



“We are not all the same!”

How gender and class intersect to influence participation in the digital workforce

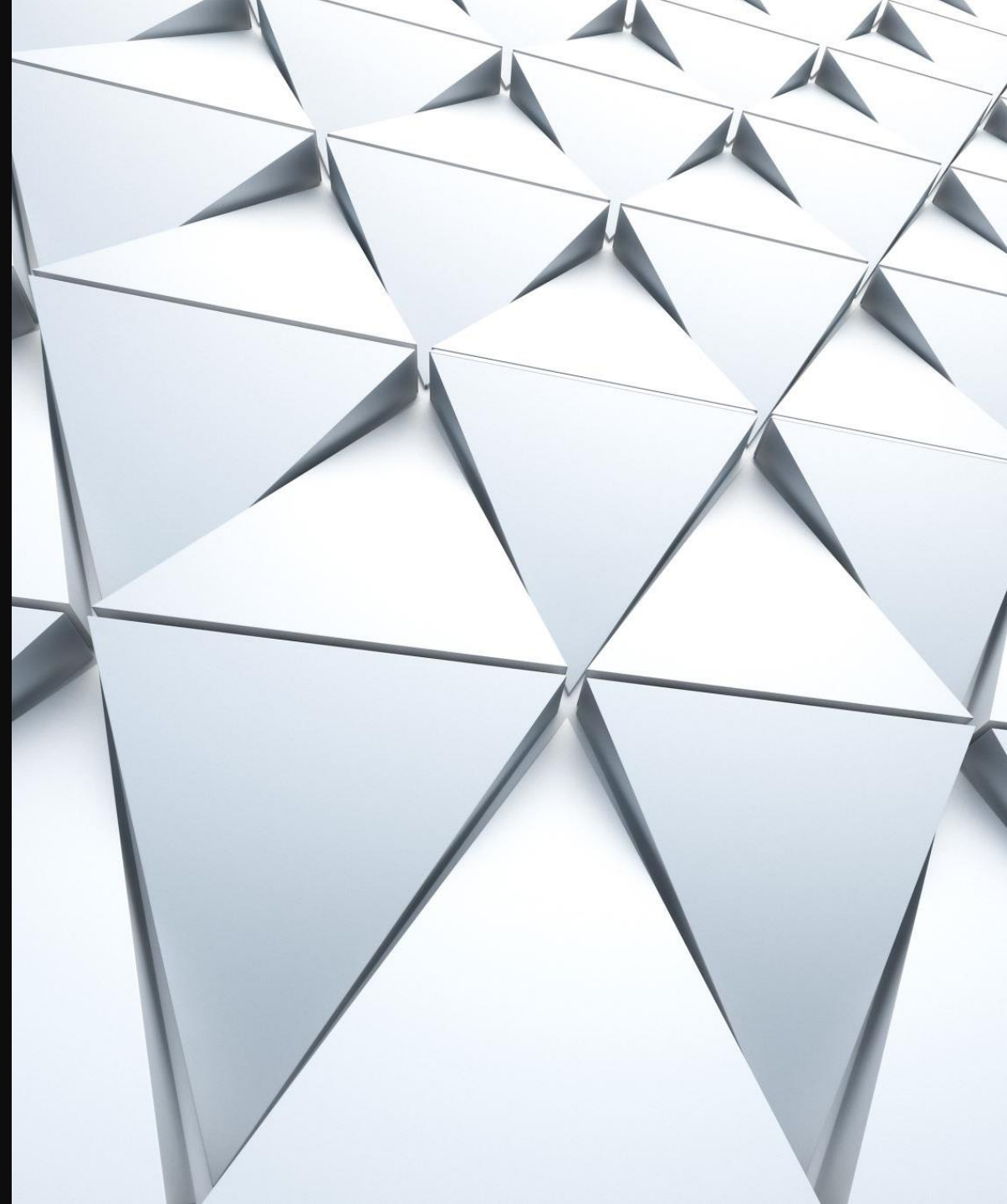
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Outline

- Intersectionality
 - Why class matters
 - Theoretical framework
 - STEM. Passport for Inclusion
 - Digital Wealth
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The "leaky pipeline"

The inquiry has heard about a "leaky pipeline" in Scotland, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). STEM is an area with higher paying jobs and increasing opportunities, so plugging this "leaky pipeline" is an essential part of reducing the gender pay gap.

Below are some of the factors witnesses have told us cause "leaks" throughout the pipeline.



Early Years and Primary School

By primary school, the idea of "girls' jobs" and "boys' jobs" are already established. Gendered school curriculum can impact on both boys' and girls' future choices.



