

Women Leadership during Covid-19 pandemic

Does gender really matter?

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Covid-19 pandemic is having disproportionate effects on women and girls

- Lack of access in **sexual** and **reproductive health services**.
- More likely to **lose their livelihoods**.
- **Lower salaries** than men (**24% less** on average) – pay gap.

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- **More exposed** to the virus due to their healthcare duties
- Spend **three times more hours** than men doing household chores, taking care of the children and the elder members of the family.
- Increasingly subjected to **sexual** and **gender- based violence**.

PANDEMIC MULTIPLIED THE ALREADY EXISTING INEQUALITIES

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More specifically, during COVID-19 pandemic:

- Increased **early childbearing, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, maternal deaths, exposure to STI including HIV.**
- **One in four women** are considering downshifting their careers or leaving the workforce entirely.
- Globally, between 2019 and 2020, women's employment declined by **4.2 per cent**, while men's employment declined by **3 per cent**. (ILO)
- Women are more likely than men to work in service occupations, including domestic work, restaurant service, retail, tourism and hospitality that require face-to-face interactions and **have been hit harder by the pandemic.**

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- Women make up **76 percent of healthcare workers**, and **78 percent of social workers**. Contrary to most people, they had to go to work daily while being exposed to the virus during their professional duties.
- Since the pandemic began, **56 per cent of women** and **51 per cent of men** have increased the time they spend on unpaid care work. On average, women have added **an extra 5.2 hours** on average per week for childcare, compared to **3.5 extra hours** for men.
- Even before coronavirus pandemic **1 in 3 women and girls** globally, experienced violence by an abusive partner in intimate and casual relationships. However, stay-at-home orders and movement restrictions left victims unsafe at home, experiencing increased GBV and IPV.

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COVID-19's EFFECTS ARE NOT GENDER NEUTRAL

Even though women and girls have been more negative affected by the pandemic, their voices in decision-making positions are absent

- On average women are **46 percent of public administrators** but hold only **31 percent of top leadership positions** and comprise only **30 percent of senior managers**.
- Only **8% of CEOs at fortune 500 companies** are female.

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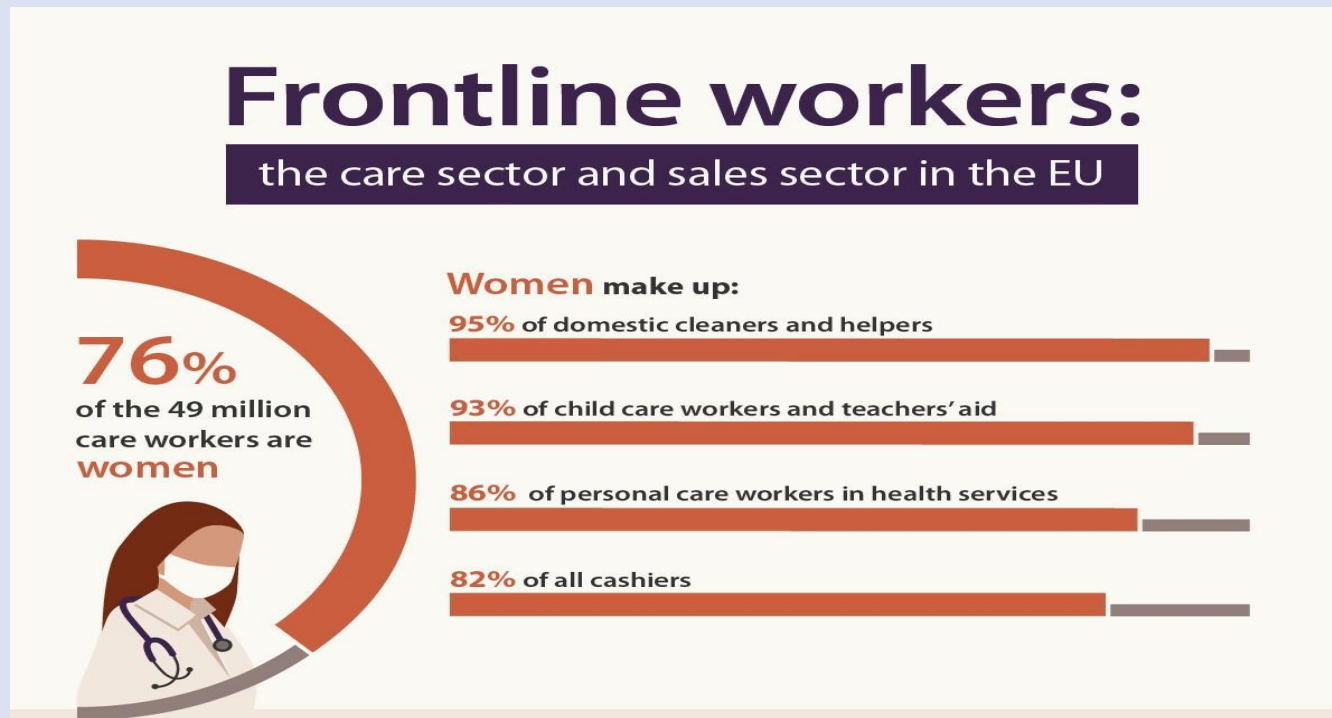
1 out of 4 women have
**not had the same
access to promotion
opportunities in their job
as their male peers***

