

NEWSLETTER

Q2 2019

Dear Readers,

The second edition of the 2019 second quarter CEE Network for Gender Issues Newsletter focuses on useful resources and reviews of gender equality in Europe and the world. In addition, we are publishing the Appeal to European leaders “Europe Ambition 2030: The Agenda for a Sustainable Europe” that will be launched in Rome on May 21st, 2019. The CEE Network for Gender Issues as a member of the Board of the European Partners for the Environment, is also a signatory to the Appeal. We work with the consortium of civil society organisations on the development of the Europe 2030/Sustainable Development strategy. Please see the UN Women eLearning website on gender equality. The CEE Network has a similar ePrimer on gender equality available upon request through our website: <https://ceegendernetwork.eu>. The ePrimer, prepared by the CEE Network, is available in English, Bosnian and Serbian courtesy respectively of FES in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Maja Sedlarević from LSDV Serbia. The ePrimer is used in training activities.

Editorial Board

Drage čitateljice i čitatelji,

Ovo je drugo izdanje našeg tromjesečnog Newslettera. Fokus nam je ovoga puta na publikacijama, izvještajima i analizama koje vam mogu biti od koristi. Prilažemo također Apel, čiji smo i mi potpisnici, “Ambicija za Europu 2030.g: agenda za održivu Evropu” koji je europskim političim liderima upućen sa skupa u Rimu, 26. svibnja 2019.g. CEE mreža za rodnu ravnopravnost je članica Glavnog odbora Europskih partnera za okoliš (EPE), te radi sa skupom organizacija civilnog društva na pitanjima održivog razvoja i strategije Europe 2030. Pogledajte i website za eLearning o rodnoj ravnopravnosti UN Women. CEE Mreža pripremila je sličan ePriručnik za rodnu ravnopravnosti koji možete upitom dobiti na: <https://ceegendernetwork.eu>. ePriručnik je dostupan na engleskom, bosanskom (zahvaljujući FES Bosne i Hercegovine) i na srpskom (zahvaljujući članici našeg Savjeta, Maji Sedlarević iz LSDV Srbije). ePriručnik koristimo na treninzima.

Uredništvo

Europe Ambition 2030: The Agenda for a Sustainable Europe Rome May 21st, 2019

Sustainability action is not a matter of choice anymore. The complex challenges facing our world have grown into threats that cannot be managed by traditional governance approaches. In recognition, Europe must unite and show leadership in building an environmentally, socially, and economically just, sustainable world that can strike the right balance between people, planet and prosperity.

Our ambition is to make the European Union the global leader, a true champion of sustainability within the framework of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. To achieve this goal, the European Union, its Member States and European society at large, both at individual and collective levels, must take immediate action to scale up and accelerate the adoption and concrete implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

More than ever, citizens demand a sustainable world where well-being, social justice and environmental harmony are the key pillars of civilisation. They are calling for peaceful, prosperous and inclusive development, within the capacities of our planetary boundaries. If this demand goes unmet and if leaders remain detached from these fundamental calls for change, the risk of instability will grow, and eventually the fire of social unrest, instability and threats to peace and security will be ignited as we have already seen in several countries across Europe.

Therefore, the European Union must adopt a holistic Vision on these grounds, anchored in Europe's rich cultural and social diversity and develop a new, collaborative model of economic, social and environmental governance. A model built on 'unconventional alliances' between public and private sector actors and citizens, one that mobilises all Europeans, especially the youth as the main stakeholders in our sustainable future. A model based on collaboration that increases our preparedness to effectively take on global risks, such as climate change, biodiversity collapse and growing socioeconomic inequalities and injustices. This approach must be proactive, bold and strategic.

We, Europeans are in a uniquely fit position to start this change. Our ethos is built on the solid foundations of peaceful development, inclusivity, solidarity and empathy, which are all cornerstones of sustainability. We are present in the field of sustainability action and cooperate actively with champions of the SDGs across the entire world: our track record and success stories are numerous. We also have a significant capital of knowledge in Systems Thinking, which is essential to addressing the complex challenges facing us.

In making the brave but necessary leap on this path, we expect our leaders and institutions to show unwavering support and take determined action: a clear commitment to a sustainable design, collaborative

action and inclusive systems leadership. In particular, the European Union and its Member States must develop strategic, transparent, strong and innovative governance tools to achieve the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and our Climate Neutrality goals, as well as shape the future of our more prominent social and environmental policies that can offer the greatest impact in achieving these outcomes. Simultaneously, the process and outcomes of transformative governance should guide and underpin the EU Green Budget ("MFF") towards 2027.

