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· YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ·

# #WeCo LEAD

· FOR COLLABORATIVE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ·



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du Luxembourg

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# Toolkit #1

## REFLECTIVE METHODS FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

**Toolkit #2 LAB ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT  
FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

**Toolkit #3 PATH OF THE RAIN DANCE**



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the world is only one creature

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THIS TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED TO BE INTERACTIVE,  
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THIS TOOLKIT IS OPEN SOURCE

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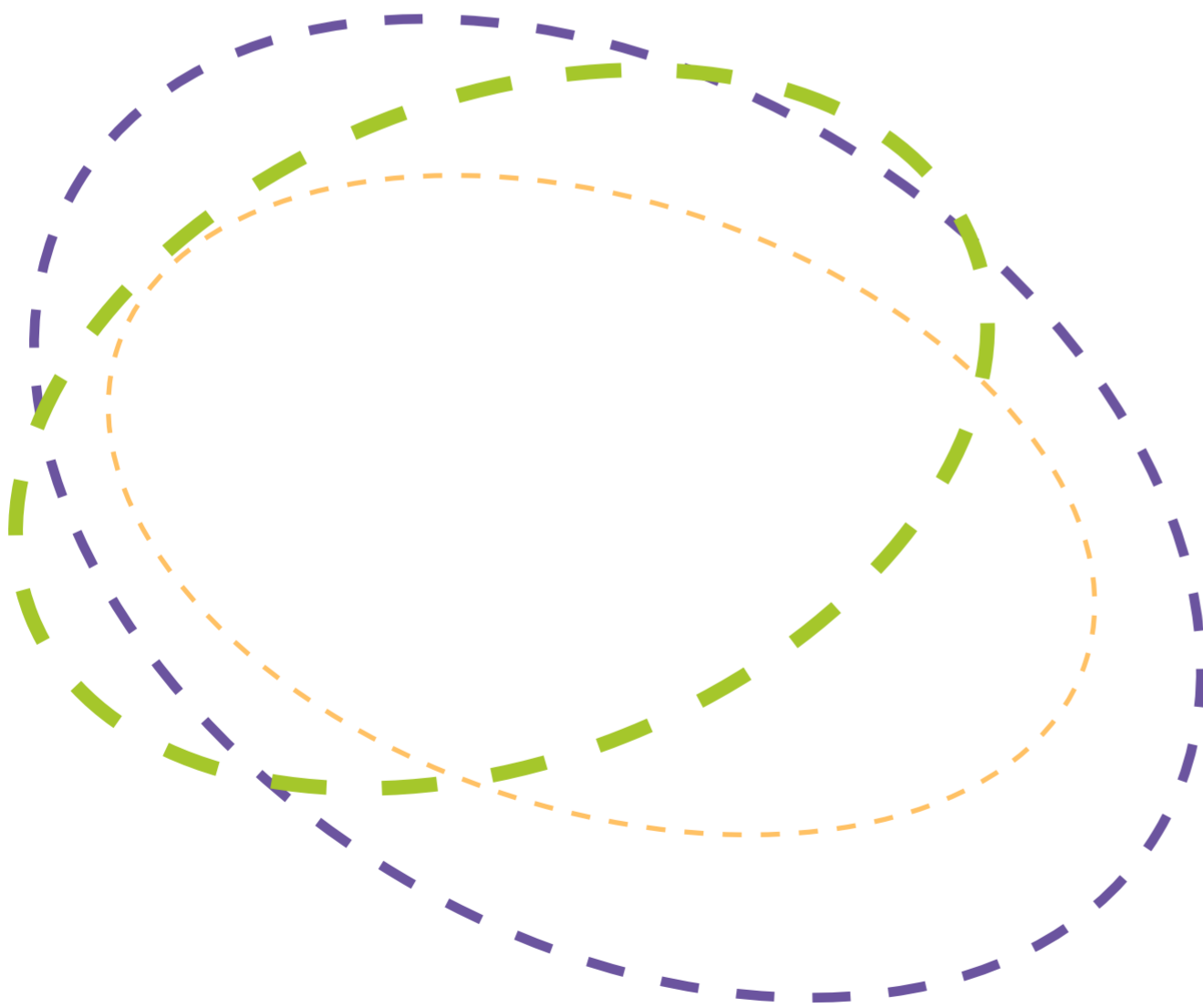
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# ABOUT THE #WeCoLead PROJECT

**#WeCoLead** is a KA2 Cooperation Partnership co-funded by the Erasmus+ of the European Union. Led by SwIdeas in Sweden, the project also gathers partnerships from Italy (CESIE), Greece ('COMMON), Hungary (SVF – Subjective Values Foundation), and Luxembourg (FSL – Formation et Sensibilisation de Luxembourg).

#WeCoLead is an innovative project based on the idea that young women are especially positioned to creatively and innovatively initiating processes to develop a sustainable new normal that is coped with gender equality and empowerment. Based on this, the project has two main goals: 1) to empower young women to act as leaders in shaping the sustainable new normal and fighting against climate change, acting as change-makers, and exploring their active citizenship and socio-economic potential 2) to promote sustainable internationalization by empowering the EU to act as leader in matters of biodiversity conservation, sustainable practices, and sustainable action. This project brings together the power of young women to act as leaders in the promotion of green and sustainable practices, interactive and innovative methodologies, and collaborative methods to produce results that will be relevant, useful, and empowering for young women and for youth workers.



