

00:04

When we think of solutions to global warming, we generally think in terms of technology or policy, but other approaches are necessary which have to do with how our societies are structured. The most important of them is educating and empowering women and girls. Now, don't take my word for it. Its potential impact has been calculated by scientists. Like, for instance, those working on Project Drawdown, who focus on greenhouse gas emissions. They calculated that educating and empowering women and girls is one of the single most important things that we can do to confront carbon pollution. It may result in a total reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gases of over 80 billion tons, which is not far from double the total annual global emissions.

00:52

As a marine scientist and nature adventurer, I've witnessed firsthand how climate change impacts the world we live in. These climate catastrophes have almost taken my life. Like when I was nearly buried alive during an avalanche or swept away by a cyclone. Thankfully, I survived, but will our grandchildren call this planet home in 2050 or 2100 if our trajectory continues?

01:22

Coming from a male-dominated society, I've been asked all sorts of intrusive questions as to why I do what I do. "Can you even travel alone?" "Are you capable of climbing mountains with your heavier figure? I mean, are you fit enough?" "Do you think, as a woman, you're equipped to do this?" And the answer has always been, yes. I want to show my fellow Arab women that anything is possible, that being a woman should not be the end to your dreams, that you are so much more than what you are conditioned to be, and that you are indeed the solution to the crisis facing our planet.

02:00

In 2020, women made up about 40 percent of the global workforce. Women's shares in the Middle East are just under 25 percent. And these figures are way lower in the Gulf countries. And considering that women make up nearly half of the Gulf, imagine how women's equal involvement in the economy could enhance the overall growth of the region. Many labor laws state that there's no discrimination between men and women. Yet women's upward mobility is quite restricted and many senior positions are still being held by men. The cultural perception that women are more emotional or better suited to household responsibilities remains a serious obstacle for ambitious women who end up underemployed.

02:47

So what does that have to do with the climate? Well, access to education, employment and family planning is the condition for more vibrant lives for women and girls, for their families and their entire communities. They get to earn more money, achieve career goals and face fewer health issues. And not only that, they become more resilient and better equipped to manage both food and nature and to cope with the impacts of climate change.

03:17

Women are also the ones most at risk when it comes to impacts of climate catastrophes like cyclones, which have grown more frequent in my own home country of Oman. And why? Well because they're left with a charge of the children or elderly, they don't know how to swim, or simply because they never had basic resilience skills taught to them, like building a shelter, making a fire or even administering basic first aid. In fact, UN figures indicate that 80 percent of people displaced by climate change are women. And with more of these occurrences happening, my gender will face more of the brunt further preventing them from achieving their potential and protecting themselves.

04:01

This is why I founded WomeX, a platform where we teach women from my community negotiation skills to nurture a new wave of girl bosses in the region. WomeX is on a mission to laying the groundwork to combating climate change by bridging localized context and leadership training. By educating more women on these skills, we hope to equip them with the tools that allow them to control their careers and their lives, and to contribute significantly to the collective efforts necessary to confront carbon pollution. So far, we've supported a thousand and are working hard to achieve our ambitious goal of a million. Now, even though it has been on the global sustainability radar for years, gender parity as a climate solution has not received the attention it deserves. Now is the time to make it a priority. Now is the time to educate and empower all women and all girls.

05:03

Thank you.