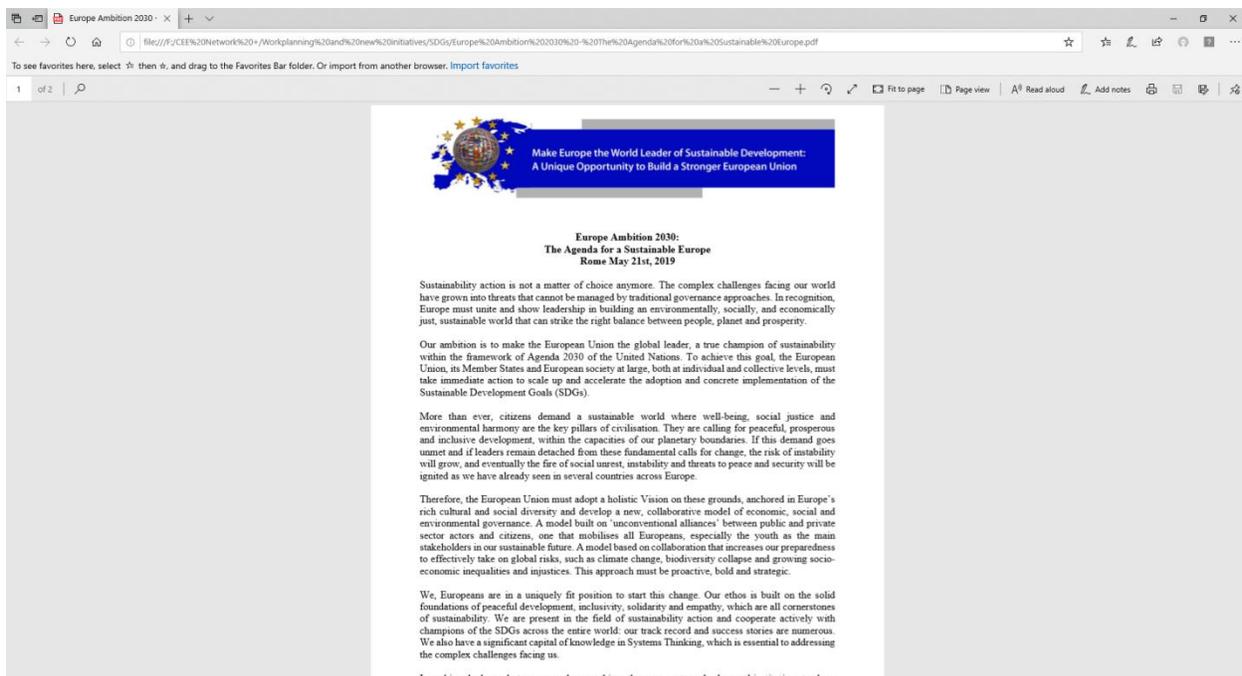
Our leadership and institutions, in cooperation with civil society, must recognise the challenges and perils confronting us and assume bold steps towards sustainable development, progress and peace in the interest of European citizens and the world. Unity must be forged across the European Union to urgently address the existential risks inherent in climate and eco-systemic emergencies through just transition approaches rooted in science and solidarity. That is our demand.

Taking this vision into consideration, we call upon the Members of the European Council to lead on sustainable development, and deliver a better future for all by:

- Electing as President of the European Council, European Commission, European Central Bank an individual who would have expressed his/her clear vision and dedication to an ambitious implementation of Agenda 2030;
- Making Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals the overarching framework of the EU Leaders Agenda 2019-2024 to be debated early June by the European Council, in consultation with civil society, to pave the new development model;
- Including into the EU Leaders Agenda 2019-2024 a European people-centred agenda – as proposed by the OECD1 - with a new social contract and, tackling global challenges, sustainable production and consumption patterns;
- Deciding in June to convene an ‘Agenda 2030: Enhanced Partnership’ meeting, chaired by the President of the European Council with the participation of the Members of the European Council and other strategic partners in an era of ‘polylateralism’² and to convene its first annual meeting before the end of 2019;
- Agreeing to convene in 2020 a European Youth Convention on Agenda 2030 with the objective to contribute to the EU Action Plan 2020-2030 and to related treaty reviews. As the European Partners for the Environment and its allies, we aim to achieve this by contributing to development and justice through the Four Big ‘I’s of transformation described by the German Advisory Council on Global Change.³

Together with our partners all over the world, we are calling for a movement - uniting values of economic development, social equality and justice, environmental integrity and solidarity - to lead a new social, economic and financial model, relaunching “A European Vision” in the service of humanity and of our European society.

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019). 'The European Union: A People Centred Agenda'. 2 'The conduct of relations between official entities and at least one unofficial, non-state entity in which there is a reasonable expectation of systematic relationships, involving some form of reporting, communication, negotiation, and representation' in Wiseman, G. (1999). “Polylateralism” and New Modes of Global Dialogue” 3 innovation, infrastructure, investment, inclusion



The World's Women 2015 - <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Data.html>

MOVING FORWARD ON GENDER STATISTICS

Availability of data for gender analysis has increased

Relevant, reliable and timely gender statistics—cutting across traditional fields of statistics, including education, health and employment as well as emerging ones, such as climate change— are essential to understanding the differences between women and men in a given society. Such information is critical to policy- and decision-makers and to advancing progress towards gender equality.

The World's Women 2015 has benefited from the growing availability of gender statistics. Because more countries are conducting household surveys, in addition to regular population censuses, the majority of them can produce at present data disaggregated by sex for basic indicators on population, families, health, education and work. Many more surveys are presently available on critical areas such as violence against women: 89 countries collected data on this topic through household surveys during the period 2005–2014 compared to only 44 in the previous decade. Furthermore, gender statistics based on administrative records are becoming more widely available. For instance, statistics on women's representation in lower or single houses of parliament are available for 190 countries in 2015, an increase from 167 countries in 1997.

... yet major gaps still exist in terms of availability and comparability

Despite improvements over time, gender statistics are still far from satisfactory and many gaps exist in terms of data availability, quality, comparability and timeliness, even for basic indicators. For example, according to the latest data reporting at the international level, only 46 countries were able to provide reliable statistics on deaths disaggregated by sex, based on civil registration systems, at least once for the period 2011–2014. Less than half of all developing countries have information disaggregated by sex on labour force participation, unemployment, status in employment, and employment by occupation for at least two points over the period 2005–2014.