# Project Result 2: #CoCreateTheToolkit

The second project result's activities have led to the co-creation of the #WeCoLead toolkit, that provides a step-by-step process with methodologies, theoretical modules for female leadership in environmental sustainability, and exercises for young women and youth workers. Inspired by the Civil Society Toolbox's structure and methodology, the #WeCoLead Toolkit is divided in 3 different parts, steps which aim to empower all young women, civil society representatives, stakeholders and youth workers on how to support female leadership in environmental sustainability matters. The Toolkit is based on the core idea that, as result of our research in the partner countries, female leadership and empowerment are intertwined processes that take place gradually and can be supported on different levels: 1) the individual level, 2) in small organizations or informal groups, and finally 3) at the structural and organizational level in established organizations.

Therefore, **3 parts of the #WeCoLead Toolkit are the following:**

1.

## REFLECTIVE TOOL FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

The tool aims to increase young women's leadership potential and give them a better understanding of what social structures affect our lives in terms of gender and environment. It contains self-reflection tips, relevant content, exercises on climate change issues and environmental sustainability. This tool is a response to one of the key needs identified, which is that young women often lack role models, access to educational platforms, knowledge on how to contribute to environmental sustainability through individual actions. Some also lack community support from other diverse groups of women, although the heterogeneity of this target group calls for an intersectional approach.

2.

## LAB ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The Lab addresses the expressed need for supportive activities in different fields (emotional, financial, household support) and advocacy for a wide range of gender equality, issues found both at home, in education and labor market. This Lab gives a planning activities opportunity for young women leaders and/or organizations that want to work on women's empowerment. The Lab stems from the idea that groups of young women and members of civil society need practical tools/methods and processes to support them in creating activities and projects in their local communities. The process of this Lab wishes to inspire and create the space where people come together to collectively focus, brainstorm, design and develop an implementation time-plan for their activity always taking into consideration the environmental sustainability aspect.

3.

## PATH OF THE RAIN DANCE – WORKING ON JOINT PROJECTS FOR COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY

The goal of the Path is to support small, medium, and bigger organizations in developing their way of working, organizational tools and methods, as well as providing support in advocacy projects. The path stems from the identified need for more advocacy on women's rights, raising awareness in our respective societies on climate change and how young women's leadership is an essential resource to reduce socioeconomic and environmental inequalities. Thus, advocacy requires strategic action, planning and organizational coordination. The Path provides guidance on tools, cards, and methods to conduct the following: an analysis of the local thematic you want to work on, a list of issues you want to tackle and a plan of activities to implement locally; An analysis of your allies, participants and local community and a strategic plan on how to reach out; A risk assessment for your activities and a plan on action; An evaluation strategy to manage results and points that you can use for advocacy action.

# BACKGROUND – WHY ARE WE HERE?

During the first part of our research within the [#WeCoLead project](#), the team conducted local workshops and gathered data through surveys in different EU countries (Sweden, Italy, Greece, Luxembourg, Hungary). We asked young women aged 18-30 what are the barriers that they face in their respective societies in terms of leadership: accessing the labour market, entering higher education, personal inspiration, entrepreneurship, and barriers to sustainable practices in businesses and daily life. We also asked civil society and organizational representative who work with young women the same questions: what barriers do they face in their work with young women that prevent them from having a social and environmental impact?

Although the results had differences in the national contexts, many barriers were aligned: patriarchal structures, sexism, discrimination, and gender gaps in all sectors resulting in socioeconomic inequalities for different groups of young women. Another very relevant barrier was the gendered stereotypical roles within the family and the household: this affects young women because they have less time for themselves, their social life and professional development. Different categories of young women (entrepreneurs, students, mothers, professionals, migrant workers, etc.) also named lack of psychological support and financial security as main barriers preventing them from taking leadership roles and accessing the labour market. All these barriers have negative effects on young women, often redirecting their career choices and adjusting their personal lives.

What about climate change and environmental sustainability? How is this connected to gender? Although we asked this question to our participants in the project, there is little knowledge on the connection between the two topics. In relation to entrepreneurship and business creation, what came out was that, while on one hand it is a stereotype that women are more environmentally oriented, on the other this tendency is a result of gendered structures. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse this complex topic very carefully and closely. Several reports and academic research have proven that achieving climate change and gender equality go hand in hand.

Finally, the analysis of our research results has led to several ideas on what kind of methodologies and tools could be used to achieve a greater collective impact for both gender-related inequalities and environmental sustainability. We asked young women and civil society/organizational representatives what ideas they must improve the current situation. What needs to be done to support young women's leadership in sustainability? Among all the ideas, this tool is a response to one of the key needs: empowerment of young women. Young women lack inspiration, roles models, access to platforms, an adequate educational support, and last but not least – they lack support from other diverse groups of women. The heterogeneity of this target group calls for an intersectional approach.

Empowerment seems to be this collective process of women “gaining power back”, fighting patriarchal structures, and building sustainable communities to advocate for their rights and protecting the environment. However, at the same time, empowerment is also an individual process that each one of us undertakes singularly, for our own self-awareness and self-reflection of our social position and individual needs. This is where feminist sustainable leadership starts from!

# MYSELF – THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS TAKING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

This reflective tool is thought to be the first step you can take towards feeling capable of leading environmental action first in your own life and later in your community. The story of this tool begins with the assumption that it is not possible to lead the change in our communities if we are not capable of leading the change on ourselves first. It is crucial to feel empowered and able to lead our own lives first, to reach our own goals. This is the only way we can, later on, inspire and empower others to become active citizens and participate in society to tackle common challenges such as environmental sustainability.

That is why the Toolkit presented by the #WeCoLead project presents an approach that invites you to work from the individual to the organizational scope. Start with yourself by utilizing this self-empowerment tool proposed here to overcome internal barriers you may have and design your own action plan for environmental action. Then, feel free to move on to the next proposed tools: *Reflective Methods*, which may be used in a group, team or organization and *Path for the Rain Dance*, which may only be used within an already established organization.

