AI and gender equality in Denmark, 2026

Primary findings from the Mirror Survey of 500 Danes' knowledge and perceptions of AI

Connected Women in AI

aetheon

Ipsos

WAAVES

Cover photo: Cristina Filo

A note on this report and its data

This report draws primarily on the Mirror/DK Basics survey from March 2025, a nationally distributed attitudinal survey of 500 Danish respondents (255 women, 245 men, aged 18–75). Mirror provides a broad snapshot of how Danes perceive AI, gender, and visibility. All core findings and figures are drawn from this dataset.

A second dataset, Signals 2026 (CWAI/IPSOS, n=210), is referenced selectively in Section 9 to illustrate how perceptions documented in Mirror may connect to lived professional experience. Signals captures a different population: AI-active professionals, 89% female, 78% holding a master's degree or higher, 77% based in Copenhagen. It cannot be directly compared to Mirror. Where Signals findings appear, they serve as a contextual lens, not as validation or contradiction of the Mirror data. This means that the two datasets are complementary perspectives, not comparable samples.

All figures are self-reported attitudes. The survey measures perceptions, not behaviour. Cross-tabulations are based on absolute counts from the survey extract, and percentage calculations on subgroups are approximate due to small cell sizes.

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Photo Thomas Lekfeldt, Ritzau Scanpix

When we founded Connected Women in AI, it started with a simple observation: women were using AI, but they were not visible in it. Not on the panels, not in the headlines, not in the rooms where decisions about AI were being made.

That observation is now backed by data. This report puts numbers on something many of us have felt but have not been able to prove. And the numbers are clear: AI in Denmark is broadly adopted, it is broadly valued, and it is broadly perceived as male. Not by men alone, but by everyone.

That last part matters. If this were a story about men overestimating their own importance, it would be easy to set aside. But it is not. Women and men share the same assumption about who shapes AI. Both genders look at the field and see the same picture: a male one. It is a shared mental model, and it runs deep enough that experience does not shake it. In fact, experience makes the gap wider.

The report you are about to read traces this pattern through the data. It shows that the more women engage with AI, the more clearly they see its imbalance. It shows that the men who actively support gender diversity are often the least aware that the problem exists. And that a remarkably large share of Danes, when asked directly who shapes the AI they use, simply draw a blank.

These findings describe the ground that women in AI walk on every day. Low visibility means fewer role models. Fewer role models means fewer women entering the field. And fewer women entering the field means the perception stays intact. The loop closes.

But there is also something hopeful in this data. Danes overwhelmingly agree that both genders should shape AI. The will is there. What is missing is awareness, and awareness is something we can build.

This report is a beginning, not a conclusion. It draws on two datasets that together offer early, directional insight into how Danes perceive AI, gender, and visibility. The patterns it identifies are consistent and clear, but they are not exhaustive. There are questions this data raises that it cannot yet answer: how perceptions differ across industries and regions, how they shift over time, and what specific interventions change them.

Answering those questions will require continued measurement, larger samples, and longitudinal tracking. We see this as the first step in a longer programme of work, one that will deepen as the evidence base grows.

That is what Connected Women in AI exists to do. We are not here to point fingers, nor to make this a grievance. We want to make women in AI visible, supported, and connected, so that the next time someone is asked who they associate with AI expertise, the answer looks different.

This report is one step in that direction. I hope you will read it, share it, and use it to start conversations that matter.

Introduction to the findings

AI in Denmark is broadly adopted and broadly valued. Nearly four in ten Danes use it regularly, and the gender gap in access is small. But AI has already acquired a gender in the Danish public consciousness. And that gender is male. Three findings stand out.

The male default is shared, not contested.

33% of Danes associate AI expertise primarily with men. Only 2% (rounded average) say primarily women. Women and men give almost the same answer (34% vs. 32% associate AI with the male gender). This is not a perception held by one gender about the other, it is a shared assumption, which makes it both harder to see and harder to challenge.

Experience widens the gap instead of closing it

Among women who use AI frequently, 44% disagree that women have equal visibility in the field. Among men with the same level of experience, only 17% disagree. The more women engage with AI, the more clearly they see its imbalance. Men with the same engagement see it less. And men who actively support diversity are the group most likely to believe the problem is already solved: 71% of engaged men say women are equally visible, compared to 29% of engaged women.