Measuring gender equality in areas such as environment and poverty is even more challenging. Links between gender and environment have been assessed based on qualitative or small-scale quantitative studies and cannot be extrapolated to a whole society or across countries. Household- level data on poverty, measured traditionally on the basis of either income or household consumption, do not account for the distribution of resources within households. Thus they do not allow for an assessment of poverty at the individual level, which is needed for the production of relevant gender statistics.

mostly due to differences in sources, definitions, concepts and methods used to obtain the data. For example, the comparability of data on earnings is affected greatly by the data source used. Establishment

surveys sometimes exclude workers in small enterprises and in the informal sector. Labour force surveys, although they cover all types of workers, have to rely on self-reported wages, which may introduce reporting errors. Comparability of data is also affected by the concepts and methods used to produce them, including how questions are phrased. For instance, the way in which women are interviewed about violence may affect their willingness and capacity to disclose their experience, undermining the quality of the data produced and also their international comparability.

Even when information is collected, it is often not tabulated and disseminated to allow for meaningful gender analysis

Yet another shortcoming is the fact that the information collected is often not exploited sufficiently for gender analysis. Data are frequently tabulated and disseminated in categories that are not relevant or are too broad to adequately reflect gender issues. For example, assessing gender segregation in the labour market is often hampered by the lack of employment data in detailed occupational categories. Another example of the underutilization of existing data relates to information collected through time-use surveys. Although data are most often collected by detailed categories of activities, published data on time use are often limited to broad categories only. Separate categories for time spent on collecting water and firewood, for example, are not often available, making it difficult to assess the impact of these specific activities on the work burden of women and men.

New statistical standards and methods have been developed

New methodological guidelines have been produced by international organizations, with the aim to improve the availability, quality and international comparability of gender statistics. The most recent guidelines include the Handbook on Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics (2015); Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women (2014); Methodological Guidelines for the Gender Analysis of National Population and Housing Census Data (2014); and the Handbook on Developing Gender Statistics: A Practical Tool (2010). Another ongoing effort, undertaken by the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project, is developing methodologies to measure asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective. The project is being implemented by the UN Statistics Division in collaboration with UN-Women. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization is developing statistical guidelines to collect data on work. The guidelines reflect the definition adopted by the 2013 International Conference of Labour Statisticians, encompassing all forms of work, including own-use production of goods and services, which is particularly relevant for gender analysis.

Another achievement towards the standardization of methods and harmonization of indicators is the 2013 agreement by the United Nations Statistical Commission to use the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators,

consisting of 52 quantitative and 11 qualitative indicators, as a guide for national production and international compilation of gender statistics.

... but additional guidance is needed

Statistical methods and gender statistics are still lagging behind in many subject areas including: decision-making positions in local government and in the private sector; poverty based on individual-level data; the quality of education and lifelong learning; the gender pay gap; social protection measures, including pensions and unemployment benefits; universal health coverage; and the impact of natural disasters. Producing relevant, accurate and timely gender statistics remains a challenge for many countries. Initiatives to develop statistical standards and national capacity, particularly on integrating a gender dimension into official statistics, should therefore be undertaken on a priority basis.

European Union

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2016/579075/EPRS_ATA\(2016\)579075_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2016/579075/EPRS_ATA(2016)579075_EN.pdf)

“When the European Union endorsed 'gender mainstreaming' as its official policy approach to gender equality, it was seen as a potentially revolutionary means of accelerating progress and achieving real equality between the sexes. Twenty years on, there are concerns about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels, and a possible downgrading of its status.”

Inter-Parliamentary Union - IPU

<https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-03/gender-equality-glance>

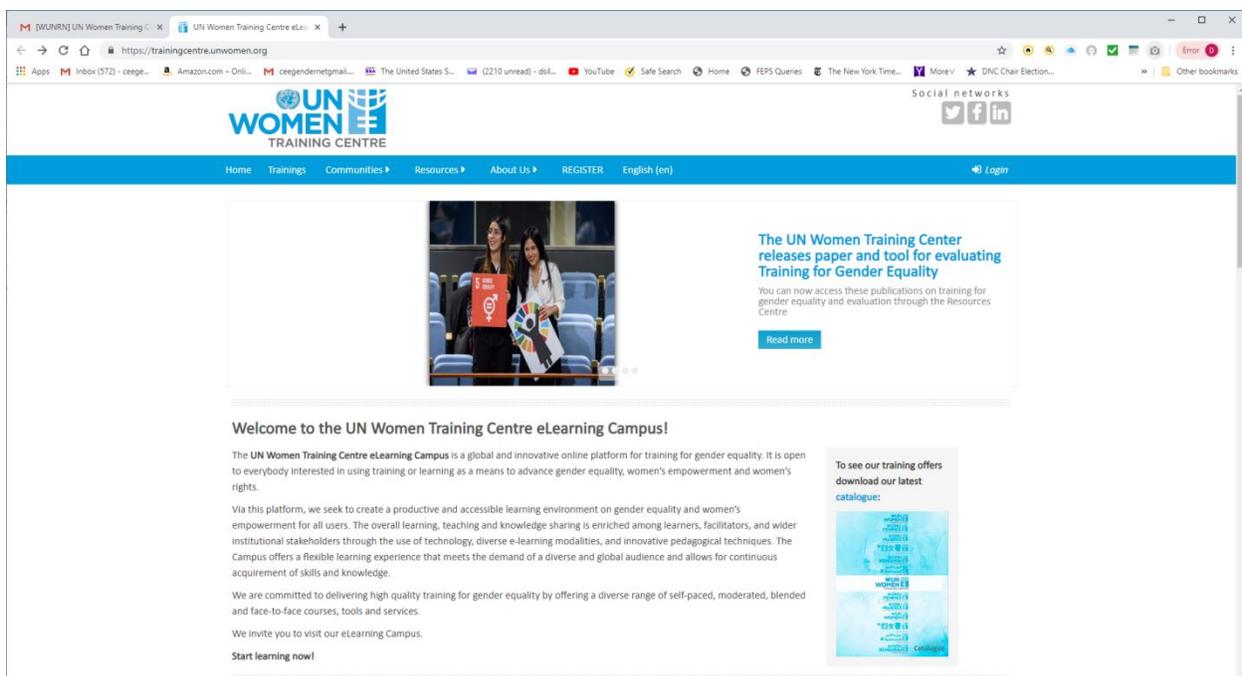
Women account for half the world's population yet most parliaments are dominated by men. With a global average of only 24% of women parliamentarians, equality is still a long way off and current progress is far too slow. Read the full report.