In this way, the toolkit proposes to move from the individual action to the group and organizational processes, increasing in number of people and complexity of response step by step. Nevertheless, feel free to take from this toolkit what you find useful, to skip steps if these are not relevant to you and to choose the tools that better suit your needs. The toolkit is here to support you, not to limit you!



# AIM OF THE REFLECTIVE METHODS TOOL

This tool aims to support you in overcoming internalized barriers and guiding you through a process that will improve your resilience, self-awareness and provide tips for reflection. When we can overcome our own barriers and empower ourselves, our confidence and eagerness to contribute to building a better society and a more sustainable world automatically increases. Self-awareness is also about self-reflection – and although this process can only take place individually, you are encouraged to reflect about the societal structures around you, and about the bigger spheres that affect your actions and way of thinking.

Hence, we hope that after putting this tool into practice, you will feel more capable of achieving your goals and have a stronger willingness to fight the challenges that our nowadays society presents to build a more inclusive, green, and sustainable future for you and your community.

The tool will also give you the chance to design those actions you'd like to take to build up your path towards becoming part of the green and sustainable movement! It's up to you to decide your level of involvement, time, and effort you wish to dedicate to it.

Hence, while completing the exercises proposed in this tool you will:

- recognise what empowers you.
- identify the structural barriers that prevent you from moving forward.
- feel more empowered to take action to build a better, more inclusive, and greener world.
- have decided the path you want to take for contributing to a more sustainable world, designing an action plan that will guide your way.

The tool is composed of 3 steps. Go ahead and complete them all!



# FOR WHOM IS THIS TOOL?

The reflective methods tool is shaped and created for individuals who identify as women aged between 18 and 30. According to our #wecolead project, young women are the primary target group – therefore, if you identify with this category, this tool is for you.

Additionally, although this reflective tool is aimed at all young women as individuals, it is particularly suited for young women who have no or little knowledge about the topics of gender, sustainability, and leadership. The self-empowerment tool is aimed at young women to go through it individually, as it is focused on self-awareness and reflection. However, ideally – you can also test it individually while being in a group with other young women and a facilitator who can help you in case of questions or if guidance is needed.



# READY TO START THE REFLECTIVE PROCESS? LET'S GO FOR IT!

## STEP 1 - INTRODUCTION

Let's start by reflecting on some key questions.

Think about the answers to the questions on these cards and write them down on the space dedicated to it. Once you are done, turn the cards around to read some interesting extra information.

### WHAT WORDS OR ACTIONS DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH EMPOWERMENT

#### In reference to female empowerment (European Gender Equality Institute):

“Women’s empowerment is the process by which women gain power and control over their lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices”.

<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1102>

#### Additional explanation/information:

“Women’s empowerment has five components: women’s sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. In this context, education, training, awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources, and actions to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality are important tools for empowering women and girls to claim their rights.” (European Gender Equality Institute).



## DO YOU FEEL EMPOWERED? IN WHICH WAYS?

Examples: Practising a sport; setting goals and creating plans to achieving them; working in a group of like-minded people; practising mindfulness; finishing studies/certifications; speaking in public; getting involved in activism; dancing. It could be anything big or small.

## HOW DOES EMPOWERMENT HELP YOU IN YOUR PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND PROFESSIONAL SPHERES?

PERSONAL SPHERE

SOCIAL SPHERE

PROFESSIONAL SPHERE

Examples of answers:

- **Personal:** I feel capable of achieving personal goals, such as completing studies, building healthy habits, or going zero-waste. I feel agency in deciding for myself for instance how to lead my life, carefully choosing the people around me, making decisions for my well-being and mental health, etc.
- 
- **Social:** it helps me discuss and exchange opinions with assertiveness about topics of my interest, such as gender issues or sustainability. It helps me to engage in having a social network, making my opinion and voice heard in a collective context (when in a group), etc.
- 
- **Professional:** it gives me confidence to speak up at my job, or to aim for higher responsibility roles. It helps me to stand up for my rights and opportunities; it also allows me to express my opinions and thoughts on work-related matters, communicating with others, etc.

*These answers refer mainly to examples of what you feel empowered to do individually, or by joining a group of individuals working towards the same purpose. Think of small and/or bigger actions and practices that you either already do or that you think of doing.*



## DO YOU FEEL EMPOWERED TO CONTRIBUTE TO A GREENER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY?

IF YES, HOW? IF NOT, WHY?

Some examples of answers:

I have my own plans to reduce energy consumption, going zero-waste, buying second hand, etc.

- I am following people who are developing their own initiatives and becoming part of organised groups for the environment, or I am doing this myself.
- I am attending events related to environmental action/education.
- I am reading articles and posts about zero-waste and sustainable practices
- I am studying at university a course on environmental sustainability
- I am reading a book, or I have plans to attend an event
- I am inspiring other people/my friends or family to reflect on climate change and why it is important to take action.
- I am part of an organization/volunteering association working with climate advocacy
- I am trying to rethink my transportation habits
- I am reading and informing myself on food and sustainable products
- I am politically involved in a movement or organisation
- I donate to organizations working with climate advocacy.



## STEP 2 - REFLECT FURTHER

We invite you to think further upon your previous answers with the next exercise. It does not matter if you currently feel empowered or not, just try to identify those things that could potentially empower you and those that could prevent you from feeling empowered. There is not right or wrong answer, your choice is completely personal!

