



From access to agency

AI in Danish workplaces October 2026

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Foreword by Katrine Bach



“The question is no longer only who gets access to AI. It is who gets a say in the future we are building with it.”

Katrine Bach

Chair, Connected Women in AI

Photo: Thomas Lekkeldt, Ritzau Scanpix

Our first report asked who is seen in AI. Our second asked who is using AI at work, and who is supported to do so. This third report takes us to a question I believe is even more important: Who gets to shape how AI changes the way we work?

AI is no longer just a tool we use individually. It is increasingly influencing how work is organised, which tasks we perform, and how decisions are made. These changes are being shaped now, and the people involved in making them will have an influence that extends far beyond their own jobs.

Our findings reveal an important distinction. While 68% of working Danes use AI, only 33% are closely involved in shaping how it changes their work. Using AI is not the same as having a say.

And the gender gap becomes more pronounced when we look at participation rather than use. While 64% of women and 72% of men use

AI at work, only 26% of women and 41% of men are closely involved in shaping how it is applied. The gap in participation is almost twice as large as the gap in use.

But there is another finding I find equally important. Once women are closely involved, they report real influence about as often as men. This suggests that the bigger challenge is not necessarily whether women's contributions are heard, but whether they have the opportunity to contribute in the first place.

We see a similar pattern among older employees. They participate less often in shaping AI, even though many know where it could create value in their work. And when they are involved, they often report greater influence than their younger colleagues. At a time when organisations are redesigning work around AI, we should be asking whether we are making sufficient use of the knowledge and experience already within our workforce.

The research also points towards solutions. Participation is closely associated with opportunities to learn, clear mandates to experiment and encouragement from leadership. But organisations cannot rely only on those who are already confident or eager to put themselves forward. Nor can individuals leave every decision about their future to others. Creating meaningful participation requires action from both sides.

For me, that is what moving from access to agency means. Not simply giving more people the tools to use AI, but enabling them to contribute their knowledge, challenge assumptions and influence the decisions that will shape their work.

The question is no longer only who gets access to AI. It is who gets a say in the future we are building with it.

Using AI is not the same as having a say

Of the 2,000 working Danes surveyed, 68% use AI in their work. Half as many (33%) are closely involved, meaning to a high or very high degree, in shaping how AI changes that work, in at least one of three areas. The gap between women and men grows from using AI to shaping it: 64% of women and 72% of men use AI, but 26% and 41% are closely involved.

Many use AI without being closely involved in shaping it

Half of AI users (51%) are not closely involved in any of the three areas, though some of them take part to a lesser degree. Frequent use goes together with taking part but does not ensure it: among daily users, a third are not closely involved. For many, AI is something they use more than something they help shape.

Opportunity, skills and initiative go together with participation

Of those offered an AI course, pilot or network, 48% take part in finding where AI can create value, against 12% of those not offered one. Those who say they know where AI can help in their own tasks take part more often too (45% against 13%). Among those who have, or may have, AI tools at work, 59% of those who obtained AI tools themselves take part in at least one area, against 20% of the rest.

Women and older employees take part less, not heard less

Women take part less often than men at every age, and older employees, aged 49-66, less often than the younger groups (39% of AI users, against 55% and 53%). Yet among those who are closely involved, women report real influence about as often as men, and older employees more often than the youngest. This holds in all three areas.

From use to responsibility, by gender

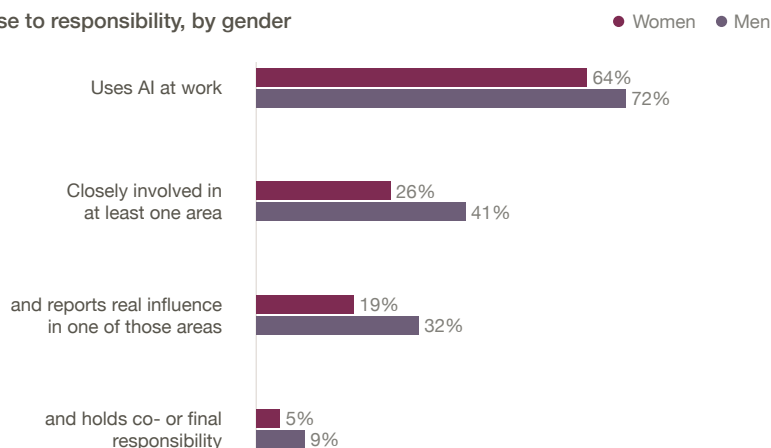
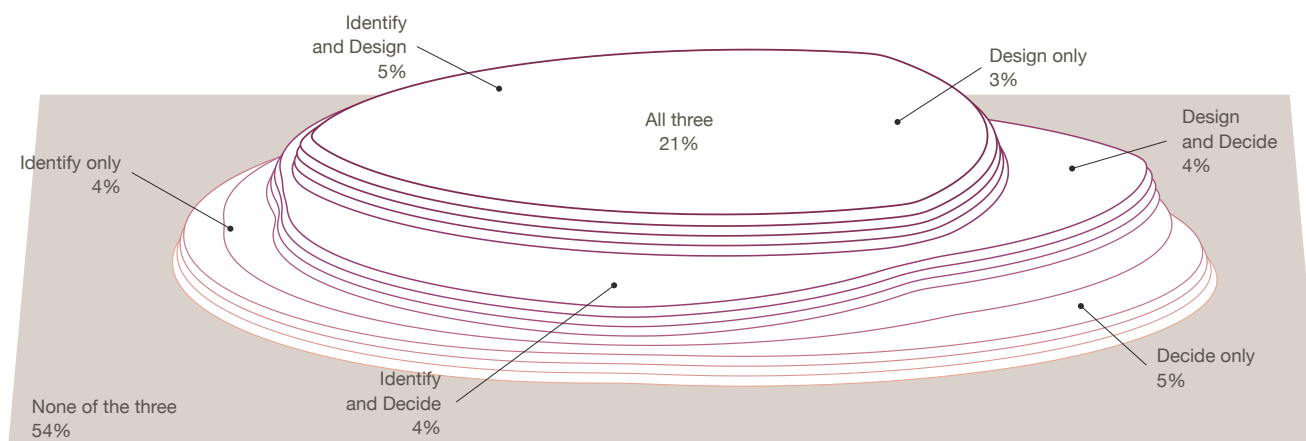


