geoconvention
Virtual Event
September 13 - 15
2021

Gender Equality as a Critical Economic Challenge in Relation to STEM

Grace B. Adaghe
CPHR

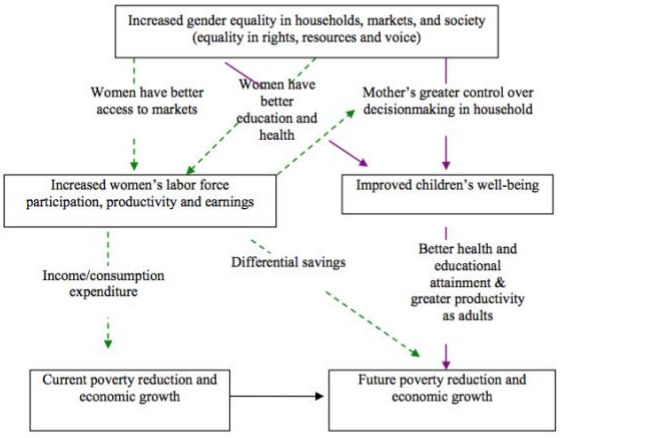
Summary

Equality is fairness: we must ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favorably because of their protected characteristics. Equality also means equality of opportunity: we must ensure those who may be disadvantaged can get the tools they need to access the same, fair opportunities as their peers.

Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral or social issue but also a critical economic challenge. Since 2015 gender equality has been marginal and large gaps remain. However, it is estimated that greater efforts to harness the power of women in the economy could boost Canada's annual GDP by $150 billion in 2026.

Theory

Figure 1. A framework for understanding the links between gender equality and growth/poverty reduction



Source: Morrisson, Raju and Sinha (2007)

Results, Observations, Conclusions

Challenges of Gender Equality:

- Women have faced rising costs and insecurity
- Women face growing challenges from automation
- Women are underrepresented

- Women still lag behind men in STEM graduation rates
- COVID-19 pandemic has had a regressive effect on gender equality

Why are so few women in STEM?

- Gender stereotypes
- Male dominated cultures
- Fewer role models

Benefits of getting more women in STEM and the economic impact

- It will boost global GDP
- Helps to narrow the gender pay gap
- Enhances women's economic security
- Ensures a diverse and talented STEM workforce
- Prevents biases in these fields and the products and services they produce

Novel/Additive Information

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Alicia Bjarnason for reviewing my work, and to everyone for the opportunity to speak and be a part of something great!

References

Mekala Krishnan, Anu Madgavkar, Kweilin Ellingrud, Lareina Yee, Vivian Hunt, Olivia White and Deepa Mahajan (2020), McKinsey Global Institute.

Anna Powers (2018), A Stanford study offers insights as to why there are so few women in STEM, https://www.forbes.com/sites/annapowers/2018/09/30/a-stanford-study-offers-insights-as-to-why-there-are-so-few-women-in-stem/?sh=f7e3c09614bf [Accessed online May 26, 2021].

Sephiat Oniyangi, The Effects of Natural Resources on Gender Inequality: An Explanation for the Resource Curse? https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/Oniyangi-EffectsofNaturalResourcesonGenderInequality.pdf [Accessed online May 26,2021]

Professor Jane Turner (2019), Why gender equality is critical to economic challenge, https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/gender-equality-economic-challenge/58082/ [Accessed online May 26, 2021]
World Economic Forum (2021), Global Gender Gap Report.

AAUW, The STEM Gap: Woman and Girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/#:~:text=Giving%20women%20equal%20opportunities%20to,products%20and%20services%20they%20produce. [Accessed online May 26, 2021]