A large share of Danes simply draw a blank

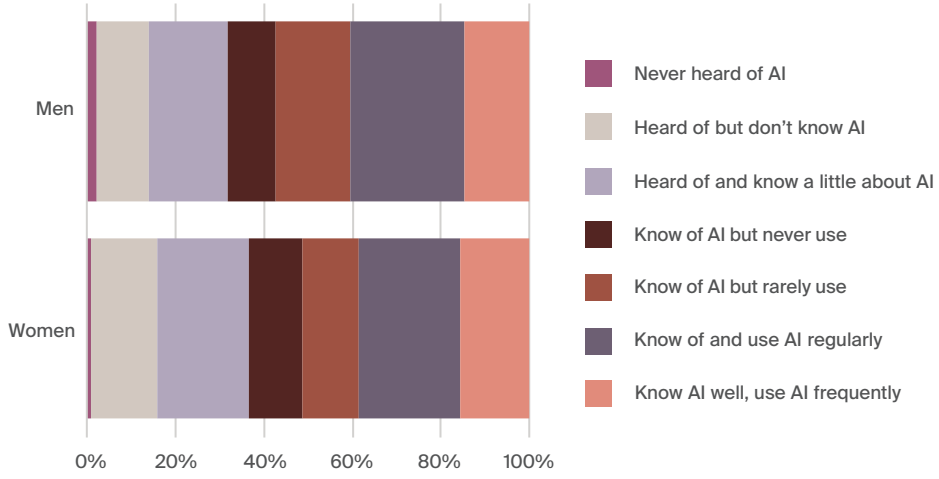
48% of women cannot say whether women are visible in AI. They do not disagree, they simply have no picture at all. When nearly half of all women have no reference point for who shapes the AI they use, the field is not just unequal, but invisible.

These findings are not driven by a lack of goodwill. 71% of Danes think both genders should shape AI. 68% think diversity among AI creators promotes innovation. This is about a lack of awareness, not a lack of will.

Men and women self-rate as equally knowledgeable about AI

Figure 1: "How would you characterise your experience with and use of AI?"

The distribution of knowledge and adoption of AI is broadly similar across genders, establishing the baseline of near-equal access before the perception findings that follow.



AI has a gender in the Danish consciousness

Men and women agree that AI expertise is almost never associated solely with women

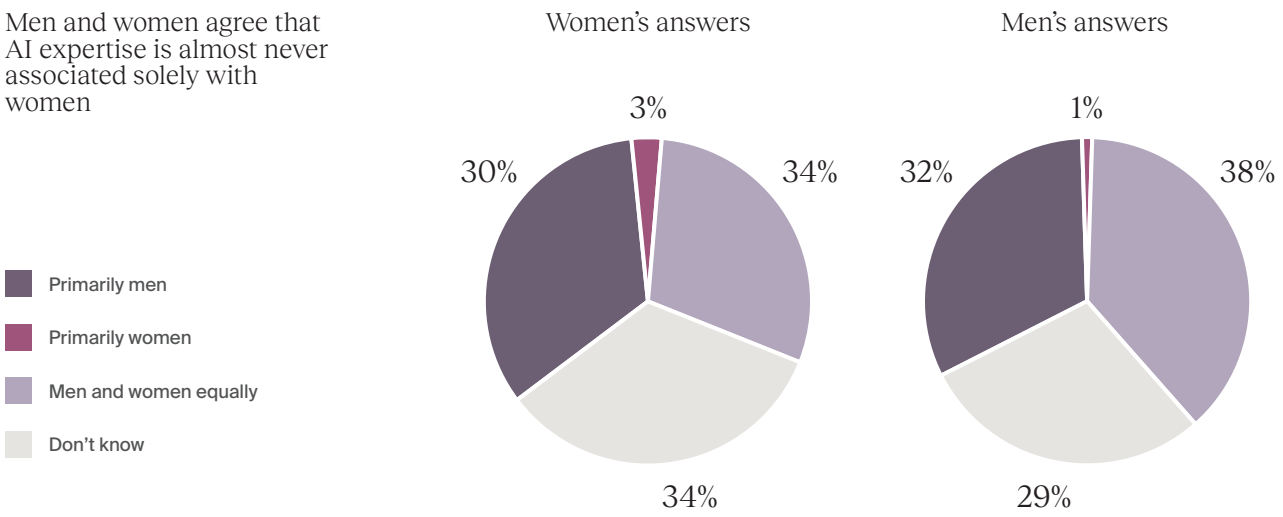


Figure 2: "Who do you primarily associate with expertise in AI in Denmark?" Both men and women associate AI expertise with men or both men and women equally. A minority associates AI expertise with women. About a third don't know.

Despite near-equal adoption, AI expertise is overwhelmingly associated with men. 33% of all respondents say they primarily associate AI expertise with men. Only 2% say primarily women. 34% say both genders equally, and 32% don't know.

The gender split on this question is striking for its absence. 34% of women and 32% of men answer "primarily men." The male default is not something men impose on women, or something women perceive more acutely than men. It is a shared assumption, carried equally by both genders, and that symmetry is itself the finding.

This is one of the report's most structurally important results. If the perception were contested between genders, one could argue that it reflects a gendered grievance or a difference in sensitivity. It is not contested. Men and women respond almost identically. This makes the finding much harder to dismiss in broader debate. It points not to disagreement between genders, but to a common mental model of what AI expertise looks like and who holds it.

The assumption is not plucked from thin air. It likely reflects the visible Danish AI landscape, where male profiles dominate conferences, media commentary, and boardroom positions. But the data shows it has calcified into a default that exists independently of individual experience. Even among people who personally use AI every day, the association persists. That is what makes it structural rather than anecdotal: it is not a view held by people unfamiliar with the field. It is the view of the field itself.

Experience reinforces the imbalance

One might expect that direct experience with AI would moderate the male-default assumption. If the perception is based on unfamiliarity, greater familiarity should weaken it. The data shows that it does not. In fact, the opposite happens.