Figure 1: From use to responsibility, by gender. Each step is a smaller group within the one before, and the gap between women and men grows from using AI to taking part. The steps are a way of reading the data, not stages people pass through.

Real influence means saying one's input had influence to a high or very high degree.

Three areas of participation and influence

Agency is having a say in how AI changes one's own work. At work, that say is exercised in three areas.



Identify: identifying or prioritising where AI can create value at the workplace.

Design: adapting or designing AI-supported workflows or solutions.

Decide: making decisions on how tasks and responsibility are divided between people and AI.

Among those who have, or may have, AI tools at work, about a third are closely involved in each area, meaning to a high or very high degree in the past 12 months: 34% in Identify, 33% in Design and 34% in Decide.

The three areas are not steps in a process where one leads to the next. They overlap: of those closely involved in at least one area, 46% (21% of the whole group) take part in

all three. The rest take part in one or two (Figure 2).

Using AI does not by itself bring close involvement, but almost everyone who is closely involved also uses AI. The more often people use AI, the more often they take part, but frequent use is no guarantee. Among weekly users, 57% are not closely involved in any area, and among monthly users 71%. Even where AI is a fixed part of the workflow or has changed it, a quarter are not (26%).

Agency also has degrees. Taking part is a start. Experiencing that one's input has real influence goes further, and holding co-responsibility or final responsibility goes furthest. Each step is reached by fewer people. Of all 2,000 surveyed, a third take part, a quarter also report real influence, and

Figure 2: How the three areas overlap. Those who take part in shaping AI at work often take part in all of it: nearly half of them (46%) are closely involved in all three areas. More than half (54%) are not closely involved in any of them, though some take part to a lesser degree.

7% also hold co- or final responsibility (Figure 1).

Who takes part goes together with what workplaces offer, such as a course, a clear mandate or a manager who encourages. It also goes together with what people bring: seeing where AI can help in their own tasks, and the skills to judge what AI produces. Where these are in place, about half take part, and the gap between women and men is smaller.

Who gets to say where AI should be used?

Deciding where AI is worth trying sets the agenda for AI at work. About a third of those who have, or may have, AI tools at work take part. Men do so more often than women at every age, with the largest gap among the youngest. Taking part goes together with what the organisation offers, and with seeing where AI can help in one's own tasks.

Before AI changes how work is done, someone points to where it is worth trying. That choice shapes what AI ends up being used for. It draws on two kinds of knowledge: knowing what the tools can do, and knowing the work well enough to see where they fit.

Being invited in goes together with taking part. Of those who have been offered an AI course, a pilot project or a working group or network on AI in the past year, about half are closely involved. Of those offered none of these, about one in eight are. The pattern holds at every age (Figure 3). Which comes first is open, but an offer is something an organisation can choose to make.

Offers are not spread evenly. Seven in ten of those aged 31-48 have been offered at least one of these, against just over half of the youngest and of older employees, aged 49-66. With an offer, older employees take part nearly as often as their younger colleagues. Without one, only one in ten do.

Seeing where AI fits in one's own work matters as well. AI users who say they know where AI can create value in their own tasks take part far more often than those who say they do not (45% against 13%). Being unsure counts for little: those who neither agree nor disagree take part almost as rarely as those who disagree. The same pattern shows for

being able to judge and check what AI produces.

Those who are hardly or not at all involved point the same way. The most common reason they give, from about a third, is that they were never given the opportunity. One in five say they lacked the skills. Just over one in ten strongly wish they had been more involved.

Taking part in Identify goes together with both: an organisation that opens a way in, and employees who see where AI could help in their own work.

Identify, by whether offered a course, pilot or network

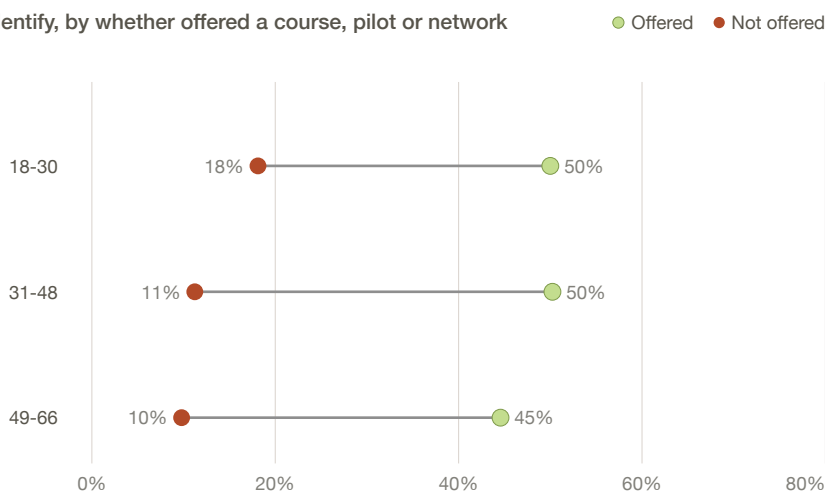


Figure 3: Offers and taking part go together. At every age, those offered an AI course, pilot or network are far more often closely involved in finding where AI can create value. Which comes first is open, and a pilot or working group can itself be a way of taking part.

