

Empowerment for a Sustainable Future

Bridging Education and Equality

Prof. Dr. Zoe Lefkofridi, Paris-Lodron University Salzburg



Funded by
the European Union



Funded by
the European Union

Disclaimer

This research has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2021 research and innovation program under grant agreement N° 101061687.

Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.





Funded by
the European Union



Overview

- **Understanding interconnectedness:** How are empowerment and environmental sustainability linked? Ecofeminism
 - Gendered consequences of climate change and climate effects of gender inequality
 - Who governs? Gendered preferences, gendered decisions?
- **Where are we, right now?**
 - Weak linkage of empowerment and environmental agendas
 - Gender disparities worldwide – and in Austria
- **Where are we heading?** Two complementary pathways:
 - Inducing the Empowerment Turnaround top-down: the institutional approach
 - Fostering change from below: transforming education





Funded by
the European Union



PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG

Empowerment for Sustainability

Institutional Solutions, e.g. Quotas but also:

- Somatic Practices and experiential learning
- Engagement of all genders in Empowerment for Sustainability



The Environment – Empowerment Linkage

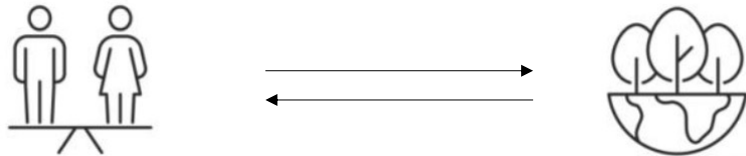




Funded by
the European Union



Understanding Interconnectedness



Why does equality matter for sustainability?

- Gendered effects of climate change
- Environmental effects of gender inequality





Funded by
the European Union



Ecofeminism

- Critical theoretical framework and social movement
- **Challenges patriarchy and capitalism** simultaneously (Mallory, 2010)
- Conceptual, historical, and material relations between:
 - Women's subjugation
 - Nature's domination and degradation
- Synergies between environmentalism and feminism: **enhance both movements' conceptual and political aspirations**

WP1 Report: <https://pushbacklash.eu/dissemination/>





Funded by
the European Union

Gendered Effects of Climate Change



Source: OECD 2023

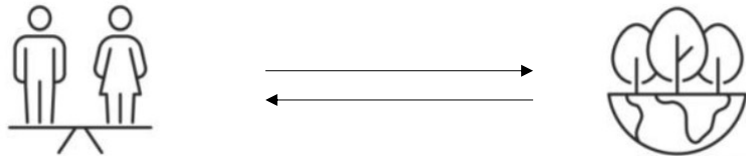




Funded by
the European Union



Understanding Interconnectedness



Why does equality matter for sustainability?

- Gendered effects of climate change
- Environmental effects of gender inequality
- Women as agents for change





Funded by
the European Union

Gendered Attitudes and Actions

Across countries and over time **women in the citizenry** are found to be...

- **more worried about the environment** irrespective of the nature and distance of environmental problems (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, Mohai 1992, Zelezny et al. 2000, Hunter et al. 2004, McCright and Xiao 2014, Joireman and Liu 2014)
- **show higher risk perception** regarding environmental degradation (Norgaard and York 2005, Honda et al. 2014), and
- **are more likely to take pro-environmental action** than men with the gender gap widening as actions draw closer to daily life (e.g., Zelezny et al. 2000, Hunter et al. 2004, Stolle et al. 2005, Luchs and Mooradian 2012)
- **more engaged in political consumerism** (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Gundelach and Kalte, 2021; my own research with V. Jansesberger)





Funded by
the European Union



Gendered Attitudes and Actions

Gender gap travels to **elite level**:

Female Members of the European Parliament are more likely than their male colleagues to cast **pro-environmental votes** (e.g., Ramstetter and Habersack 2019)

Women's leadership in government is i.a. related with

- **greater environmental protection** (e.g., increase of renewable energy use, Salamon 2022),
- **more stringent climate policies** (e.g., Mavisakalyan and Tarverdi 2019),
- **higher ratification rates of environmental treaties** (Norgaard and York 2005)
- **greater improvements on the SDG agenda** (Mirziyoyeva and Salahodjaev 2022).
- **more specific and ambitious outcomes of climate negotiations** (Krause, Krause and Bränfors 2018)



Where are we, right now?





Funded by
the European Union



Increasing Recognition of Interdependence

Several global frameworks prioritize **gender as a key element** in addressing climate change:

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): enhance women’s participation and promote gender-responsive climate policies
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30: women’s leadership and participation crucial for effective climate adaptation

But also: Climate & Gender research: perceived with skepticism! - - - “ideological”