UN Women Training Centre

<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/>

The **UN Women Training Centre eLearning Campus** is a global and innovative online platform for training for gender equality. It is open to everybody interested in using training or learning as a means to advance gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights.

We are committed to deliver high quality training for gender equality by offering a diverse range of self-paced, moderated, blended and face-to-face courses, tools and services.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the UN Women Training Centre. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the UN Women logo and the text 'TRAINING CENTRE'. Below this is a blue navigation bar with links for Home, Trainings, Communities, Resources, About Us, REGISTER, and English (en). A 'Login' button is also present. The main content area features a large image of two women holding a red book titled 'Training for Gender Equality'. To the right of the image is a text box with the headline 'The UN Women Training Center releases paper and tool for evaluating Training for Gender Equality' and a 'Read more' button. Below this is a 'Welcome to the UN Women Training Centre eLearning Campus!' section with a paragraph of text. To the right of this text is a 'To see our training offers download our latest catalogue:' section with a 'Download' button and a small image of the catalogue cover.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-budgeting-mainstreaming-gender-eu-budget-and-macroeconomic-policy-framework>

EU - Gender Equality Deserves MORE Than 1% of the EU's Structural & Investment Funds - Report + Analysis

Gender budgeting. Mainstreaming gender into the EU budget and macroeconomic policy framework

This report presents the main research results of the gender budgeting (GB) projects implemented by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The projects supported European Union (EU) and EU Member State policy makers and practitioners to take a consistent and systematic approach to implementing gender budgeting as the main gender mainstreaming tool within EU economic governance and budgetary processes.

Privatization & Women's Human Rights

https://world-psi.org/uncsw/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/FactSheetCSW63_Privatisation.pdf

Privatisation and Women's Human Rights Factsheet for CSW63 advocacy

Privatisation refers to any means by which services, infrastructure and functions traditionally or ideally performed by government are wholly or partially owned, provided, managed or delivered by private actors / privately employed workers. It includes public-private partnerships, corporatisation of public services, outsourcing of public service employment and euphemisms like 'asset recycling'. This factsheet focuses on the privatisation of services that are essential in the advancement of women's human rights, primarily: healthcare, education, water and sanitation, energy, emergency services, public administration, criminal justice and transport.

Key Points

- Privatisation has a discriminatory effect because quality public services are essential in overcoming exclusion, systemic discrimination and because women's reduced economic and political power means they are often less likely to afford privatised services.

- When public services are diminished and delivered at a profit, women are forced to fill in the gaps of delivering health and social care, acquiring water and energy and thereby provide an unpaid subsidy to the state and economy. Consequently, privatisation increases the gendered burden of unpaid work.
 - It is the responsibility of the state to ensure women enjoy their human rights. Outsourcing that obligation to corporations leads to rights violations and is fundamentally at odds with the principles that underpin human rights and democratic obligations.
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<https://www.betterhelp.com/advice/stereotypes/22-ways-to-overcome-gender-stereotypes/>

22 Ways to Overcome Gender Stereotypes

Reviewer [Audrey Kelly, LMFT](#)

Many people feel that gender equality has already come to most industrialized countries. Nothing could be further than the truth. Instead, women and men alike deal with gender stereotypes at work, in their communities, and even at home. What can you do to overcome these stereotypes? First, you need to understand what they are and why they matter. Following are 22 ways to move beyond gender inequality.

2019 NGO CSW NY Guide:

<https://www.ngocsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NGO-Main-Guide-2019-Supplement-5.pdf>

In 2020, the UN will celebrate the anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the massive gathering of more than 50,000 participants that took place in Beijing 25 years ago. 189 governments agreed on the Beijing Platform for Action, an historic consensus document that called for action on “Twelve Critical Areas of Concern.” Then—as today—this document stands as the gold standard for policies to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment. While incredible advancements have been made in many areas regarding the health, safety, economic potential and well-being of women and girls, our work is far from done. Some countries have made effective efforts to increase women’s rights, while other countries have taken steps back. Given these challenges, we must seize this opportunity to speed up and scale up progress. The commemoration of “Beijing Plus 25” will include a special event during the September session of the UN General Assembly in New York. Leading up to this event, other UN meetings in the regions and at the national level, governments--in consultation with civil society--will have a chance to assess progress, identify challenges and seek better ways to fulfill promises made in the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2020, the feminist and women’s movements can also put into practice a

motto expressed during the Beijing women's conference that "All issues are women's issues." We must make our voices heard at the High Level Political Forum and its review of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 75th anniversary of the UN, the Human Rights Council, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security; the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015); the Paris Agreement on climate change (2015), among others. We must build bridges with social movements working for human rights, climate justice, rights of indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, as well as the older women, youth and girls. We must also make sure that governments implement the Beijing Platform for Action-- in its entirety -- along with human rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. By ushering in a year of exploration, Beijing Plus 25 can launch innovative ideas. Together, we can work towards movement building through consultations and collective action around NGO parallel reports. Unlike "shadow reports," our reports can "praise and raise" achievements by both civil society and governments while providing critical analyses and new data. NGOs can also partner with projects such as the Online Books. "My Memories and Messages for the Next Generation" (Book I) will be written by participants of the UN FWCW in Beijing. Young women in the arts will express their issues, dreams and hopes through their own stories and media in Book II, "My Issues, Hopes and Dreams." Join us on this exciting journey. (See: www.ngocsw.org).