*What may empower you? Choose the cards that suit you or, alternatively, write your own options on the blank box.*

### WHAT EMPOWERS YOU?

**Some examples:**

- Following people who are fighting for the environment/climate action on social media
- Starting my own eco-business
- Following inspiring women
- Reading self-empowerment books
- Getting information about my rights
- Having a support network
- Having role models in my life
- Finding my way in the labour market/finding a job that I like
- Feeling comfortable at my workplace/university
- Getting informed about climate change and political engagement opportunities
- Volunteering in a community
- Sharing feelings and perspectives with other people
- Starting my own project/initiative in my local context
- Being part of an organization and learning new things
- Participating in events and meeting new people
- Talking with my friends or family about the things I care for
- Having an income/salary
- Discussing openly about mental health issues
- Completing an important personal or professional project
- Being able to follow through with your own plans
- Being able to establish boundaries

What may prevent you from feeling empowered? We will call these barriers. Choose the examples that suit you or, alternatively, write your own options in the box below.

## WHAT PREVENTS YOU FROM FEELING EMPOWERED?

Main barriers gathered in the harvest:

1. Patriarchy
2. Gendered family roles
3. Gender Stereotypes
4. Financial Insecurity
5. Lack of empowerment tools and methodologies
6. Sexism
7. Psychological issues
8. Economic barriers

## WHAT MAY PREVENT YOU FROM FEELING EMPOWERED TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT?

Choose the examples that suit you or, alternatively, write your own options on the blank box. If you feel that there are examples from the previous question that also fit this one, feel free to use them again!

Examples:

- Feeling too small or too alone when taking action to mitigate the effects of climate adversities
- Being constrained by your context, for instance, when trying to recycle or repair products (if the infrastructure is lacking where you live)
- Lacking information to make conscious choices
- Seeing that the governments and high institutional powers do not achieve enough for stopping climate change
- Seeing negative news on media every day
- A personal environment where I am stuck in a non-productive or negative routine

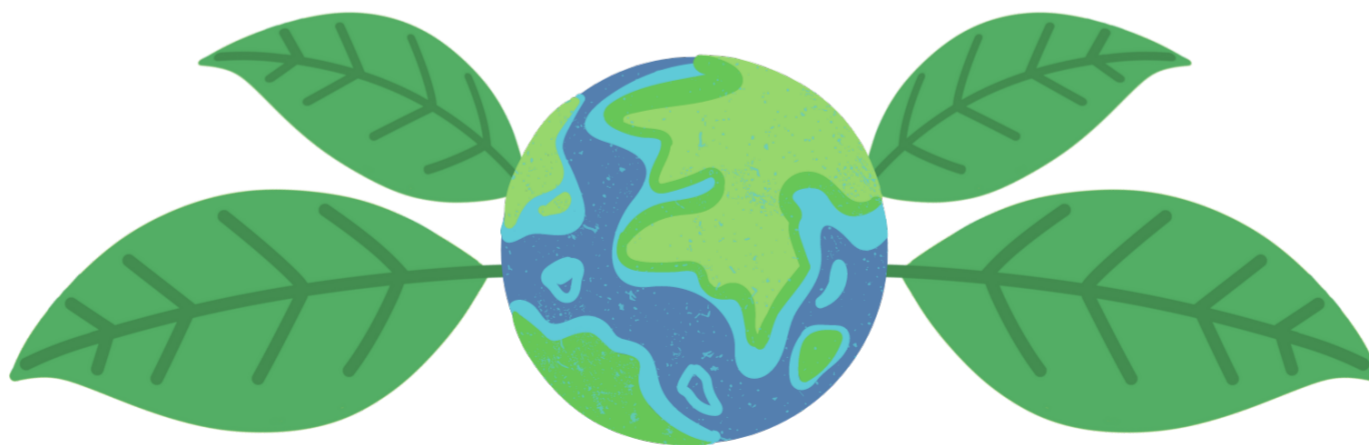
### STEP 3 - WHAT CAN WE DO?

Now you have identified those things that may empower you and those barriers that may prevent you from feeling empowered. It is time to use the ones that empower you and overcome the ones that stop you!

When individuals feel aware and empowered, they are more confident and feel more capable of achieving their goals. We strongly believe that building a more inclusive and sustainable society can only happen when the individuals within it feel empowered to lead the change. Hence, it is time to utilize all the gained knowledge to reflect on how we can use what we learnt to contribute to building greener communities around us. For this matter, we propose you the next exercise:

#### **A** DECIDE ONE OR MORE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO

- a.** You can choose one from the following cards or create your own. Choose 1 issue from the given list or, alternatively, feel free to add your own. When choosing, aim to select the one you are most interested in, but also the one on which you think your impact can be the highest. If you'd like to choose more than one, go ahead! You may find a way to connect 2-3 issues, although we don't recommend you choosing more than 3 to tackle simultaneously. If you'd like to choose more, repeat the exercise separately for those issues that are not strongly connected.



### Card 1: REDUCING CONSUMPTION OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Animal agriculture is far from the efficient and sustainable food source that many believe it to be. Despite the fact that 77 percent of the world's agricultural land is used for animal agriculture, less than 40 percent of the protein and 18 percent of the calories we consume actually comes from the products it provides. Even if more environmentally friendly production methods were used, animal agriculture would still have a substantial effect on climate change. The largest source of emissions in the industry is the animals themselves, with cattle producing extremely large quantities of methane.

Methane gas, known to be even more potent than carbon dioxide, is produced on a very large scale by the industry. Because of the number of cattle being raised, animal agriculture is responsible for around 32 percent of methane emissions. Changing the way we eat has the potential to really make a difference in the fight against climate change. Scientists estimate that a food system with a greater focus on plant-based food sources could get us one-fifth of the way to holding global warming below 2 degrees Celsius.