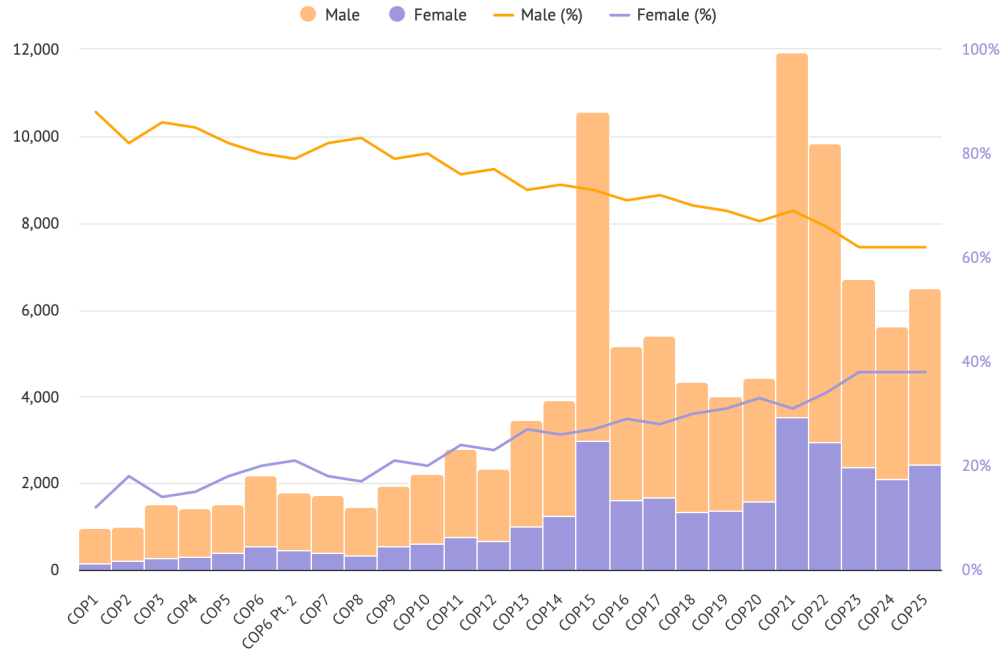


Funded by the European Union



Gender Ratio in COP Delegations Changed

The changing gender balance of named party delegations since COP1 in 1995



Source: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-how-delegations-at-cop-climate-summits-have-changed-over-time/>





Funded by
the European Union



PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG

Persistent Gender Gap in Decision-Making Processes

Despite 132 UNFCCC decisions that mention gender, with 54 of them specifically referencing gender balance in decision-making processes, progress toward gender balance in UNFCCC spaces continues to fall short—with COP28 having 34% women across all national delegations compared to 31% at the COP in 2008, the first year WEDO started tracking data.

31%

at COP14 in 2008

34%

at COP28 in 2023



<https://wedo.org/release-new-data-shows-34-womens-participation-on-party-delegations-at-cop28-the-same-percentage-as-10-years-ago/>





Funded by
the European Union



And yet ...

- Around the world, **women remain underrepresented** in decision-making positions
 - Low participation of women in environment negotiations: male delegates overrepresented
 - gap widest in regions that are likely to suffer the most from climate change
- Parallel advances in gender equality and environmental agendas – but **rarely addressed in tandem**: OECD's Green Recovery Database: only 18 out of 705 measures assessed for gender relevance and sensitivity are gender-relevant (2.5 percent; OECD 2021)
- **Dearth of disaggregated data** on the gender dimension of environmental degradation
- **Exclusion of local stakeholders' and communities' experience** and knowledge
- **Lack of intersectionality**, e.g., indigenous women





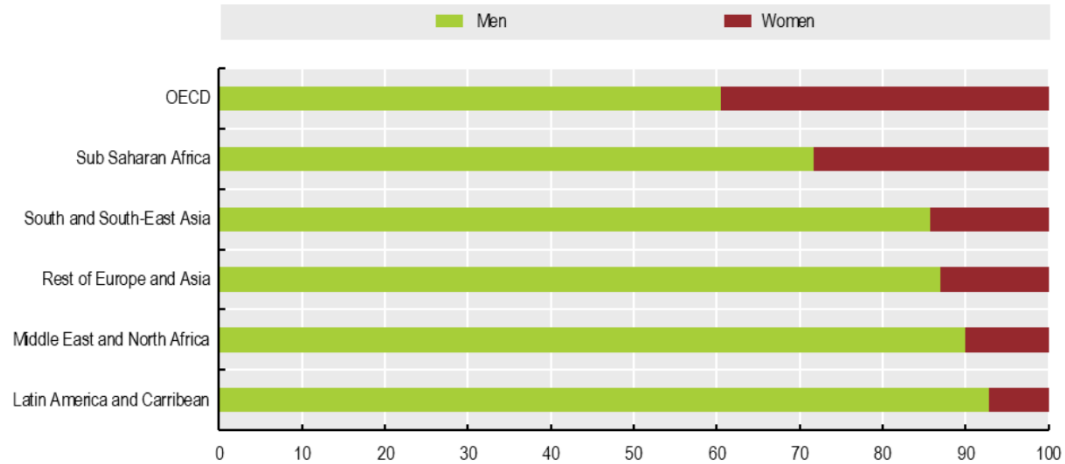
Funded by
the European Union

Environment Ministers



Figure 2.1. Environment ministers, by gender

2021 data



Note: Regions classified as presented in OECD, 2015^[36]. Rest of Europe and Asia = non-OECD European countries, European countries that belong neither to the OECD nor EU, the Caspian Region (excluding Iran), China and the Russian Federation.