Among women who know AI well and use it frequently, approximately 54% answered that AI expertise is associated with "primarily men" compared to approximately 42% of men with equivalent experience. Among frequent male AI users, approximately 44% say the expertise is associated with both genders equally. Among frequent female users, only approximately 32% perceive this equality.

The pattern is clear: the more women engage with the field, the more clearly they see its imbalance. Men with the same level of engagement see it less clearly, possibly because they are part of the landscape that shapes the perception. This is not a question of women being pessimistic or men being optimistic. It is a question of vantage point. Women and men who both use AI regularly are observing the same field and arriving at different conclusions about what it looks like.

The data cannot tell us who is right, but it can tell us that increased engagement does not automatically produce a shared picture. If anything, it sharpens the divergence. And that divergence has practical implications. If women who become experts in AI also become more acutely aware that the field does not see them as the norm, the experience of expertise itself becomes different for men and women. The field rewards differently depending on who you are.

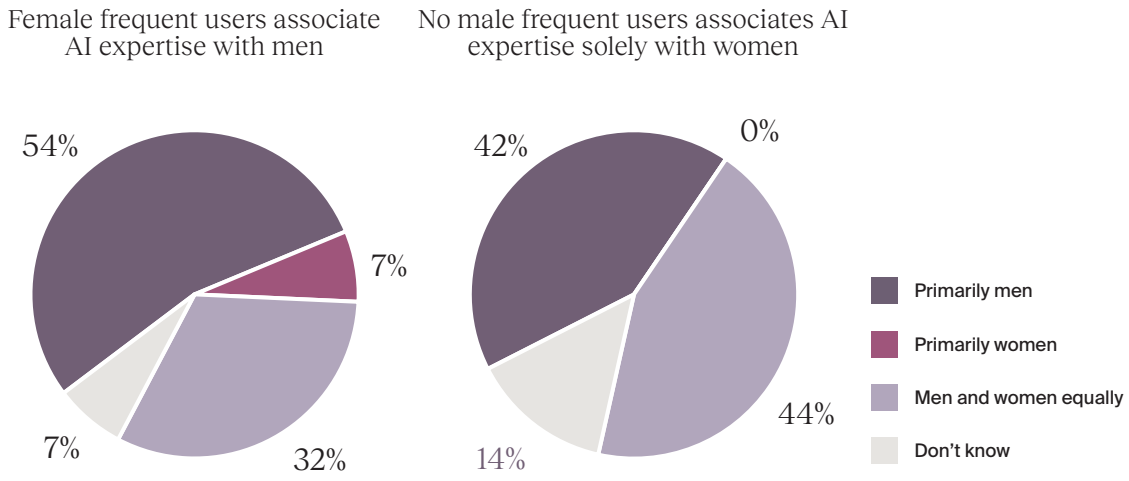


Figure 3: Expertise association among frequent AI users (filtered for "knows well and uses frequently"): Women vs. men. Experienced AI users perceive a much stronger male bias in AI expertise than the broader population.

The visibility gap

The widest gap in the survey concerns visibility. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree that "women have the same visibility as men in AI in Denmark."

49% of men agree (21% strongly agree, 28% somewhat agree). Among women, total agreement is 25% (7% strongly, 18% somewhat). 27% of women actively disagree, compared to 17% of men. And 48% of women answer "don't know," a figure that is itself a finding and is explored in depth in Section 6.

This is not a difference of nuance or emphasis. It is a fundamental disagreement about what the field looks like. Men and women in the same country, asked the same question about the same field, arrive at radically different assessments of women's presence in it. Nearly half of men believe women are equally visible. Only a quarter of women agree.

The disagreement deepens further when filtering for respondents who themselves believe diversity is important and that role models are lacking. Among this engaged subgroup, male agreement with equal visibility rises to 71%, while female agreement falls to 29%. The more engaged someone is with the question, the wider the gap becomes.

This is perhaps the report's most structurally troubling finding.

It is worth dwelling on what this means in practice. Men who actively support diversity in AI are simultaneously those who most strongly believe women are already visible. Women who actively support diversity are those who most strongly believe they are not. If men in decision-making positions share the former perception, it may mean the problem becomes invisible precisely where it could be addressed. The people with the power to change the situation are, in statistical terms, the people least likely to see it.

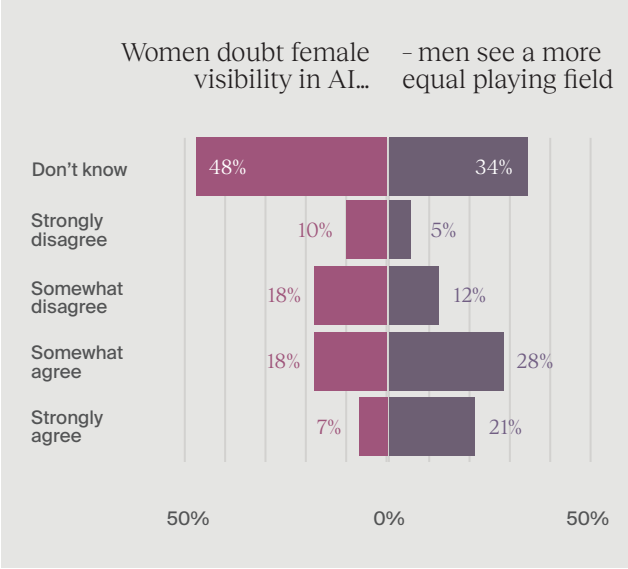


Figure 4: "Women have the same visibility as men in AI" by gender. 49% men, only 25% of women agree. Almost half of the women simply don't know.

