Navigating
the Gender Gap in Tech
across **Taiwan** & **France**

April 2024

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Foreword

It is with profound gratitude and great enthusiasm that I present this white paper navigating the gender gap in the tech industry through surveys, interviews and best practices from Taiwan and France.

This document is not intended to provide an exhaustive and definitive account of the situation, but rather it has been designed to stimulate questioning and dialogue regarding the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and employees in the tech sector.

First and foremost, I extend my deepest appreciation to Claire Chang and Melody Chen, board members of La French Tech Taiwan. Their long-standing support for diversity and inclusion has been foundational in shaping the discourse and actions surrounding this crucial issue. Their guidance and leadership have been invaluable.

Special thanks are due to Hannah Chou, whose meticulous dedication to the cause, along with her diligent verification and correction of the data from the survey in Taiwan, have been critical to the integrity and success of this report. I also wish to thank Elisa Duquet for her hard work on the layout of this paper and Stéphane Daucourt for his insightful advice throughout the process.

Our efforts have been generously supported by La Mission French Tech, whose sponsorship has been essential. Additionally, profound gratitude goes to Eva Leihener-Stefan from L'Oréal Taiwan, whose support in funds and in-kind contributions have greatly bolstered La French Tech Taiwan's initiatives.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge all the members and friends of La French Tech Taiwan who continuously contribute to enriching scientific, commercial, and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and France. Your engagement is crucial to our ongoing success and is deeply valued.

This white paper is a collective achievement that reflects our shared commitment to fostering gender parity. As we put forth the findings and recommendations detailed within these pages, we hope they will act as a catalyst for continued progress and inspire further action toward an equitable tech industry.

Together, we can continue to break barriers and shape an inclusive tech industry where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to their fullest potential.

Cerise Phiv
Co-President of La French Tech Taiwan
Taipei, April 30th 2024

Context

Taiwan

La French Tech Taiwan has been **championing gender balance** in the tech industry, focusing on **practical initiatives** to uplift women in tech since early on.

For instance, the association has always strived to ensure a minimum presence of women on its board, **with a female-male co-presidence** and **30% of women from its first board in 2019** until reaching **perfect parity with 50% of women on board in 2024.**
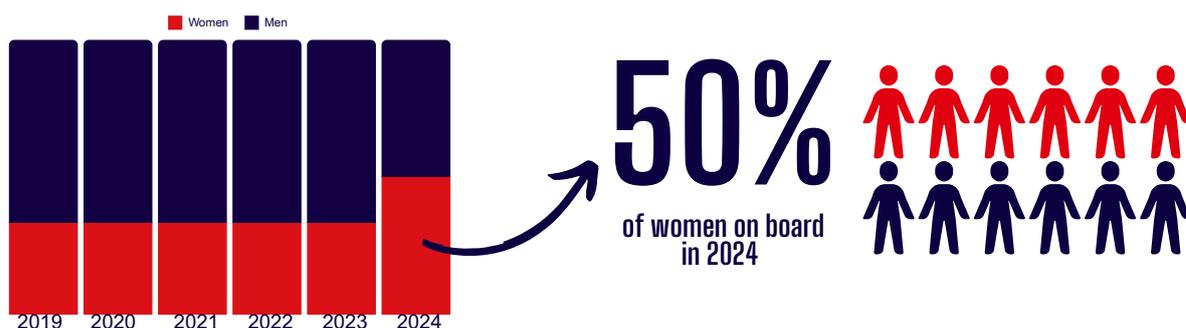
Gender Balance on the Board of La French Tech Taiwan since 2019

Furthermore, since 2022, the association has been organizing **targeted workshops** and **networking events** with partners such as the French Chamber Taiwan or Taiwan Tech Arena in order to provide women with the tools and connections needed to thrive in the tech ecosystem.


International Women's day workshop

2023 Innovative Business Networking Event For Women

This year, La French Tech Taiwan took a step forward to examine the status of **gender equalit**y within Taiwan's tech sector by initiating a **survey** within our community. Its findings presented next offer **key insights into the state of gender balance**, aiming to drive the conversation and actions towards a **more inclusive tech community**.