Involved in Identify, by gender and age

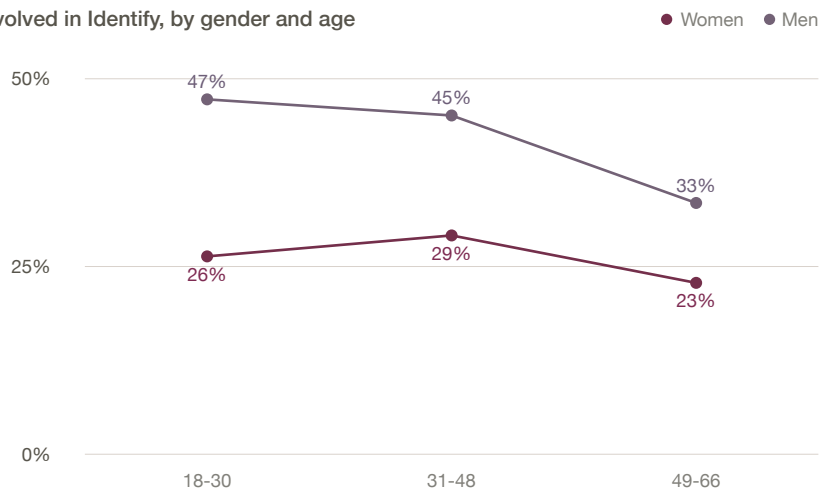


Figure 4: Women take part in Identify less often at every age. The difference is largest among the youngest.

Women take part less often than men at every age, and the difference is largest among the youngest (Figure 4). Once closely involved, women report real influence about as often as men (69% and 74%).

Older employees show a similar pattern. Once closely involved, they

more often say their input had real influence than the youngest (82% against 58%). Where they fall behind is in taking part.

Nor do they say less often that they know where AI can create value in their own tasks: older AI users say so as often as anyone. Yet four in ten of

them say they know but are not closely involved (Figure 5), and among those with more than ten years at their workplace, nearly half (Figure 6). Bringing that knowledge in takes an organisation that asks, and employees who step forward.

Knowing is not the same as taking part

AI users, by age

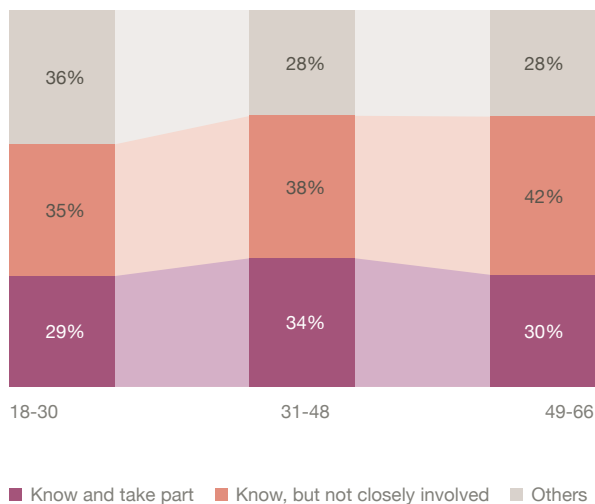


Figure 5: Many know where AI can help but are not closely involved. In every age group, more than a third of AI users say they know where AI can create value in their own work but are not closely involved in finding where it should be used at the workplace. Among those aged 49-66, it is four in ten. Some of them take part to a lesser degree. "Know" means agreeing, partly or fully, with the statement "I know which of my work tasks AI can create value in". "Others" do not say they know.

AI users aged 49-66, by years at the workplace

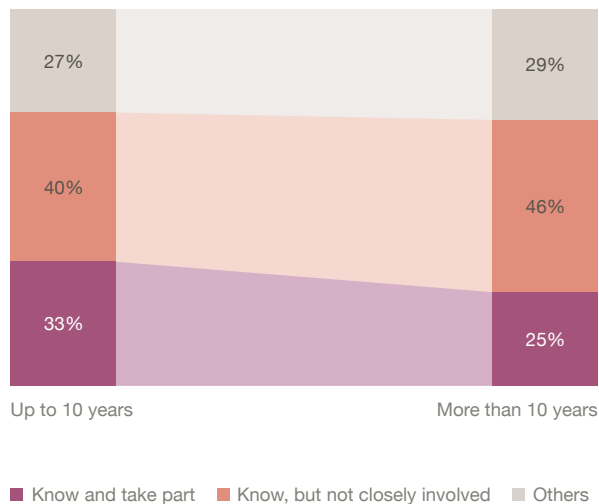


Figure 6: Long service does not bring a seat. Among AI users aged 49-66, those with more than ten years at their workplace say they know where AI can create value in their own work as often as those with fewer years. Fewer of them both know and take part, and nearly half know but are not closely involved. "Know" and "take part" are defined as in Figure 5.