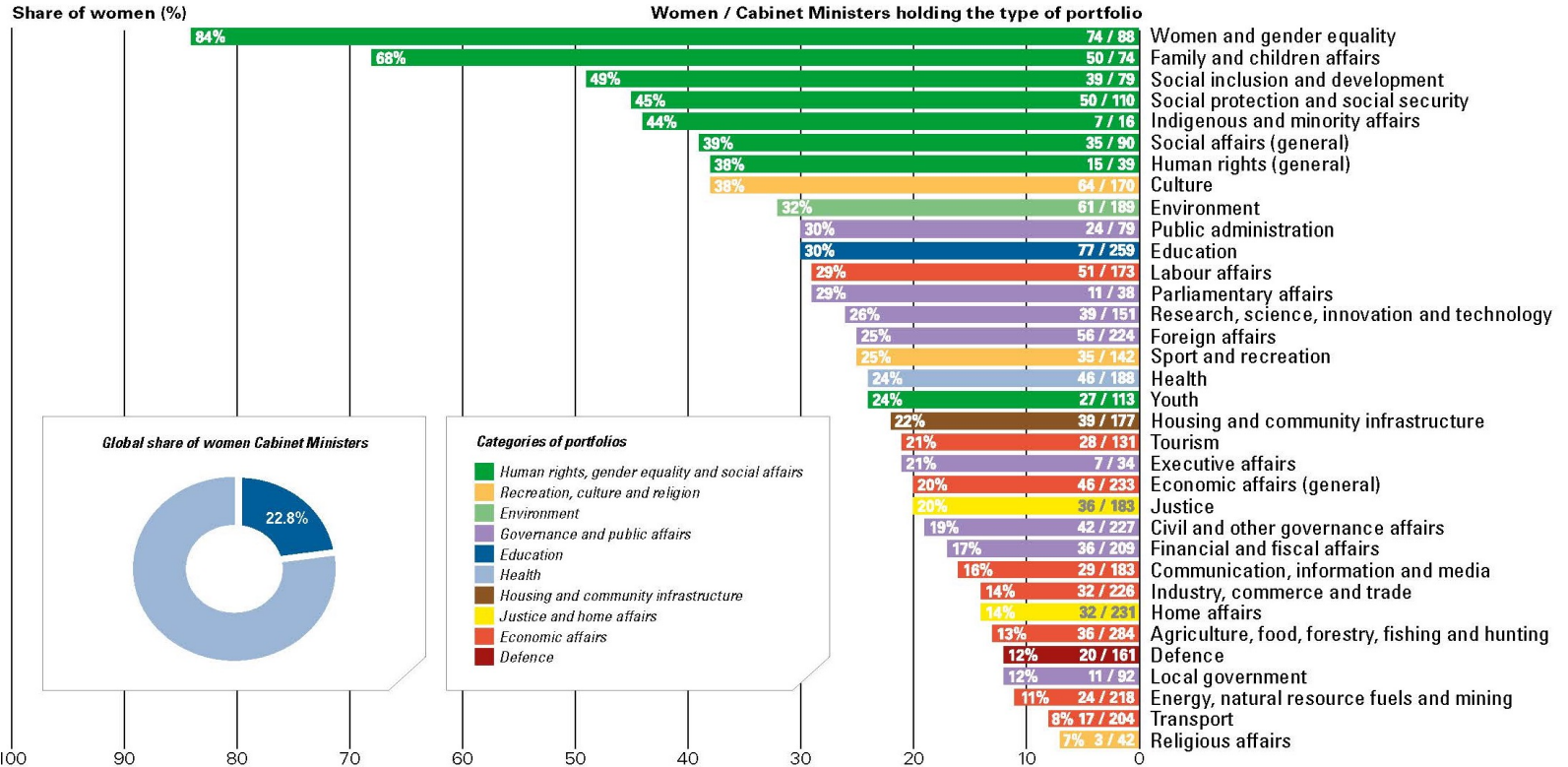
Source: Authors' own research, 2021.

Source: Strumskyte et al./ OECD 2022



Share of women Cabinet Ministers by type of portfolio^{ca}

(based on 190 countries)



Source: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Women-in-politics-2023-en.pdf>