Profile of the respondents

We surveyed over 250 people working in the technology sector in Taiwan about their thoughts and opinions on the gender gap in tech:

- A majority of respondents are **women** (**71,9%**), **45,8%** are in a **managerial position**, while **36,1%** of the respondents are **founders of a tech-related company.**

- **Two thirds** of respondents are in the **30-49 years old age group.**

Women 71.9% **Other 1.9%** **Men 27.2%**

Profile of the respondents

2/3
of respondents are in the 30-49 years old age group
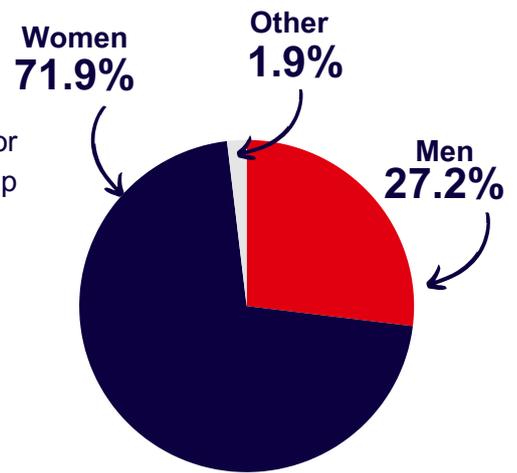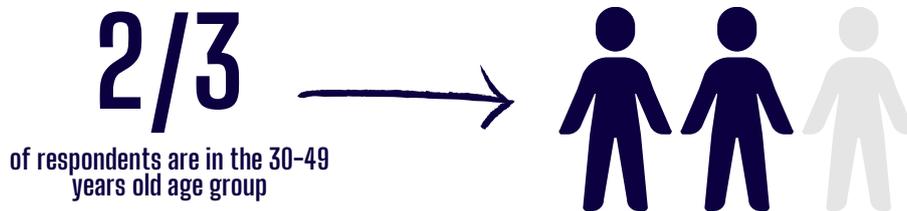
The Gender Gap and Discrimination

While **Taiwan ranks 7th globally** according to the **Gender Inequality Index** published by the **U.N. Development Programme**, there is still room to improve its gender balance in the tech sector.   For example, the ratio of female entrepreneurs in the tech sector is 30%[1] and employees in science parks are still predominantly male with female employees accounting for less than 40% among which than 20% had managerial or R&D positions.[2]

In our survey, when **48,2%** of respondents have not been subjected to gender discrimination, **32,8%** answered having experienced it at least once and **11%** responded frequently. **81%** of respondents also answered that there are more male founders, entrepreneurs and managers in the tech sector.
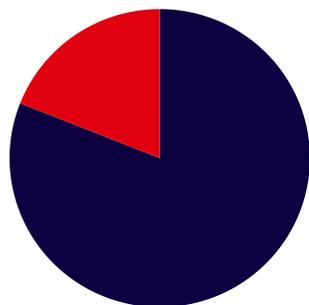
The proportion of men and women in key tech positions, according to our respondents

81% of the respondents
believed that there are more male founders, entrepreneurs and managers than female, in the tech sector.

[1]TAIWAN STARTUP ECOSYSTEM, 11 January 2024,
https://startup.sme.gov.tw/home/upload/downloads/20240111063103ftv.pdf

[2]GENDER AT A GLANCE, 11 April 2023, published by the Department of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan
https://www.boca.gov.tw/fp-275-7312-0a42e-1.html

Also, **64%** of respondents reported there is a **salary gap** in tech.
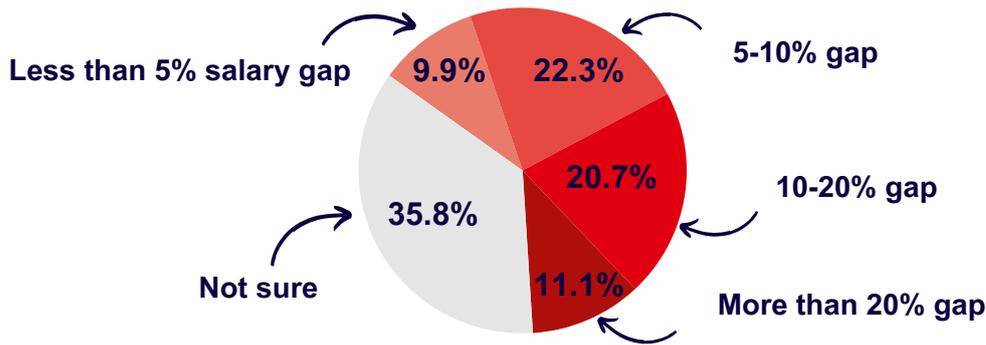
The reasons cited for women receiving lower salaries than men include: **the nature of the sector** (38.6%), **gender** (40.3%), **fewer suitable job vacancies** (26%), **personal factors** (21.7%), and **ability** (12.6%). It is interesting to note that some attribute this wage gap to women's lower negotiation skills regarding salary, as well as the impact of maternity leave and family responsibilities on career advancement.

