

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

2026

Theme : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market**Name of the citizen :** Evelien Töpfer

Family situation ☐ Married / dating ☒ Single ☐ With kids, if so how many _____	Education level ☐ Primary ☒ Secondary ☐ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

I am a young woman in my 20s from Germany and I work in engineering specifically robotics engineering. This topic concerns me because I see that a lot of young people are not very interested in STEM and do not really see themselves working in these fields in the future, while at the same time the labour market is changing very quickly because of AI, automation making and new technologies.

i think there are different reasons for this problem. First of all, some young people do not get enough opportunities to discover what STEM is actually about. At school we often learn maths, physics and science but we do not always get to see how these subjects can be used in real life. If we only see them in textbook they can often seem boring or difficult. With more practical work and a better understanding of how these subjects are used, we could discover much more interesting ideas and breakthroughs.

This is especially important because the skills needed for jobs are changing very quickly. The World Economic Forum estimates that around 39% of workers' current skills could change or become outdated by 2030. From my experience in robotics, engineers are not only expected to understand machines anymore but also software AI data and how humans and technology can work together.

Another problem is the stereotypes around STEM especially for young girls, even though they can do just as much as boys. When I was younger I never really thought engineering was something I could do because I thought it was mostly for people who were good at maths and technology, and I also thought it was more of a job for men. I think these ideas can stop young people from even considering STEM before they have had the chance to try it. While if they saw how much this can impact and lead our future they might rethink it.

There is also the problem that young people do not always get to meet individuals who actually work in STEM. If students could meet engineers, scientists, programmers and other STEM

workers, they could get a better idea of what these careers are really like instead of only seeing them through school.

As a young woman working in robotics engineering, I think I can understand some of the reasons why teenagers might feel disconnected from STEM. I want to help change this by showing young people that they can be part of STEM no matter their gender or background. I also think young people should have more opportunities to experience STEM for themselves and see how it connects to the problems we will face in the future.

This is important because young people are going to be the ones creating and using many of the technologies that will shape our future and hopefully turn these changes into something positive. For me, empowering young people is not just about convincing them to choose engineering. It is about giving them the confidence, practical experience and skills they need to adapt to the future labour market and help shape it instead of feeling left behind by the fact it makes our future greater and better.

2. What do you suggest on your scale ?

I think schools should give students more chances to try engineering and STEM for themselves instead of only learning about it from books. For example, schools could have robotics days where students can build simple robots, program them, and work together to solve problems. I think this would make STEM much more interactive and could help students discover something they are interested in.

I also think schools should invite engineers, scientists and programmers to talk to students about their jobs.

I would especially like to see more women engineers talking to young girls because it could show them that they can do the same thing. Companies could also let students visit their workplaces so they can see what engineers actually do, and witness their hands-on work.

I want young people to understand that you don't have to know everything before starting, you can learn new things along the way and make mistakes.

I hope that by sharing my own experience I can convince more young people to give engineering and STEM a chance.

Maybe someone who never thought engineering was for them will discover that it is actually something they love and want to continue with it, just like me.