UfM Training Empowering Women in AI
2 December 2024 – 10h-13h

Background:

The representation of women in Artificial Intelligence (AI) remains critically low despite the field's rapid growth. The World Economic Forum reports **in 2024 that women account for just 28 per cent of all science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workers**.[1] This underrepresentation is further evident in leading tech companies, where recent data from 2023 shows that the share of female tech leaders is at 14 percent.[2] In academia, Women make up just 18 per cent of AI researchers.[3] In the MENA region, 57% of science technology engineering and math (STEM) graduates are women. However, only **34% of the MENA region's tech-focused startups were founded by women** – and often they struggle in accessing fundings for their own sustainability. [4]

Women face significant challenges in AI, including gender bias and a lack of representation in leadership roles. Despite these barriers, there are promising developments. Organisations such as **Women in AI (WAI)** are actively working to bridge the gender gap through education, resources, and networking. Initiatives like the **Google Growth Academy for Women in AI** and **Girls Who Code** continue to foster the next generation of female AI professionals, Providing women led startups with essential growth skills, internationalization strategies, and tools to help them scale and innovate in AI responsibly.

Women still significantly trail behind men in digital and AI skills development, which has direct economic implications as AI and STEM-related jobs become increasingly central to labour markets. The skills gap limits women's economic potential and affects their representation in AI companies and startups. Although female AI talent is growing at a faster rate than male talent, the risks associated with AI disproportionately impact women. AI-induced job losses are projected to affect women more than men, particularly those without advanced degrees who occupy entry-level jobs at risk of automation. Additionally, AI-powered "deepfakes" and other digital crimes continue to disproportionately target women, underscoring the need for better representation in STEM fields, legal protections, and workforce policies promoting gender equity.

In the MENA region, initiatives like the **Womenpreneur Initiative focuses on empowering women in tech** through equitable access to resources, mentorship, networking, and policy advocacy. Additionally, the TiE Women MENA Programme, launched by TiE Dubai, provides extensive support

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[1] World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2024* https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2024.pdf

[2] Statista, share of female leaders in tech companies, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1337862/female-leaders-global-tech-companies-industry/

[3] UN 2024, https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155446#:~:text=Women%20make%20up%20just%2018,in%20terms%20of%20hiring%20rates.

[4] UN Tourism 2024, https://www.unwto.org/women-in-tech-startup-competition-middle-east-2nd-edition-2024

for female entrepreneurs, including those in AI, through mentorship, financial advice, and workshops on business planning. The **MENA AI Observatory** further contributes by connecting policy-oriented researchers and innovators, aiming at fostering collaboration and building capacity for responsible data and AI practices, and striving to eliminate gender biases in AI systems.

Objectives of the training:

The workshop will explore:

- **AI Overview**: Leveraging Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs
- **Practical Applications of AI**: Tools, Methodologies, and Use Cases for Entrepreneurs
- **Ethical Considerations and Future Trends** in AI Development and Use

Agenda

Time	Session & Speakers
10:00 - 10:15	**Welcome and Opening Remarks** **Stephen Borg**, Deputy Secretary General at the Social and Civil Affairs Division of the Union for the Mediterranean **Set the Scene** **Anna Dorangricchia**, Project Manager, at the Social and Civil Affairs Division of the Union for the Mediterranean
10:15 - 11:10	**Introduction to AI** Speaker: **Raquel García** - What is AI? ○ History, definition, and basic concepts ○ Types of AI (narrow, general, superintelligence) - AI in Business ○ How AI is transforming industries ○ Benefits and challenges of AI adoption - AI and Women Entrepreneurs ○ Overcoming barriers and leveraging opportunities - **Breakout Session 1:** Participants Networking or Q&A Session (15 minutes)
11:10 - 12:05	**Practical Applications of AI** Speaker: **Asia Noble** - AI Tools and Technologies ○ Machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing

Time	Session & Speakers
	○ Popular AI platforms and tools - AI Use Cases for Entrepreneurs ○ Customer service and support ○ Marketing and sales ○ Product development and innovation ○ Operational efficiency - **Hands-on Demo:** Using AI tools for a specific business problem
12:05 - 13:00	**Ethical Considerations and Future Trends** Speaker: **Anna Via** - AI Challenges ● Ethical implications of AI development and use ○ Addressing bias in AI algorithms ● Privacy and Security ○ Data privacy & security concerns in AI applications ● Compliance with regulations (AI Act, GDPR) - Future of AI ○ Emerging AI trends and technologies ○ The impact of AI on the workforce and society - **Breakout Session 2:** Brainstorming AI future challenges and potential (15 minutes)