

The uneven transition: AI at work in Denmark 2026

A national survey of 1,000 working Danes on who uses AI at work, who is supported in using it, and who is being left outside it.

Foreword by Katrine Bach, Connected Women in AI

“ We can keep building the gap by default. This report is an invitation to decide not to.



Katrine Bach
Chair, Connected Women in AI
Photo: Thomas Lekfeldt, Ritzau Scanpix

A note on this report and its data

This report draws on a survey of 1,000 working Danes, carried out by Ipsos for CWAI in 2026. The sample is representative of the Danish working population on gender, age, region and company size. Aetheon is the analysis partner.

The findings are reported by gender and by career stage. Three age bands are used throughout: 18–30, 31–48 and 49–66, chosen to track the working life from early career to the most experienced cohort, and sized so each band carries enough respondents to compare reliably. Where the report says "experienced", it means the 49–66 band.

Percentages within a gender-and-age group are calculated within that group, so they describe that group rather than its share of the whole. To compare the three age groups fairly, a weighting balances them to equal size; because that adjustment is uniform inside each gender-and-age group, it leaves every within-group figure unchanged. Whole-population figures are reported on the sample as surveyed.

Three respondents selected a gender other than woman or man. Because that group is too small to report on without identifying individuals, it is excluded from the gender

breakdowns; it remains in any whole-population figure.

All figures are self-reported. The survey measures what people say about their access to AI, their use of it, and the support around them — not their behaviour observed directly.

Survey by Ipsos and CWAI. Data processing, copy, and layout by Aetheon.

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When we published our first report, we asked *who is seen in AI* - whose face people picture when they think of the field, and how reliably that picture is male. This report asks a different question: *who is actually using AI at work*, and who is being supported to do so.

The answer, for Denmark in 2026, is that the transition is real but uneven in ways that should concern anyone responsible for an organisation's long-term capability.

Fewer than half of Danish employees say their employer has given them access to AI tools. Among those who have access, most report no expectations set, no follow-up on their skills, and no seat at the table when AI decisions are made. That is not a transition. It is a tool rollout, and a partial one.

What the data shows - and what I find most important to name - is that this is not primarily a technology problem or an aptitude problem. It is

an organisational one. The single largest driver of whether anyone uses AI at work is whether their manager actively encourages them to. Where that encouragement exists, two in three employees use AI daily. Where it doesn't, three in five never use it at all. That is a management behaviour. It can be observed, measured and changed.

The gender dimension is clear throughout the findings, and we do not minimise it. But I want to resist the reading that this is only a women's issue. By mid-career, the majority of employees (men included) are outside most of the transition. The gap is largest for experienced women, but the pattern is broader than any one group. Organisations are, by default, building their AI capability in a narrow slice of their workforce. That is a competitive problem as much as anything else.

The finding that stays with me most is this: when asked how their organisation is handling AI, nearly half

of the most experienced women answer that they do not know. Not that it is going badly. Not that they are excluded. That they cannot see it clearly enough to form a view. The people most affected by the uneven transition have the least visibility of it. What you cannot see, you cannot ask to change.

This report is not an argument for charity. It is an argument for deliberate management of a transition that is already happening - whether organisations are paying attention or not. The decisions about who gets tools, who has expectations set for them, and who is in the room are being made now, quickly, and in most workplaces without the majority of the workforce in view.

We can keep building the gap by default. This report is an invitation to decide not to.

AI has arrived in Danish workplaces, but unevenly

Almost half of working Danes say their employer has made AI tools available, and one in five uses AI daily. Beneath those headline figures the data shows something more structural, running across both gender and age, and it bears directly on how organisations manage the transition.

Access to tools is only the first step, albeit an important one

Forty-five percent of employees say their workplace has made AI tools available to them. On almost every other measure, even that much is absent: half report no clear expectations for how AI should be used, half see no follow-up on their skills, only about a quarter have been offered any training, and more than half are never invited into decisions about AI. See page 6.

Manager encouragement is the most important factor

A manager who encourages and supports AI use is the largest single effect visible in the data. Where that encouragement is present, two in three employees use AI daily; where it is absent, three in five never use it at all. The mechanism is the same for women and for men, but it is not distributed evenly across the workforce. See page 8.