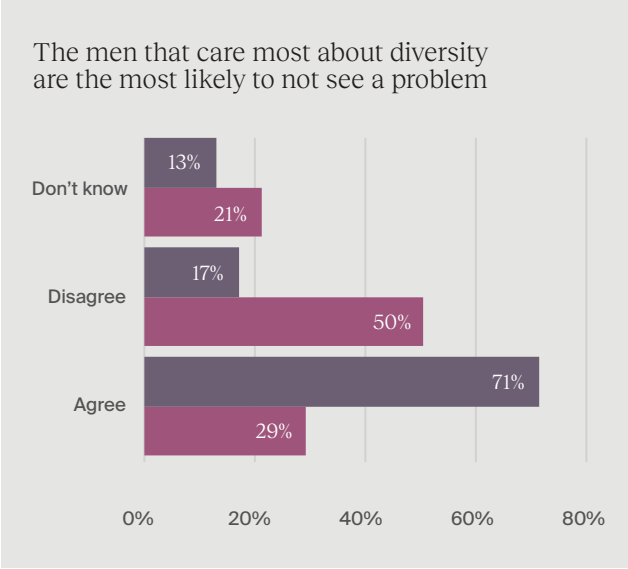
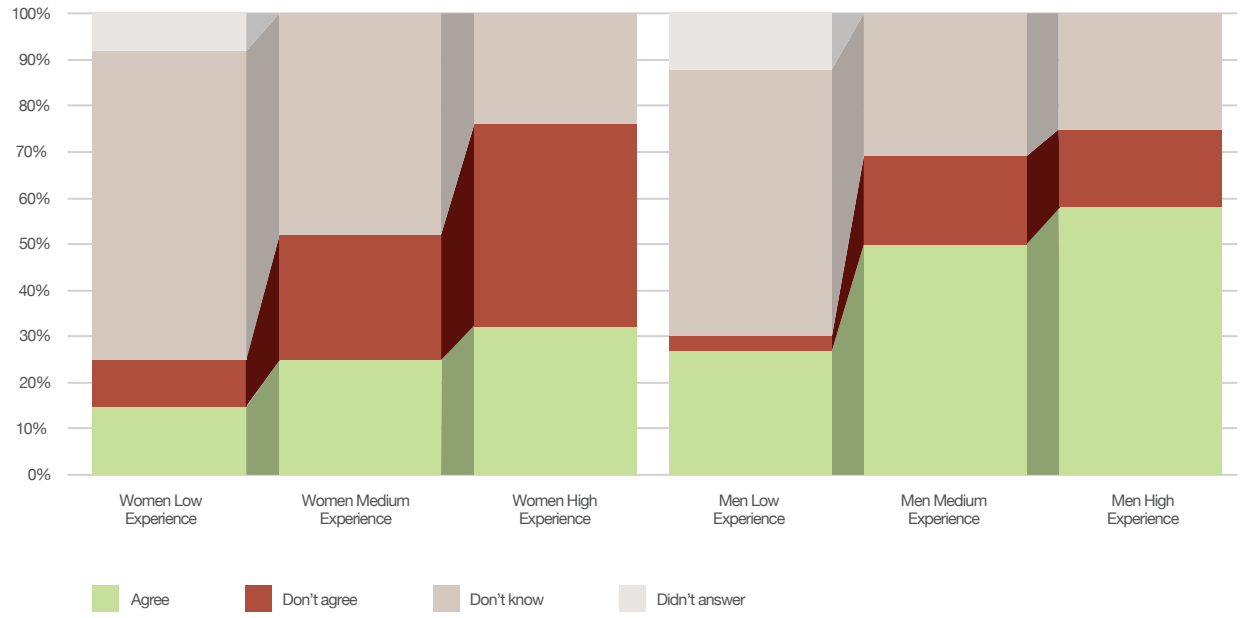


Figure 5: "Women have the same visibility as men in AI" by engagement in the diversity cause.

71% of men who care about diversity (men who agree that men and women should play equal roles within AI and that role models are important) think that women have the same visibility within AI. The paradox is that the men who care most about diversity also think there isn't a problem. In contrast only 29% of the engaged women agree that visibility is the same.

Experience makes women more, not less, critical

The more women know about AI, the less diversity they see



The cross-tabulation of AI experience and visibility perception closes the most obvious counter-explanation. One might assume that women who perceive low visibility simply do not know the field well enough to judge. If they had more experience, they would see a more balanced picture. The data shows the opposite.