DELIVERED BY WOMEN, LED BY MEN: A GENDER AND EQUITY ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORKFORCE

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/311322/9789241515467-eng.pdf?ua=1>

Demographic changes and rising health care demands are projected to drive the creation of 40 million new jobs by 2030 in the global health and social sector. In parallel, there is an estimated shortfall of 18 million health workers, primarily in low- and middle-income countries, required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and universal health coverage. The global mismatch between health worker supply and demand is both a cause for concern and a potential opportunity. Since women account for 70% of the health and social care workforce, gaps in health worker supply will not be closed without addressing the gender dynamics of the health and social workforce.

The female health and social care workers who deliver the majority of care in all settings face barriers at work not faced by their male colleagues. This not only undermines their own well-being and livelihoods, it also constrains progress on gender equality and negatively impacts health systems and the delivery of quality care. In November 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) established the Gender Equity Hub (GEH), co-chaired by WHO and Women in Global Health under the umbrella of the Global Health Workforce Network.

The GEH brings together key stakeholders to strengthen gender-transformative policy guidance and implementation capacity for overcoming gender biases and inequalities in the global health and social workforce, in support of the implementation of the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030, and the Working for Health five-year action plan (2017–2021) of WHO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Executive summary In 2018, the GEH identified and reviewed over 170 studies in a literature review of gender and equity in the global health workforce, with a focus on four themes: occupational segregation; decent work free from bias, discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment; gender pay gap; and gender parity in leadership. This report will inform the next phase of the work of the Global Health Workforce Network GEH, which seeks to use these research findings to advocate gender-transformative policy and action. Key findings from the four thematic areas of the review

The key findings in each of the four thematic areas covered by the GEH review are summarized in Figure ES.1 and covered in detail in Chapters 3–6 of this report. Overarching findings and conclusions from the review.

Feminism against capitalism

<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/02/aschoff-socialism-feminism-clinton-sandberg-class-race-wage-gap-care-work-labor/>

By [Nicole M. Aschoff](#) – 16 March 2016

Socialism and feminism have a long, and at times fraught, relationship.

Socialists are often accused of overemphasizing class — of placing the structural divide between those who must work for a wage to survive and those who own the means of production at the center of every analysis.

Even worse they ignore or underplay how central other factors — like sexism, racism, or homophobia — are in shaping hierarchies of power. Or they admit the importance of these negative norms and practices, but argue that they can be rooted out only after we get rid of capitalism.

Meanwhile, socialists accuse mainstream feminists of focusing too much on individual rights rather than collective struggle and ignoring the structural divides between women. They accuse mainstream feminists of aligning themselves with bourgeois political projects that diminish the agency of working women or pushing middle-class demands that ignore the needs and desires of poor women, both in the Global North and South.

These are old debates that date back to the mid-nineteenth century and the First International, and revolve around deeply political questions of power and the contradictions of capitalist society.

Muddying the waters further is how the politics of feminism is complicated by the historical nature of capitalism — the way sexism is integrated into both processes of profit-making and the reproduction of the capitalist system as a whole is dynamic.

This dynamism is very apparent today when a female presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, is the top choice among US millionaires. But the divide between socialism and feminism is ultimately an unnecessary one.

Why Socialists Should Possibly Be Feminists

The oppression of women, both in US society and globally, is multi-dimensional — gender divides in the political, economic, and social spheres underscore why, to free ourselves from the tyranny of capital, socialists must also be feminists.

The possibility of a woman finally becoming US president highlights the stark lack of female leadership, both in the US and around the world. Despite powerful women like Angela Merkel, Christine LeGarde, Janet Yellen, and Dilma Rousseff, the gender balance in politics and the corporate world remains highly skewed. Only 4 percent of CEOs at Fortune 500 firms are women and most corporate boards have few if any female members.

Globally, 90 percent of heads of state are men, and at the 2015 World Economic Forum only 17 percent of the 2,500 representatives present were women, while 2013 marked the first time women held twenty seats in the US Senate.

Unlike many countries, women in the United States have, roughly speaking, equal rights and legal protection, as well as access to similar education, nutrition, and health care as men. But gender divides are apparent across society.

Women outperform men in higher education, but they don't achieve comparable levels of success or wealth and remain stereotyped and underrepresented in the popular media. Attacks on women's reproductive rights continue unabated, and after a long, steady decline through the 1990s, rates of violence against women haven't budged since 2005.

At the same time, decisions about balancing home life and work life, in the face of ever-increasing housing and child care costs, are as difficult as ever. In the fifty years since the passage of the 1963 Equal Pay Act, women have entered the workforce en masse; today 60 percent of women work outside the home. Single and married mothers are even more likely to work, including 57 percent of mothers with children under the age of one.

But women who work full time still earn only 81 percent of what men do — a number inflated by faster declines in men's wages (aside from the college-educated) in recent years.

Pay gaps are matched by a gendered division of labor. The retail, service, and food sectors — the center of new job growth — are dominated by women, and the feminization of "care" work is even more pronounced. Despite recent gains, like the extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to domestic workers, care work is still seen as women's work and undervalued. Disproportionate numbers of caring jobs are low-paying, contingent gigs in which humiliation, harassment, assault, and wage theft are common.

