

Women's Forum 2023

Change education, Educate for change

From Afghanistan, where girls are excluded from the education system, to our companies, where despite the rhetoric and efforts, gender inequalities are still so stark in some sectors, it is time to change the level of our ambition as regards to education.

Education is a fundamental human right for all, yet we are not all equal in access to education and inequality between men and women in this area is considerable. According to UNESCO, two-thirds of the 750 million illiterate adults are women, a proportion unchanged since 1976, and 15 million girls and 10 million boys will never set foot in a classroom.

Learning environments are not always inclusive, qualitative and impactful. Free education is not universally available and poverty, which affects mostly women, hinders access to education. The world's challenges have a direct impact on women's access to education, especially in countries disproportionately affected by political fragility, conflict and violence. In the most developed economies, unconscious and societal biases still lead to inequalities between women and men with regards to education and professional outcomes.

We need to reimagine education, the way we learn and what we learn.

Simply reforming education systems would imply that only the younger generations would acquire the tools to tackle today's challenges – and this is not enough. **It is our responsibility to all to educate ourselves, individually, corporately and socially.**

Education is a "multiplier right", allowing access to many others: property, political participation, justice, freedom from all forms of violence. **Education allows us to grow, thrive and design a more just, prosperous and inclusive world.**

This is why this year, the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society will focus on education and the way it equips us with the power and agency to shape our lives and future in a variety of domains: **Tech, climate, health, future of work, entrepreneurship, feminist diplomacy and women & money**, our major engagement for 2023.

It is time to leverage the full power of education to empower women and foster economic, social and political transformation. The Women's Forum believes that **education is key to Raise women's voices, Create change.**

Programme:

Tuesday, November 28

08:00-08:50 *Doors open and coffee*

08:50-09:15 **Welcome remarks**
Plenary session

09:15-09:25 **Conversation with a leader 1**
Plenary session

09:25-10:05 **Girls' access to education: The key towards a fairer future for all**
Plenary session

In all parts of the world, girls today still struggle to access education due to gender biases that make them more vulnerable to poverty, violence, child marriage, and other forms of oppression. Covid-19 in many cases exacerbated the existing barriers in place. Educating girls is fundamental to achieve gender equality and move towards sustainable progress: what can society do to overcome these challenges and grant access to education for all?

10:05-10:45 **Closing the gap: Innovative solutions for addressing the STEM pipeline problem**
Plenary session

The future of innovation and progress depends on a diverse and inclusive STEM workforce. To bridge the gender gap, it is necessary to address the systemic issues that create gender barriers, such as unequal access to STEM education and training, bias in hiring and promotion, and lack of support and mentorship for women in STEM. In light of these challenges, how can we foster a more inclusive environment that empowers women to thrive and widen the narrow definition of success in this sector, that may be excluding women and other underrepresented groups?

10:45-11:10 *Break*

11:10-11:55 **Masterclass 1: WF Barometer**
Plenary session

11:10-11:50 **Discovery Session 1**

11:55-12:35 **Masterclass 2: Working with Cancer**
Plenary session

11:55-12:35 **Discovery Session 2**

12:35-13:45 *Lunch break*

13:45-14:30 **Masterclass 3: Coding bootcamp**
Plenary session

13:45-14:25 **Discovery sessions 3**

14:30-15:05 **Women's education as a catalyst for climate action at community-level**
Plenary session

Women are the greatest impacted by and often the first responders to the effects of climate change. The UN [reports](#) that communities are more successful in resilience and capacity-building strategies when women are part of the planning process. What are some of the current female-led initiatives tackling climate change at community-level? What is the role of schools and education in building community resilience to the effects of climate change?

15:05-15:20 **Conversation with a leader**

15:20-15:55 **Creating a safe space for female health**
Plenary session

Health is the precondition to succeed in a happy and fulfilled life. Women and girls experience a number of health issues like cancer, endometriosis, hormonal fluctuations and heavy mental loads that are too often treated as taboos. This not only affects their wellbeing and performativity in companies, but also their overall empowerment in society. What are the actions we can take to lead educational opportunities around female health?

15:55-16:30 **Harmonising Sustainability and Gender Equality: A Path to Inclusive Progress**

In an era where sustainability is not just a buzzword but a necessity, education plays a pivotal role in shaping corporate behaviour, bringing sustainable actions that lead to positive environmental and societal impacts while driving long-term business success. Promoting gender equality within corporate sustainability initiatives isn't just an ethical imperative; it's a strategic necessity.

How can education be the driving force behind a greener and more responsible corporate world ?

16:30-16:50 **Break**

16:50-17:30 **Women at war: Unveiling the far-reaching consequences of conflict and violence**

Plenary session

Violence against women in conflict zones remains a critical global issue that demands urgent attention. Women often bear the brunt of conflict, experiencing physical, psychological, and sexual violence, while displacement, loss of livelihoods, and disruption to their education further exacerbate their vulnerability.

How can we address the specific needs and rights of women affected by war and violence ? How can education help rebuild resilient communities?

16:50-17:30 **Discovery session 4**

17:30-18:05 **Transitioning economies: Are women ready for the future of work?**

Plenary session

To capture job opportunities in increasingly automated economies, [millions of women](#) will need to make major work transitions by 2030. This will generate a need for higher educational attainment and new ways of reskilling to stay employed. What needs to change in modern education to boost the labour mobility of women?