Secondary School and University

Girls and boys study STEM subjects at equal levels in school. But 73% of women who graduate with STEM degrees leave the industry, citing "casual sexism" and a lack of female role models.



Workforce

Women enter the STEM workforce at similar positions and pay to men. However, women tend to receive fewer promotions, leading to fewer women in senior positions. This helps create a negative environment for female workers.



Returning to Work

Many women choose to return to work on reduced hours, but a lack of flexible and part-time opportunities is limiting. Women can experience a drop in confidence from time not in work, particularly in fast-changing sectors. Ongoing care responsibilities can affect women throughout their careers.



The Motherhood Penalty

Workplace pregnancy and maternity discrimination is still widely reported, including cases of redundancy and dismissal. Skilled female workers take a permanent 4% pay cut for each year not in work.

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WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY

- [Crenshaw \(1989\)](#) “Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (p. 140)
- *Intersectionality is the overlapping social categories, such as class and gender, that are relevant to a specified individual or group’s identity and create a **unique experience** that is separate and apart from its originating categories.*

Definitions

- Class and gender are two distinct social categories – *but not two independent experiences* – Such social categories at work are experienced as ‘*and*,’ not ‘*or*.’ They are conjunctive, not disjunctive. They are *intersectional*.
- Class - a system of ordering society whereby people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic status.
- Gender -the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, femininity and masculinity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity

AMY BOHAN



Middle-class family, mother was a scientist and father a teacher.

“We were told when we were tiny that we would go to university...it was a given”

KATRIONA O’SULLIVAN



Under class- criminality and addicted parents, no one in family finished school let alone went onto university

“If you read books you were considered weird in my community”

JIALIMEY VUONG

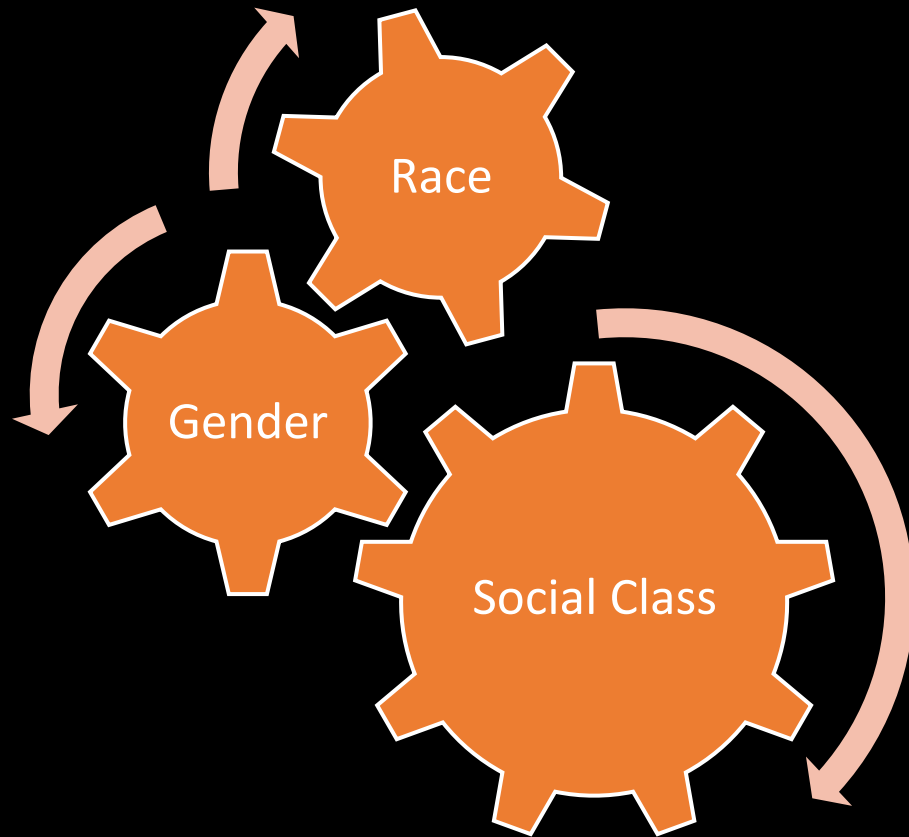


Migrated to Ireland due to extreme poverty, attended DEIS school and experiences financial struggle and ethnic minority.

