

# Stereotypes vs. Facts: Women in STEM & Business



Progress has been made, yet bias still lingers in STEM and business.

It often appears in subtle stereotypes about who belongs, who's good with numbers, or who should lead. Every woman studying engineering, starting a company, or managing a project helps rewrite those outdated beliefs.

The challenge isn't a reason to step back — it's a call to step forward. **Awareness of bias is the first step to recognising it and responding with confidence.**

MYTH

VS

FACTS

MYTH 1

Men are naturally better at math, coding, and technical subjects.



Numerous studies (e.g., OECD, 2023) show no innate gender differences in mathematical or technical ability. The gender gap reflects socialization and access, not talent. **In fact, girls outperform boys in science in 38 of 71 countries surveyed (PISA).**

TRUE

MYTH 2

Women aren't interested in STEM.



Interest is shaped by exposure. **Across the EU, women make up 52 % of the overall science and technology workforce** (Eurostat, 2024). When encouraged and mentored, girls choose STEM fields at the same rates as boys.

TRUE

MYTH 3

Women don't have the same leadership potential, especially in tech.



Research from McKinsey (2023) and the European Investment Bank (2022) shows that **companies with more women in leadership outperform peers in profitability and innovation.** Leadership ability is not gendered — it's nurtured.

TRUE

MYTH 4

Women are too emotional for business or management



Emotions are often stereotyped as "feminine" but anyone can be emotional or controlled. Meanwhile, **emotions are a key pillar of authentic leadership** and emotional intelligence is recognized by Harvard Business Review (2023) **as a core effective leadership linked to higher team performance and retention.**

TRUE



Check more at: [4equality.erasmus.site](https://4equality.erasmus.site)

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by the European Union

# Stereotypes vs. Facts: Women in STEM & Business



MYTH

VS

FACTS

MYTH 5

Women-led firms attract less funding because they are less ambitious or risky.



Data from the EIB (2022) and Tech Funding News (2024) shows **female-founded start-ups deliver higher revenue per euro invested and are often more stable and capital-efficient**. The funding gap is bias, not evidence.

TRUE

MYTH 6

Women naturally prefer creative careers, so STEM isn't for them.



**STEM is inherently creative.** It thrives on design thinking, experimentation, and innovation. Women are applying their creativity and multidisciplinary skills to lead groundbreaking cross-sector innovations, such as Ida Tin's Clue app and Inna Braverman's Eco Wave Power.

TRUE

MYTH 7

Women in technical teams are tokens or diversity hires.



Women earn their roles through competence and expertise. They bring valuable technical, analytical, and leadership skills that strengthen teams. **Research shows mixed-gender teams achieve up to 20% higher patent impact** (OECD, 2022), proving diversity built on talent drives innovation, not tokenism.

TRUE

MYTH 8

Women don't negotiate as well as men.



Research (Harvard Kennedy School, 2022) shows **women negotiate as effectively when given the same context and information**. The gap reflects bias in how negotiations are perceived, not skill.

TRUE

MYTH 9

Women's success stories in STEM are exceptions, not the rule.



From Fabiola Gianotti (CERN) to Roxanne Varza (Station F) and Mette Lykke (Too Good To Go), **thousands of women across Europe lead world-class companies, labs, and innovation ecosystems** — it's the new normal.

TRUE

MYTH 10

Women need to act like men to succeed.



**What drives modern leadership is authenticity, trust and innovation!** Research (Catalyst, 2023) shows inclusive, empathetic leaders, regardless of gender, achieve stronger performance. Women succeed because of their own styles, not despite them.

TRUE



Check more at: [4equality.erasmus.site](https://4equality.erasmus.site)

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by  
the European Union