Who gets to shape the new ways of working?

Design is where AI becomes part of how the work is done. About a third of those who have, or may have, AI tools at work are closely involved in adapting or designing workflows and solutions with AI. Those who have a clear mandate to try out new ways of working take part far more often than those who do not.

Once it is clear where AI is worth trying, someone has to work out how: which steps in a workflow change, and what has to be checked and by whom. Those choices are made close to the work, and they shape the daily work of others too.

Just over half of AI users say they have a clear mandate to try out or change working methods with AI. About half of them are closely involved in Design, against fewer than one in ten of those who say they do not (51% against 8%).

Mandates also go together with skills (Figure 7). AI users who say they can judge and check what AI produces far more often say they have a clear mandate than those who say they cannot.

cannot (64% against 26%). Women say somewhat less often than men that they have one (50% against 59%), but among those who can judge AI output, the difference is small (63% and 66%). The link with skills holds for women and men alike.

The link holds at every age (Figure 8). With a mandate, about half take part at every age. Without one, few do, and hardly any older employees, aged 49-66, although they say they have a mandate about as often as their younger colleagues.

A workplace can spell out a mandate, but that does not settle who takes part: about half of those who have one are not closely involved in Design.

Have a clear mandate

AI users, by whether they agree that they can judge and check AI output

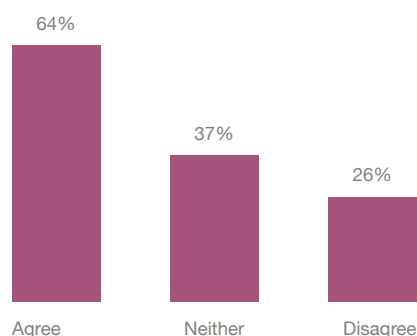


Figure 7: Skills and mandate go together. AI users who say they can judge and check the quality of what AI produces far more often say they have a clear mandate to try out or change working methods with AI than those who say they cannot. The survey cannot say whether the mandate or the skills come first.

Involved in Design, by clear mandate

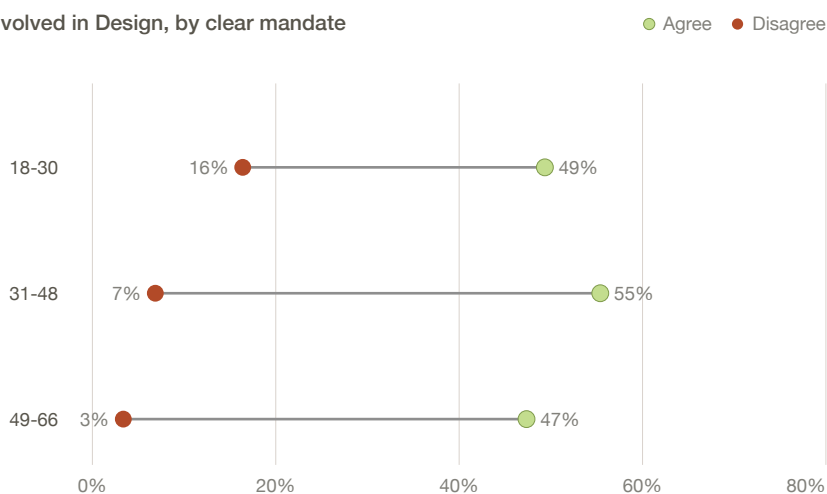


Figure 8: With a mandate, about half take part at every age. Among AI users who do not have a clear mandate to try out or change working methods with AI, few are closely involved in Design, and hardly any of those aged 49-66.

Involved in Design, by gender and age

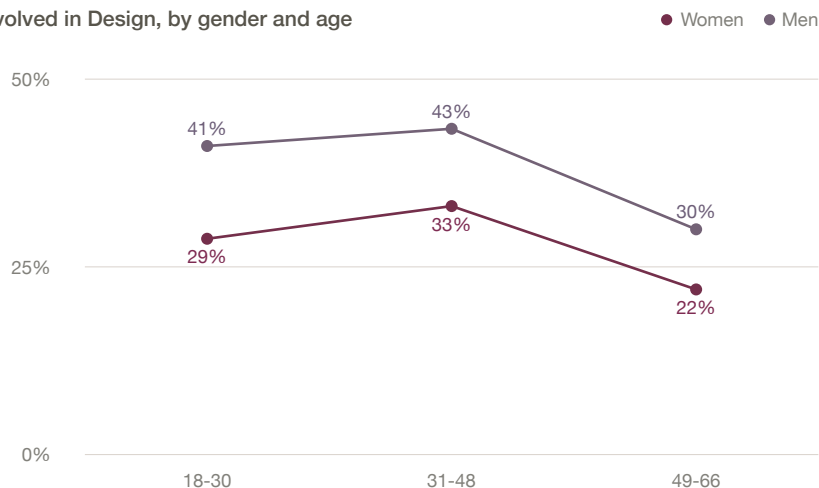


Figure 9: Women take part in Design less often at every age. The difference is about ten points in each age group, and both women and men aged 49-66 take part least.

Women take part in Design less often than men at every age (Figure 9). Among those who have a clear mandate, the difference narrows to a few points: 49% of women and 53% of men are closely involved.