Women aged 49-66 carry every high bar throughout the survey

On every dimension measured (tool use, manager support, training, expectations, follow-up and a say in decisions) experienced women, those aged 49 to 66, come off worst. Three in four are not invited to take part in AI decisions at their workplace. The data suggests that the way AI has been introduced was, by default, arranged around someone else. See page 9.

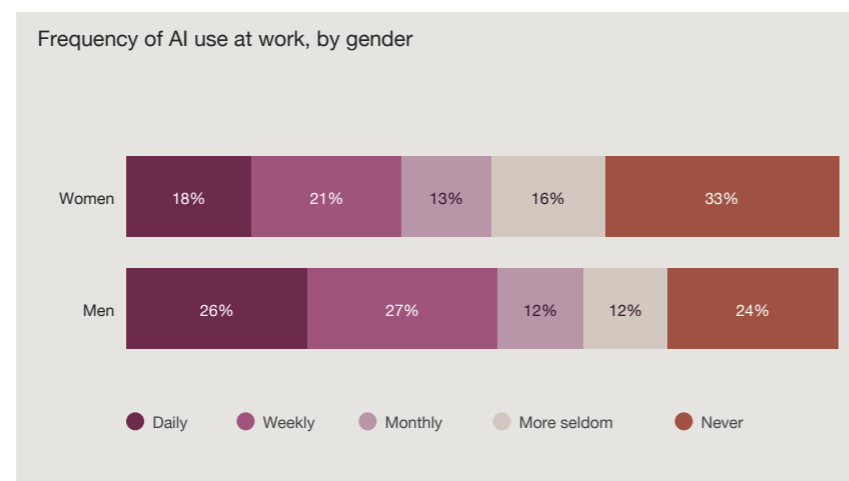


Figure 1: Frequency of AI use at work, by gender. Women's distribution sits further toward "never" than men's; daily use is a minority on both bars. This is the starting picture for the four findings that follow.

The gender gap won't close on its own

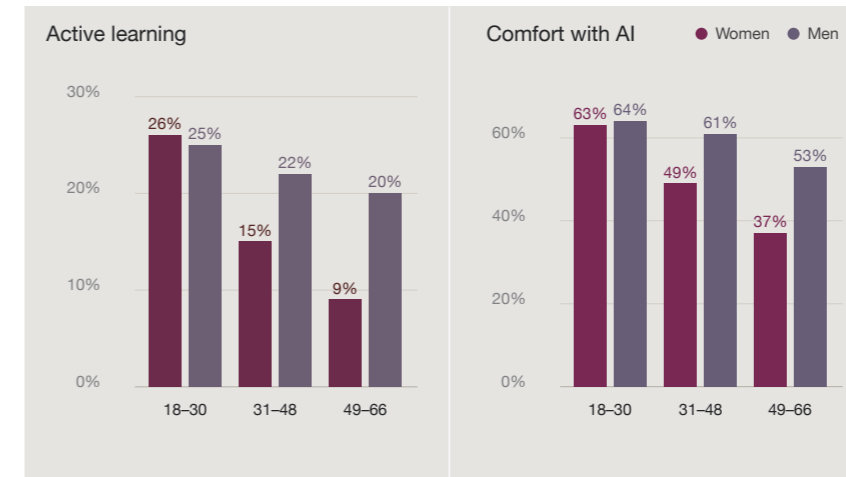


Figure 2: Active and continuous AI learning, by gender and age, with 2a: comfort with AI. Both are near-level among the youngest workers, but among the most experienced the gap in active learning reaches about 11 points and the gap in reported comfort about 26. These are differences employers would need to address directly.

The gender gap in AI capability is small among the youngest workers and wide among the most experienced.

It is tempting to read it as a matter of demographics, on the assumption that older workers are less interested than younger ones, or that women care less than men. But the skew serves no business, and even if it were purely demographic, no organisation can afford to wait the ten or fifteen years it would take for the workforce to turn over.

Among young workers, self-rated comfort with AI is close to parity: 63% of young women describe themselves as at least somewhat comfortable using AI at work, against 64% of young men. As with active learning, the gap opens further up the age range: among the most experienced, 37% of women report

being comfortable, against 53% of men.

Active learning shows the same pattern. At the youngest end it is level, with 26% of young women and 25% of young men reporting that they have actively and continuously learned something about AI in the past year. The gap widens with age: among midlife workers, 15% of women report active learning against 22% of men, and among the most experienced, 9% against 20%. Self-reported AI use traces the same shape, with the share reporting no experience of AI running at 11% against 8% among the young and 33% against 24% among the experienced.

