

## **THE FUTURE OF CLIMATE CHANGE IS FEMALE: HP, MIT ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Article by Katie Mather

The [2021 UNESCO Science Report](#) found that sustainability research still hasn't been a mainstream topic within mainstream scientific journals — despite the fact that climate change, biodiversity loss and the decline of ocean health impacted every single person in the world.

One common explanation for why women are so underrepresented in STEM careers is because of unconscious bias. [Multiple studies](#) found that when [children](#) were asked to draw pictures of a mathematician or scientists, young girls were twice as likely to draw men than to draw women in those roles.

HP Inc. and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are well aware of this gender gap in STEM and joined forces to invest in young female students who were interested in sustainability and environmental science. HP and MIT launched [Girls Save the World](#) as an incentive to encourage anyone between the ages 13 to 18 who identifies as a girl to submit ideas on how to address an environmental issue facing their local communities. This offered them the chance to win funding to put their idea into action.

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Entries for Girls Save the World concluded on Jan. 18. The winner and 10 finalists will be announced on March 26.

“Girls and young women are uniquely positioned to be problem solvers

either the hardware or the education and training that would allow them to be part of these fields.”

[Girl Rising](#) transitioned from being a film production company to a nonprofit under Lowery’s leadership in 2017. The motive behind Girl Rising is to create all forms of educational resources to dismantle the harmful gender stereotypes that keep young women from pursuing careers in STEM fields.

When Lowery mentions women not having “equal access” to STEM education, she is suggesting how several factors deter women from pursuing higher education in the field. Nationally, elementary school-aged girls perform [just as well as boys](#) in math and in science — it’s only when female students are approaching college years that there begins to be a disparity in the number of women versus men enrolled in advanced STEM classes.

The gap could be caused by a number of things, [studies find](#), from sexism in STEM to a lack of role models.

“There is a cultural norm in many places that even basic technology like mobile [phones](#) are ‘for boys,’ and ‘not for girls,’ and that careers in STEM fields are not for women,” Lowery continued. “Technology inequity and climate change can only be addressed through a conscious and concerted movement of gender equality.”

Girl Rising is one of the partners involved in Girls Save the World and recently launched a fellowship of its own called [Future Rising](#). Future Rising focuses on young activists working on environmental justice storytelling.

are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, while at the same time, they are so well positioned to innovate.”

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Christina Kwuak, an Advisory Council Member for Girl Rising, reiterated in a [2021 essay](#) that girls’ education is directly tied to climate change in undeniable ways. “Estimates suggest that together with family planning, girls’ education has the potential of avoiding nearly [85 gigatons of carbon emissions](#) by 2050,” she said.

For those who want to help, Lowery suggested mentoring and supporting young women through formal or informal relationships.

“Invest in girls’ education by supporting organizations working on the frontlines to address the barriers to learning and ensure that girls’ right to a quality education is fulfilled,” she advised.

Also, as Girls Save the World emphasizes in its mission, becoming a climate change [advocate](#) in your own community can have a direct impact.

“By participating in local climate mitigation projects, you can be a part of the transition to a more sustainable future, for yourself and for the next generation,” she said.

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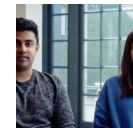
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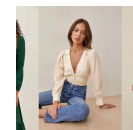
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