

Women in Computer Science – Visibility, Networking, and Empowerment at Kiel University

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Despite the increasing importance of computer science in nearly all areas of society, women remain significantly under-represented in the field [1]. Female students are not only less likely to choose computer science as a field of study, but those who do often face a higher dropout rate compared to their male peers [3, 6, 12]. This gender gap starts already in the schools [2, 4, 7, 8], persists throughout academia and into professional careers, underscoring the urgent need for targeted support, inclusive spaces, and visible role models [5]. At the same time, numerous studies have shown that diverse teams [11] – including gender-diverse ones [9, 10] – are more innovative, effective, and better at problem-solving.

At the Department of Computer Science at Kiel University (CAU), the ACM-W Kiel professional chapter is committed to increasing visibility, fostering community, and empowering women in STEM. Research has not only shown that women and girls have different approaches to learn Computer Science but also that the lack of role models discourages them to pursue a career in Computer Science. Moreover, in Germany the main opinion of what girls can or cannot transported from the parents to the girls is that Computer Science is nothing for girls, just maybe to become a teacher.

Thus, our activities can be categorised into reaching out to female pupils as well as encouraging female students to pursue their studies and research. Our activities range from academic events like the Women's Talk Marathon¹ on International Women's Day

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¹<https://www.frauenvortragsmarathon.uni-kiel.de/?year=2025&lang=en>

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to informal gatherings such as the bi-weekly Women's Café, offering a safe space for female students and female employees at the department of Computer Science. We also host film screenings that spotlight women in STEM, professional training for female students, e.g. in body language, Girls Code events to encourage female pupils in a safe environment to recognise their talent, and campaigns tied to international awareness days such as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The aim is to create a supportive and inclusive environment for female pupils, students, researchers, and staff members, while highlighting the societal importance of women in computer science. The event for the Ada Lovelace Day is open for both pupils and students firstly to have the students as role models and secondly to build networks. The poster will present the wide array of initiatives by the Kiel ACM-W chapter and invites discussion and exchange across disciplines.

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