There are two ways to read this. The gap may form as people move through their careers, in which case today's near-equal young workers would drift apart as they age; or it

may be generational, in which case the young would carry their parity with them. A single survey cannot separate the two. What the data does rule out is aptitude: among the youngest workers there is no gap to attribute to women's appetite or ability for AI.

Neither reading is a reason to wait. If the gap forms over a career, the equal young cohort will develop it in turn; if it is generational, the only remedy is demographic turnover, which would take a decade or more to reach senior roles and is far too slow for a technology already reshaping work. The task, on either reading, is to raise capability across every age group at once and to close the gender gap early, before it widens, rather than rely on younger workers to dissolve it themselves. The access, encouragement and participation that the rest of this report examines are how that is done.

Providing the tools is the first step, but it's not the same as access to AI

Just under half of Danish employees have had AI tools made available to them. It is the most visible part of an AI transition, and the easiest to point to. But too many businesses leave the provisioning to individual initiative, and that creates a gap between men and women. Even where tools are provided, the work that turns them into real use is usually absent.

When a workplace provides no tools, some employees acquire their own, but leaving provision to individual initiative is the least equal route of all. Among the youngest workers, 46% of women have obtained their own access, against 63% of men, and that gap holds at every age. Self-equipping favours men from the outset, so the more a workplace leaves access to the individual, the more male the resulting distribution becomes.

Left to itself, this builds a workplace's AI capability out of whoever is most confident or most

willing to ask, which is a narrow and uneven base to grow from. The people who wait to be equipped, more often women and more often those further into their careers, are precisely the ones an organisation needs to reach if AI is to be used across the whole of its work rather than only at its edges.

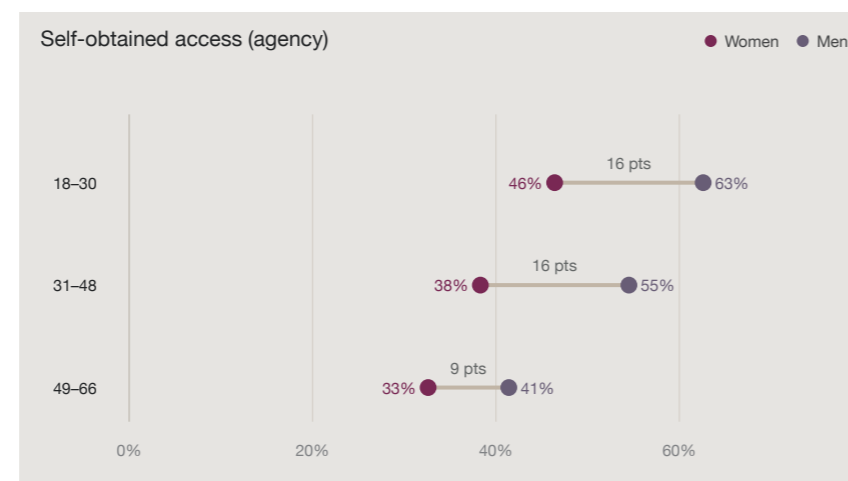
It is common to treat some gender and age skew as a normal feature of technology adoption: younger workers take new tools up fastest, and the assumption is that their fluency will in time move up through the organisation. That assumption is

worth questioning. It does nothing for the gender gap, which is present among the youngest workers and runs through every age, and no organisation can suspend its competitiveness for the ten or fifteen years a more even generation would take to arrive.

A business that wants AI used widely and evenly therefore has to place the tools on people's desks itself. It is the one lever that reaches everyone, and the one management directly controls.

Tools on the desk are only the start. Most employees have no clear

Figure 4: Self-obtained AI access, by gender and age. When the workplace provides nothing, employees fall back on getting their own tools, which is the most unequal route of all, tilted towards men from the youngest workers up. Provision is the more even lever, and the one management controls.



expectations set, no follow-up on their skills, and no part in the decisions, with fifty-five percent never consulted, and on each of these counts women fare worst. Provision works when management owns it and builds it with the people who will use it, choosing tools that fit the actual work and allocating

access by design rather than to whoever asks most loudly or supplies their own.

Handled that way, the transition lifts the whole workforce; left undone, it holds everyone back, women most of all, at every stage and on every measure. The tools have to be

provided deliberately and in close collaboration with the people who will use them, and the expectations around them set and followed up.