Skills go together with taking part as well. AI users who say they can judge and check what AI produces are closely involved in Design far more often than those who say they cannot (44% against 11%). Among those hardly or not at all involved in Design,

about one in six say they lacked the skills.

The other side is who wants to be more involved. Most of those who were hardly or not at all involved in at least one area had not strongly wanted to be. Young men stand out: about four in ten of them strongly wanted more, around twice the share of young women. In every other group it was about one in five or fewer (Figure 10).

But participation cannot be left to those who want it most. A clear mandate, given broadly, is one way for organisations to bring in others as well, and a mandate is easier to use with the skills to back it. Building them is a shared task: workplaces can offer training and time to learn, and each employee, at any age, has to take it up.

Who wanted more involvement

Strongly wanted to be more involved

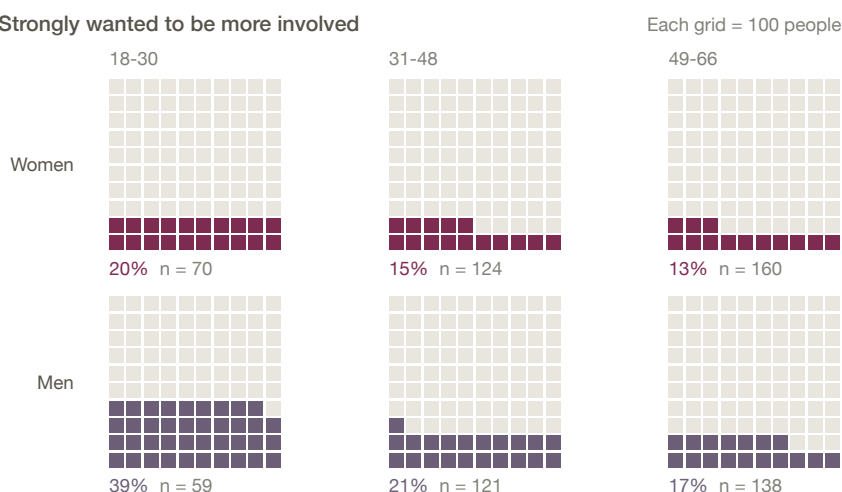


Figure 10: Who wanted more involvement. Among those hardly or not at all involved in at least one area, most did not strongly want to be more involved. Young men stand out, at about twice the share of young women. "Strongly wanted" means wanting to be more involved to a high or very high degree in at least one of the three areas. Young men are a small group (59), so their share is less certain.

Who decides what goes to people and what to AI?

Deciding how tasks and responsibility are divided between people and AI settles what AI may do on its own and who answers for the result. About a third of those who have, or may have, AI tools at work take part. Where managers encourage the use of AI to a high or very high degree, about half or more do so at every age.

When AI takes on part of a task, someone has to decide where the line between people and AI goes. Those decisions change jobs, not only workflows.

A manager's encouragement goes together with taking part, and the stronger it is, the more take part. Where the manager encourages the use of AI to a very high degree, about two in three are closely involved in Decide. Where the manager does not encourage it at all, hardly anyone is (65% against 6%).

With little or no encouragement, far fewer take part at every age (Figure 11), and among older employees, aged 49-66, only one in twenty. Long service does not go with more involvement either: older employees with more than ten years at their workplace take part less often than those with fewer (19% against 32%).

Among those whose manager encourages them, the gap between women and men is smaller but still there: 52% of women and 61% of men take part.

Encouragement is not the only signal from the workplace. Where there are no expectations for how AI is used, or no follow-up, fewer than one in five take part.

What people bring counts as well. AI users who say they can judge and check what AI produces take part in Decide far more often than those who say they cannot (44% against 17%). Deciding what AI may do on its own calls for that kind of judgement.

Involved in Decide, by manager encouragement

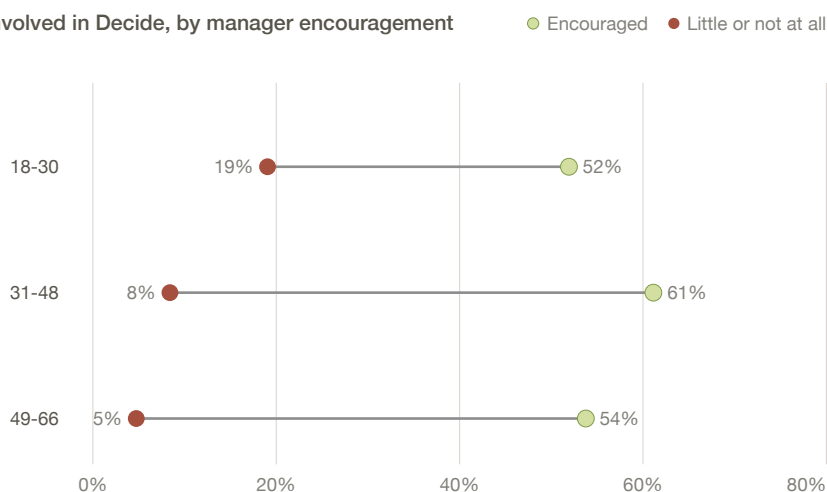


Figure 11: With encouragement, about half or more take part at every age. Encouraged means the manager encourages the use of AI to a high or very high degree. Where the manager does so slightly or not at all, far fewer take part, and hardly any of those aged 49-66.