In addition to these clear differences between the experiences of men and women in the US there are more insidious, long-range effects of sexism. Feminists like bell hooks argue that sexism and racism pervade all corners of society and that dominant narratives of power glorify white, heteronormative visions of life.

From birth, boys and girls are treated differently, and gender stereotypes introduced in the home, school, and everyday life are perpetuated throughout women's lives, shaping their identities and life choices.

Sexism also plays a less obvious, but critical, role in profit-making. From the beginning, capitalism has relied on unpaid labor outside the labor market (mainly in the home) that provides the essential ingredient for capital accumulation: workers — who must be created, clothed, fed, socialized, and loved.

This unpaid labor is highly gendered. While more men take part in household chores and child-rearing than in the past, social reproduction still falls primarily on women, who are expected to shoulder the heaviest burden of household tasks.

Most women also perform paid labor outside the home turning their work in the home into a “second shift.” In this way, women are doubly oppressed — exploited in the workplace and unrecognized as workers in the social reproduction of labor.

Why Feminists Should be Socialists

These persistent, cross-class gender divides — in the political, economic, and social spheres — fuel the dominant feminist viewpoint that sexism is a thing apart from capitalism, something that must be tackled separately.

Throughout numerous waves of feminist struggle, activists have pursued a variety of strategies for combating sexism and gender divides. Today, mainstream feminists gravitate toward a focus on putting women in power — both in the political and economic sphere — as a way to solve the range of problems women face, such as wage inequality, violence, work-life balance, and sexist socialization.

Prominent spokeswomen like Sheryl Sandberg, Hillary Clinton, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and many others advocate this “take-power” feminist strategy. Sandberg — one of the most influential proponents of this strategy — argues that women need to stop being afraid and start “disrupting the status quo.” If they do, she believes this generation can close the leadership gap and in doing so make the world a better place for all women.

The thrust of the take-power argument is that if women were in power they, unlike men, would take care to implement policies that benefit women and that cross-class gender divides in economic, political, and cultural spheres will only be eliminated if women hold an equal number of leadership positions to men.

The emphasis on individual advancement as the path to achieving the goals of feminism is not new, and has been critiqued by numerous feminists including Charlotte Bunch and Susan Faludi, who question the notion of sisterly solidarity as a remedy for deep-seated gender divides. As Faludi says, “You can’t change the world for women by simply inserting female faces at the top of an unchanged system of social and economic power.”

Socialist feminists like Johanna Brenner also point to how mainstream feminism glosses over deep tensions among women:

We can generously characterize as ambivalent the relationships between working-class women/poor women and the middle-class professional women whose jobs it is to uplift and regulate those who come to be defined as problematic — the poor, the unhealthy, the culturally unfit, the sexually deviant, the ill-educated. These class tensions bleed into feminist politics, as middle-class feminist advocates claim to represent working-class women.

So while it is certainly necessary to recognize how gendered contemporary society remains, it is also necessary to be clear-eyed about how to overcome these divides and, equally important, to recognize the limitations of a feminism that doesn't challenge capitalism.

Capital feeds on existing norms of sexism, compounding the exploitative nature of wage work. When women's ambitions and desires are silenced or undervalued, they are easier to take advantage of. Sexism is part of the company toolkit, enabling firms to pay women less — particularly women of color — and otherwise discriminate against them.

But even if we root out sexism, the inherent contradictions of capitalism will persist. It is important and necessary that women step into positions of power, but this won't change the fundamental divide between workers and owners — between women at the top and women at the bottom.

It won't change the fact that most women find themselves in precarious, low-wage jobs that present a far greater barrier to advancement and a comfortable life than sexism in the economic or political sphere. It won't change the power of the profit motive and the compulsion of companies to give workers as little as economic, social, and cultural norms will allow.

Of course, society is not reducible to the wage relation, and gender divides are real and persistent. Taking class seriously means anchoring the oppression of women within the material conditions in which they live and work while recognizing the role of sexism in shaping both women's work life and their home life.

The feminist movement — both its “social-welfare” incarnation and its radical contemporary — has made significant gains. The challenge now is twofold: to defend these hard-won victories and make it possible for all women to actually enjoy them, and to push forward with new, concrete demands that address the complex relationship between sexism and profit-making.

There is no simple answer to how to accomplish these twin goals. In the past, women have made the biggest gains by fighting for both women's rights and workers' rights simultaneously — linking the fight against sexism to the fight against capital.

As Eileen Boris and Anelise Orleck argue, during the 1970s and '80s, “trade union feminists helped launch a revitalized women’s movement that sparked new demands for women’s rights at home, on the job, and within unions.” Airline stewardesses, garment workers, clericals, and domestic workers challenged the male-dominated trade union movement (a woman didn’t sit on the AFL-CIO executive board until 1980) and in the process forged a new, more expansive feminism.

Trade union women created a new field of possibility by demanding not only higher wages and equal opportunity but also child care, flexible work schedules, pregnancy leave, and other gains usually overlooked or undervalued by their union brothers.

This is the direction that both socialists and feminists should be orienting themselves — toward struggles and demands that challenge both the drives of capital and the ingrained norms of sexism that are so deeply rooted under capitalism.

Struggles and demands that achieve this are concrete and are currently being fought for. For example, the struggle for single-payer healthcare — which would provide healthcare as a right to every person from cradle to grave regardless of their ability to pay — is a demand that undermines both sexism and the power of capital to control and repress worker agency. There are many other concrete short-term demands that blend the goals of feminism and socialism as well, including free higher education, free child care, and a universal basic income combined with a robust social safety net.

These reforms would lay the groundwork for more radical goals that would go far in rooting out sexism, exploitation, and the commodification of social life. For example, projects to increase collective, democratic control over institutions central to our home, school, and work lives — schools, banks, workplaces, city governments, and state and local agencies — would give all women and men more power, autonomy, and the possibility for a better life.