The scaffolding around the tool is missing

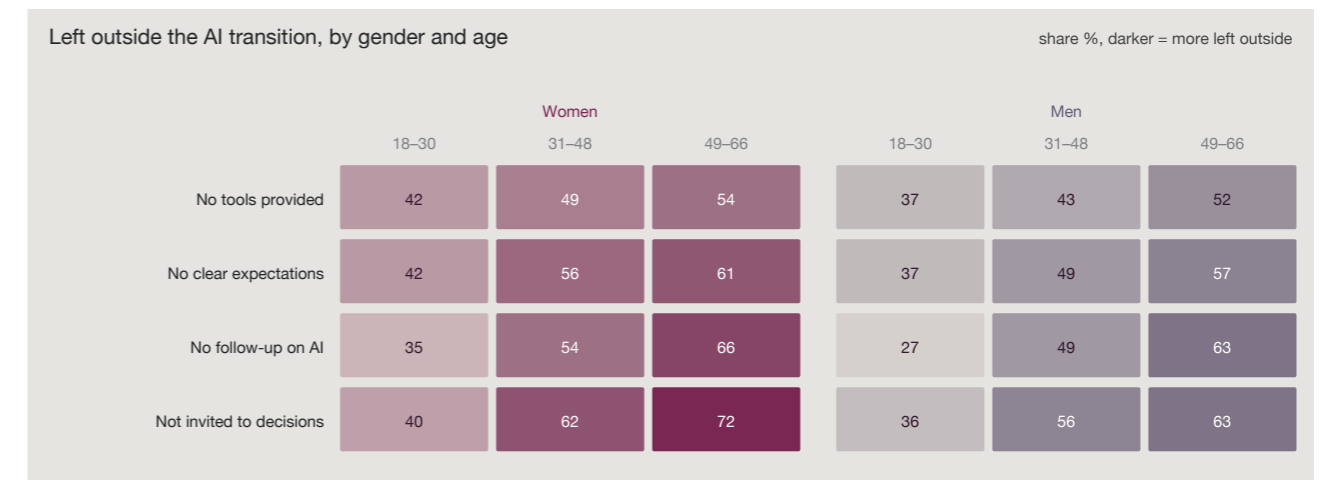


Figure 3: The AI transition across a career, on four measures. Each panel shows the share of workers left outside one part of it: Without tools, without clear expectations, without follow-up, or without a say in AI decisions, by gender and age. Exclusion rises steeply with age on every measure, and women sit further outside than men at every stage, widest on invitation.

Provision is where the numbers are strongest. On every other measure the support thins markedly: half of employees report no clear expectations for how AI should be used, half receive no follow-up on their skills, only about a quarter have been offered any training, and more than half are never invited into decisions about AI at all. The tools may be in place, but the expectations, training and involvement that would turn them into capability are largely absent.

That absence is not evenly distributed. The share of workers left

outside rises steeply across a working life: by twelve to fifteen points on tools between the youngest and the most experienced, by around twenty on expectations, and by close to thirty on both follow-up and involvement in decisions. The transition reaches the start of a career far more than its later stages, and by mid-career most employees, men included, already sit outside much of it.

Women are further outside than men at every age. The gap is present among the youngest workers and persists throughout, widest on

participation, where nearly three in four of the most experienced women have never been invited into decisions about AI. The pattern is straightforward: exclusion deepens with age, and at each stage sits a little deeper for women.

A workplace that provides the tools and goes no further has done the easiest part. Whether a tool becomes capability depends on the structure around it: clear expectations, follow-up, training and a place in the decisions. On each of those conditions, it is women who sit furthest outside.

The strongest lever for AI use is a manager who asks

The one thing that moves AI use the most is a manager who asks. Among employees whose manager actively encourages AI, two in three use it every day. Among those whose manager does not, *three in five never use AI at all*. It is the largest single effect in the data, and it is the same effect for women and for men.

The mechanism is universal

The pattern barely moves between the sexes. Where the encouragement is active, 67% of women and 66% of men use AI daily. Where it is absent, 60% of women and 64% of men never use it. This is not a gendered mechanism but a universal one: a manager who asks for AI gets it used, whoever the employee is. The effect is not a switch between on and off either, but rises in steps. With no encouragement, just 4% of employees use AI daily. With a little, 13%. With some, 29%. With active encouragement, two in three.