Funded by the European Union





Funded by the European Union

Leadership Beyond Politics

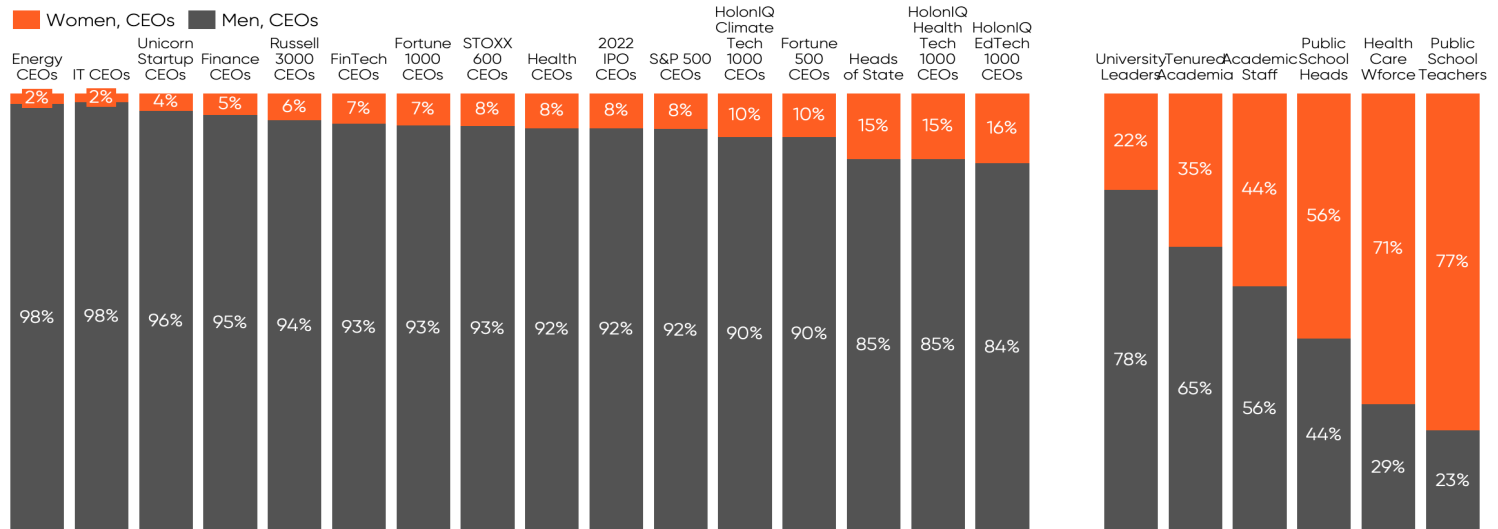


HOLONIQ. GLOBAL IMPACT INTELLIGENCE



2023 State of Women's Leadership

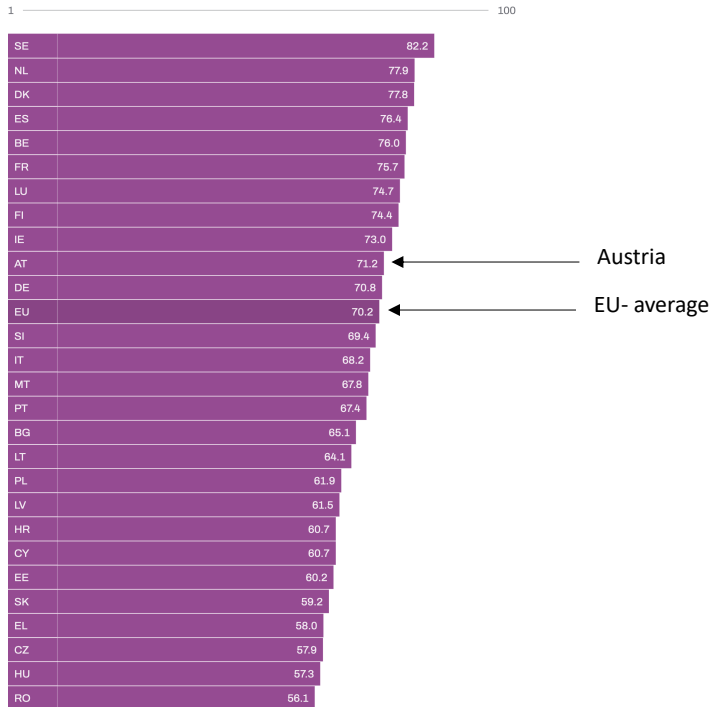
Global CEO and Industry Leadership Gender Diversity Benchmarks.



Sources: HolonIQ, Altfi, American Association of School Administrators, Australian Institute of Company Directors, Catalyst, College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, Education Sub Saharan Africa, European United Nations, European Women on Boards, FemStreet, Forbes, Fortune, Gusto, Hindustan Times, IMF, International Hospital Federation, National Center for Education Statistics, OECD, School Superintendents Association, Sifted, Spencer Stuart, Standard and Poor's, TechCrunch, The Conference Board, Times Higher Education, US department of Labor, US Dept of Education, World Bank, Women in Business Collaborative, World Health Organization, Women on Boards, 50/50 Women on Boards, Women CEOs in America, UN Women, University World News, Women's Power Gap. www.holoniq.com



