



UNESCO Talk: Spotlight on Gender Equality and **Artificial Intelligence** in the Caribbean

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DECEMBER 1
9:30 AM
(GMT-5:00)

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE PROMISES AND THE THREATS

There have been spectacular advances in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years, leading to inventions that we had never thought possible. Computers and robots now have the capacity to learn how to improve their own work, and even make decisions – this is done through an algorithm, of course, and without individual consciousness. How can we harness AI for social good? Scan the QR code and read the UNESCO's Courier Magazine Edition to learn more about the promises and threats of AI.



New Report: Artificial Intelligence and **Gender Equality**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recently launched its new report on [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) and Gender Equality](#), which sets forth proposed elements of a Framework on Gender Equality and AI for further consideration, discussion and elaboration amongst various stakeholders.

Research, including UNESCO's 2019 report [I'd Blush if I Could: Closing Gender Divides in Digital Skills Through Education](#), unambiguously shows that the **gender biases found in AI training data sets, algorithms and devices have the potential of spreading and reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes**. Considering the ubiquity of AI in our societies, these gender biases risk further stigmatizing and marginalizing women on a global scale. They may even offset some of the considerable progress that countries have made towards gender equality in the past.



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SCAN FOR
THE REPORT



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & CARIBBEAN SIDS

In the Caribbean sub-region, the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is of no exception. Its rapid introduction and uptake give it great potential to address some of the Caribbean's most pressing development challenges, and supporting Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. On the other hand, increased use of AI systems may come with inherent challenges.

For this reason, the role, impact, and ethics behind artificial intelligence is also of importance to SIDS that are faced with specific development challenges and vulnerabilities. Focusing on better understanding the ethical implications, while untangling underpinning biases is critical.

"How to imagine, design and develop an **emancipatory** AI"

The report calls for raising awareness on gender equality considerations in the technology and advocates for a proactive understanding on how to imagine, design and develop an emancipatory AI that undermines consumerist, racist, gender binaral and heteropatriarchal societal norms. **In the Caribbean SIDS, gender biases and stereotypes are pervasive at varying levels** depending on the country under assessment and available data. For example, findings indicate that men in Jamaica are perceived as "aggressive, powerful, unemotional and controlling", while women are portrayed as "passive, nurturing, submissive and emotional". These notions may represent **fertile ground for AI-systems to learn from biased data-sets**. Thus, Caribbean countries are also at risk to allow AI-based technologies to perpetuate existing gender stereotypes. This risk occurs in a broader Caribbean setting that is characterized by limited policies or strategies to address AI and its possible disruptive effects on societies. While AI-based technologies tend to be developed in countries of the Global North, AI is ubiquitous in Caribbean SIDS and often invisible, as it is blended into people's environments.



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CARIBBEAN AI INITIATIVE

In 2019, the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean launched the Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative. The overall purpose of the Initiative is to raise awareness and promote reflection on the opportunities and challenges that AI and its correlated technologies pose in the Caribbean SIDS.

At the global level UNESCO is the UN agency mandated by member states to develop the first normative instrument on the Ethics of AI. In 2020, in the framework of the Caribbean Artificial Intelligence Initiative, UNESCO held a Caribbean Consultation on the Draft Recommendation on the Ethics of AI to reflect the views of Caribbean Small Island Developing States. Likewise, UNESCO in the Caribbean organized the virtual Conference: Artificial Intelligence for Information Accessibility AI4IA.

Format: UNESCO **Talk**

In times of increasing webinar fatigue and diminishing attention spans, the UNESCO Talk is conceptualized as a format that will better capture the attention of the viewers and enhance virtual interaction.

The Talk will have the following features:

- Length: **60 minutes** broadcast via Zoom and Youtube.
- Kick off: In lieu of an opening speech, the session kicks off with a **video** that provides a brief introduction on AI.
- The format will be interview-based. Interviewees are encouraged to provide short and concise answers. Questions will be shared in advance. Power point presentations are not recommended.
- Possibility of asking questions via the chat.
- Share with participants where to access further information and upcoming activities.

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