The supply is uneven

Across the workforce, a third of employees get none at all. Among experienced women it is half, the scarcest support of any group, with experienced men just behind at 45%. At the start of a career it is even: about one in five young women and young men report no encouragement, and the gap opens only later. Active encouragement runs the same way. It reaches about a quarter of the youngest workers, but only one in eighteen experienced women. The group that uses AI least is the group managers are least likely to be pushing.

Behaviour beats culture

Manager encouragement is not a mood or a value that takes years to shift. It is an observable behaviour: asking, expecting, following up. Because it is a behaviour, it can be seen and managed. An organisation can know, manager by manager, where AI is being encouraged and where it is not, and it can ask for more of it without a budget or a reorganisation. Of everything in this data that moves AI use, it is the most tangible to act on, and the one currently supplied least evenly. Few levers in this report are that direct.

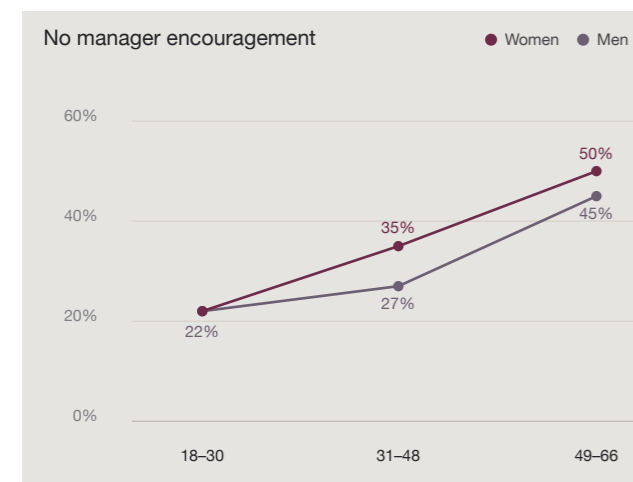


Figure 5: Share of employees who get no manager encouragement, by gender and age. The lever that most moves AI use is least present among the most experienced, and least of all for experienced women, though it is even at the start of a career.

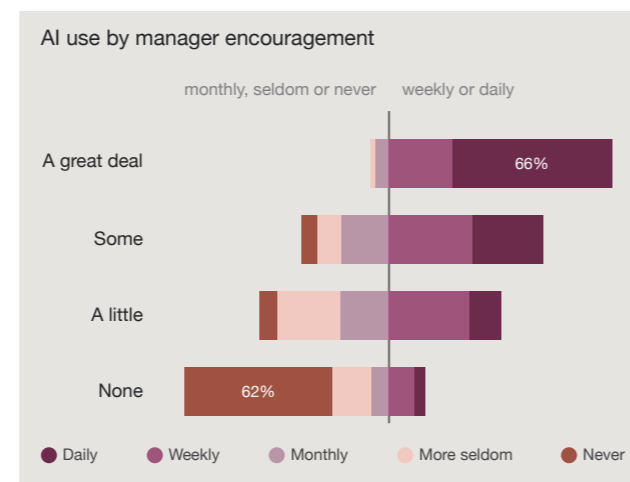


Figure 5b: What the lever does. How often employees use AI, by how much their manager encourages it. As encouragement falls, daily use gives way to never: with active encouragement two thirds use AI every day and almost none never; with none, most never use it at all.

However you measure it there's a bias

Women between forty-nine and sixty-six are the least invited to AI decisions, the least followed up on, the least likely to have clear expectations, encouragement, recent learning, any AI use at all, or any AI experience. The finding is not the height of any one bar. It is that one group sits at the top of all of them.