* Excludes results from the opinion survey conducted by Focus 2030 and Women's Beliefs, covering 17 countries, Summer 2020.

Worldwide,
**only 36 % of
senior executives
in the private sector and
senior political leaders
are women.**

Sources: OECD Gender Inequality Index; Gender Index Report 2020

- Women make up **70% of global health and social care workforce** but only **24%** of them held **decision-making positions**.



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Moreover, according to UN WOMEN data:

- Only **three countries** globally have **50 per cent or more** women in parliament, and the **same amount** have no women in parliament at all.
- Women under 30 years- make up **less than one per cent** of parliamentarians globally.
- Women parliamentarians reported in one survey that they experienced nearly **twice as much** exposure to torture, ill treatment and acts of violence compared to men.
- Despite the plaudits given to many women leaders for their COVID-19 response, only **3.5 per cent** of the COVID-19 task forces examined in **87 countries** had gender parity.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATIONS IS FAR FROM EQUAL AND UNDER THREAT DURING BY THE PANDEMIC

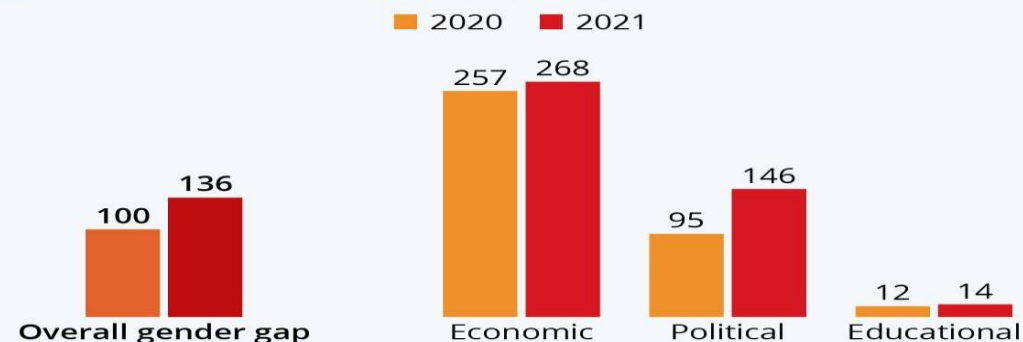
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STILL A MAN'S WORLD?



Moving Backwards on the Long Road to Gender Equality

Time needed to close the following global gender gaps based on current trends (in years)*



* Calculated using figures for the 107 countries covered by the source report since its inception.
Source: World Economic Forum



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Why is it important to have more women in leadership and decision-making positions?

- Women are more likely to **address the inequalities** that many other women and girls face and enforce policies in order to combat them.
- They **focus on women's needs** such as childcare healthcare services and practises to combat GBV.
- Research has shown that when women are in power there is often **less government corruption** and **political parties are more likely to work together**.

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- **Gender equality and diversity** are keys to improving government function and the quality of life for us all.
- Women leaders enforce **gender inclusive leadership management** of the coronavirus crises.
- Women in decision-making positions provide good **role models** for other women and girls, who aspire to participate actively in the public sphere.

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ACTIVITY

Men and women leaders around the world have demonstrated different leadership styles during Covid-19 pandemic. Read the article below and answer the following question:

In your opinion, those differences can be explained by the leader's physical and physiological features or there is an alternative explanation?

<https://www.uu.nl/en/news/success-of-women-leadership-during-covid-19-at-risk-of-essentialising-the-feminine>

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Despite the small number of women in positions of power, during pandemic crisis, women-led countries outperformed male-led countries, demonstrating successful management skills.

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Common characteristics that countries with female leaders have:

- Fewer death rates- **1.6 times** fewer deaths per capita.
- Faster respond – enforced **movement restrictions quicker**.
- More **empathetic**.
- **Communicating better** about the seriousness of the virus and the responsibility of citizens to adhere to pandemic protocols.

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- Less willing to take **health risks**, but more eager to take **economic risks**.
- **Deeper concern** for measures that affect women and children – delay school closure.
- Willing to **listen alternative views**.
- **Science-based measures**.