Involved in Decide, by gender and age

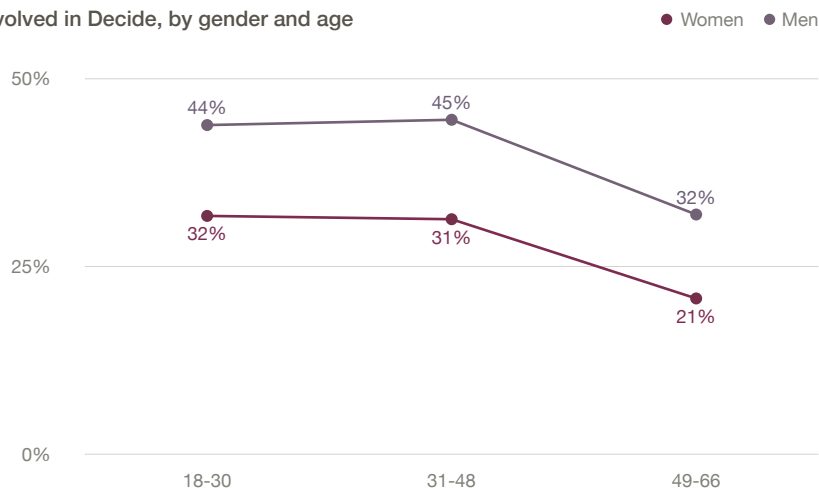


Figure 12: Women take part in Decide less often at every age. The difference is more than ten points in each age group, and both women and men aged 49-66 take part least.

Women take part in Decide less often than men at every age, by more than ten points (Figure 12). Women and men aged 49-66 take part least.

Once closely involved, the picture is different. Women and men then report real influence about as often (75% and 70%), and older employees more often than the youngest (81% against 56%). The same pattern shows in Identify and Design. The

age difference holds for those already involved. It does not mean that age itself brings influence.

Influence is not the same as responsibility. Of those involved who stated their role in the AI activity they were most involved in, most were informed, gave input, tested a solution or helped design it. Fewer than one in five held co-responsibility or final responsibility (Figure 13).

Being heard is a start. Taking part in decisions about AI should also mean sharing responsibility for them. Workplaces can hand over more of it, and employees of all ages can take it on.

Heard, but rarely responsible

Role in the AI activity

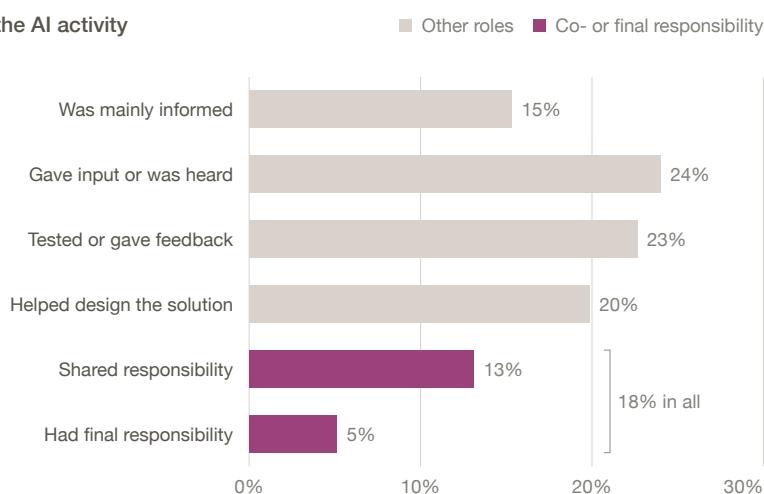


Figure 13: Heard, but rarely responsible. Most of those involved in AI activities were informed, gave input, tested a solution or helped design it. Fewer than one in five held co-responsibility or final responsibility for the decision or its implementation.

Where you work matters

Who takes part also varies with where people work. Among those aged 49-66, 6-10% of public-sector employees are closely involved in each of the three areas, against about a third in the private sector. In customer and sales work, men take part more than twice as often as women.

In the private sector, about a third or more take part in each of the three areas, at every age. The public sector looks different. The youngest take part about as often as in the private sector, those aged 31-48 less often, and among those aged 49-66, one in ten or fewer take part in each area (Figure 14).

The type of work matters too. In office and knowledge work and in practical work, about a third or more take part in Decide, and the difference between women and men is small to moderate. In care and teaching, fewer take part, women and men alike (15% and 20%).

The largest gender gap is in customer and sales work: 20% of women and 49% of men take part in Decide (Figure 15). The same gap shows in the two other areas. Where people work goes together with who takes part. What people do themselves matters too.

Involved, by sector and age

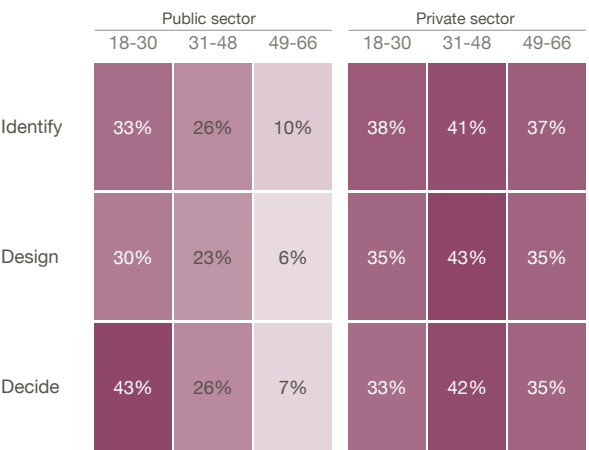


Figure 14: In the public sector, few of those aged 49-66 take part. In the private sector, about a third or more take part in each area at every age.

