



**“The secret of getting ahead is getting started”**  
*Agatha Christie*

My name is Paula Penckert. I am originally from Germany. I did my master studies on Waste Management both in Germany and Sweden. Since two years I´m doing my PhD in the field of Circular Economy.

I was raised in the believe that sciences and mathematics are nothing ‘we - as a family - do’. I did not question that. Naturally I thought, I am not good at this, too. Today I am doing my PhD in environmental engineering. I changed my mindset and just did it. My field is a male dominated science. I am fighting that through standing out, giving talks and being as visible as I can be.



**“The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.”**  
*Walter Bagehot*

Challenges I faced in during my PhD:

- Thought I could not make it
- Work on my own project, not on tasks others thought they would suit better
- Relax and unwind after work (Work-Life-Balance)
- To be unperceived as young women

My solutions :

- I just started and that changed my mindset. To talk to others also helped me a lot.
- I started saying “No.”
- I don´t check my email at home or in holidays. I always try to finish open tasks before going home.
- I try to fight sexism with knowledge and intelligence. Further I always try to be visible, for example participate actively in discussions.