

Dear TWF friends

"It's the women who actually are the first victims of environmental degradation" – Wangari Maathai, environmental activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate

The United Nations has designated April 22 as International Mother Earth Day. On this occasion, we would like to highlight how environmental issues are linked to gender issues, from how the problems affect women to how women play an important role in green movements.

Environmental degradation takes a heavy toll on women, particularly poor women in developing countries. Studies have [shown](#) that women are more likely than men to be affected by climate change: 80% of people displaced by climate change are women. In many parts of the world, it is women and girls who bear the responsibility to fetch water. And when water is scarce, they have to walk long distances – spending hours or even days – looking for water.

In a modern city like Hong Kong, women are still hit hard by environmental problems. A recent Civic Exchange [study](#) on PM2.5 – particulate matters from air pollution that are very harmful to human health – showed surprising results: PM2.5 exposure at home was significantly higher than in the office, and even slightly higher than on public transport. With women still shouldering the bulk of housework, this means women – from housewives to domestic workers – are more susceptible to the high indoor air pollution at home. Hong Kong is also [struggling](#) with millions of tonnes of rubbish, with landfill sites expected to hit the saturation point by 2020.

While the Government has been criticised for lack of regulations in tackling environmental problems, women in Hong Kong have been picking up the pieces and leading the charge in creating green initiatives. Philanthropist Gigi Tung's Food Angel collects 4,000 kg of edible surplus food that would otherwise go to the landfills every day and turns it into 6,000 meals for the underprivileged. Ada Yip, alumna of TWF's Mentoring Programme, serves as CEO for social start-up [Urban Spring](#) which aims to build a network of fresh water refill stations across Hong Kong to reduce single-use plastic bottles. Tamsin Thornburrow founded [Live Zero](#), the city's first zero-waste and packaging-free grocery store. In fashion-conscious Hong Kong, charity Redress, founded by Christina Dean, [seeks](#) to promote environmental sustainability and encourage manufacturers and consumers to reduce fashion waste. Christine Loh, who sits on TWF's advisory board, co-founded and led public policy and environmental think tank Civic Exchange before she served as Undersecretary for Environment from 2012 to 2017.

Studies show there is a [correlation](#) between gender equality and environmental protection. Countries with more female legislators, for example, are more likely to set aside protected lands and ratify international environmental treaties.

On Earth Day, TWF pays tribute to all eco women warriors of Hong Kong. We can all start by doing something small: reduce household waste, take public transport, and conserve energy and water. Have a green week!

As usual we would love to hear from you. Get in touch at Fiona.Nott@twfhk.org.

Have a great week.

Fiona Nott
 CEO, The Women's Foundation

TWF PROGRAMME UPDATES



Girls Go Tech Teacher Workshop

Last Wednesday, we were delighted to partner with HKT education to run a teacher workshop for around 60 teachers from United Christian College. Thank you to the HKT team for showcasing hands-on tools for STEM education and inspiring the teachers with the latest developments in the STEM education field.



Girls Go Tech Company Visit

Last Friday, around 40 GGT participants from Pope Paul VI College enjoyed a company visit to State Street, during which they learned how technology is applied to facility control and security, and how technology fosters



workplace inclusion and diversity. Many thanks to the passionate volunteers from State Street for hosting the visit and providing career planning advice and encouragement to the girls.



Mentoring Programme - Mentors Workshop on Influence

Last Tuesday, the Mentoring Programme held a mentors-only session on the topic of "Expanding your Influence" where Dr. Alicia Fortinberry of Fortinberry Murray shared how to use authentic power to express your own functional needs and boundaries, how to persuade your immediate superiors, how to coach upwards and how to empower others to ensure the right decisions are made at the top. Many thanks to Scotiabank for hosting the session and to Dr. Alicia Fortinberry for facilitating the session.



Mentoring Programme - Online Presence Part 2 Workshop

Yesterday evening, our mentors and protégés participated in the second of the two-part Online Presence workshops to identify the key components of a polished and professional online presence. The session built on the insights shared in the first session with participants having the opportunity to once again take part in an interactive workshop whilst receiving feedback from the facilitators and their peers. Thank you to Martin Cerullo for facilitating the session and to Bloomberg for hosting.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Startup Launchpad Conference

Last week, Jo Hayes, TWF's Director of Pipeline Initiatives shared the stage with an impressive line up of Women in Tech at the Startup Launchpad, Global Sources Trade Fair at AsiaWorldExpo. Together with Holly Hamilton | Taiwan Startup Stadium, Jessie Lam | Brinc.io, Ambar Amleh | Ibtikar Fund, Ayu Putri | TCL and Tara Joseph | AmCham as moderator, they touched on some of the barriers Women in Tech face, the impact of the #MeToo movement on the industry and importantly, showcased some of the amazing achievements that these women have accomplished.



QUEST Early Career Women's Programme

Yesterday, TWF was invited to deliver a session for Quest as part of their day-long Early Career Women's Programme. TWF's Director of Pipeline Initiatives, Jo Hayes, presented on the topic of "How to Make Sponsorship & Mentorship Happen" sharing how they are different and the importance of both in the pursuit of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. She was then joined by our Mentoring Programme Alumni mentors for a group mentoring session focusing on Leadership Competencies. Thank you to our mentors Felicity McRobb, Kelly Liew, Fran Thompson, Maryann Tseng, Samantha Buttle, Carole Lewis and Barbara Leach-Walters for their participation and experience sharing.

WHAT WE'RE READING

Our top picks for recommended reading on the key trends and breaking stories on women and gender:

- [How These Major Companies Are Getting Equal Pay Right](#) (Fortune)
- [Why girls can be boyish but boys can't be girlish](#) (CNN)
- [Powering change: Women in innovation and creativity](#) (World Intellectual Property Organisation)
- [How To Build Gender-Balanced Teams](#) (Forbes)
- [Boys to Men: Teaching and Learning About Masculinity in an Age of Change](#) (NY Times)
- [Gender pay-gap data shows the future is far from female, in earnings at least](#) (SCMP)
- [Leading by example to close the gender pay gap](#) (CBS News)

We are following the latest developments on combatting sexual harassment. Key reports below:

- [Hong Kong needs a strong feminist movement, and not just for its women](#) (SCMP)
- [10 Powerful Women on How #MeToo Has Changed the Fight for Equal Pay](#) (Time)
- [America's Boards Are Still Afraid of #MeToo](#) (Bloomberg)
- [Thai women reject Songkran advice with 'don't tell me how to dress' campaign](#) (BBC)
- ['MeToo' incident has made me stronger, says Hong Kong hurdler Vera Lui five months after revelations of sexual abuse by a former coach](#) (SCMP)
- [In age of #MeToo, can there be forgiveness, second chances?](#) (Washington Post)

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