

Forum: Citizen forum on inequalities

Theme: How to reduce inequalities at different scales?

Name of citizen: Sean Martin

Marital status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Married/in a relationship<input checked="" type="radio"/> Single<input type="radio"/> With children, if so, how many	Level of education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Primary<input type="radio"/> Secondary<input checked="" type="radio"/> University
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Personal information

My name is Sean Martin, I'm 41 years old and currently working as a computer engineer in Busan.

How does the theme of inequalities concern you?

Throughout my time working as a computer engineer I've witnessed and experienced issues with inequality in my work environment. Since I moved to Busan I've been fortunate enough to experience the full extent of Korean culture presenting me with an extraordinary way of life that I've never seen anywhere else, but even with the beauty of this country I can also say for certain that like anywhere else in our world there are some issues for many many of us who live and work here.

In my field there are a certain number of inequalities that affect me directly, one of them being the wage and career disparities. Even within the same role, people with the right university name often get faster promotions and higher salaries, I personally went to the University of Bremen in Germany a respectable engineering school, yet I've seen first hand what happens when someone coming from top Korean computer engineering universities like KAIST in Daejeon or POASTECH in Pohang end up getting similar roles as me. They may have the same skill set and job as me, yet they gain more money and even more promotions. Although it isn't something that is easily confirmed it's clear that for some higher ups there are some preferences. But in the grand scheme of things this is only a minor issue that may only be found in my company. Something that isn't even close to being a small issue is the clear inequality between women and men in the tech industry.

In tech, there's still far too little support for women. Promotions often go to the same kind of candidates over and over, and there aren't enough mentors to guide talented women into leadership roles. On top of that, rigid family policies and cultural

expectations put most of the pressure at home on women, which forces many to step back or leave even when they're highly capable. The result is a steady loss of talent that hurts teams, projects, and innovation as a whole. I've personally seen a good friend and colleague of mine resign because she's pregnant and will soon be a mother leaving her work behind and having her husband take care of money.

What solutions would you find most helpful?

Although I believe it will be hard to change the cultural belief that women should be mothers and not be employed as well, I do still think that through education, role models, policy changes, and other solutions we may see a future with more women in the workforce. However other challenges may not be as complicated to solve, although it would take commitment. We need fair, transparent pay and promotion systems, real mentorship programs that include women, and flexible schedules.

We also have to challenge subtle biases in hiring and make sure job descriptions and interview panels don't unintentionally shut women out. These changes don't tilt the field, they simply level it, keeping great engineers in the industry and letting the whole field grow stronger.

Inequalities are being addressed all around the world but there are still many challenges for us to address and overcome.