Among women with low AI experience, 68% answer "don't know" to the visibility question. They lack a basis for responding, and they say so. But among women who use AI regularly, the "don't know" group shrinks to approximately 24%, and what emerges is not agreement but active disagreement: approximately 44% of frequent female users disagree that women have equal visibility, compared to only approximately 17% of frequent male users.

This is one of the most central findings. What happens when women gain enough experience to have an opinion is that they form a negative one. The progression is consistent: as experience increases, women do not move toward the male assessment. They move away from it. Uncertainty gives way to informed disagreement. Among men, the same gain in experience produces the opposite effect: uncertainty is replaced by agreement.

Women with experience assess that visibility is not equal. Men with experience assess that it is. The two groups are looking at the same field from different positions within it, and they arrive at opposing conclusions.

This means that simply "getting more women into AI" will not, on its own, change how the field is perceived. The structural conditions that shape perception, who is visible, who occupies leadership positions, who is invited to speak and to decide, must change alongside participation. Without that, increased engagement may produce more informed frustration, not convergence.

Figure 6: "Women have the same visibility as men in AI" – by AI experience and gender.

Women move from "don't know" (68% at low experience) through growing disagreement to 44% disagreement at high experience. Men move from "don't know" (58% at low experience) through growing agreement to 58% agreement at high experience.

The blind spot: “Don’t know” as a finding

Across several questions in the survey, the “don’t know” proportion is not incidental noise or a sign of disengaged respondents. It is itself a finding, and potentially the most powerful one in the report.

On the visibility question (Q4), 48% of women answer “don’t know.” On the role model question (Q5), 39% of all respondents do the same. On the expertise question (Q9), 32% say they don’t know who to associate with AI expertise. These are not trivial figures. They represent a population, and particularly women who do not themselves actively use AI, having no picture at all of who shapes the technology they encounter daily.

This is not neutrality. It is an absence of reference points. If you cannot see who is shaping AI, you cannot form an opinion about it. And if you cannot form an opinion, you cannot see yourself in it. That links directly to participation. A field that is invisible to half the population cannot expect to recruit from it. The “don’t know” response is, in effect, a measure of how large a share of the Danish population exists in a kind of informational vacuum about who shapes one of the most consequential technologies of the era.

Education dampens the uncertainty somewhat: 25% of master’s holders answer “don’t know” on the expertise question, compared to 44% at primary school level. But the male default does not weaken with education. Across every level, “primarily men” outnumbers “primarily women” by at least ten to one. Education provides more confidence in answering, not a different picture of the field.

The “don’t know” responses deserve separate attention in how they are visualised and communicated. They are not missing data or a methodological artefact. They are a measure of how many Danes, when asked directly about the gender landscape of AI, draw a blank. That blank itself tells us something important about visibility, and about the distance between AI as a technology people use and AI as a field people can picture.

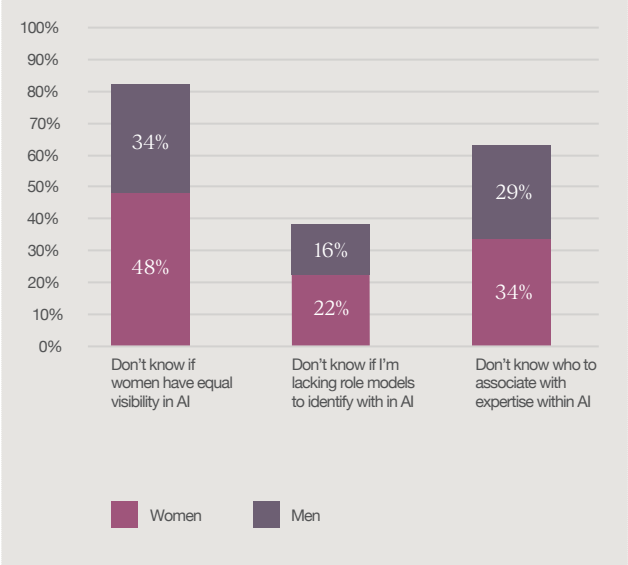


Figure 7: Proportion answering “don’t know” on Q4: Visibility of women in AI, Q5: Whether role models exist that the responder can identify with, and Q9: Whether expertise in AI is primarily perceived as male or female, shown by gender

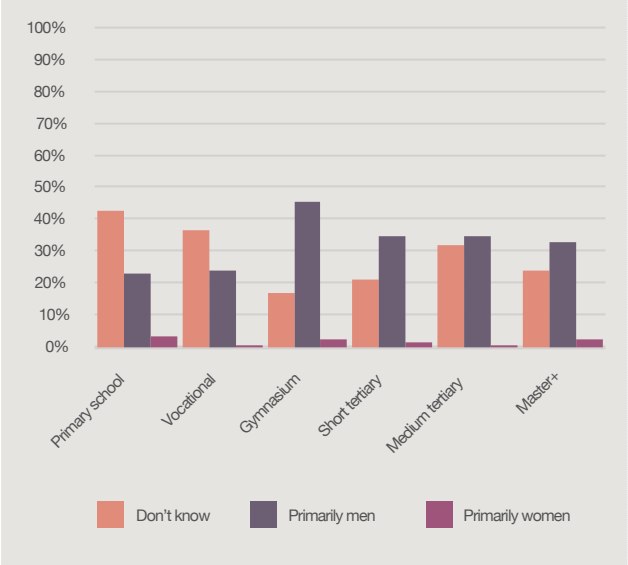


Figure 8: **“Who do you primarily associate with expertise within AI”** by educational level. Education reduces “don’t know” but does not weaken the male default. “Primarily men” outnumbers “primarily women” by at least ten to one at every education level.

