on the agenda, continue to raise awareness both internally and externally.
- To support and encourage your organization to engage in networks and platforms for women for non-binary - and count their time and dedication as something valuable. (We're for sure a little biased here!)
- To increase the numerical representation of women and non-binary in both teams and leadership positions - simply because representation matters.
- To listen in to the needs and wants from the women and non-binary in your companies.

# ABOUT

**WOMEN  
IN TECH**

## BACKGROUND

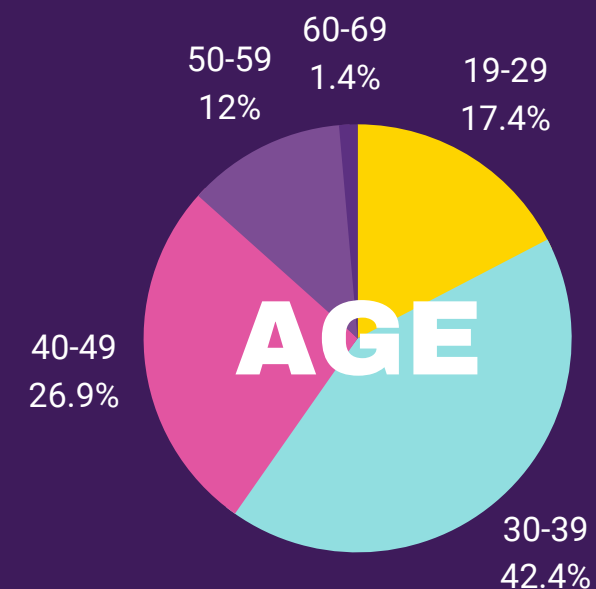
With the growth of the Women In Tech community, we have continuously surveyed our members to discover trends and important forecasts to share with our members and the industry. All with the purpose of providing insights and fuel actions.

The survey of 2023 asks questions to dig deep and capture opportunities and challenges from the last decade, the now, and the future. The topics selected relates to why our members chose tech in the first place, what inspires them, if they'd ever consider leaving, what makes their heart sing, the state of the industry, benefits of a more equal industry - and how to actually make it more equal, what has changed over the years, how do we attract more women and non-binary to the industry - and how to make them stay, what makes an employer attractive, and of course, the future. All based on the focus of fighting inequality in the tech industry - no matter what type of inequality.

## METHODOLOGY

We sent out an email asking our 20,000 members to answer our survey "What's the state of Women in Tech 2023?". We got 1,585 answers. A task force consisting of Women in Tech team members and partner analysts worked together to export the results and analyze the data - as well as seek trends and correlations both in the industry and the society as a whole.

Almost all respondents identify as women, 98.61%. Approximately 87.56% work in tech, 7.44% are students, and 4.98% don't work in tech nor are they tech students.



## **ABOUT WOMEN IN TECH**

Women in Tech began as an event on International Women's Day in 2014, introduced by tech and media companies that wanted to make a statement and create change in the industry. Since then, the initiative Women in Tech has grown into a community, a platform, and a movement.

The mission of Women in Tech is to inspire women to choose a career in technology - and to keep those already in the industry - by providing networks, role models, inspiration and experience from successful people from the corporate, entrepreneurial, academic and scientific worlds. This is done through an annual conference, networking events for members, breakfast seminars - among other things.

Women in Tech Sweden is run as a non-profit association. Behind the initiative stands some of Sweden's largest and most influential technology companies, partnering up each year. We are proud to say that these companies have signed up for change. That there's a will to do better and the possibility to create a better industry with all the everyday decisions that are made in these companies.

People of all genders are welcome to join as members as well as participate in our events and initiatives. Everyone will benefit from a more inclusive tech industry. And the responsibility to create the change must be a joint liability.

## **CONTACT**

Feel free to reach out if you have any questions on the report - or about Women In Tech in general.



Siri Andersson-Melin  
CMO  
[siri.a.melin@womenintech.se](mailto:siri.a.melin@womenintech.se)

A wide-angle photograph of a large audience seated in a theater, facing a stage. A woman in a red top is speaking at a podium on the stage. A large screen behind her displays a world map and text. The text 'WOMEN IN TECH' is visible on the stage backdrop. The entire image has a purple color overlay.

# WOMEN IN TECH