Why are there less women entrepreneurs?

When we asked what are the three main reasons why there are less women founders, entrepreneurs or managers in tech, the top reasons are:
1. **Family factors (64.9%)**,
2. **Male dominance (44%)** and
3. **Fewer advancement to high-level positions (40.5%).**

Other cited factors are the **lack of a female-friendly working environment (34%)** and **long working hours (23%)**

As a note, among the 36% of entrepreneurs who responded to the survey, 58% respondents said finding talents is the biggest problem in starting a business while capital came second, before experience and knowledge and government regulations.
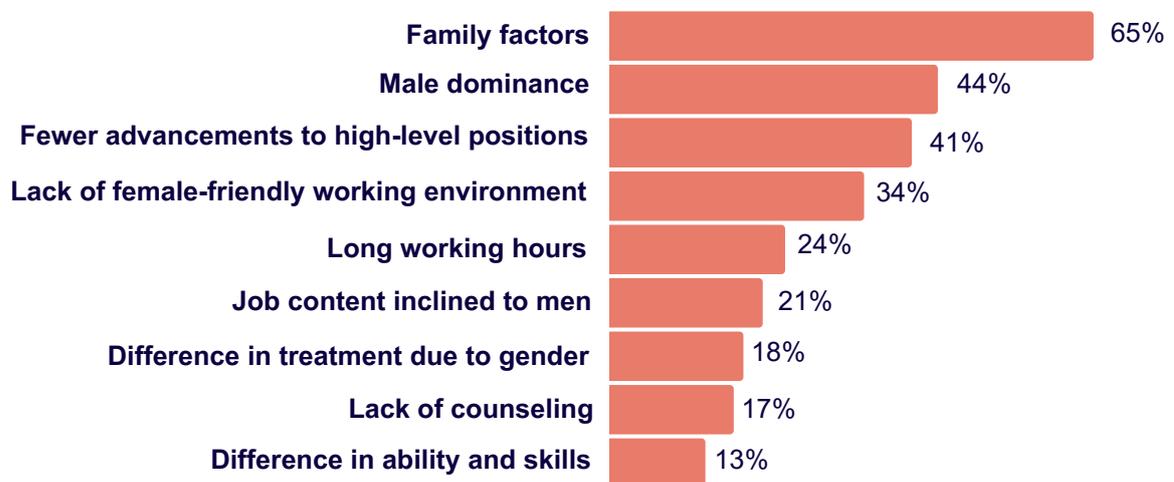
The reasons why there are less women entrepreneurs in tech according to our respondents

Actions and solutions

We then asked who should be responsible for addressing the imbalance of women in the tech industry:
    32.5% of respondents believe **employers** should be responsible,
    29.3% answered the **government**, and
    24.6% schools.

In the "other" category, popular answers were **all of the above** and **society in general** with an emphasis on culture and education.
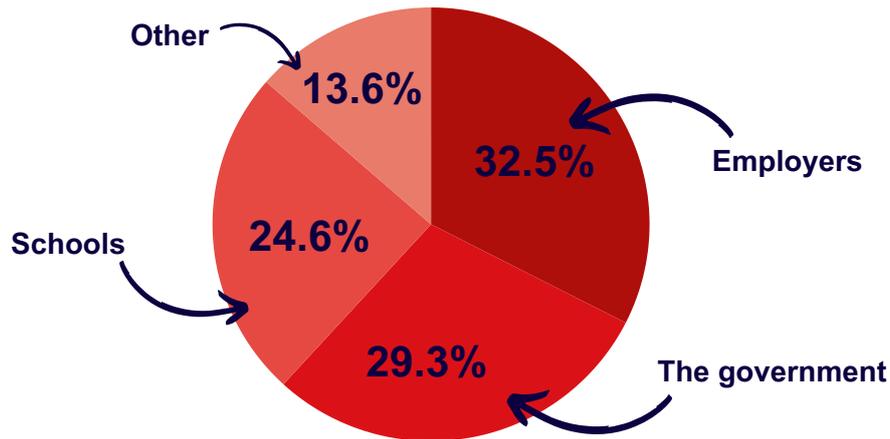
Who should be responsible for addressing the imbalance of women in the tech industry, according to our respondents

As many respondents said that the responsibility to make a change lies with employers, the top measures recommended to improve gender balance include **making the workplace more female-friendly (43.2%)**, **hiring more women (22.2%)**, and **having more women in managerial positions (19%)**.