AT in Comparative Perspective: Gender Equality Index Ranking



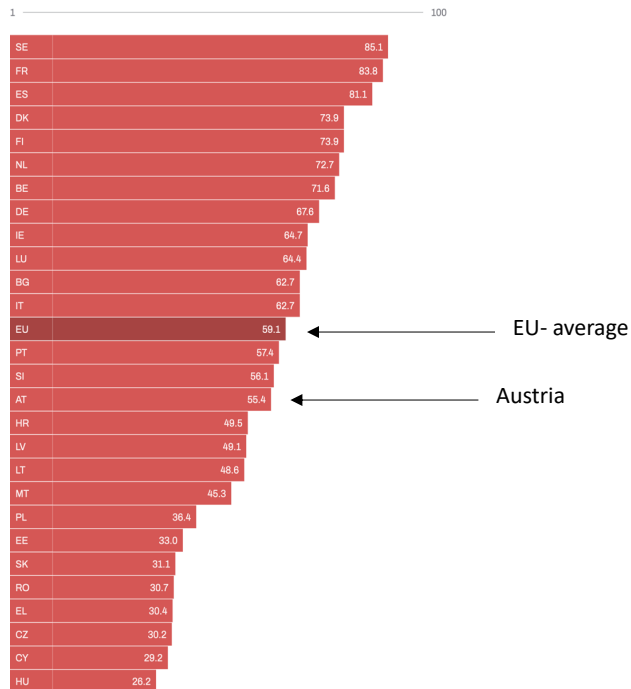


Funded by
the European Union



PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG

AT in Comparative Perspective: Gender equality - EU Ranking Power

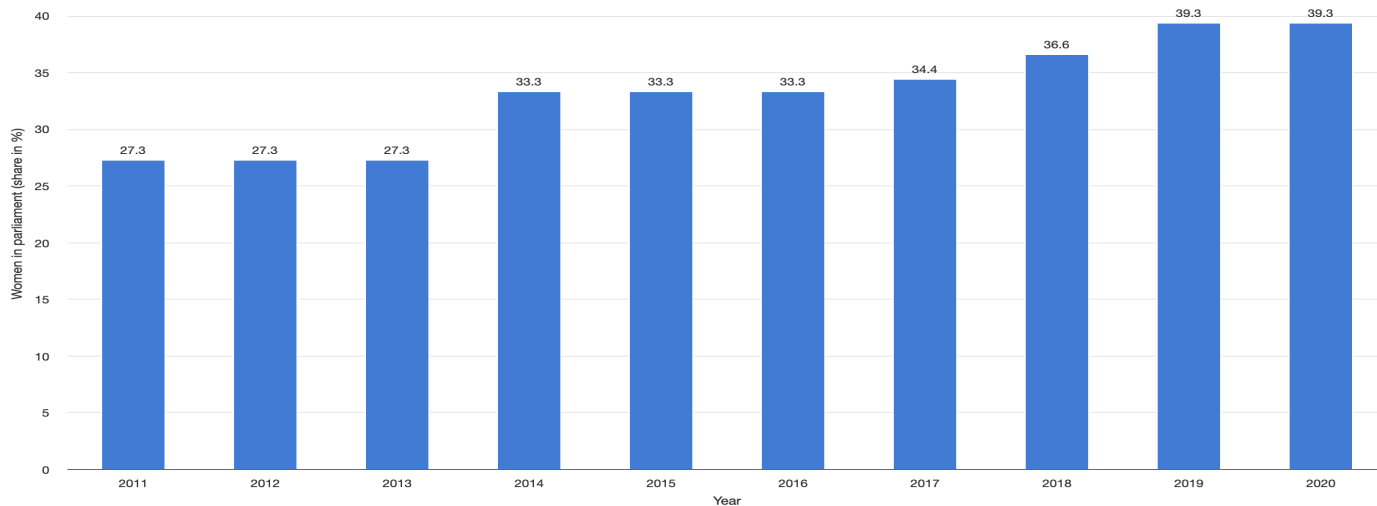




Funded by
the European Union



AT - Women in Parliament



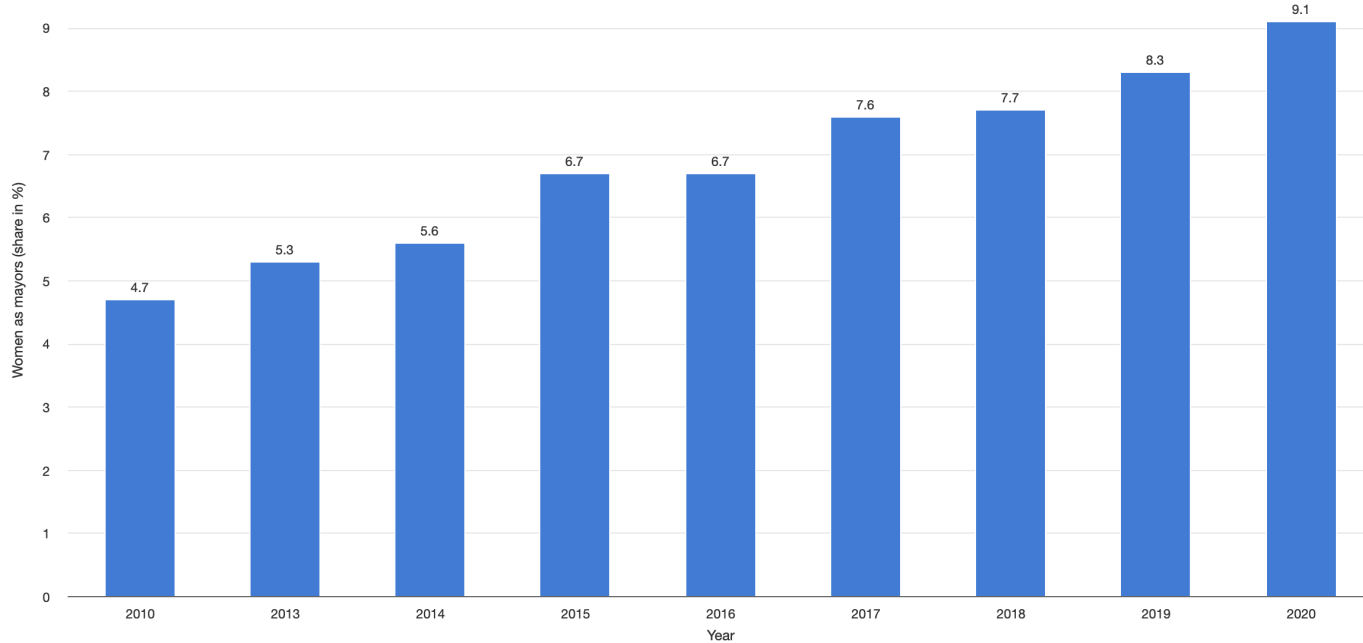
Source: <https://www.statistik.at/en/services/tools/services/indicator-systems/sdgs-sustainable-development-goals-and-indicators/goal-5-gender-equality/target-55#c8468>





Funded by
the European Union

AT - Women Mayors



Source: <https://www.statistik.at/en/services/tools/services/indicator-systems/sdgs-sustainable-development-goals-and-indicators/goal-5-gender-equality>





