SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Middle and High School (6-12)

Description: In this lesson, students use primary documents to review historical trends in women's share of the labor force and chosen occupations. Using Barbie careers as a timeline, they speculate as to why Barbie represented certain careers for girls at different points in time since 1959. They choose which career Barbie might represent next year and explain that choice in a one-page essay.

Lesson Plan:

https://www.stlouisfed.org/-/media/project/frbstl/stlouisfed/Education/Lessons/pdf/Barbie-in-the-Labor-Force.pdf?la=en

Highlights:

- Some of the priming materials for the activity utilize different types of graphs from various sources, giving students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with how to visualize data
- This activity provides an option for small group work or work as a whole class to determine which year they think corresponds with each of Barbie's careers and encourages discussion
    - Students are prompted to think critically about both American history and how society treats women and girls as a whole
- https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-more-women-aren-t-computer-scientists-engineers
    - A PBS video that explains the gender divide in a specific field – in this case, computer science – and provides both reasons why women may not be interested in this field/discouraged from it as well as reasons why there should be more women in the industry
- The final "assessment" for this activity asks students to utilize research skills in order to produce an essay arguing for what they think Barbie's career should be next year, deepening their understanding of the workforce and gender inequity