18:05-18:20 **Conversation with a leader 2**

Plenary session

18:20-18:30 **WE4Good ceremony**

Plenary session

18:30-19:15 **NYT Debate**

20:00-00:00 **Cocktail Dinner**

Petit-Palais

Wednesday, November 29

08:00-08:50 *Doors open and coffee*

08:50-09:05 **Wrap-up day 1 & Welcome remarks day 2**
Plenary session

09:05-09:20 **Conversation with a leader 3**
Plenary session

09:20-10:00 **Beyond the battlefield: The impact of conflict on girls' education**
Plenary session

UNICEF reports that 27 million children of primary and lower secondary school age are currently out of school in 24 countries affected by conflict. Girls' education is particularly vulnerable in conflict situations, as they face greater barriers to access than to boys. This further hinders crucial progress towards achieving gender equality. In light of these challenges, what measures can be taken to ensure that girls' access to education is protected during times of conflict ?

10:00-10:40 **Artificial intelligence in higher education: The potential of AI to transform learning**
Plenary session

Through self-correctional algorithms and using computing power to process large sets of data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) can enhance learning by expanding our capacity to automate tasks and free up resources for learning. How does AI act as a powerful force for change in higher education and simultaneously provide some of its most complex academic, legal and ethical dilemmas? What is the impact of software like ChatGPT on education? Do we need to rethink educational pathways to prepare students for a labour market in which AI plays a significant role?

10:40-11:00 *Break*

11:00-11:45 **Masterclass BCG Bliss study**
Plenary session

11:00-11:40 **Discovery session 5**

11:45-12:25 **Masterclass : Social media : What do young girls and teens experience online ?**
Plenary session

11:45-12:25 **Discovery session 6**
Plenary session

12:25-13:30 *Lunch break*

13:30-14:15 **Keeping up with change: Education as a lifelong experience for career development**

The job market develops at the highest speed with new technologies substituting human labour, new demands to meet, and new challenges concerning sustainability. To keep being qualified and attractive to businesses the learning process needs to be continuous.

How can we foster a new approach to education as a lifelong experience? How should we rethink our learning methods, and facilitate apprenticeship ?

13:30-14:10 **Discovery session 7**

14:15-14:50 **Breaking barriers around women's mental health**

Plenary session

Though mental health awareness has increased in the wake of COVID-19, we are still lacking gender-specific public awareness of how women's mental health manifests and is influenced. Social, economic and physiological factors can put women at greater risk of poor mental health than men. How can public and private sectors be better informed, recognising and treating women's mental health symptoms?

14:50-15:30 **Urban Catalysts: How Cities Shape the Future of Education**

Plenary session

Cities play a pivotal role in enhancing global education, by fostering diverse learning environments and providing access to quality educational institutions to all. By promoting inclusive policies and equitable access to education, cities can empower individuals and bridge educational gaps, ultimately driving social progress and fostering a more inclusive society. Let's hear some of the most prominent women mayors who are shaping a brighter future for generations to come.

15:30-16:10 **Bridging the gap between women's civic engagement and political leadership : is education the key?**

Plenary session

Women have always shown forms of active civic engagement, despite being officially denied participation in public fora until relatively recently. To this day, due to long-standing patriarchal systems and persisting gender biases, women tend to be in the vast minority when it comes to political roles. How can education be a tool of acceleration to grow women's presence in political leadership?

16:10-16:30 **Conversation with a Leader 4**
Plenary session

16:30-16:50 **Break**

16:50-17:30 **Empowering the future: Unleashing the potential of energy innovation**
Plenary session

In the future, addressing energy challenges will be closely linked to achieving net-zero emissions and implementing effective carbon removal strategies. In order for the world to transition towards a new sustainable energy supply, it is fundamental to question the systems in place and give space to new narratives and actors, and ensure a greater diversity and women's active participation.

In the effort to revolutionise environmental policies and strengthen efforts, inclusivity will have to play a key role.

16:50-17:30 **Discovery session 8**

17:30-18:05 **Overcoming financial barriers through education: Is financial education a woman's best form of protest?**
Plenary session

Financial education has emerged as a game-changer for women looking to take control of their economic lives. Not only does it provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage their finances, but it also serves as a means to address gender-based inequalities that stem from the stifling of their financial freedom. How can governments and organisations ensure that financial education programmes are designed and implemented in a way that enables women from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to achieve economic independence?

18:05-18:40 **Eradicating gender bias in education: Empowering girls to thrive in the classroom and beyond**
Plenary session

Education environments transmit cultural and systemic norms and values, some of which negatively impact the scope of girls' aspirations for their futures. This 'hidden curriculum' is embedded in textbooks, lessons, language and teacher interactions with students, often unconsciously reproduced, often with repressive consequences. How can classrooms and curriculums better serve girls' educational empowerment and encourage diverse talent to achieve their full academic potential?

18:40-18:50 **FWE40 session**

18:50-19:00 **Farewell remarks**

STAY CONNECTED. JOIN THE WOMEN'S FORUM ONLINE COMMUNITY!