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Socialism and feminism have a long, and at times fraught, relationship.

Socialists are often accused of overemphasizing class — of placing the structural divide between those who must work for a wage to survive and those who own the means of production at the center of every analysis.

Even worse they ignore or underplay how central other factors — like sexism, racism, or homophobia — are in shaping hierarchies of power. Or they admit the importance of these negative norms and practices, but argue that they can be rooted out only after we get rid of capitalism.

Meanwhile, socialists accuse mainstream feminists of focusing too much on individual rights rather than collective struggle and ignoring the structural divides between women. They accuse mainstream feminists of aligning themselves with bourgeois political projects that diminish the agency of working women or pushing middle-class demands that ignore the needs and desires of poor women, both in the Global North and South.

These are old debates that date back to the mid-nineteenth century and the First International, and revolve around deeply political questions of power and the contradictions of capitalist society.

Muddying the waters further is how the politics of feminism is complicated by the historical nature of capitalism — the way sexism is integrated into both processes of profit-making and the reproduction of the capitalist system as a whole is dynamic.

This dynamism is very apparent today when a female presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, is the top choice among US millionaires. But the divide between socialism and feminism is ultimately an unnecessary one.

Why Socialists Should Possibly Be Feminists

The oppression of women, both in US society and globally, is multi-dimensional — gender divides in the political, economic, and social spheres underscore why, to free ourselves from the tyranny of capital, socialists must also be feminists.

The possibility of a woman finally becoming US president highlights the stark lack of female leadership, both in the US and around the world. Despite powerful women like Angela Merkel, Christine LeGarde, Janet Yellen, and Dilma Rousseff, the gender balance in politics and the corporate world remains highly skewed. Only 4 percent of CEOs at Fortune 500 firms are women and most corporate boards have few if any female members.

Globally, 90 percent of heads of state are men, and at the 2015 World Economic Forum only 17 percent of the 2,500 representatives present were women, while 2013 marked the first time women held twenty seats in the US Senate.

Unlike many countries, women in the United States have, roughly speaking, equal rights and legal protection, as well as access to similar education, nutrition, and health care as men. But gender divides are apparent across society.

Women outperform men in higher education, but they don't achieve comparable levels of success or wealth and remain stereotyped and underrepresented in the popular media. Attacks on women's reproductive rights continue unabated, and after a long, steady decline through the 1990s, rates of violence against women haven't budged since 2005.

At the same time, decisions about balancing home life and work life, in the face of ever-increasing housing and child care costs, are as difficult as ever. In the fifty years since the passage of the 1963 Equal Pay Act, women have entered the workforce en masse; today 60 percent of women work outside the home. Single and married mothers are even more likely to work, including 57 percent of mothers with children under the age of one.

But women who work full time still earn only 81 percent of what men do — a number inflated by faster declines in men's wages (aside from the college-educated) in recent years.

Pay gaps are matched by a gendered division of labor. The retail, service, and food sectors — the center of new job growth — are dominated by women, and the feminization of "care" work is even more pronounced. Despite recent gains, like the extension of the Fair Labor Standards Act to domestic workers, care work is still seen as women's work and undervalued. Disproportionate numbers of caring jobs are low-paying, contingent gigs in which humiliation, harassment, assault, and wage theft are common.

In addition to these clear differences between the experiences of men and women in the US there are more insidious, long-range effects of sexism. Feminists like bell hooks argue that sexism and racism pervade all corners of society and that dominant narratives of power glorify white, heteronormative visions of life.

From birth, boys and girls are treated differently, and gender stereotypes introduced in the home, school, and everyday life are perpetuated throughout women's lives, shaping their identities and life choices.

Sexism also plays a less obvious, but critical, role in profit-making. From the beginning, capitalism has relied on unpaid labor outside the labor market (mainly in the home) that provides the essential ingredient for capital accumulation: workers — who must be created, clothed, fed, socialized, and loved.

This unpaid labor is highly gendered. While more men take part in household chores and child-rearing than in the past, social reproduction still falls primarily on women, who are expected to shoulder the heaviest burden of household tasks.

Most women also perform paid labor outside the home turning their work in the home into a “second shift.” In this way, women are doubly oppressed — exploited in the workplace and unrecognized as workers in the social reproduction of labor.

Why Feminists Should Possibly Be Socialists

These persistent, cross-class gender divides — in the political, economic, and social spheres — fuel the dominant feminist viewpoint that sexism is a thing apart from capitalism, something that must be tackled separately.

Throughout numerous waves of feminist struggle, activists have pursued a variety of strategies for combating sexism and gender divides. Today, mainstream feminists gravitate toward a focus on putting women in power — both in the political and economic sphere — as a way to solve the range of problems women face, such as wage inequality, violence, work-life balance, and sexist socialization.

Prominent spokeswomen like Sheryl Sandberg, Hillary Clinton, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and many others advocate this “take-power” feminist strategy. Sandberg — one of the most influential proponents of this strategy — argues that women need to stop being afraid and start “disrupting the status quo.” If they do, she believes this generation can close the leadership gap and in doing so make the world a better place for all women.

The thrust of the take-power argument is that if women were in power they, unlike men, would take care to implement policies that benefit women and that cross-class gender divides in economic, political, and cultural spheres will only be eliminated if women hold an equal number of leadership positions to men.

The emphasis on individual advancement as the path to achieving the goals of feminism is not new, and has been critiqued by numerous feminists including Charlotte Bunch and Susan Faludi, who question the notion of sisterly solidarity as a remedy for deep-seated gender divides. As Faludi says, “You can’t change the world for women by simply inserting female faces at the top of an unchanged system of social and economic power.”