Funded by
the European Union



AT - Performance in SDG 5

SDG5 NOT yet achieved

- **Gender pay gap at 19 %** (EU average at 12.7 %) → unequal pensions (41 %/ EU 25 %)
- **Unequal distribution of unpaid care and housework**
- Violence: **three women murdered per month** on average

SDG 5 - Levers for gender equality

- Re-evaluation of work
- Fair remuneration
- Equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work
- Elimination of gender stereotypes

Sources: <https://www.uninetz.at/en/sdgs/sdg-5>; <https://www.statistik.at/fileadmin/announcement/2023/03/20230303GenderStatistikEN.pdf>; <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/the-university/news-and-events/news/details-news/detail/austria-s-gender-pay-gap-is-among-the-worst-in-europe>; <https://wien1x1.at/pension-gap-2023/>; <https://www.statistik.at/statistiken/bevoelkerung-und-soziales/gender-statistiken/pensionen>



The Way Forward: Empowering Women for Sustainability



Institutional Approach

Lifting women
into leadership

Educational Approach

Transforming
the ways of
knowing



Institutional Approach

Lifting women
into leadership





Funded by
the European Union



The Institutional Approach

- Enact **policies and laws that promote gender equality**
- EU acts as a trailblazer to force MS and candidate countries to reform legislation (however, states have to enact legislation that goes beyond the EU directives)
- Important role of European civil society actors that lobby for better rights for women

Good practices:

Sweden: **Feminist foreign policy framework** (2014) → commitment to integrate gender equality into all aspects of its foreign relations

Spain: **The Organic Law on Effective Equality between Women and Men** (2007) → prohibits gender-based discrimination in all spheres of life

Poland: **Act on Counteracting Domestic Violence** (2005) → legal measures to safeguard domestic violence victims and establish support services

See: **Good practices** - Report WP7: <https://pushbacklash.eu/dissemination/>





Funded by
the European Union



How to increase women's representation?

- Prior 2000: research focus on electoral systems, cultural issues/change and the strength of leftist political parties
- Since the mid-1990s: gender quotas in an increasing number of countries as a "fast track" solution (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005).
- Quotas + electoral systems that allow for greater candidate turnover (i.e., party-list proportional representation systems) have the greatest impact (Tripp and Kang 2008)





Funded by
the European Union



Gender Quotas

- **Most effective quota laws**
 - with higher thresholds of women;
 - placement mandates specifying that women must hold certain positions on the ballot;
 - strict enforcement mechanisms for compliance (Schwindt-Bayer 2009).
- Gender quotas **improve the quality of legislators!** Fewer low-quality or “mediocre” male politicians make it into office (Besley et al. 2017 on quotas & the crisis of the mediocre man)



Educational Approach

Transforming
the ways of
knowing





Funded by
the European Union



The Educational Approach

- Promoting curricula that **address gender and the environment in tandem**
- Fostering discussions, organizing workshops, and implementing policies that challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviors
- Empowering marginalized voices
- Promoting inclusive language policies
- Engaging men and boys in discussions on gender equality
- Empowering women with disabilities

See: Push*back*lash's preliminary findings about good practices in Report WP7:
<https://pushbacklash.eu/dissemination/>





Funded by
the European Union



Shift to Transformative Learning

“Transformative learning for people and the planet is a necessity for our survival and that of future generations. The time to learn and act for our planet is now.”

UNESCO's Berlin Declaration
on Education for Sustainable Development, May 2021

- Critically **exploring the subjective perspectives** from you engage with the world
- Reflect on how you perceive, value, interpret, and relate
 - Shining light on underlying assumptions
 - Potential for **deep change** in how one experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world
 - Fostering **transformative qualities** like awareness, listening, sense-making, and integrity





Funded by
the European Union



Mindfulness- and Compassion-Based Training

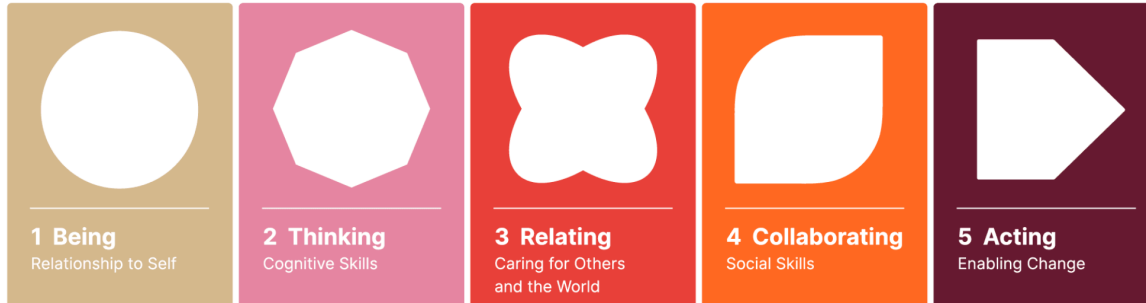
“There are many changes to make over the next ten years, and each of us will take different steps along the way, but all of us start the transformation in one place: the mindset.”