Respondents also underlined the importance of assisting women with childcare and babysitting as well as training managers and HR directors on parity topics. Some also suggested implementing quotas.
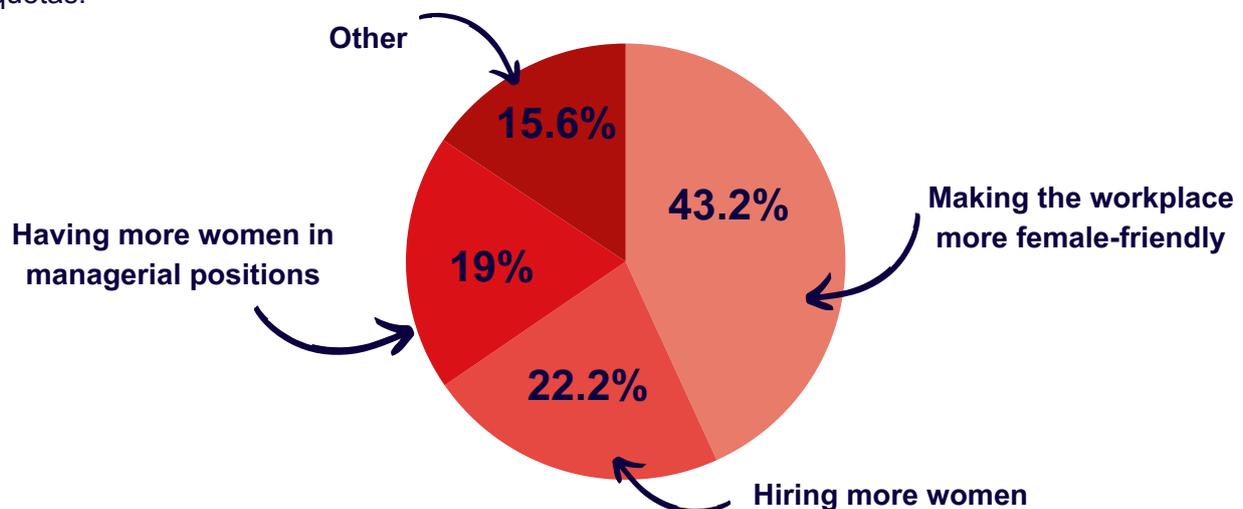
The top measures recommended to improve gender balance according to our respondents

When considering job benefits to attract more women, **flexible working hours** emerged as the most desirable (76%), closely followed by competitive **salaries and bonuses** (72%).

The option for **remote work**, **additional paid holidays**, and **opportunities** for job training were also highly valued. These preferences highlight the importance of a **supportive and flexible working environment**, especially in regions with fewer vacation days, to **attract** and **retain female talent** in the tech industry.

Benefit	Percentage
Flexible working hours	76%
Salary and bonus	72%
Remote work	41%
More paid vacation	39%
Job training	39%
Increased maternity-related subsidies	24%
Retirement plan	12%
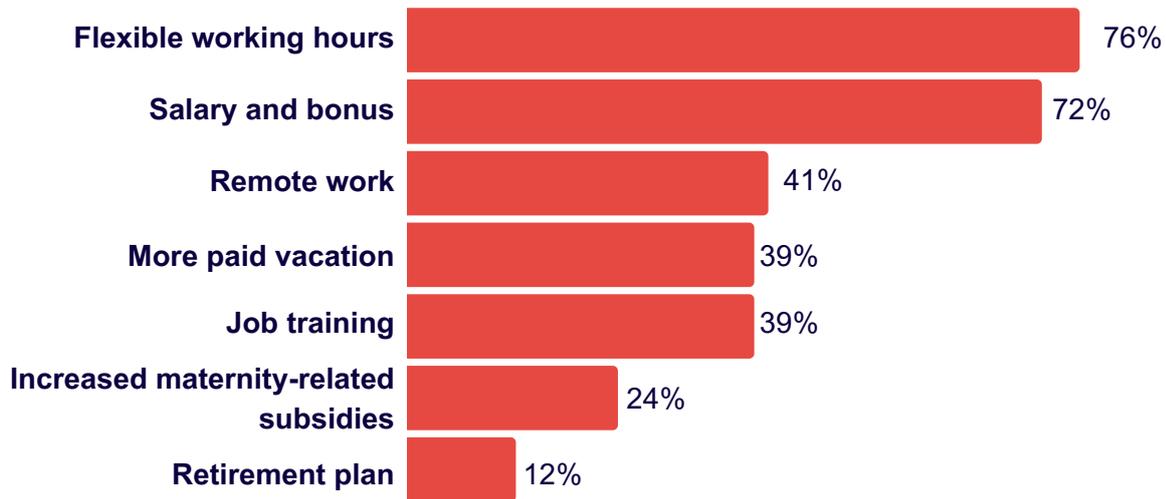
Job benefits designed to appeal to more women,
as identified by our respondents