Source: <https://sentientmedia.org/does-animal-agriculture-contribute-to-climate-change/>

### Card 2: GOING ZERO WASTE / REDUCING WASTE

Waste generation has increased massively around the world in recent decades, and there are no signs of it slowing down. By 2050, worldwide municipal solid waste generation is expected to have increased by roughly 70 percent to 3.4 billion metric tons. This is due to several factors, such as population growth, urbanization, and economic growth, as well as consumer shopping habits. Every year, humans produce millions of tons of waste, and this is increasingly becoming a major issue worldwide. With such immense volumes of waste arising, the need for authorities to provide adequate waste treatment and disposal services has become ever more important. However, less than 20 percent of waste is recycled each year, with huge quantities still sent to landfill sites. Waste is also often disposed of at hazardous open dump sites, especially in developing nations. Richer countries produce more waste than poorer countries, but typically have better waste management to help deal with these issues.

Source: <https://www.statista.com/topics/4983/waste-generation-worldwide/>

### CARD 3: REDUCING AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution kills an estimated seven million people worldwide every year. WHO data shows that almost all the global population (99%) breathe air that exceeds WHO guideline limits to containing high levels of pollutants, with low- and middle-income countries suffering from the highest exposures.

Extra resources:

What is air pollution and its consequences, including smog: [Air Pollution 101 | National Geographic](#)

The main sources of air pollution. An article by Breeze (we can include parts of the article or just the link to it for participants to read it): <https://www.breeze-technologies.de/blog/main-sources-of-air-pollution/>

Air pollution caused by farming in the EU: [Air pollution from agriculture](#)

Interesting real time air-quality index: <https://waqi.info/>

### CARD 4: REDUCING WATER POLLUTION

Water pollution: Some 80% of the world's wastewater is dumped—largely untreated—back into the environment, polluting rivers, lakes, and oceans. Our drinkable water sources are finite: Less than 1 percent of the earth's freshwater is actually accessible to us. Without action, the challenges will only increase by 2050, when global demand for freshwater is expected to be one-third greater than it is now. Water pollution occurs when harmful substances—often chemicals or microorganisms—contaminate a stream, river, lake, ocean, aquifer, or other body of water, degrading water quality and rendering it toxic to humans or the environment. Water is uniquely vulnerable to pollution. Known as a “universal solvent,” water is able to dissolve more substances than any other liquid on earth. It's the reason we have Kool-Aid and brilliant blue waterfalls. It's also why water is so easily polluted. Toxic substances from farms, towns, and factories readily dissolve into and mix with it, causing water pollution.

Interesting article and source of the previous given info to link as hotspot: <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/water-pollution-everything-you-need-know>

[Causes and effects of water pollution: Causes and effects of water pollution - Sustainability | ACCIONA](#)



### Card 5: REDUCING LAND POLLUTION

Land pollution: There are several known causes of land pollution. Of those, there are six factors that contribute more than others.

1. Deforestation and soil erosion: When forests are cleared for development and to meet the demand for wood supply, the soil is loosened in the process. Without the protection of the trees, the land becomes barren over time and starts to erode.
2. Agricultural chemicals: Part of the farming process often involves the use of harmful pesticides and insecticides to protect crops. However, the chemicals can cause the land to become barren. The once-fertile soil is then more susceptible to environmental elements, such as the wind.
3. Industrialization: The Industrial Revolution may have resulted in significant positive changes for the economy and society, but it also led to significant pollution of the land. Through unsafe disposal practices for chemicals used in manufacturing, poor regulation, and the overwhelming number of industries and factories that are polluting the land daily, industrialization has become one of the main contributors to the pollution problem.
4. Mining: The mining process can lead to the creation of large open spaces beneath the surface of the earth. This can result in the land caving in, which compromises the integrity of the land. Mining also results in harmful chemicals, such as uranium, being disturbed and released into the environment.
5. Landfills: The garbage found at landfills is filled with toxins that eventually seep into the earth. During rains, the toxins are washed into other areas and the pollution is spread. As the population grows, the amount of garbage filling landfills also grows.
6. Human sewage: Untreated human waste can produce toxic gases that can seep into the ground. As with air pollution, the soil quality is negatively impacted, and land nearby can be contaminated. In addition to this, the probability of human illnesses occurring increases.

Source: <https://www.conservationinstitute.org/land-pollution/>

### Card 6: REDUCING ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The world faces two energy problems: most of our energy production still produces greenhouse gas emissions, and hundreds of millions lack access to energy entirely.

It is the production of energy that is responsible for 87% of global greenhouse gas emissions and as the chart below shows, people in the richest countries have the very highest emissions.

This chart here will guide us through the discussion of the world's energy problem. It shows the per capita CO2 emissions on the vertical axis against the average income in that country on the horizontal axis.

In countries where people have an average income between \$15,000 and \$20,000, per capita CO2 emissions are close to the global average (4.8 tonnes CO2 per year). In every country where people's average income is above \$25,000 the average emissions per capita are higher than the global average.

The world's CO2 emissions have been rising quickly and reached 36.6 billion tonnes in 2018. As long as we are emitting greenhouse gases their concentration in the atmosphere increases. To bring climate change to an end the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere needs to stabilize and to achieve this the world's greenhouse gas emissions must decline towards net-zero.

### Card 7: CONTRIBUTING TO PREVENT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history. The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900. More than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened. The picture is less clear for insect species, but available evidence supports a tentative estimate of 10% being threatened. At least 680 vertebrate species have been driven to extinction since the 16th century and more than 9% of all domesticated breeds of mammals used for food and agriculture had become extinct by 2016, with at least 1,000 more breeds still threatened.