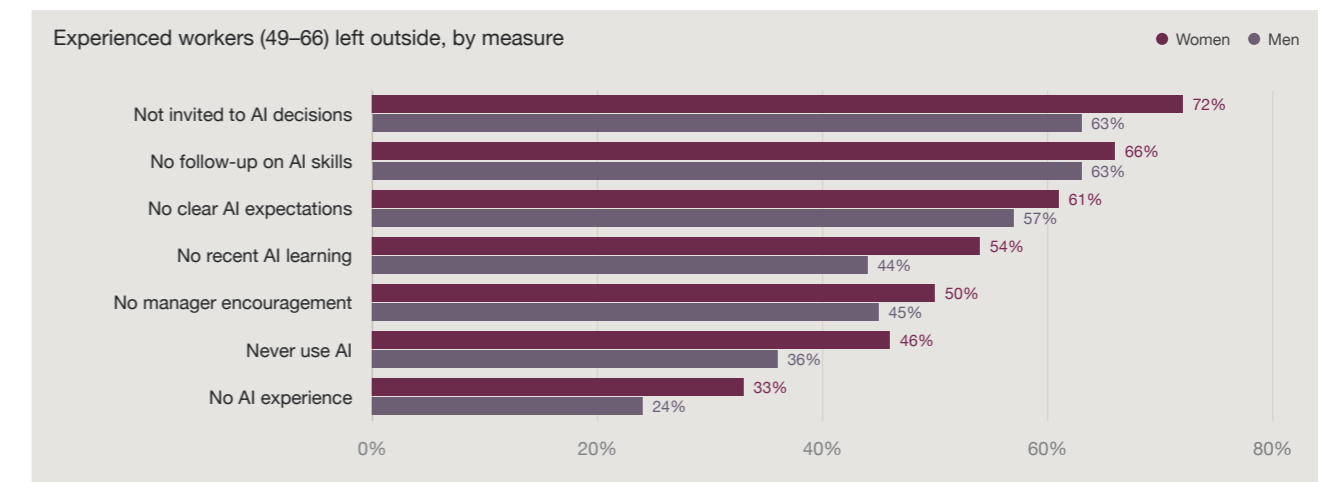


Figure 6: One group, every measure. Among experienced workers (49-66), the share of women left outside each part of the AI transition, with the men's rate marked for comparison. Women sit furthest out on all seven measures; men are second on each. The finding is the recurrence, not any single bar.

Seventy-two percent of experienced women have not been invited into AI decisions at their workplace. Two in three work somewhere that follows up on no one's AI skills, six in ten under no clear expectations, half without encouragement from their manager, just under half never using AI at all, and a third reporting no AI experience of any kind. On each measure they are the group furthest out, with experienced men the second furthest, so the difference is one of degree rather than kind.

These numbers could be read as disengagement, but the survey does not support that interpretation.

Asked what most prevents AI from creating value in their work, experienced women most often answer that it lacks relevance to their tasks, at 36%, the highest share of any group. That is less a rejection of AI than a difficulty in seeing where it fits the work they actually do.

A similar distance appears in what they are able to observe. Only 4% of experienced women report that AI is used broadly across their organisation, against 8% of experienced men, and 47% say they do not know how satisfied they are with their workplace's handling of AI,

against 32% of men. Distance from the transition, in other words, does not produce a critical view of it so much as no view at all.

This is the structural reading the figures invite. Provision, expectations, follow-up, encouragement and a place in the decisions, the conditions this group sits outside of, are choices the organisation makes or fails to make, not characteristics of the employee. The pattern is not built by the people it describes but around them.

What employees say they need

Asked what would most help them use AI, employees do not point to better technology or to limits in their own ability. They describe a short and ordinary set of working conditions: time to learn, concrete examples for their role, reliable access to tools, and clear expectations from management.

Having shown where the gap lies, the report turns to how it might be closed, and the answer the survey points to is not a technological one. Employees describe the need for an ordinary set of working conditions: time to learn and experiment, concrete examples relevant to their role, reliable access to tools, colleagues to learn alongside, and clear expectations from management. Each of these is something an organisation provides or withholds through its own decisions, and none lies within the gift of the individual employee.

The list varies remarkably little. Across age groups, and between women and men, employees converge on the same small set of conditions, which suggests the shortfall is structural rather than a matter of differing preferences. Where the answers do shift, they move in ways consistent with the rest of the report: the wish for concrete examples rises with age among women, from 15% of the youngest to 28% of the most experienced, the group that most often says AI does not seem relevant to their work. Clear expectations

matter most to the youngest women (18%), at the start of a career, before habits and access have set.