We also asked the respondents at the end of the survey to freely add remarks about the gender gap in tech in Taiwan.

A majority of answers highlighted the **difficulty for a woman to advance her career while caring for children or her household**, this is also shown by the majority of respondents advocating for **flexible working hours** or **higher salary to pay for childcare**.

Here are a few chosen quotes:

"
Women have the right to **choose marriage and childbirth.** Like work, marriage and childbirth are parts of a woman's life and do **not affect a woman's performance at work.** Nor does having a husband and children prevent one from focusing on their job.

Women of marriageable age or those who are married with children **should not be labeled**. Instead, women should be **encouraged to continue working after marriage,** rather than being forced to leave their jobs due to an unfriendly workplace, thus preventing them from **utilizing their talents!**
"

Currently, there have been **significant improvements** in the "**hardware**" aspects related to measures for **women's childbirth**, such as childcare rooms, etc.

However, the "**software**" aspects, such as **mutual understanding** among people or the lack of understanding when work is handed over to others due to childcare leave, still have much room for **enhancement**.

Perhaps this could be addressed by **hiring more contract staff** or providing **additional compensation** to those who take over the work."

"
Some tech jobs in the U.S. allow men/women with young children to leave the office at 3:30 to go home to work (school ends at 3:30).

I think the Taiwanese workplace should follow this up and not limit it to women, especially since we are more traditional in our family concepts, and if we can **provide the flexibility** to allow couples to take turns caring for/picking up their children, it will **balance** the **work situation** of employees with families in the workplace.

Key Findings :

→ The **majority** of respondents were **women**, with a significant portion in **managerial or founder roles.**

→ **Two-thirds** of the respondents perceived a **salary gap** and nearly **one-third** of respondents **experienced gender discrimination.**

→ The **main barriers to women's advancement** in tech were identified as **family responsibilities**, **male dominance**, and a **lack of opportunities** for high-level positions.

Recommendations to improve gender balance include:

Creating a more female-friendly workplace environment.

Enhancing support for child care and offering job training opportunities.

Encouraging the hiring and promotion of women to managerial positions.

Implementing flexible work arrangements and competitive compensation packages to attract and retain female talent.

Taking a collective approach involving employers, government, schools, and broader society to address cultural and educational factors contributing to gender imbalance.

In summary, the survey highlights the progress and ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality in tech, with discrimination and barriers such as family responsibilities and male-dominated cultures being significant issues.

Recommendations include creating a more inclusive workplace, promoting women into leadership roles, and a collective effort from all societal sectors to address underlying causes.

Shifting focus to France, let's explore the situation of the gender gap in its particular context and further our analysis of effective strategies and policies that promote inclusivity and diversity within the tech sector worldwide.

France

The French Tech Parity Pact

One of the major focuses of the **French tech** sector is aimed at fostering **gender parity** within the French tech ecosystem. To this end, the **Mission French Tech,** the French government agency that steers the actions and development strategies of the French Tech, launched in May 2022 **the Parity Pact (Pacte Parité)** co-constructed by the Mission French Tech and the companies of the Next40/FT120.

Video Presentation of the Parity Pact by Clara Chappaz

This initiative targets the **persistent gender imbalance** in the **startup** and broader **tech industry** by implementing **concrete commitments** to significantly and sustainably advance **equality** between men and women. The pact was introduced as part of efforts to engage startups and businesses in the French Tech community, including those within the **Next40 / French Tech 120**, to commit to actionable steps towards achieving gender parity. This initiative reflects a broader commitment to creating a more **inclusive** and **equitable** tech sector in France .