“I have no internet, or laptop at home- I am expected to work in the family business every day after school”

**“GENIUS IS EVENLY DISTRIBUTED BY CLASS ,RACE & GENDER
...OPPORTUNITY AND ACCESS ARE NOT”**

Why focus on class



Case Study: Working Class Women & Access to STEM

- The STEM gender gap is well documented
 - In Ireland STEM courses and careers are male dominated with engineering and computer science courses having the lowest % of females' applicants year on year (HEA, 2020).
 - We are also in a talent crisis
 - 8,000 tech jobs currently unfilled in Ireland
 - Encouraging diversity and participation is paramount for economic success
- When we consider income and class the STEM gender divide widens
 - Working class females significantly less likely to participate in higher level STEM courses in school (HEA, 2019)
 - They are less likely to apply to STEM degree courses (SUSI, 2019)
 - About 30% of of working-class female students who begin a STEM degree leave without the degree – twice as many as middle class female students (NCES, 2014)
 - Working Class Women are rarely seen in STEM professions and even more so in leadership positions

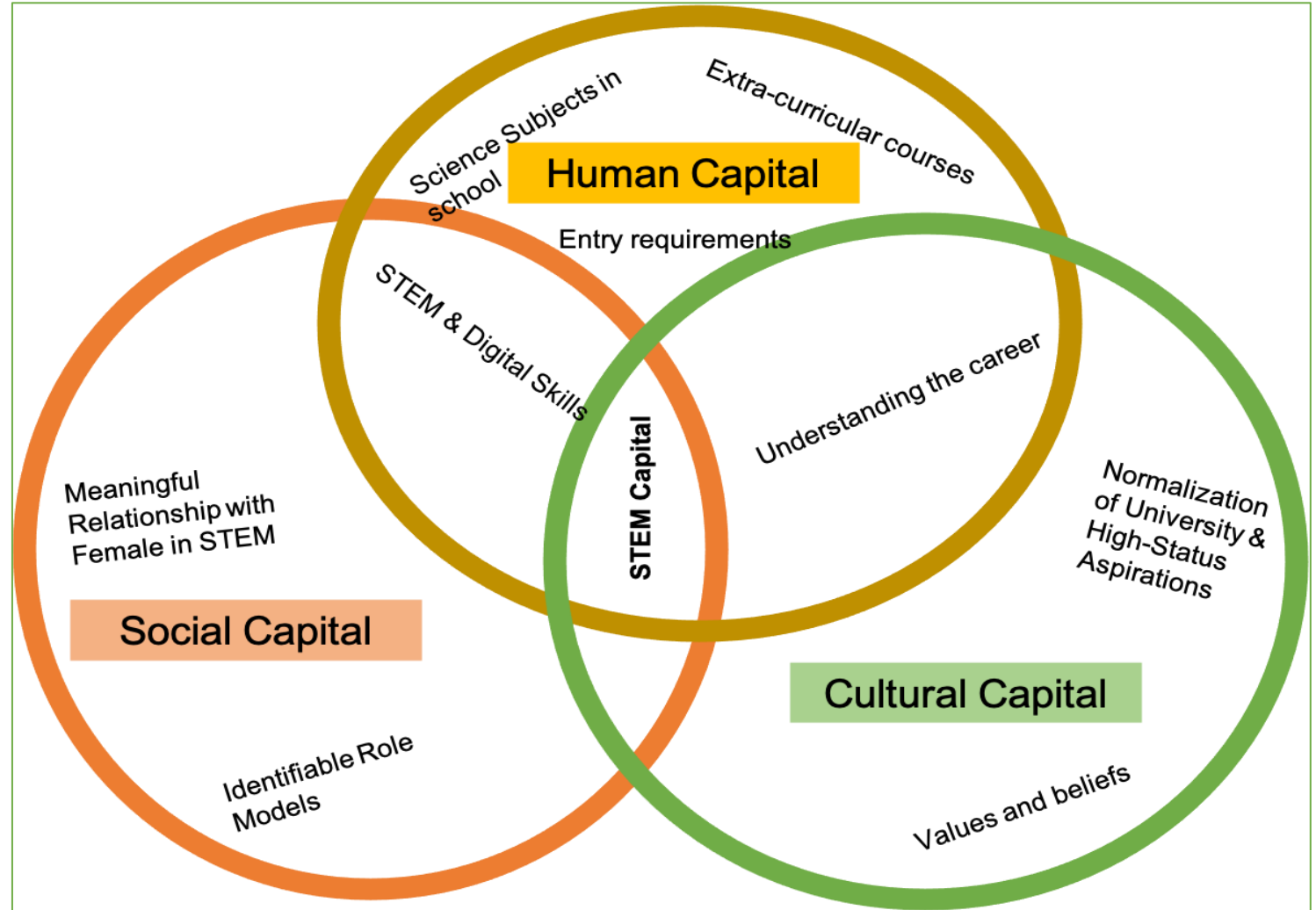
Case Study: Working Class Women & Access to STEM