Involved in Decide, by type of work

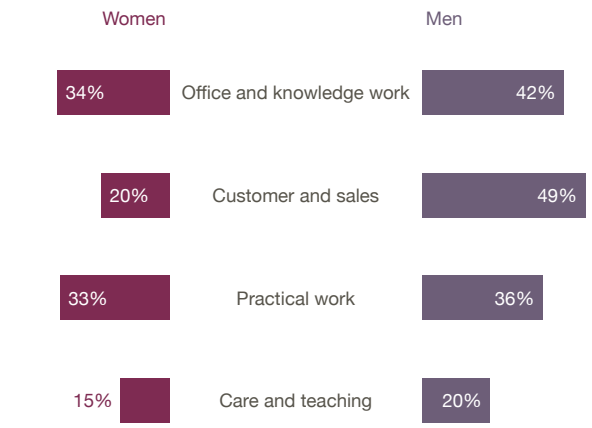


Figure 15: The gender gap varies with the type of work. It is largest in customer and sales work and smallest in practical work. In care and teaching, few take part, women and men alike.

Opportunity has to be offered, and taken

Among those hardly or not at all involved, about a third say they were never given the opportunity, and about as many that it is not relevant to their work. Few strongly want to be more involved. Those who obtained AI tools themselves take part far more often, at every age.

Among those hardly or not at all involved, about one in eight strongly wanted to be more involved, in each of the three areas. Most of them were men.

The reasons are much the same in all three areas (Figure 16). Close to one in five say they lacked the skills.

Missing opportunity is not the same as being kept out. Of those hardly or not at all involved in Identify, only 7% both strongly wanted more and say they never got the opportunity. Six in ten neither strongly wanted more nor point to a missing opportunity.

What people do themselves goes together with taking part. Among those who have, or may have, AI tools at work, 59% of those who obtained AI tools themselves take part in at least one area, against 20% of the rest. The pattern holds at every age and is strongest among those aged 49-66: 53% against 10%. It may also reflect the kind of work people do.

Older employees have taken that step less often than their younger colleagues (39% against 51% and 57%), and they are offered a course, pilot or network less often (53%

against 69% of those aged 31-48). It is not that they see less clearly where AI can help: older AI users say they know where AI can create value in their work as often as anyone.

Opportunity has to be offered, and it has to be taken. Workplaces need to offer it to more than those who want it most. Employees, older ones included, need to take it without waiting to be asked.

Why they were not more involved

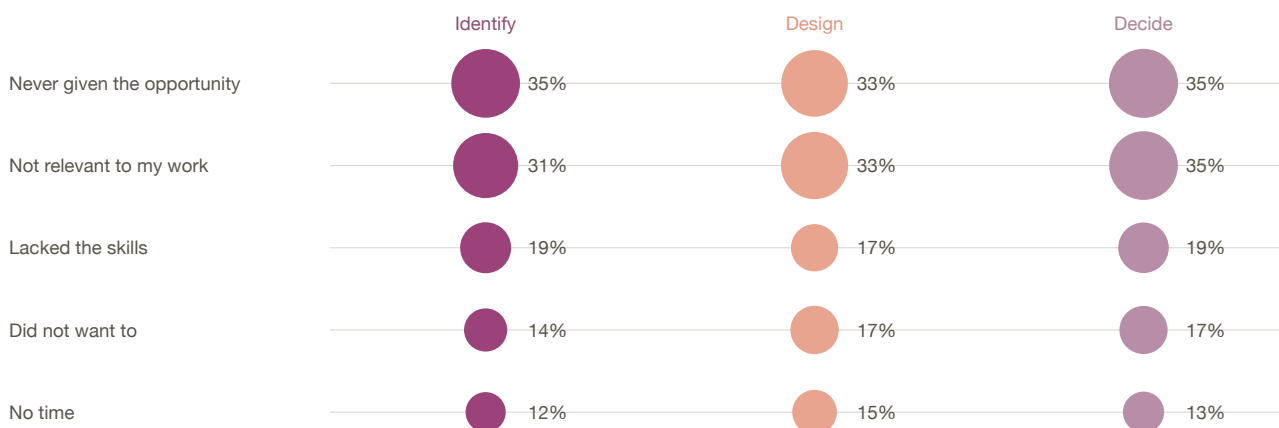


Figure 16: Missing opportunity and lack of relevance come first. Among those hardly or not at all involved, the reasons are much the same in all three areas. Close to one in five point to a lack of skills. (Several answers possible)

Having a say is built from both sides

Participation does not spread on its own. Leaders have to open it up, and employees have to step in.

Two in three of those surveyed use AI in their work, but using AI is not the same as shaping how it changes work. Women are less often closely involved than men, and the gap is wider than in AI use. Who takes part goes together with the opportunities, encouragement and mandates workplaces provide, and with the

skills and initiative employees bring. Organisations that rely on those who put themselves forward risk missing people who see where AI could help in their own work.

The task is not only to get more people using AI. It is to open real opportunities to help decide where

AI creates value, how work is redesigned and how responsibility is shared, and for employees to take them up.

EMPLOYEE

Do not wait to be invited

If you want to be included in your workplace's AI decision making process, get started with AI in your own work, within what your employer allows, and build the skills to judge and check what it produces. That applies just as much after many years in the job. A say in how AI changes your work rarely comes to those who wait for it.