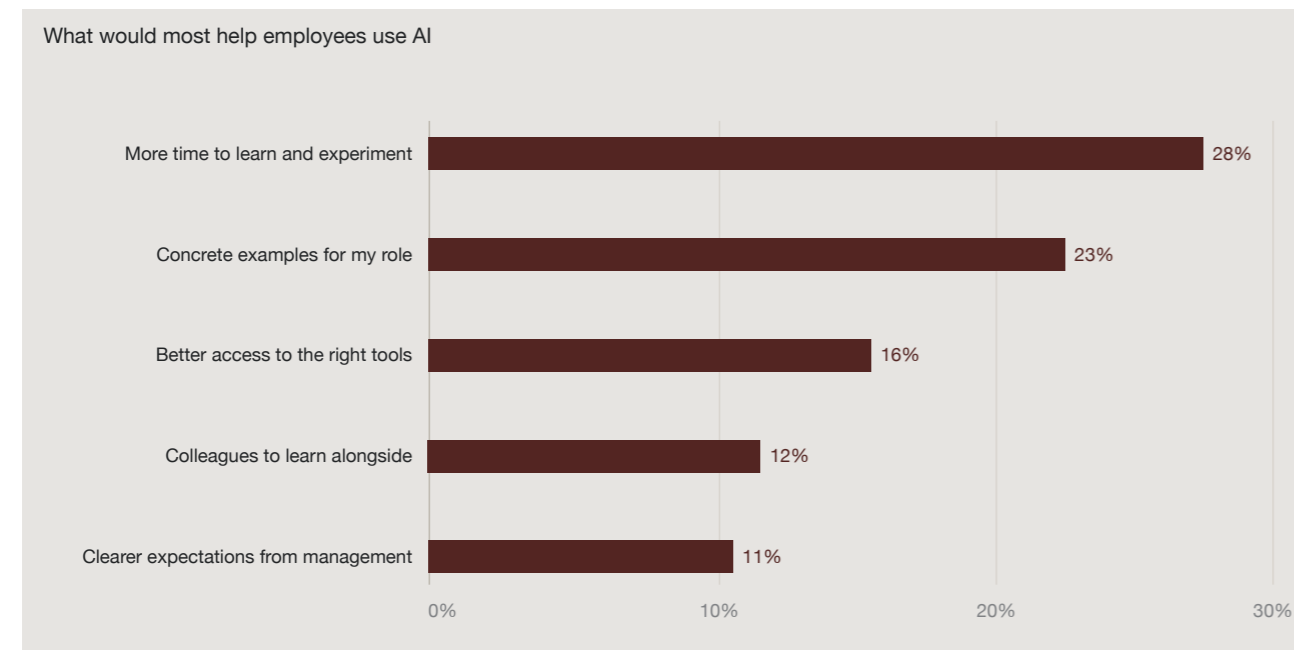


Figure 7: What would most help? Employees' single most-chosen change to improve their use of AI. The answers vary little by age or gender, and every one of them is a condition an organisation provides, not one an individual can set alone.

What no one sees

The last thing the data shows is that much of it is invisible to the people inside it: asked to judge how their own workplace is handling AI, a large share simply cannot say, and more women than men fall into that group.

Some questions ask what a workplace does; others ask the employee to form a view of the whole, and it is the second kind that tends to go unanswered. Asked whether they are satisfied with their workplace's handling of AI, 29% say they do not know; asked whether AI access is evenly distributed, 37% cannot say; asked whether AI is used broadly across the organisation, 32% cannot say. On the questions that require a view of the transition, about a third of the workforce has none.

As with the other findings, that blank is not evenly spread: it widens with age and falls more heavily on women. Among the youngest workers, about one in eight cannot say how their workplace is handling AI; among experienced women the figure is almost half, at 47% against 32% of experienced men. The further a person sits from the transition, the less of it they can see.

A "don't know" is easy to pass over, but it is not a neutral answer; it marks the absence of a vantage point. The people placed furthest outside in the earlier findings, those

without tools, without encouragement and without a place in the decisions, are the same ones who cannot see the transition clearly enough to judge it. Much of the unevenness this report documents is invisible to the people it affects.

What is invisible is hard to change. An organisation cannot ask for what it cannot see, and few measure who is being left out. Making the transition visible, who has access, who is encouraged, who is in the room, is the first step to making it even.