- Without intervention working class women are most at risk in terms of the move towards digitalization and the 21st-century job market
- Working class women will be more likely to end up in low paid, low potential jobs- remaining entrenched in poverty through a lack of STEM opportunities.
- She-Cession- Covid-19 pandemic has shown that working class women are even more at risk as they are over-concentrated in low-skilled social care roles
- **Providing Working-Class women with the opportunity to move out of low-skilled, low-paid, and low-potential will increase social mobility, contribute to overall wellbeing and provide solution to the talent crisis**

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Theoretical Framework





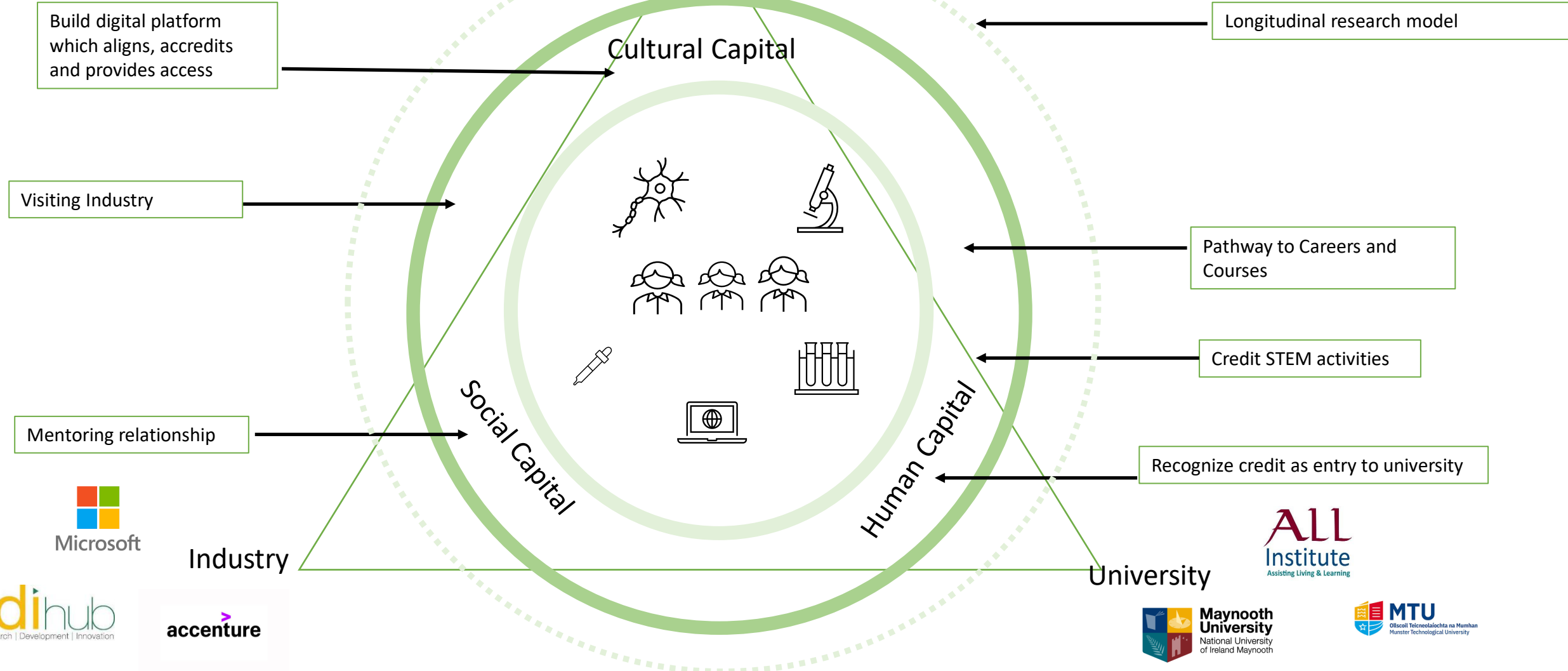
What can we
do better



STEM Passport for Inclusion



Science Foundation Ireland



Build digital platform which aligns, accredits and provides access

Longitudinal research model

Visiting Industry

Pathway to Careers and Courses

Mentoring relationship

Credit STEM activities

Recognize credit as entry to university



Industry

University



STEM Passport for Inclusion



Align: All STEM activities under human, social and capital forming activities and house information on each on one easy to use platform



Accredit: STEM offerings through local higher education institutions



Allow: Pathway to STEM courses and careers based on credits



Assess: build a profile of girls' college and career decisions through the platform, identifying factors which support STEM progression



PASSPORT

Questions?

