Meet Inspiring EIT Community Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs

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Tell us a bit about yourself and your connection to the EIT Community.
I did my Master’s Degree in Information and Service Management at the business school of Aalto University. During my studies I became actively involved in the Finnish start-up ecosystem. That’s why I joined EIT Digital, to continue to do this at a European level. With EIT Digital, I’ve been working with start-ups and organising various international events.

Tell us about Girls in Tech Helsinki and what you do there.
Girls in Tech Helsinki is part of a global network supporting women in technology. One of our most prominent activities is a mentoring programme that I’m currently working on. This is a six-month programme designed to inspire, encourage and support young women in business and technology to achieve their goals. We match experienced professionals with female mentees seeking support. The programme includes networking events, workshops and, importantly, one-on-one mentoring sessions.

Currently some people talk of there being a ‘tech gender gap’ in the digital innovation industry. Do you think this is true?
It is certainly still pretty common to attend a tech event and the majority of attendees are male, even though the gender ratio appears to be moving towards 70% male and 30% female. From my observations, many early stage tech start-ups have very few women in their teams, which are mainly made up of engineers. Lately however, there have been more and more start-ups with female co-founders.

What specific advice would you give to young women who want to become entrepreneurs?
1) Try things and don’t be afraid to fail, every failure is a learning opportunity
2) Perfection is evil!
3) Grow and use your network

What has been the most rewarding moment of your career so far?
After all the invested time and effort, when our mentees shared the impact our programme had on their careers and lives, I was very inspired and reassured. It felt like we actually did something good in the world.

Which woman inspires you and why?
Sheryl Sandberg, for being vocal about the gender gap in a smart way and for proving that every woman can grow without limit in tech and any area she sets her mind to.

How does Finland compare with regard to gender equality in Europe?
Finland has recently seen a rise in the number of female entrepreneurs and communities focusing on women in tech. Networking events and meet-ups for women who code are just a few examples of this. There is a huge amount of support for the next generation of women in tech.