The age dimension

Young women don't see a strong gender gap. Around 35-44 years of age, genders disagree about the diversity, and at a later age especially women don't know.

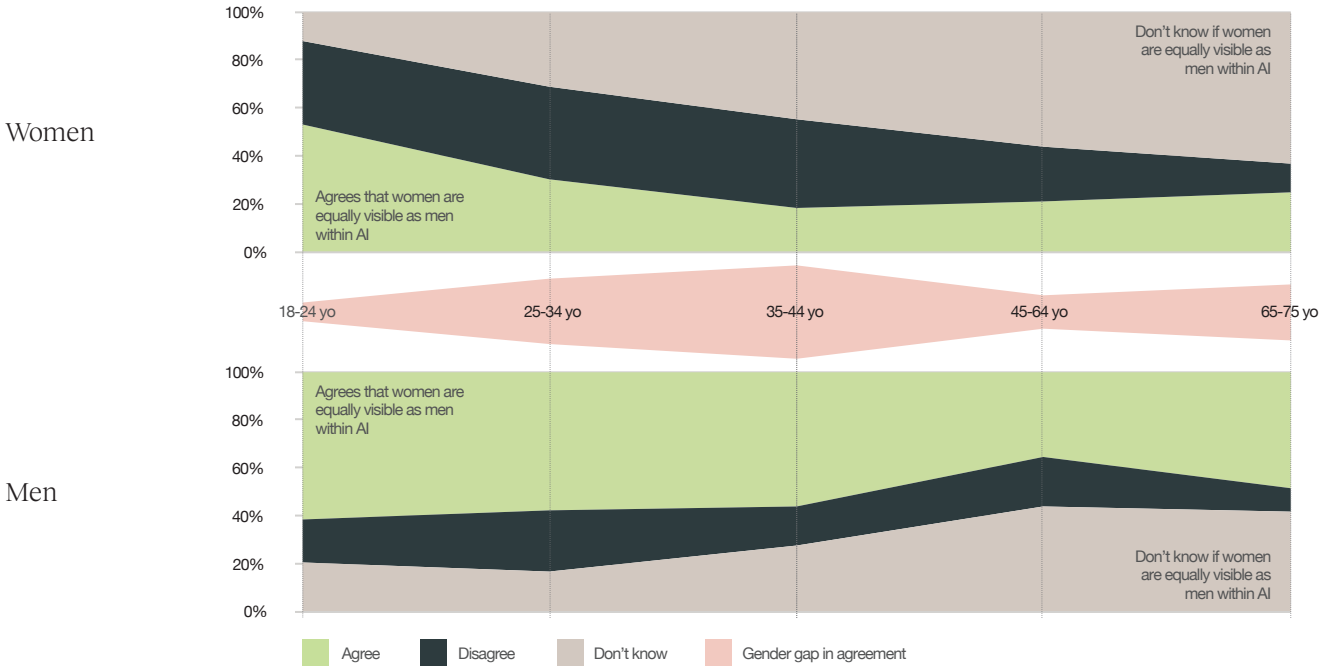


Figure 9: "Women are equally visible as men within AI" – by age and gender; Disagree = disagree strongly + disagree somewhat; Agree = agree strongly + agree somewhat.

The age data adds a layer of nuance that complicates any simple narrative about progress. Among the youngest women (18–24), 53% agree that women have equal visibility in AI. The figure falls steeply with age, bottoming out at 18% among women aged 35–44, then partially recovering to 21% (45–64) and 25% (65–75). The "don't know" share, meanwhile, climbs continuously: from 12% among the youngest to 56% at 45–64 and 63% among women aged 65–75.

