Game Changer

How One Woman In Argentina Is Opening Doors For Women Everywhere

From her home in Argentina, Dr. Olga Cavalli looks back at her career as one of the world’s leaders in technology.

“I have done many things and I feel very happy, but I am pretty sure that many doors were closed to me just because my name was Olga and not Carlos.” While doors may have shut to her because of her gender, her career suggests she has definitely forced more than a few open.

Dr. Cavalli is now one of those role models, a position she works to forward with the help of the Internet Society. In addition to her work with the Chapter, she is president of the
Women in Technology and Business Forum, and founded a new commission within the National Centre of Engineers – Women Engineers for Development. ’There are few women engineers in Argentina, few women engineers in Latin America, and we need a lot of engineers because developing countries need a lot of people trained in technology. What we’re trying to do is bring younger women into studying engineering. It's an interesting opportunity for a career because there's a lot of work in Latin America and Argentina, and all over the world, and you are well-paid in general. It's interesting work, but many people don't know that.’

Engineering is still a technology field dominated by men, in many Western countries women make up less than 15% of the workforce. Dr. Cavalli feels this is changing, albeit slowly: 'I have talked to a lot of younger women engineers through this commission, and they don't feel there was a barrier when they were selected for a job or when talking with teachers.'

The Internet Society works to keep the Internet open and accessible to everyone, regardless of location or circumstances. “No society can ever reach its full potential unless it empowers and draws upon the talents of all of its citizens,” says Chief Operating Officer Walda Roseman. “The global Internet opens the way as never before for women to further their education, draw upon information that can improve their own, their family's and society's conditions, and contribute their talents to the arts, leadership and economic growth. This bodes well for all of us.”

The Internet Society also funds community projects around the world. The Unleashing the Power of Adolescent Girls project in Sierra Leone is also using the power of the Internet to connect isolated young women. Awarded a Community Grant, the project works offline and online to open the lines of communication between young girls, often isolated by domestic duties, around early marriage, early childbirth, and sexual violence. As well as engineering the networks, women are using technology to connect and tell their stories in places where organizing in person is difficult. The Internet Society awarded a Community Grant to TUNAWEZA, a website dedicated to young women survivors of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Serving as a portal for local blogs by young women, the program looks to provide a platform for these young writers to express themselves, giving voice to their resilience.

Things are changing, Dr. Cavalli says. 'There are some areas that are mainly managed by men, and there's an opportunity for women to take a space there.'