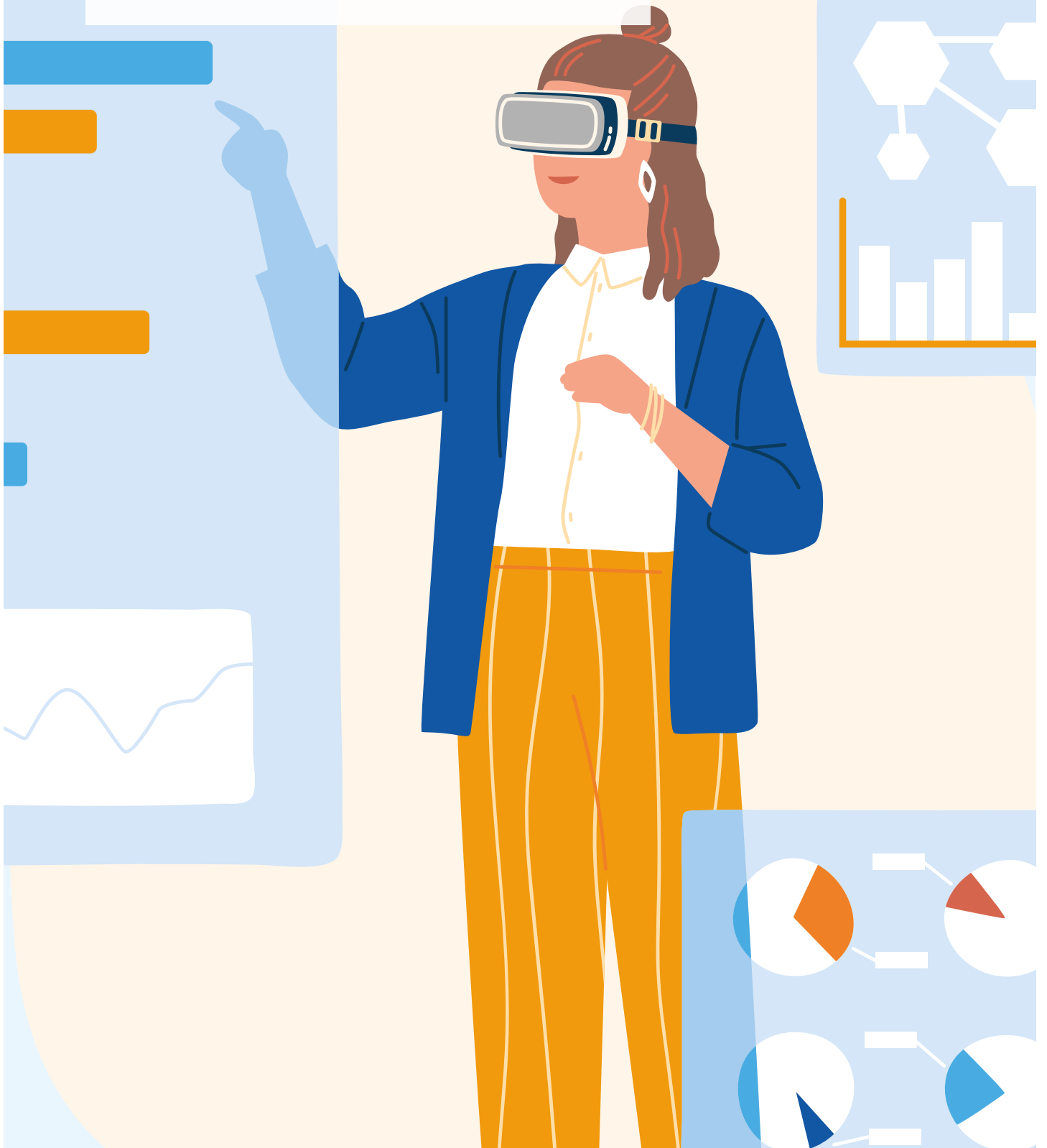


Female Founders Monitor 2025



Key findings

- 1. Share of female founders declines for the first time:** After five years of steady growth, the proportion of female founders in Germany's startup ecosystem has dropped to 18.8%. The downturn in consumer spending has hit business-to-consumer (B2C) startups particularly hard – a sector where women are more strongly represented.
- 2. Gender gap emerges early in higher education:** Career priorities diverge early: 60% of female students prioritize job security, compared with just 32% of male students. In addition, while 40% of male students consider launching a business or working in a startup, only 21% of female students do.
- 3. Women enter entrepreneurship later:** Men are more likely to see entrepreneurship as a career goal early on: 65% of male startup founders first set their sights on starting a business in their youth or during studies, compared with just 43% of female founders. Social norms and gender expectations clearly shape career choices from an early stage.
- 4. Male founders less likely to see gender disparities as a problem:** While 87% of female founders recognize gender inequality as an issue in the startup ecosystem, only half of male founders share that view. However, awareness rises to 64% among male founders who work in mixed-gender founding teams.
- 5. Investment trends show progress:** Since 2017, venture capital (VC) funding for startups with at least one female founder has nearly doubled, and total investment has almost quadrupled. Yet, all-male founding teams still receive 91% of VC funding.
- 6. Work-life balance and role models are key to closing the gap:** Both women (81%) and men (60%) in the startup ecosystem cite the compatibility of family and work as a critical factor in narrowing the gender gap. The presence of visible female role models is also seen as essential to fostering greater participation.

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