Socialist feminists like Johanna Brenner also point to how mainstream feminism glosses over deep tensions among women:

We can generously characterize as ambivalent the relationships between working-class women/poor women and the middle-class professional women whose jobs it is to uplift and regulate those who come to be defined as problematic — the poor, the unhealthy, the culturally unfit, the sexually deviant, the ill-educated. These class tensions bleed into feminist politics, as middle-class feminist advocates claim to represent working-class women.

So while it is certainly necessary to recognize how gendered contemporary society remains, it is also necessary to be clear-eyed about how to overcome these divides and, equally important, to recognize the limitations of a feminism that doesn't challenge capitalism.

Capital feeds on existing norms of sexism, compounding the exploitative nature of wage work. When women's ambitions and desires are silenced or undervalued, they are easier to take advantage of. Sexism is part of the company toolkit, enabling firms to pay women less — particularly women of color — and otherwise discriminate against them.

But even if we root out sexism, the inherent contradictions of capitalism will persist. It is important and necessary that women step into positions of power, but this won't change the fundamental divide between workers and owners — between women at the top and women at the bottom.

It won't change the fact that most women find themselves in precarious, low-wage jobs that present a far greater barrier to advancement and a comfortable life than sexism in the economic or political sphere. It won't change the power of the profit motive and the compulsion of companies to give workers as little as economic, social, and cultural norms will allow.

Of course, society is not reducible to the wage relation, and gender divides are real and persistent. Taking class seriously means anchoring the oppression of women within the material conditions in which they live and work while recognizing the role of sexism in shaping both women's work life and their home life.

The feminist movement — both its “social-welfare” incarnation and its radical contemporary — has made significant gains. The challenge now is twofold: to defend these hard-won victories and make it possible for all women to actually enjoy them, and to push forward with new, concrete demands that address the complex relationship between sexism and profit-making.

There is no simple answer to how to accomplish these twin goals. In the past, women have made the biggest gains by fighting for both women's rights and workers' rights simultaneously — linking the fight against sexism to the fight against capital.

As Eileen Boris and Anelise Orleck argue, during the 1970s and '80s, “trade union feminists helped launch a revitalized women’s movement that sparked new demands for women’s rights at home, on the job, and within unions.” Airline stewardesses, garment workers, clericals, and domestic workers challenged the male-dominated trade union movement (a woman didn’t sit on the AFL-CIO executive board until 1980) and in the process forged a new, more expansive feminism.

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UN WORKING GROUP ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN LAW & IN PRACTICE

Statement on End of Mission to Greece -

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24471&LangID=E>

GREECE MUST PUT GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RECOVERY

GENEVA / ATHENS (12 April 2019) – Greece has a unique opportunity to simultaneously strengthen its economy and drive progress on women’s human rights by prioritising gender equality in its social and economic recovery, says a group of UN independent experts.

"Greece has established a strong legal and institutional framework for advancing gender equality. We welcome all measures to boost women’s participation in political, social and economic life," said the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law and Practice, presenting a statement after visiting the country.

“The country is now at a critical point of transition after an unprecedented and prolonged period of austerity measures, which have impacted profoundly on every aspect of people’s lives. The loss of jobs and rise in precarious work because of the financial crisis continue to disproportionately affect women, rendering them more vulnerable to poverty.

“As people in Greece highlighted to us, gender equality is a human right. It is not a luxury for better times. It must be placed at the heart of the country’s economic and social recovery.”

The experts said Greece was lagging behind other countries in the European Union on women’s rights despite legal and policy frameworks being in place, because of poor implementation, the persistence of discrimination and the lingering impacts of the crisis and austerity measures.

“Currently, Greece has one of the lowest rates of women’s employment in the European Union and is the lowest ranking country in the Gender Equality Index for EU countries. The situation for marginalised groups, such as migrant and Roma women, is even worse,” the experts said.

The experts also noted that the law in relation to maternity protection was not being implemented uniformly, and expressed concern about ongoing discrimination based on pregnancy and family

responsibilities, as well as the persistence of a gender pay gap and the absence of women in leadership roles.

“We have also observed challenges in providing adequate support to women who have suffered violence, and are particularly concerned about the recent retrogressive proposal to amend the Criminal Code concerning the definition of rape,” they said.

“A concerted effort is now needed for implementation, monitoring and accountability of measures to address the issues, as well as the allocation of adequate resources for social protection and other services, particularly steps aimed at reducing women’s unpaid care workload and in efforts to prevent gender-based violence.

“Efforts to change current social norms and gender stereotypes through the education system and the media are also critical. Without strong intervention, the opportunity to accelerate the economic recovery through women’s equal participation in the social and economic recovery of Greece will not be realised.”

The experts called for Greece to prioritise the strengthening of its institutional mechanisms such as the General Secretariat for Gender Equality to support the new substantive gender equality law, the Gender Equality National Action Plan and the Ombudsman. They also proposed the use of targets and data collection.

The experts added: “We commend the government for its commitment to upholding the human rights of the unprecedented number of migrants and refugees who have arrived since 2015. However, we are concerned about the serious challenges and gaps in practice. We witnessed the particular vulnerability of women and were concerned about their safety and access to health services. ”

The Working Group delegation visited Athens, Thessaloniki and Lesbos and met national and local Government officials, as well as representatives of State institutions and civil society organisations and individuals. They also visited a school, a prison and a camp for migrants and refugees.

The experts will submit their full report to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2020. Their findings will inform national and international efforts to advance gender equality and the protection of human rights for women and girls across the world.