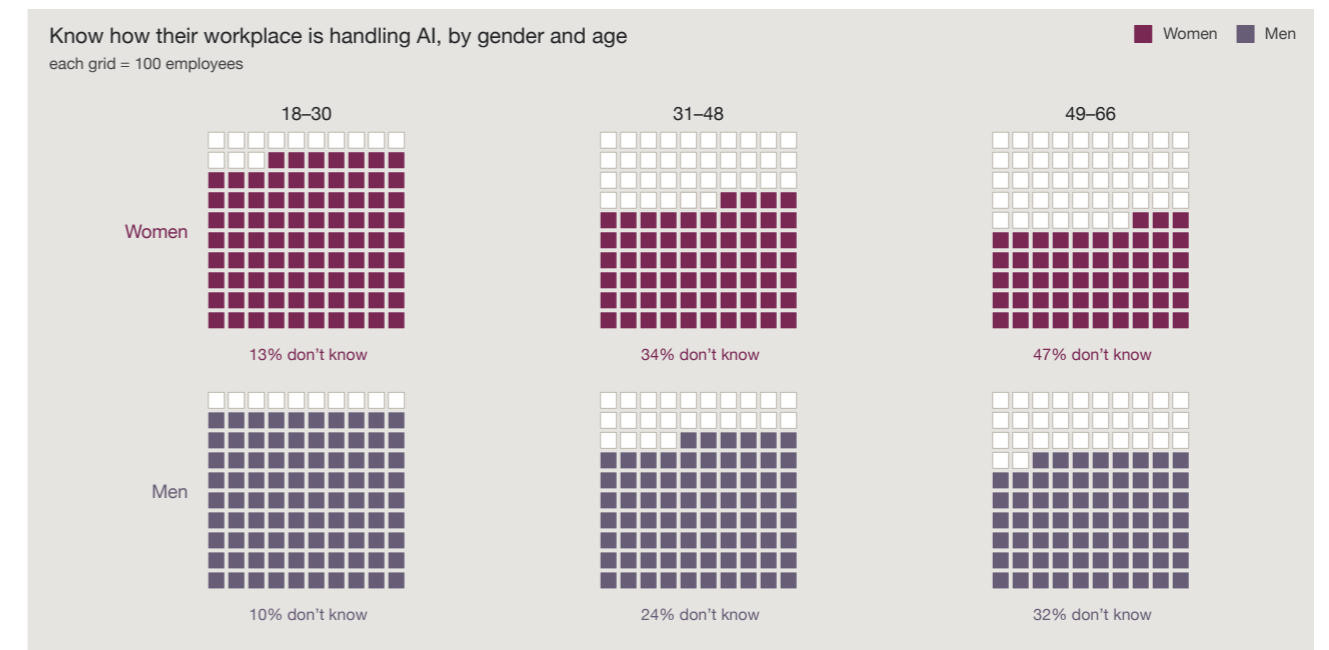


Figure 8: Who can't say how their workplace is handling AI. Each grid is 100 employees; the blank squares are those who answered "don't know". The share unable to form a view rises steeply with age and is larger for women throughout; among the most experienced women, almost half the field is blank.

Implications: Four questions all leaders should ask

This report describes an aggregate, the Danish working population in 2026. For any single organisation the question is not whether these patterns exist, since they plainly do, but where the organisation itself sits within them.

1 How many of your employees get no encouragement at all to use AI?

A manager who actively encourages AI is the strongest single factor in this data for whether people use it, and one of the least often measured. An organisation that cannot see how that encouragement is distributed across its teams cannot manage the lever that moves use the most.

2 Do you measure whether your AI tools are used, or only available?

Just under half of employees say they have been given AI tools, and provision is the easy half to count. The gap between a tool being available and a tool being used is where this report's findings sit, and it stays invisible unless someone measures use rather than access.

3 Who is in the room when your organisation makes its AI decisions?

More than half of employees are never invited into AI decisions, the most experienced women least of all. Yet only about a quarter think access is uneven where they work, including most of those it disadvantages. Knowing who is in the room is the first step to changing it.

4 How do you know whether your AI investment is becoming capability?

Around half of employees report no follow-up on their AI use or skills, and capability does not develop on its own. Without it, spending on tools and licences records what you have bought, not what your organisation can now do; measuring use and skill is what turns the one into the other.

None of this is a matter of fairness for its own sake. An organisation that spreads AI evenly across its people is not being generous but building capability across its whole workforce rather than in one corner of it. The most experienced workers, and the women among them, are not a side concern: they make up a large part of any workforce and carry much of its accumulated experience.

An even transition does not arrive on its own; it is built deliberately, by putting the right tools within reach, encouraging people to use them, and bringing the right people into the room where AI is decided. Each of these is a choice the organisation makes or declines, and where any is left undone the breadth of capability never arrives, which in a fast-moving market is the more expensive outcome.

Complacency, in that light, is not a neutral position but a competitive choice, and a costly one.



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



Connected Women in AI (CWA) 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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