

Gender and Climate in the Intelligent Age: Partnerships for Intersectional Action

Gender equity and the climate crisis are two of the most urgent challenges of our time. Both are profoundly influenced—supported and challenged alike—by the emergence of new technologies like artificial intelligence. Where they intersect, there are unparalleled opportunities for transformative partnerships to drive meaningful impact. In keeping with this year's World Economic Forum theme, *Collaboration for the Intelligent Age*, Boster Group convened a panel of leaders at the forefront of technology, gender and climate to share how partnerships are advancing real-world solutions to evolving challenges.

As part of Boster Group's eighth annual collaboration with The Female Quotient at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Boster Group Founder and CEO, Susan Boster, moderated a conversation with Amanda Ellis (former UN Ambassador for New Zealand), Henk Rogers (Co-Founder, Tetris; Founder, Blue Planet Alliance), Martin Chungong (Secretary-General, Inter-Parliamentary Union), and Alyse Nelson (Co-Founder and CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership) to reflect on the evolution of gender equity efforts in the 30 years since the landmark [Beijing Declaration](#), examine the relationship between gender equity and the ongoing climate crisis, and discuss the urgent need for collaborative action and cultural changes to address both.



From Left to Right: [Susan Boster](#) (Founder and CEO, Boster Group), [Martin Chungong](#) (Secretary-General, Inter-Parliamentary Union; Chair, Global Board of International Gender Champions), [Alyse Nelson](#) (Co-Founder, President and CEO, Vital Voices Global Partnership), [Henk Rogers](#) (Co-founder, Tetris; Founder, Blue Planet Foundation and Alliance) and [Amanda Ellis](#) (former UN Ambassador for New Zealand; Co-chair, WE Empower UN SDG Challenge).

Closer to the problem, closer to the solution

The UN estimates that 80% of the people displaced by climate change are women, but as Amanda pointed out, women are also driving innovative solutions. Initiatives like the [WE Empower UN SDG Challenge](#) – co-chaired by Amanda and Alyse – highlight the critical role and unique value of women in addressing the world's most pressing challenges. The women entrepreneurs and business leaders involved in WE Empower leverage their proximity to crises to develop practical, sustainable, and transformative solutions.

Each panellist emphasised that diverse perspectives are essential for addressing complex issues. Evidence suggests that women, in particular, make [long-term, sustainable decisions](#) that [yield higher returns](#) and [more effectively manage risk](#). In the context of climate solutions, women [often lead](#) with a focus on [community-driven, sustainable](#) approaches; this insight inspired both Henk and Martin to enforce 50/50 gender representation on boards and delegations within their organisations.

Despite this, female representation remains disproportionately low in critical leadership positions. Women account for just [8.2%](#) of S&P 500 CEOs and [27% of MPs](#) worldwide. Women entrepreneurs – such as those developing solutions to the climate crisis – [receive only 2% of all venture capital investment](#), while in the US, [less than 2%](#) of all philanthropic giving directly benefits women and girls.

With [women predicted to control over 50% of the global wealth market](#) in the next 5 years, there is significant scope to improve those numbers. A critical challenge, however, is the rise of tech-facilitated, gender-based violence (TFGBV), which disproportionately impacts women and undermines their ability to participate fully in economic, political, and social spheres.

The Intelligent Age: A double-edged sword

Technology has revolutionised the way we collaborate to address global challenges, but it has also become a significant barrier to progress on both gender equity and climate change. As Amanda and Alyse highlighted, the rise of TFGBV [is on the rise](#). TFGBV, which includes behaviour like doxing, harassment and hate speech, is often linked to disinformation campaigns aided by generative AI tools. These digital threats undermine women's participation in public discourse, erode public trust, and hinder progress towards critical gender-linked challenges like the climate crisis – yet [40% of people surveyed for the 2025 Edelman Trust Barometer see this kind of 'hostile activism'](#) as 'a viable means to drive change' – rising to 53% in young adults (18-34).

To counter this, Alyse called for urgent collaboration between governments, businesses, and civil society to ensure policies and technologies are designed with equity in mind. These partnerships must prioritise transparency, ethical governance, and proactive engagement to mitigate the unintended consequences of technological advancements – such as, in the case of climate change, the significant carbon footprint of AI tools.

Proactive engagement is particularly critical to the successful governance of cross-sector partnerships. In summarising her points on gender equity, Amanda referred to 4 'C's: Conflict, Communication, Climate and Collaboration, and it is through that final 'C' – Collaboration – that our panellists are identifying and actioning solutions.

40%
of people approve of
'hostile activism',
according to the
Edelman Trust
Barometer

Recruit partners and allies – and actively choose to be one

Achieving intersectional impact requires bold leadership, collective action, and a willingness to recognise the decisions that created systemic problems while actively choosing to change them – a tall order. Active allies and partners are critical to those efforts.

Martin Chungong emphasised that engaging leaders across genders, sectors and nations to enforce accountability is critical. For example, the Inter-Parliamentary Union's "[Parliaments for the Planet](#)" initiative integrates gender considerations into climate policymaking, [generating more effective solutions](#). Engaging with partners unlocks a broader coalition of support and can often make the final result more effective on every level – not just more responsible or ethical.

Henk Rogers founded the Blue Planet Foundation to address ocean conservation and acidification in Hawai'i following a near-death experience. Years later, through the Blue Planet Alliance, Henk has fostered collective action to transition 15 US states and multiple island nations to 100% renewable energy, all while championing 50/50 gender representation on his organisation's board and requiring it across any partner delegations. This shift has not only reduced CO2 emissions but also delivered financial and environmental benefits, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of inclusive leadership and great storytelling.

Meaningful progress in either gender equity or climate action supports progress in the other, creating a virtuous cycle of impact – but progress in both is significantly accelerated by storytelling.

Storytelling as a powerful catalyst for change

If cross-sector partnership is essential to accelerate intersectional progress, storytelling is essential to recruiting and aligning with effective partners. As Alyse shared, the wide variety of research available today demonstrating the positive impact of addressing gender equity and climate change did not exist 30 years ago.

That storytelling inspired action, and the impact of that action was measured; as the research improved, the storytelling improved, and the action accelerated.

Culture plays a pivotal role in this effort. Alyse's [art exhibition](#) and book, [Vital Voices: 100 Women Using Their Power to Empower](#), is just one example of how cultural influence can amplify underrepresented voices and provide a platform to inspire and shift mindsets in favour of gender- and climate-forward policies.

The [Edelman Trust Barometer](#) suggests that mindsets are, if anything, shifting the other way. 53% of those surveyed feel strongly that 'What helps people who don't share my politics comes at a cost to me'. This has significant implications for a multitude of social policies, including gender and climate, where 'cost' may be seen as anything from having to pay higher taxes and increased prices to losing jobs.

62%

of men say they fear being discriminated against, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer

Boster Group consistently integrates cultural storytelling into the cross-sector collaborations it develops for its clients, recognising the unique ability of culture to unite stakeholders and elevate critical conversations. In an era of disinformation, cultural leaders and institutions can offer a counterbalance, building trust and catalysing meaningful change.

Addressing intersectional issues like gender and climate in a world so deeply impacted by rapidly evolving technology requires leadership that prioritises collaboration. As our panellists demonstrated, by leveraging partnerships together with great storytelling, we can drive the systemic change needed to build a sustainable, equitable future.

Watch the full conversation between Susan, Amanda, Alyse, Martin and Henk on [The Female Quotient's LinkedIn](#) channel.

