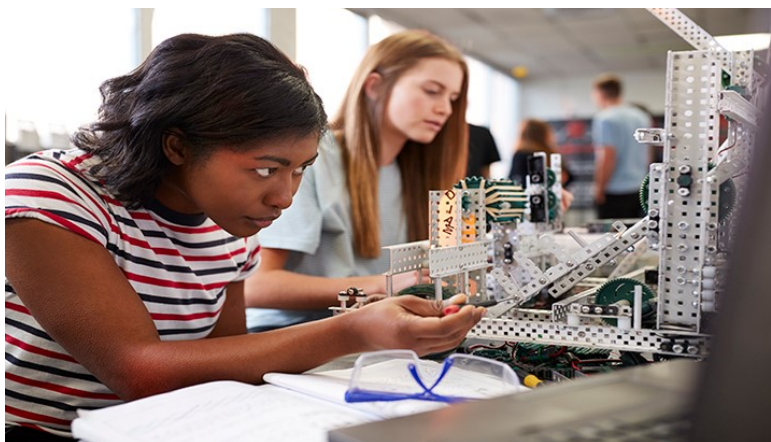# UABDIVULGA
## BARCELONA RECERCA I INNOVACIÓ

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# Women in the technology sector, sufficiently competent



The metaphor of the glass ceiling still does not escape from reality. This article questions the lower positions that women hold in companies in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), since, although their skills are adequate because are the required by the companies, it does not allow them to scale to higher leadership positions. The paper also highlights the lack of business training paths for these professionals.

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Most of the data shows that women usually have good academic records, thus, we think that female talent should be indisputable for companies in the technology sector. However, employment figures indicate otherwise that they occupy intermediate positions and, very rarely, leadership positions. We aim to figure out if the glass ceiling of women in the technology sector is related to their level of professional competences.

In order to shed light on this issue, we asked these women about their level of competences, formal (languages, qualifications, etc.) and informal (communication, negotiation, leadership, etc.), as well as the correspondence of these skills with the demand of companies for developing their work.

These women state that they are sufficiently trained regarding these competences at a high level: above to 80% with regard to formal education degree, cultural adaptation, team work and interpersonal communication; the lowest punctuations, still above 56%, on leadership, creativity, innovation, negotiation and dialogue. These skills were considered very important to develop their work by the companies. Also, those competencies indicated as more valuable by companies match with those competences that women affirm are highly trained; and those competences considered with a lesser extent valuable by companies match with low punctuations of their own skills. In other words, women in ICT industry have the competencies demanded by the industry.

Their answers fit to their position: female managers point out competences related to this position:  leadership, dialogue, teamwork and interpersonal relationship; while female employees point out formal competencies corresponding with their professional category. Likewise, women have trained along their professional career through several channels. Women aged between 30 to 45 were trained through company training programmes; on the contrary, women under 30-year-old and over 45-year-old mainly were trained through their own resources, which denotes scarce concern of the companies to train the youngest and the oldest female employees.

Therefore, we conclude that female glass ceiling in the technology sector is not related with their competences because they are enough trained. Lack of investment of companies to train young women and senior women suggests their job opportunities window is very limited. Educational institutions, business organizations and professional associations should take note of this data in order to improve women's opportunities in the ICT sector.

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## References

These results have been published in Laura Lamolla and Ana M. González Ramos (2019) "**Women in tech: Is it about skills?**" *Revista Española de Sociología*, 28 (3, supl. 2): 79-98. It has been conducted in the project GENTALENT: incorporation, retention and promotion of female talent in the ICT sector, RecerCaixa, financed by the ACUP (Catalan Public University Association) and La Caixa Foundation (2014ACUP00013).

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