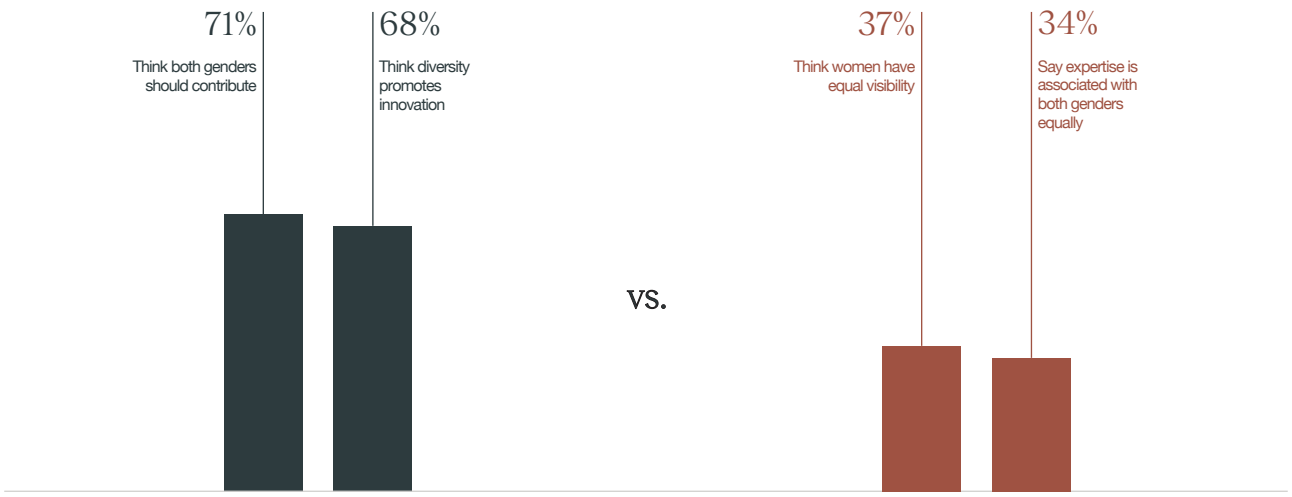
Among men, the curve is flatter and starts much higher. Male agreement with equal visibility runs at 61% (18–24), 57% (25–34) and 56% (35–44) before dropping to 35% at 45–64 and recovering to 48% at 65–75. Men also decline mid-life, but less steeply than women, and from a much higher starting point.

The pattern can be read in at least two ways. Either younger women experience a more equal AI landscape than their older counterparts, or they have not yet had enough experience with the field to see its structures. The declining optimism with age, combined with the rising "don't know" rates, points towards the latter interpretation. The youngest group may be expressing a general optimism about technology and their own futures that has not yet been tested against the realities of a professional environment where visibility, leadership access, and structural barriers intersect.

The age data also shows that the perception gap between men and women is not concentrated in any one generation. It exists across all age groups but deepens at mid-career (35–44), exactly the point at which professional visibility, access to leadership, and structural barriers tend to compound. This is the age at which career trajectories diverge, at which informal networks begin to matter more than formal qualifications, and at which the consequences of being visible or invisible in a field become concrete and lasting.

Broad will, narrow awareness

We all think the world is better off if men and women contribute equally, but also agree that we're not there yet



The survey's positive figures deserve their own section, not because they contradict the findings above, but because they frame them. The goodwill toward gender diversity in AI is real, and it is wide.

71% of Danes believe it is important that both genders contribute to AI development: 36% say "very important" and 35% "fairly important." Support is high across both genders, with 73% of women and 69% of men considering it important. Only 4% say it is not important at all. Support also rises with age, from 53% among 18–24-year-olds to 78% among 45–64-year-olds, before easing slightly to 71% in the 65–75 group.

68% agree that diversity among AI creators promotes innovation: 33% strongly agree and 35% somewhat agree. The gender split here is essentially absent: 69% of women and 69% of men agree. This is not a niche opinion held by those already invested in the question. It is mainstream consensus, expressed with near-identical conviction by men and women alike.

But these principled commitments coexist with a field widely perceived as male, a population that largely cannot name who shapes the AI it uses, and a perception gap that widens rather than narrows with experience and engagement. The distance between principle and perception is the report's central tension.

It is not that Danes lack goodwill toward gender diversity in AI. They do not. It is that the goodwill has not yet translated into awareness of the current state of the field, and among those who do have awareness, men and women see two vastly different realities. Support for the principle of diversity is broad. Understanding of the present imbalance is not. And without that understanding, the support remains abstract, a value held sincerely but directed at a problem many do not yet recognise as theirs.

The will is there. The awareness lags behind.

Figure 10: A stark difference between how we think the world should be, and how we perceive reality. Both genders.

There's a big drop-off between values (71% thinks both genders contributing to AI is important, 68% think diversity promotes innovation) and perception (37% think women have equal visibility within AI and 34% say AI expertise is associated with both gender equally.

From perception to lived experience: context from Signals 2026

The Mirror survey asked 500 Danes about AI. Our smaller Signals survey queried people in jobs in or around the AI industry. These two surveys cannot be directly compared, but still we find the Signals data valuable as a different window into the field of AI in Denmark – as seen from the people who work with the technology each day.

The Mirror data documents a perceptual landscape. A reasonable question is whether these perceptions have downstream consequences, or whether they are "just attitudes" with limited practical impact.

A separate dataset provides some context. Signals 2026, conducted by CWAI in partnership with Ipsos Denmark, surveyed 210 AI-active professionals in Denmark.

The sample is heavily skewed (89% female, 78% master's degree or higher, 77% Copenhagen-based) and should not be read as representative of the Danish workforce. But it offers a portrait of the people most actively working in AI, and their experience resonates with the perceptions captured in Mirror.

The findings referenced here are presented as context, not comparison. The two datasets measure different populations, use different methodologies, and cannot be formally synthesised.

"90% of AI-active professionals want to apply more AI in their current role. Only 21% feel 'very confident' about building an AI career in Denmark"

Confidence does not match engagement

The Signals respondents are highly engaged. 49% use AI tools extensively and help others use them. 43% can critically assess AI tools and explain their impact. 90% want to apply more AI in their current role. By any measure, this is a cohort that has moved well beyond awareness into active, daily deployment.