Take a share of the responsibility

Being heard is only a start. When you take part, ask what you are allowed to change, and take a share of the responsibility for the result. Having a say also means answering for what is decided.

LEADER

Invite those who do not ask

Look beyond those who put themselves forward. Seek out the people who know the work well, older employees included, and bring them into the decisions about AI. Ask them where AI could help in their own work.

Know who is missing

Measure who takes part in your AI decisions, not only who uses AI. Look for who is left out, women and older employees in particular, and make sure the next decision includes them.



Connected Women In AI founders.

From left: Barbara Myhre Isaksen,
Mette Treppendahl, Katrine Bach

Photo: Cristina Filo

Data and definitions

The survey was carried out by Ipsos for Connected Women in AI in October 2026 among 2,000 employed Danes aged 18-66. The figures are unweighted.

The questions about AI at work were put to the 1,442 respondents whose workplace provides AI tools, who did not know whether it does, or who have obtained AI tools themselves. The report calls them those who have, or may have, AI tools at work. AI users (1,361) are those in this group who use AI in their work.

Taking part, or being closely involved, means being involved to a high or very high degree in the past 12 months. Real influence means saying one's input had influence to a high or very high degree. It is compared among those closely involved in each area. Answers below these levels do not mean no involvement or no influence. "Don't know" and "has not taken place" count as not closely involved. Older employees are those aged 49-66. Long-serving means more than ten years at the current workplace.

The comparisons are descriptive. They show what goes together, not what causes what, and they are not adjusted for role, sector or other factors. Statements about what workplaces and employees should do are the authors' recommendations. They build on the findings but are not survey results.

Percentages are rounded half up. In figures that show a whole divided into parts, a rounded label may be adjusted by one point so that the parts add up to 100%. Breakdowns by gender leave out the two respondents who did not state a gender. The statements about mandate, skills and knowing where AI can create value were put to AI users only.

The data behind the figures

Figure 1: All respondents, n = 2,000: women n = 997, men n = 1,001. Each step is a subset of the one before. Real influence was asked of those at least somewhat involved in each area. Responsibility refers to the AI activity the respondent was most involved in, which need not be the area where they report real influence. Regardless of the other steps, 9% (189) hold co- or final responsibility.

Figure 2: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work, n = 1,442. Each person appears in one region only.

Figure 3: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work, n = 1,442. Offered a course, pilot or network: n = 873 (18-30: 176, 31-48: 430, 49-66: 267). Not offered: n = 569 (18-30: 138, 31-48: 196, 49-66: 235).

Figure 4: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work and stated a gender. Women n = 686 (18-30: 167, 31-48: 278, 49-66: 241). Men n = 754 (18-30: 146, 31-48: 348, 49-66: 260).

Figure 5: AI users, n = 1,361 (18-30: 306, 31-48: 608, 49-66: 447).

Figure 6: AI users aged 49-66, n = 447: up to 10 years at the workplace n = 270, more than 10 years n = 177.

Figure 7: AI users who agree (n = 911), neither agree nor disagree (n = 247) or disagree (n = 141) with the statement "I can assess and quality-assure AI-generated content". Those who answered "don't know" are not shown. A clear mandate means agreeing, partly or fully, with the statement "I have a clear mandate to try out or change working methods with AI".

Figure 8: AI users who agree that they have a clear mandate, n = 742 (18-30: 154, 31-48: 343, 49-66: 245), or disagree, n = 252 (18-30: 61, 31-48: 102, 49-66: 89).

Figure 9: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work and stated a gender. Women n = 686 (18-30: 167, 31-48: 278, 49-66: 241). Men n = 754 (18-30: 146, 31-48: 348, 49-66: 260).

Figure 10: Those hardly or not at all involved in at least one of the three areas, who were asked whether they had wanted to be more involved in that area. Those involved to some degree were not asked. Women n = 354 (18-30: 70, 31-48: 124, 49-66: 160). Men n = 318 (18-30: 59, 31-48: 121, 49-66: 138).

Figure 11: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work and whose manager encourages the use of AI to a high or very high degree, n = 573 (18-30: 104, 31-48: 283, 49-66: 186), or slightly or not at all, n = 351 (18-30: 63, 31-48: 119, 49-66: 169).

Figure 12: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work and stated a gender. Women n = 686 (18-30: 167, 31-48: 278, 49-66: 241). Men n = 754 (18-30: 146, 31-48: 348, 49-66: 260).

Figure 13: Those involved who stated their role in the AI activity they were most involved in, n = 1,038. The 65 who answered "don't know" and 5 who answered "other" are not shown.

Figure 14: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work in the public or private sector. Public sector: 18-30 n = 91, 31-48 n = 149, 49-66 n = 151. Private sector: 18-30 n = 183, 31-48 n = 450, 49-66 n = 327. Other sectors are not shown.

Figure 15: Everyone who has, or may have, AI tools at work and stated a gender, by type of work. Office and knowledge work: women n = 325, men n = 405. Customer and sales: women n = 108, men n = 86. Practical work: women n = 55, men n = 147. Care and teaching: women n = 136, men n = 59. Type of work is grouped from the tasks respondents say they do most. Other types of work are not shown.

Figure 16: Those hardly or not at all involved in each area: Identify n = 478, Design n = 508, Decide n = 518. Several answers were possible, so the shares add up to more than 100%.



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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