Christina Figueres, Former Executive Secretary of the UNFCC



INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Transformational Skills for Sustainable Development





Funded by
the European Union




Mindfulness- and Compassion-Based Training

**Die Innere Arbeit
Sozialer Gerechtigkeit**

Ein 12-Wochen-Mindfulness-Based Student Training
(MBST)

Du möchtest deine Rolle in der Welt
verstehen und Veränderungen
mitgestalten?
Kognitiv und emotional begreifen, wie
Stereotype und Vorurteile entstehen und
wirken?
Und dabei deine Aufmerksamkeit und
Emotionsregulation stärken?



PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG

- Currently available for PLUS students
- Increasing evidence for the positive effects of mindfulness— and compassion-based training on sustainability and conflict resolution
- Synergy effects with a broad range of intrapersonal effects
- Applicable for a wide range of age groups, from pre-school till old age

This and the next semesters @Uni
Salzburg: Ramstetter

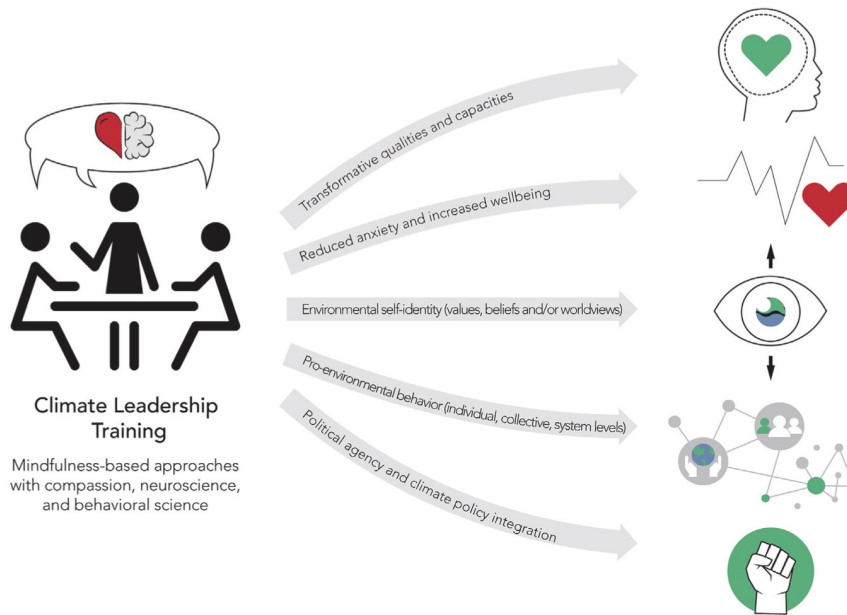




Funded by
the European Union



Fostering collective climate action and leadership



Insights from a pilot experiment involving a **10-week mindfulness and compassion training**

- Nourished transformative qualities and capacities (such as mindfulness, compassion, connectedness with nature)
- Increased environmental self-identity
- Increased pro- environmental behaviors (at individual, collective, and system levels)

Source: Ramstetter et al. (2023)



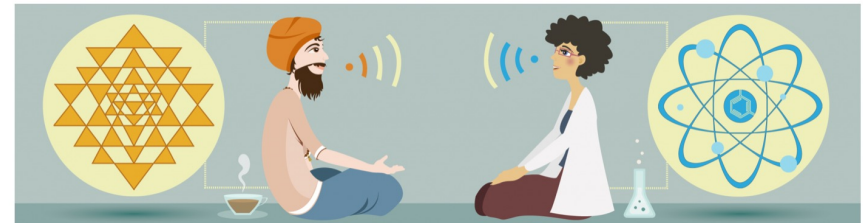


Funded by
the European Union



Exploring Worldviews

- **Worldview Journeys** (<https://worldviewjourneys.com>) as transformative learning opportunities
- Research-led: based on Annick de Witts (2023, 2016) research on worldviews
- Open to people of all ages and educational backgrounds
- Encourages participants to **explore their own worldviews, its roots and causes** – and to understand and connect with other worldviews





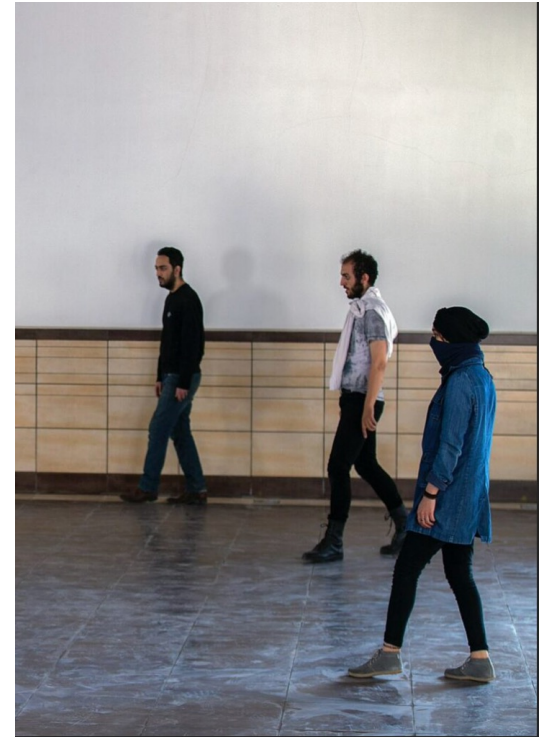
Funded by
the European Union



Theatre of the Oppressed

- Interactive theater: spect-actors „rehearse reality“, „probing the possible“
- Premise: people can free themselves from their restrictive thoughts and **develop skills to change adverse structures** (inner change)
- Outer change becomes feasible as inner change alters world views and behaviors