What is influencing biodiversity loss? Three-quarters of the land-based environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions. More than a third of the world's land surface and nearly 75% of freshwater resources are now devoted to crop or livestock production. In 2015, 33% of marine fish stocks were being harvested at unsustainable levels; 60% were maximally sustainably fished, with just 7% harvested at levels lower than what can be sustainably fished. Urban areas have more than doubled since 1992, reducing the size of natural ecosystems and hence, destroying the home of many species. Plastic pollution has increased tenfold since 1980, 300-400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other wastes from industrial facilities are dumped annually into the world's waters, and fertilisers entering coastal ecosystems have produced more than 400 ocean 'dead zones' where almost no species can thrive, totalling more than 245,000 km<sup>2</sup> (591-595) – a combined area greater than that of the United Kingdom.

Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

Interesting video to better understand biodiversity: [Why Is Biodiversity So Important?](#)

Example of biodiversity loss consequences with bees: [DEMYSTIFIED: What Would Happen If All the Bees Died? | Encyclopaedia](#)

### Card 8: FIGHTING FAST-FASHION

According to a 2019 UN report, global clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2014, and the industry is “responsible for 20 percent of total water waste on a global level.” To make a single pair of jeans requires 7,500 litres (2,000 gallons) of water. The same report said that clothing and footwear manufacturing contributes 8% of global greenhouse gases, and that “every second, an amount of textiles equivalent to a garbage truck is buried or burnt.” Besides, most fashion and clothing products are produced in countries such as Bangladesh, China, or India, in which the workers (often women) work in poor health conditions and are underpaid.

The case of the Atacama Desert in Chile: The social impact of rampant consumerism in the clothing industry—such as child labor in factories or derisory wages—is well-known, but the disastrous effect on the environment is less publicized.

Chile has long been a hub of second hand and unsold clothing, made in China or Bangladesh and passing through Europe, Asia, or the United States before arriving in Chile, where it is resold around Latin America.

Some 59,000 tons of clothing arrive each year at the Iquique port in the Alto Hospicio free zone in northern Chile. Clothing merchants from the capital Santiago, 1,800 kilometres (1,100 miles) to the south, buy some, while much is smuggled out to other Latin American countries. But at least 39,000 tons that cannot be sold end up in rubbish dumps in the desert.

Source: <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-chile-dumping-ground-fast-fashion.html>

### Card 9: CONTRIBUTING TO PREVENTING FOOD-WASTE

Between 33-50% of all food produced globally is never eaten, and the value of this wasted food is worth over \$1 trillion.

Meanwhile 800 million people go to bed hungry every night. That is 1 in 9 people on the planet who are starving or malnourished. Each and every one of them could be sufficiently fed on less than a quarter of the food that is wasted in the USA, UK and the EU each year. And hunger is not just a problem that's happening 'somewhere else' – in the UK for example, over 1 million people accessed a food bank last year, whilst in the USA 40 million Americans live in food poverty.

Food waste is really, really bad for the environment. It takes a land mass larger than China to grow the food each year that is ultimately never eaten – land that has been deforested, species that have been driven to extinction, indigenous populations that have been moved, soil that has been degraded – all to produce food that we then just throw away. In addition, food that is never eaten accounts for 25% of all freshwater consumption globally.

Not only are all the resources that went into creating the uneaten food wasted (land, water, labour, energy, manufacturing, packaging, etc), but when food waste goes to landfill, which is where the vast majority of it ends up, it decomposes without access to oxygen and creates methane, which is 23x more deadly than carbon dioxide. However, the reality is that in the 'developed' world, more than 50% of food waste takes place in our homes. In contrast, less than 2% of food waste takes place at the retail store level. So, the bad news is we are half the problem. But the good news is... this means we can be half the solution!

Source: <https://olioex.com/food-waste/the-problem-of-food-waste/>

### Card 10: SAVING THE OCEANS

Every year, about 12 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean. Among this yearly pollution, over 640,000 tons comes from lines, nets, pots, ropes, and traps used in the fishing industry worldwide. All plastic in the oceans can kill, smother, trap, or entangle animals. However, the deadliest plastic pollution is abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear, known as "ghost gear." Fishing gear can get lost in the ocean by accident, but in some cases, it's tossed into the sea deliberately. Once the gear is in the sea, it poses a severe threat to wildlife, endangering tiny fish, crabs, coral reefs, clams, turtles, seabirds, and even big whales.

In 2018, about 300 sea turtles were found dead from the entanglement of ghost gear off the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico. It's estimated that ghost gear makes up 10% of plastic pollution in the ocean. One study found that 70%, by weight, of macro-plastics found drifting on the surface of the sea was from fishing gear.

Source: <https://www.intelligentliving.co/fishing-gear-biggest-plastic-polluter-ocean/>

### Card 11: FIGHTING DEFORESTATION

Forests still cover about 30 percent of the world's land area, but they are disappearing at an alarming rate. Since 1990, the world has lost 420 million hectares or about a billion acres of forest, mainly in Africa and South America. About 17 percent of the Amazonian rainforest has been destroyed over the past 50 years.

Causes of deforestation: Farming & agriculture, grazing of livestock, mining, and drilling combined account for more than half of all deforestation. Forestry practices, wildfires and, in small part, urbanisation account for the rest.

Source: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/deforestation>

The case of Borneo: <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/46328/environmental-crisis-borneo-flood-palm-oil-coal/> and [Deforestation Declines - A sustainable future for Borneo](#)

### Card 12: FIGHTING E-WASTE

Globally, an estimated 50 million tons of e-waste is generated annually. Over 75% of solid waste is recyclable, but we only recycle 30% of it. e-waste is being dumped illegally in third world countries (mainly African countries), where children are living under the threat of toxic chemicals. A large proportion of the estimated e-waste is generated by Western countries.

Example: [THE WORLDS BIGGEST E-WASTE SITE - Agbogbloshie, Ghana](#)

Ghana is home to the world's biggest e-waste dumping site. Agbogbloshie, a former fishing village in Ghana's capital Accra, has turned into a massive digital dumping ground.