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Examples of women-led countries, that handled the pandemic successfully:

- Angela Merkel – Germany
- Jacinda Ardern – New Zealand
- Tsai Ing-Wen – Taiwan
- Mette Frederiksen – Denmark
- Erna Solberg – Norway
- Sanna Marin – Finland
- Katrín Jakobsdóttir – Iceland

The project is implemented by:



Angela Merkel – Germany

- Saw the **seriousness of the situation** from the outset.
- Established a very **effective track and tracing system** – laboratory testing.
- Maintained **clear, calm and regular communication** with the citizens.
- Imposed **strict measures of social distancing** but at the same time she encouraged the citizens to help those in need.
- **Science-based decisions.**

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Jacinda Ardern – New Zealand

- Took **quick action** with an early lockdown – limited spread of the virus.
- **Spoke directly** to the New Zealanders **with warmth and empathy**, helping soothe their anxieties and getting them on board with coronavirus restrictions.
- She and her ministers **took a 20% pay cut for six months** as a show of support for people affected by the economic disruption of covid-19.

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Tsai Ing-Wen – Taiwan



- She **had a governmental pandemic plan** including contact, tracing, quarantining and an abundance of masks.
- Her government quickly responded to early reports of the virus, preparing to **close borders, impose travel restrictions**, and set up **rigorous contact tracing** and **quarantine protocols**.
- Provide **transparent information** to the public.
- Donated **51 million masks** and **other medical supplies** to other countries struggling with the virus.

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Mette Frederiksen – Denmark

- Denmark was **one of the first countries to take action against the outbreak**, closing schools, limiting social gatherings, and in mid-March shutting its borders entirely.
- Held **press conferences for the youngest members of society**, answering questions such as “Can I still have a birthday party?” and “When can we visit our grandparents?”
- Danish government also developed a number of **economic aid packages** for companies, independent contractors, and cultural institutions.
- Preserved **balance between efficiency for public health and individual human rights**.
- **Widely praised** by her citizens.

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Erna Solberg – Norway

- Has been **answering children's questions** about the coronavirus pandemic.
- Acted decisively and **imposed a strict lockdown** on 12 March, the day the global pandemic was declared.
- Demonstrated **consistent respect for scientific advice**. For example, the Norwegian PM made a clear point in a CNN interview of letting scientists, not politicians, make critical decisions regarding medication against COVID-19.
- Was also more **open and transparent in her communication** with the public.

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Katrín Jakobsdóttir – Iceland

- Offered **free coronavirus testing for all of Iceland's citizens**. Iceland has tested **10% of its population**, which is a much higher figure than any other country in the world, including South Korea.
- Iceland is **the global leader** in sequencing samples of SARS-CoV-2.
- At every step, Iceland has followed the **science**, led by Prof Gudnason and his team, with politicians nowhere to be seen in the daily briefings.
- For every arriving person imposed **quarantine and mandatory testing at the airport**.
- It was rated **one of the top 14 safest countries in the world for COVID-19** and continues to have some of the **lowest deaths per capita**.

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Sanna Marine – Finland

- The Finnish government provided **adequate financial support** in conjunction with **legal instruments, monetary and fiscal tools** during the pandemic, thereby protecting jobs and incomes.
- The country **places first in the COVID Economic Recovery Index** (CERI), a global study of 122 countries that ranks countries on their ability to both absorb the pandemic's economic impact and emerge strongly once out the other side.
- Enforced an **early lockdown** and **strict border controls**.
- Implemented a **successful track and trace app** called “Corona Flask”.
- Finland has secured the **top spot in the UN's 2020 World Happiness Report** for the third consecutive year.

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LIMITATIONS

- Covid-19 pandemic is **still an ongoing** phenomenon.
- The **small number** of women leaders.
- The effectiveness of women leaders against the coronavirus should not be considered without **structural and leadership factors**.
- *What if countries led by women are managing the pandemic more effectively not because they are women but because the election of a women is a **reflection of societies** where there is a greater presence of women in many positions of power, in all sectors?*

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SUGGESTIONS FOR MORE EQUAL, DIVERSE AND GENDER SENSITIVE PUBLIC SPHERE:

- Funds to **employment** and **entrepreneurship** of women.
- Promote women in **STEM**.
- Policies and legislation must integrate the **gender dimension**
- Break the “**glass ceiling**”.

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- Engage **women frontline workers, women's groups** and **networks** in all decision making and policy spaces.
- Implement innovative **family friendly policies**.
- Break stereotypes by **showcasing role models**.
- Close **gender pay gap**.

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ProGender

A Digital Hub on Gender,
the COVID-19 Crisis and its Aftermath



Thank you for your attention!

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