The 5 objectives of the Parity Pact

1 Achieving a minimum of 20% women on the company board by 2025, rising to 40% by 2028.

2 Train 100% of managers on diversity issues and the right against discrimination and harassment.

3 Guarantee that 100% of the job descriptions published by the company are aimed at both men and women.

4 Set up a joint team of representatives to speak on behalf of the company, both internally and externally.

5 Set up specific support for each employee returning from parental leave.

Assessing the Impact of the Parity Pact's Progress

Nine months following the launch of the initiative, the **Mission French Tech** conducted a **survey**[3] among the firms that had committed to the pact. By 2023, a total of **83 startups** from the French Tech Next40 and FT120 groups had endorsed the **Pacte Parité.**

The results of this survey are compiled here:

Regarding the commitment to **feminizing corporate governance** by 2025, **two-thirds** of the French Tech 120 **signatories** to the Pacte Parité have already **achieved the 20% target** for women on their boards in 2023, two years ahead of the first stage of the commitment. Thanks to these pioneering companies, the boards of French Tech 120 companies now comprise an average of 23% women.

94% of survey respondents have taken steps:
- to train their management teams in diversity, anti discrimination and harassment issues.
- in favor of equal representation in the company's speaking opportunities

Regarding the publishing of **job descriptions** for both men and women, **100%** of respondents have **put the process in place**. In addition to working on job descriptions, **66%** of startup respondents have initiated a **proactive recruitment process** to identify female profiles (in addition to incoming applications).

62% of the respondents have already fully integrated this commitment within their company

80% of respondents feel that these training courses are effective and meet their objectives.

Regarding the key **issue of parenthood** within companies, the **Parity Pact** advocates providing **specific support** for women returning from **parental leave**. 94% of surveyed companies believe that when employees return from their parental leave, they are more quickly up to date with their company's news and can **get back to work more quickly** thanks to this **commitment.** 41% mention the introduction and support for an extension of the "**second parent**" leave (currently 28 days in France)

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[3] ABOUT THE PARITY PACT ON THE FRENCH TECH MISSION WEBSITE
https://lafrenchtech.gouv.fr/en/the-ecosystems-commitments/parity-pact/

In summary, the **Parity Pact** by the **Mission French Tech** is a landmark initiative aimed at correcting gender disparities in the French tech ecosystem. As of 2023, significant strides have been made, with a commendable portion of startups not only meeting but exceeding early targets for women on corporate boards. Efforts in **diversity training, gender-neutral hiring practices, equitable representation,** and **support for parental leave** have seen widespread implementation and positive impacts. This initiative highlights the potential of **government-industry collaboration** to foster a more inclusive tech sector.

Next, we present several interviews with women entrepreneurs and founders. We start with a video interview with Hannah Chou, founder of Wepreneurs in Taiwan. Her work focuses on empowering entrepreneurs and advancing diversity, offering insights into the global push for gender parity in tech. This discussion will touch on her experiences, the success of Wepreneurs, and her views on fostering an inclusive tech environment in Taiwan.

Testimonies from women entrepreneurs and founders in France and Taiwan tech

Empowering women in tech by giving them the resources they need

On March 21st 2024, we interviewed **Hannah Chou**, a social entrepreneur from Taiwan who **founded** the startup **Wepreneurs** after **winning the Cartier Women's Initiative award** in 2015.

Recognizing the need for a **platform to support efficient business matchmaking** and **resource exchange** among women entrepreneurs, she was inspired by her experiences mentoring women startup founders.

Hannah identified inheritance practices favoring men and **societal pressures** that often push women to leave the job market after starting families as **major obstacles to women's entrepreneurship.**

WE
WEPRENEURS

Interview of Hannah Chou, Empowering women in tech by giving them the resources they need

To address these challenges, she **advocates** for **educational** and **corporate reforms** to facilitate **women's pursuit of entrepreneurship** and **support their re-entry** into the **workforce** post-childbirth.

On **International Women's Day 2024** in Taipei, she launched the **Young Women in Tech bootcamp** and the **Women in Tech Forum**. These initiatives aim to **empower women** to engage in startup ventures with global reach, regardless of their academic backgrounds.

