



Innovating WOMEN

Past, Present & Future



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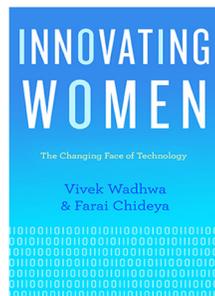
Global Transformation Call-to-Action to Fully Engage Women in 21st Century Problem-Solving and Innovation Economy

Entrepreneurial and innovation-capable female ‘genius’ capacity needed to help solve humanity’s problem and shape our future is largely not at the table. We must address.

Genius means intellect, creativity, ability to influence and impact the world around us, and the passion to engage. “Could the education of women be the problem? Not according to data from the National Science Foundation. Girls now match boys in mathematical achievement. In the U.S., 140 women enroll in higher education for every 100 men. Women earn more than 50 percent of all bachelor’s and master’s degrees, and nearly 50 percent of all doctorates. Women’s participation in business and MBA programs has grown more than five-fold since the 1970s, and the increase in the number of engineering degrees granted to women has grown almost tenfold.”

Source: <http://www.inc.com/vivek-wadhwa/where-are-all-the-female-tech-geniuses.html>

Innovating Women: The Changing Face of Technology



As a Global Ambassador, I am pleased and proud to announce the release of **Innovating Women**, the product of an initiative spearheaded by Singularity University: a campaign to crowd-fund and crowd-create a book featuring research, journey, courage, and opportunities of women’s global participation in the innovation economy that is technology-centric...and puts the spotlight on why we must close the significant gender gap.

The goal of this book campaign is to recognize, celebrate, and inspire women in technology...and to challenge societal and cultural norms that block the full capacity of our female genius to engage in the technology-dependent 21st century innovation economy. This is essential to ensure we are putting our best foot forward to address the challenges we face as a civilization and shape the future.

All proceeds from the book will go into a fund to educate women on advancing technologies and to fund their startups.

Typically I don’t “sign up” for gender-aligned initiatives; but this one struck me as different. It offered a message and perspective that has the substance and principles I have always aspired to reflect and uphold. It also naturally aligns with the path my life and professional career have taken as a pioneering woman in technology and transformation leadership. It is how I choose to live and make a difference as an individual, mother, wife, techie, leader, colleague, and change agent. However, we are not going to get to where we need to be continuing in one-off, exception-based mode. The scalability possibility of “Innovating Women” is most exciting!

Join Us...Change the World...Shape Our Best Possible Future

On behalf of the campaign team, please join us in this initiative and on a continuing basis to accelerate this critical transformation. Let’s all “lean in” and “step out” to abandon gender-biased choices and behaviors to ensure that our full problem-solving capability as a civilization is fully engaged to define our best possible future.

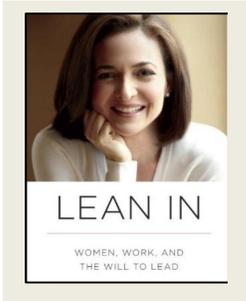
Study on Women Entrepreneurship in Technology

Stanford University and the Kauffman Foundation, in partnership with Women 2.0, conducted a study on women entrepreneurship in technology. A huge response fueled additional efforts to gather more data and apply more attention to this significant gap and its implications. The crowd-everything *Innovating Women* book campaign, announced by Vivek Wadhwa at the Women 2.0 Conference in February, is the next step. Farai Chideya agreed to lead writing efforts and curate all the crowd-sourced content into the finished book that is intended to spotlight this critical innovation capacity gap and inspire both men and women to come together to solve this problem.

My Personal Journey

I was fortunate to have been influenced from an early age by high expectations and to have the courage to be true to myself in the choices and path I choose. Along the way I accepted “my calling” to be and make a difference – and not be bounded by cultural and social norms. In my first job out of college as a computer programmer in 1976, I was typically the only woman at the table (as well as the youngest) and never thought about ‘leaning back’. I was always ‘in’. Where else would you want to be? Gender bias and discrimination never even occurred to me. Being a trailblazer and inherent creative leader is my normal.

Leaning In



As Sheryl Sandberg has so eloquently articulated in LEAN IN, we must condition (and recondition) society and cultures to expect and accept women in significant roles of leadership as the rule instead of a quota and other artificial modes. We must eliminate double standards and wasted energies that both women and men must expend to navigate social norms while attempting to blaze new trails. And we must demonstrate respect and encouragement for “real men” who choose a more active engagement in building and nurturing strong, loving families at home — that is our critical starting point and where expectations are ingrained.

“Stepping Out” of Comfort Zones and Norms

While men have been the dominant players to date (largely due to the influence of cultural and societal norms and expectations), there have been trail-blazing women by exception who have already made significant contributions. And similarly, there are men by exception and at their own risk, who have “stepped out” to value and accept women as true partners with family responsibilities and in the workplace. Both have had to deal with the resistance and negative consequences to their unconventional thinking and roles as a result of “stepping out” and “leaning in”.

Lots of Contributing Factors and Influences

What’s holding women back? What are the obstacles women face when we try to engage? Why are educated, high-performing, qualified women abandoning careers or paths in life that would get them to the table? Why do women feel that they must ultimately make a choice between family and career? Why are women who choose to pursue a career subject to being labeled a bad mother? Why does this not apply to men? Why are men who choose to share family and home responsibilities subjected to alienation and professional backlash?

Completing the Transformation

Our ultimate goal and potential as a civilization can only be realized when we have our full innovation capacity engaged at the right time in the right place in optimal roles – 24/7. Bringing together 100% of our male and female population to share commitment, responsibilities, and ownership of outcome will pave the way for more females to pursue and sustain careers in STEM-aligned fields to close the gender gap in our innovation economy and secure the best future possible. This means that society and cultures worldwide must free up their women by deeming it acceptable for men to pick up the responsibilities that women have been covering in traditional female roles without penalizing the men professionally and socially.