Yet only 21% feel "very confident" about building an AI career in Denmark. 25% express limited confidence, and 16% say "not confident at all." 61% are considering an AI-related career move, but fewer than half feel confident they can make it happen.

The gap between engagement and confidence is the central tension in the Signals data. These are people who use AI every day, who help others use it, who want to do more of it. And yet a significant share of them do not believe they can build a career around it. This is not a motivation problem. It points to something structural: a gap between individual capability and the pathways, support systems, and visible career trajectories available to them.

“Women rate themselves lower but are significantly more open to growth, learning, and career development”

Mentorship and organisational support are absent

The Signals data reveals a pronounced infrastructure gap. 52% disagree that mentors or sponsors are accessible to them. 69% say their organisation does not monitor gender participation in AI. 88% learn AI through hands-on experimentation because formal pathways are largely missing.

Meanwhile, only 44% agree that their workplace provides adequate AI infrastructure, and only 44% have access to sufficient training opportunities. The picture is of a cohort that is individually capable and motivated but institutionally unsupported. They are building their own competence despite their organisations, not because of them.

The gender confidence paradox

Despite the sample being 89% female, the very small male subsample (n≈23) reveals a pattern that connects to the Mirror findings. Men rate themselves higher on every competence and confidence measure: 74% of men place themselves at the highest understanding tier vs. 40% of women; 48% of men feel “very confident” about an AI career vs. 19% of women.

But men are also more likely to say they have reached their ceiling. 30% of men say nothing would make them pursue AI further, compared to 13% of women. Women rate themselves lower but are significantly more open to growth, learning, and career development. The combination is interesting: lower self-assessment paired with higher ambition and openness to development.

This resonates with the Mirror finding that experience makes women more critical, not more complacent. In both datasets, women who engage deeply with AI do not converge toward a comfortable assessment. They become more aware of what is missing and more determined to close the gap. This is good.

Why this matters for the Mirror findings

These Signals findings are not proof of causation, but they do demonstrate that the perceptions documented in Mirror are not abstract. When AI-active women report low confidence, absent mentors, and invisible organisational accountability, the male-default perception documented in Mirror acquires real-world weight. The perception is not just an attitude sitting inertly in people’s minds. It shapes the conditions people work in. And those conditions, in turn, reinforce the perception. The loop is visible in both datasets.

Implications

"Visibility is not a communication issue or a branding exercise. It is a structural lever. Making women in AI visible is a precondition for changing who sees themselves as belonging in the field."

Participation is shaped by perception and visibility, not only by access or skills

The data shows that access to AI is near-equal between men and women in Denmark. The gender gap in AI usage is small. But the perception gap is large. A third of all Danes associate AI expertise primarily with men, and both genders share this assumption equally.

If both men and women internalise the same male default, it shapes who considers entering the field, who feels they belong in it, and who is seen as credible within it. This is not a pipeline problem that can be solved by training more women in technical skills, but a perception problem that operates upstream of skills, access, and formal qualifications. Before someone decides to enter a field, they form a picture of who belongs there. In AI, that picture is, currently, male.

Increased engagement does not automatically correct bias

The most experienced women in the survey are the most critical of women's visibility in AI. Among frequent female AI users, approximately 44% disagree that women have equal visibility. Among men with equivalent experience, only approximately 17% disagree.

This means that engagement sharpens awareness of imbalance rather than dissolving it. Simply getting more women into AI will not, by itself, change how the field is perceived. The structural conditions, who is visible, who is in leadership, who is positioned as an expert, must change alongside participation. Without that, increased engagement may produce more informed frustration, not convergence.

The Signals data reinforces this point. Among AI-active professionals, confidence in building an AI career remains low despite high engagement, and the majority lack mentors, formal training pathways, or organisational support structures. Individual effort is not the bottleneck. Institutional infrastructure is.

The problem becomes invisible where it could be addressed

Perhaps the most structurally important finding in the data is the paradox in Figure 5. Men who actively support diversity in AI are simultaneously those who most strongly believe women are already visible (71% agree). Women who actively support diversity are those who most strongly believe they are not (only 29% agree, while 50% disagree).

If men in decision-making positions share the perception that visibility is already equal, the problem disappears precisely where it could be acted upon. This is not a critique of intent. The data does not suggest that men are indifferent or unsympathetic. It suggests that good intentions can coexist with blind spots, and that the blind spot is systematic enough to be visible in the data.

Closing this gap requires mechanisms that make the actual state of gender representation visible to those in a position to change it: data, reporting, accountability structures, and regular measurement. The perception gap will not close itself. It must be made visible to the people who do not currently see it.

Connected Women In AI founders.
From left: Barbara Myhre Isaksen,
Mette Treppendahl,
Katrine Bach
Photo: Cristina Filo

Connected Women in AI

Connected Women in AI (CWAI) is a movement dedicated to ensuring that women play an equal role in shaping the future of artificial intelligence. While AI moves forward, many women are being left behind. Most of the people building and leading in AI still don't reflect the diversity of the world around us.

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