By **connecting aspiring entrepreneurs** with **successful female role models** and potential team members, Hannah strives to **foster a supportive ecosystem** for women in business. She also recommends **establishing initiatives similar to France's parity pact** to promote gender diversity on corporate boards and calls for government action to tackle the cultural and societal barriers impeding women's advancement in entrepreneurship.

Diversity in Deep Tech

In this video, **Maud Vinet**, co-founder of **Quobly**, discusses the company's mission to develop **quantum computers** using **semiconductor technologies**. She emphasizes the societal impact of quantum computers, as they have **unmatched computing power** and hold the promise of tackling challenges currently beyond our reach, such as expediting the development of new drugs and enhancing energy distribution optimization.

Maud Vinet's **background in quantum** and **fundamental physics research** led her to **bridge the gap** between **academia and industry.** She really wanted to be in contact with the society and the business world, so she worked in the **semiconductor industry** (IBM, STMicroelectronics, Soitec) and finally created Quobly.

She finally highlights the importance of **diversity** in the **workplace** and her efforts to encourage female participation in **STEM fields**. Maud Vinet advocates for **early education initiatives** to promote **gender equality** in **science** and addresses barriers faced by women in entrepreneurship, including **imposter syndrome** and **societal stereotypes**. She stresses the need to **challenge** these **stereotypes** to empower women to **pursue careers in technology** and **entrepreneurship**.

_Interview of Maud Vinet,
about Diversity in Deep Tech_

Balancing Acts: Entrepreneur, Mother, and MBA Student

Amanda Hsu, the **founder** of **Shape Prototype**, explains that her company aims to support **hardware entrepreneurs** through the complexities of product prototyping and manufacturing. By offering **expert guidance** and helping startups avoid costly errors during production, Shape Prototype addresses a critical need in the startup ecosystem, **empowering entrepreneurs** towards success.

Amanda is also a **mother** of two and is currently enrolled in an **Entrepreneurship and Innovation MBA** (EiMBA) at NTU. She highlights the **balanced gender ratio** in her program, which fosters a diverse and meritocratic learning environment. She has not experienced discrimination as a female entrepreneur in tech or during her MBA studies and appreciates the program's efforts to **accommodate the needs of women**, such as allowing online attendance during pregnancy.

Balancing **motherhood** with her **entrepreneurial role**, Amanda emphasizes the importance of **prioritizing tasks** and learning to **delegate**. She advises women to **embrace opportunities** and stay true to their values, noting that successful female entrepreneurs serve as inspiring role models by showing that gender should not limit entrepreneurial ambitions. She is **optimistic** about the ongoing efforts to **reduce gender prejudice** and the **empowering effects** this will have on **future generations.**

Interview of Amanda Hsu, a 360 look at a woman working in tech

Conclusion

The exploration of gender disparities within the tech sectors of Taiwan and France reveals both unique challenges and universal themes in the quest for gender equality. In Taiwan, efforts by La French Tech Taiwan and survey findings underscore the **persistent issues** of **gender discrimination**, **family responsibilities** as a barrier, and the **struggle** for women to attain **leadership positions**. The significant push for gender parity, demonstrated through initiatives for a more inclusive workplace and measures to support women in tech, highlights a **community-driven approach toward change**.

In contrast, France's approach, spearheaded by the Mission French Tech and the Parity Pact, showcases a formalized and government-backed strategy aiming to foster gender parity within the French tech ecosystem. The achievements and commitments under the Parity Pact, including the **feminization of corporate governance**, **diversity training**, and **support for parenthood**, illustrate a proactive and measurable step towards equality.

The differences and similarities between Taiwan and France in addressing gender disparities in tech provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of this global issue. While Taiwan's community and survey-based approach offers a grassroots perspective on the challenges and solutions, France's Parity Pact presents a model for structured, nationwide commitment to gender parity.

As we conclude this report, it's evident that both regions are making strides towards gender equality in tech, albeit through different paths. The successes and challenges faced by each underscore the importance of tailored approaches that consider the unique cultural and social dynamics at play. Looking forward, the **next step for Taiwan** could **involve crafting its own Parity Pact**, with commitments tailored to its distinct social and cultural context. Such an initiative would not only solidify the nation's commitment to gender equality in tech but also provide a framework for measurable progress and accountability.

This comparative study between Taiwan and France on navigating the gender gap in tech serves as a testament to the global nature of this challenge and the varied strategies nations can employ to combat it. It calls for continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment from all sectors of society to create a tech industry where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality.

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La French Tech Taiwan website