- b.** Once you have chosen the issue(s), make a little research on the chosen ones. You can make use of Internet or any other sources:
1. What are the main challenges in regard to this issue? Try to focus on the area where you are based/where you are wishing to act, especially if it is a local issue.
  2. What other initiatives already exist to tackle this issue and what are they doing?
  3. How can you get inspired by these initiatives?

**B** BRING BACK THOSE THINGS THAT EMPOWER YOU FROM STEP 2

How can these support you in contributing to the chosen issue(s)?

**C** BRING BACK THOSE BARRIERS FROM STEP2 THAT PREVENT YOU FROM BEING EMPOWERED, BOTH ENVIRONMENT-RELATED AND NOT RELATED

How do these prevent you from contributing to the chosen issue(s)?

- a.**
- b.** What can you do to minimize or completely delete the negative effects that these barriers have on you? Brainstorm. Write as many ideas as you can, quantity matters now! Write even the craziest ideas you can come up with. Try to come up with at least 10 ideas.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO COMBATING THE CHOSEN ISSUE(S)? TRY LISTING AROUND 10 IDEAS!**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**c.** From the brainstormed ideas, choose between 1-3 that you feel that are the most crucial for you. Again, there is not right or wrong answer! It's up to you.

# D

## BRAINSTORM

**a.** What can you do to contribute to combating the chosen environmental issue(s)? Again, write as many ideas as you can, quantity matters now! Write even the craziest ideas you can come up with. Try to come up with at least 10 ideas.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO COMBATING THE CHOSEN ISSUE(S)? TRY LISTING AROUND 10 IDEAS!**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**b.** Now, from the list of ideas, rate them according to:

1. Impact
2. Realistic/Attainable
3. Effort required
4. Your level of motivation to conduct it

\*Rate each item from 0 to 10 and then make a sum of the collected points for each idea. Example:

IDEA	IMPACT	REALISTIC/ ATTAINABLE?	EFFORT REQUIRED	LEVEL OF MOTIVATION	FINAL SCORE
IDEA 1	7	6	5	9	27

- c.** Choose the idea that has highest score. If it is not clear or there is a draw, it is your choice to decide which of the rated items is the most crucial for you. For instance, if you'd like to have the highest impact possible, then choose the one with highest impact among the ones with highest overall scores. Alternatively, go with your gut and choose the one you feel you like the most! A third option would be to try to implement 2 or 3 ideas simultaneously, but make sure this won't be too much! We highly encourage you to go little by little. You can always incorporate more ideas in the future!

**E** **NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A SPECIFIC IDEA TO IMPLEMENT, IT IS TIME TO DESIGN YOUR ACTION PLAN! THE ACTION PLAN WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING YOUR**

**a.** What will you do? Break your idea down into small steps.

1. Think about how you will use those things that empower you on your actions from point B).
2. Think about how you will include and perform those 1-3 ideas from point C) for overcoming the barriers that prevent you from feeling empowered.
3. Think about the specific actions you will take to achieve your selected idea in point D).
4. Create a list of steps you will follow.

**b.** Put all your steps within a timeline. When will you do what?

**c.** Where will you do it?

**d.** Who can help you achieve it?

**e.** How will you remind yourself to complete the set steps?

**f.** How will you know if you achieved the desired impact?

**Congratulations!**

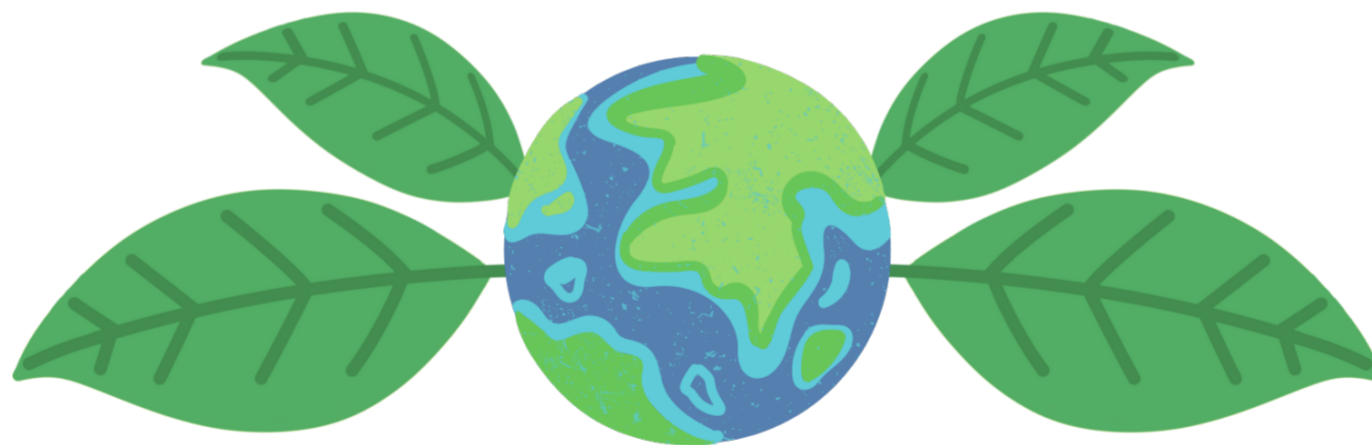
You now have your action plan and you know what to do to achieve it successfully. Please feel free to come back to this tool anytime you need a reminder about how to keep yourself empowered! You can do this, good luck on your journey!

# WHAT COMES NEXT?

Now that you have completed the tool, hopefully you have had the chance to gain relevant knowledge and information on the connection between gender and environmental issues. We hope that this also was a chance to reflect on your role in society and the actions that you can undertake as an individual to become more aware and empowered.