Winter Semester 2024 @Uni Salzburg - Lefkofridi:
Paths to Gender Equality in cooperation with
Theater der Unterdrückten Wien



<https://www.theatreartlife.com/lifestyle/augusto-boal-theatre-of-the-oppressed/>





Funded by
the European Union



Empowerment for sustainability

- **Quotas** - Fix the gender equality-related numbers to improve the decisions on climate issues
- **Education** – Transformative learning: inner change through theater and mindfulness- and compassion- based training
- **Inclusiveness** - Addressing them all: boys and girls, men and women, and everyone in-between and beyond





Funded by
the European Union



PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
SALZBURG

Push*Back*Lash



Subscribe to our newsletter:

<https://pushbacklash.eu/dissemination/>

Read our reports:

<https://pushbacklash.eu/dissemination/>



Instagram

[@pushbacklash](https://www.instagram.com/pushbacklash)

Twitter

[@pushbacklash](https://twitter.com/pushbacklash)





Funded by
the European Union



References

- Coffé, H., & Bolzendahl, C. (2010). *Same Game, Different Rules? Gender Differences in Political Participation*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-009-9729-y>
- de Witt, A., Bootsma, M., Dermody, B. J., & Rebel, K. (n.d.). The Seven-Step Learning Journey: A Learning Cycle Supporting Design, Facilitation, and Assessment of Transformative Learning. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2023(0), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15413446231220317>
- de Witt, A., de Boer, J., Hedlund, N., & Osseweijer, P. (2016). *A new tool to map the major worldviews in the Netherlands and USA, and explore how they relate to climate change*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2016.05.012>
- Gundelach, B., & Kalte, D. (2021). Explaining the Reversed Gender Gap in Political Consumerism: Personality Traits as Significant Mediators. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 27(1), 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12429>
- Honda, A., Wiwattanapantuwong, J., & Abe, T. (2014). Japanese university students' attitudes toward the Fukushima nuclear disaster. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 40, 147–156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2014.06.003>
- Hunter, L. M., Hatch, A., & Johnson, A. (2004). Cross-national gender variation in environmental behaviors. *Social Science Quarterly*, 85(3), 677–694. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0038-4941.2004.00239.x>
- Joireman, J., & Liu, R. L. (2014). Future-oriented women will pay to reduce global warming: Mediation via political orientation, environmental values, and belief in global warming. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 40, 391–400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2014.09.005>
- Krause, J., Krause, W., & Bränfors, P. (2018). *International Interactions Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2018.1492386>
- Luchs, M. G., & Mooradian, T. A. (2012). Sex, Personality, and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: Elucidating the Gender Effect. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 35(1), 127–144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-011-9179-0>
- Mavisakalyan, A., & Tarverdi, Y. (2019). Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference? *European Journal of Political Economy*, 56, 151–164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.EJPOLECO.2018.08.001>
- McCright, A. M., & Xiao, C. (2014). Gender and Environmental Concern: Insights from Recent Work and for Future Research. *Society and Natural Resources*, 27(10), 1109–1113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2014.918235>





Funded by
the European Union



References II

- Mirziyoyeva, Z., & Salahodjaev, R. (2022). Women's Parliamentary Representation and Sustainable Development Goals: a Cross-Country Evidence. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 17(2), 871–883. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11482-021-09940-8/TABLES/5>
- Mohai, P. (1992). Men, women, and the environment: An examination of the gender gap in environmental concern and activism. *Society and Natural Resources*, 5(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08941929209380772>
- Norgaard, K., & York, R. (2005). Gender Equality and State Environmentalism. [Http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.1177/0891243204273612](http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.1177/0891243204273612), 19(4), 506–522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243204273612>
- OECD. (2023). *SIGI 2023 Global Report*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/4607b7c7-en>
- Ramstetter, L., & Habersack, F. (2019). Do women make a difference? Analysing environmental attitudes and actions of Members of the European Parliament. *Environmental Politics*, 29(6), 1063–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2019.1609156>
- Ramstetter, L., Rupperecht, S., Mundaca, L., Osika, W., Stenfors, C. U. D., Klackl, J., & Wamsler, C. (2023). Fostering collective climate action and leadership: Insights from a pilot experiment involving mindfulness and compassion. *IScience*, 26(3), 106191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isci.2023.106191>
- Salamon, H. (2023). The effect of women's parliamentary participation on renewable energy policy outcomes. *European Journal of Political Research*, 62(1), 174–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12539>
- Shapiro, R. Y., & Mahajan, H. (1986). Gender Differences in Policy Preferences : A Summary of Trends From the 1960s to the Author (s): Robert Y . Shapiro and Harpreet Mahajan Source : The Public Opinion Quarterly , Spring , 1986 , Vol . 50 , No . 1 (Spring , 1986) , pp . Published by : Oxf. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50(1), 42–61.
- Stolle, D., Hooghe, M., & Micheletti, M. (2005). Politics in the supermarket: Political consumerism as a form of political participation. *International Political Science Review*, 26(3), 245–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512105053784>
- Strumskyte, S., Ramos Magaña, S., & Bendig, H. (2022). *Women's leadership in environmental action*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/f0038d22-en>
- Zelezny, L. C., Chua, P.-P., & Aldrich, C. (2000). New Ways of Thinking about Environmentalism: Elaborating on Gender Differences in Environmentalism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3), 443–457. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00177>