The **reflective methods tool for female leadership in environmental action** is just the first part of the [#WeCoLead Tool for Young Women's Leadership in Sustainability!](#)

If you would like to go a step further, you can continue with the [Lab for Women Empowerment](#), which is the second part of the Toolkit! Lab is for groups of women and individuals within a community who wish to come together with the rights methodologies and tools to create projects and activities.



# ANNEX: MAIN THEORETICAL DEFINITIONS

## Privilege

“Privilege” refers to certain social advantages, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain social identity groups.

Within American and other Western societies, these privileged social identities — of people who have historically occupied positions of dominance over others — include whites, males, heterosexuals, Christians, and the wealthy, among others.

## Intersectionality

The term intersectionality was first coined by Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989. It is understood as “the interaction of social structures, such that advantages or disadvantages attached to social categories and their hierarchical positions – including that of race, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age and disability, etc...work simultaneously and in concert with each other”. Intersectionality is useful in methodological terms for explaining “the complexity that arises when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis.”

Contemporary scholars have recognized three key assumptions at the basis of intersectionality as a concept: firstly, people are subject to the effects of multiple social categories or identities at once; secondly, the relationships of power, privilege and oppression that are produced by the multiple social hierarchies cannot be ignored in the analysis of social phenomena; thirdly, the social categories are both embedded in individual agents as well as the social structures surrounding them. At the same time, these categories are not fixed, but can be dynamic and change over time.

## Positionality

Positionality refers to how differences in social position and power shape identities and access in society. Citing a few key definitions of positionality, Misawa (2010, p. 26) emphasizes the fluid and relational qualities of social identity formation while also noting that “all parts of our identities are shaped by socially constructed positions and memberships to which we belong” and which are “embedded in our society as a system.” Pascua Yaqui/Chicana scholar M. Duarte (2017, p. 135) describes positionality as a methodology that “requires researchers to identify their own degrees of privilege through factors of race, class, educational attainment, income, ability, gender, and citizenship, among others” for the purpose of analysing and acting from one’s social position “in an unjust world.” In acknowledging positionality, we also acknowledge intersecting social locations and complex power dynamics.

## Greenwashing

The term “greenwashing” was first used in 1986 by Jay Westerveld, an American environmentalist and researcher. Greenwashing was initially used to describe a practice adopted by a beach resort in Samoa, where they provided reusable towels as a way to help the environment. Meanwhile, the resort was expanding further and further into the local land.

Nowadays, however, the word has a much broader meaning. Greenwashing is the practice of marketing a company or organisation, so they appear more environmentally friendly or more ecological (more natural, healthier, free of chemicals, recyclable, less wasteful of natural resources, etc.) when in practice its activities pollute the environment. Greenwashing is therefore considered abusive or misleading because the company improperly positions itself as greener than it is.



## Freewashing

Femwashing is when companies use marketing to capitalize on women's rights and equality. Similar to greenwashing, where an organization presents an image of heightened environmental awareness, or pinkwashing, where companies present themselves to be LGBT friendly or progressive, femwashing uses messaging of women's rights for capitalistic gains. It sells "freedom" and "equality" as capitalistic forms of liberation, and at its core, it is profiting from the patriarchy.

## Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism can be described as a meeting between feminism and ecology. The term emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s and was first used by Francoise D'Eaubonne. It is based on the perception that science and technology are not gender neutral and on the acknowledgement of the relationship of exploitative dominance between man and nature as well as of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people, and nature (Ecofeminism, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, 1993). It is further grounded on the observation that neoliberal globalisation poses a threat especially to poor women of the so-called "South", "who are the first victims of the destruction of the environment aimed at producing sumptuary objects sold in the developed world" (Alicia H. Puleo, 2017). Furthermore, ecofeminism is connected to the notions of food sovereignty and agroecology.

Related to ecofeminism is the notion that although women's interest in caring for nature is not an automatic mechanism related to gender, "statistically, at an international level, women are the majority in the environmental movements and in the defence of animals" (Alicia H. Puleo, 2017). In fact, according to Puleo (2017), from a constructive perspective, "women have not historically had access to weapons and have traditionally been responsible for taking care of the most vulnerable (children, the elderly and the sick) and maintaining the domestic material infrastructure (kitchen, clothes, etc.), developing, in statistical terms, a "relational" subjectivity, attentive to others and expressing greater affection. When these characteristics are complemented with appropriate information and a critical approach to hegemonic discourses, the conditions emerge to awaken their interest in the defence of nature and other living beings".

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## Patriarchy

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, "Patriarchy is commonly described as 'a system of social structures and practices, in which men govern, oppress and exploit women'". According to some scholars, such as Sylvia Walby, there are two distinctive forms of patriarchy in the social world: private and public, meaning respectively, a form of patriarchy that can be found in the household and one that operates in the public world. In terms of ecofeminism, patriarchy is also associated with a system that oppresses women, other people, and nature.

## Gender

Social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context- and time-specific, and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context. Other important criteria for sociocultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age. Gender-based assumptions and expectations generally place women at a disadvantage with respect to the substantive enjoyment of rights, such as freedom to act and to be recognised as autonomous, fully capable adults, to participate fully in economic, social and political development, to make decisions.

### Sexism

Actions or attitudes that discriminate against people based solely on their gender. Sexism is linked to power insofar as those with power are typically treated more favorably and those without power are typically discriminated against. Sexism is also related to stereotypes since discriminatory actions or attitudes are frequently based on false beliefs or generalisations about gender, and on considering gender as relevant where it is not. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (2009).

For more definitions related to gender topics, please have a look at the European Institute for Gender Equality: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus>

### Discrimination

Discrimination is the act of making unjustified distinctions between human beings based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they are perceived to belong. People may be discriminated on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation, as well as other categories. (UN High Commission for Human Rights).

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