

HER VOICE



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The Role of Women in Europe

INDISPENSABLE WOMEN IN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PROJECT HER VOICE, HER POWER, OUR FUTURE!

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The Role of Women in Europe

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is the foundation on which a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world must be built. Although Europe has made progress on this path, significant challenges remain, especially with regard to women's representation in key areas of public life, such as politics or science.

In this context, one of the central objectives of the project 'Her Voice, Her Power, Our Future!' is to foster cooperation between the eight European countries involved, generating a network that promotes the role of women in the European Union's sustainable development strategy from a local dimension. This initiative seeks to connect the values and principles of the EU with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, projecting a vision of Europe that is more inclusive, fairer and more committed to the future of all. The areas of action covered by the project are broad and diverse, ranging from the defence of human rights and the fight for gender equality, to innovation in public policy, improving health or environmental sustainability.

The 'Her Voice, Her Power, Our Future!' project places the gender perspective at the heart of its analysis, recognising the essential role that women play both in building Europe's future and in the concrete implementation of the SDGs. It is essential to make visible and value those contributions, past and present, which have been key to progress towards a more egalitarian society.

This report aims to do just that: to serve as a testimony and reflection of the real impact of influential women identified in the framework of the initiative 'Her Voice, Her Power, Our Future!'

Each of the partners involved has carried out a process of recognition and selection of women who, from their close environment, have played a significant role in strategic areas for European development. The focus has been on women who, through their example, represent a reference in the implementation of sustainability objectives in their communities. The impact of initiatives led by women or women-led groups that have achieved significant progress in sustainability policies was also analysed, as well as the barriers that still persist for women to access leadership positions in key sectors of organisations, companies or public administration related to sustainability.

Each country focused on the SDGs assigned to them, developing their work from that specific perspective: UNED Denia in Spain worked on the mainstreaming of SDG 5 in relation to the other goals; Romania on SDGs 4, 10 and 12; Poland on SDG 11; France on SDGs 3, 16 and 17; Italy on SDGs 3, 4 and 12; Slovenia addressed SDG 9 and 15; Yuste

in Spain focused on SDGs 12 and 17; Latvia on SDGs 16 and 17 and Ukraine on SDGs 3, 4 and 16.

Through the selected profiles, we seek not only to highlight the value of these women and their influence at both local and European level, but also to inspire those who are building the present and those who will build the future. Their stories reflect commitment, perseverance and the transformative power of individual and collective action when it is oriented towards the common good.

PROFES



UNED DENIA (SPAIN)

Human rights and gender equality are considered the basic principles on which the 2030 Agenda is based. UNED Dénia and its Chair of Equality and Agenda 2030 are committed to the transversality of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and in this way contribute to that women and men benefit equally from each of the rest of the SDGs.

Her Voice works to ensure that women's voices are heard, involve them to improve their participation in civic life and public debate and that their perspectives are considered when making decisions. For this reason, UNED Dénia presents next to local women linked to each of the Sustainable Development Goals:



SDG 1 – Magdalena López del Castillo Marchante, is coordinator and president of the charity association Corazón Express. Her job is to help people in real time and as quickly as possible, in emergency situations.

SDG 2 - Gema Amor Pérez, is coordinator of the NGO “Alicante Gastronómica Solidaria”. This NGO was born during COVID, to cook for the homeless and for the neediest families, who saw how their economy and work were suffering due to the effects of the pandemic.





Electra Peluffo

SDG 3 – Electra Peluffo Lupia was a doctor, a pioneer in the field of acupuncture in Spain. She focused on healing the circulatory and respiratory systems through this technique.



María Ángeles Menéndez Gutiérrez

SDG 4 - María Ángeles Menéndez Gutiérrez, teacher and academic and quality coordinator at UNED Denia. She has dedicated her entire life to transmitting to her students her passion for Art History and to instilling in the entire university community the importance of consolidating quality education.



Marina Hernández Toledo

SDG 6 - Marina Hernández Toledo, is responsible for the supply of drinking water for the Hidraqua company. Her work focuses on the sustainable management and availability of water resources, to ensure long-term water supply and access to drinking water for all.



SDG 7 - Ángela Muelas, is deputy director of Reception and Environmental Coordinator in the nautical sector. Her job is to minimize the environmental impact that a marina has. To achieve this, it has two lines of work, the first, a correct and efficient waste management policy and the second, responsible control of resource consumption.



Cristina Sellés Martínez

SDG 8 - Cristina Sellés Martínez, is the director of the Hotel Los Ángeles de Dénia and president of AEHTMA (Association of Hospitality and Tourism Entrepreneurs Marina Alta). Convinced that human capital is the fundamental pillar of the hospitality and tourism sector, she is committed to providing support and advice to entrepreneurs in their business career, and to ongoing training to achieve decent, quality work.

SDG 9 – Isabel Sendra Alemany, is an architect. Her projects focus on the rehabilitation of buildings and houses, always taking care of the shapes and materials so that they are as sustainable as possible. In her renovations she uses traditional construction systems to create more efficient houses adapted to the climate.



SDG 10 - Belén Rivero Almiñana, runs a home for the elderly. Her job is to make the residence a home where older people live with dignity and their rights are respected.



SDG 11 - María Assunció Sentí Ribes is an Archaeologist and professor of Prehistory and Ancient History at the UNED of Dénia. Her work focuses on the protection and projection of the archaeological heritage of Dénia, as well as redoubling efforts to safeguard the city's cultural heritage



SDG 12 - Mara Bañó Marí is viticulturist and owner of Celler Les Fresses de Jesús Pobre. She is conducting a study to reduce the impact of the carbon footprint as much as possible. Additionally, her company uses recycled corks and glass to package its wines.

SDG 13 - Mónica Gómez López, has been a councilor in Benidorm since 2019 and is responsible for matters related to the environment and beaches. She has worked on the transformation of aspects such as sustainable urban mobility, with the implementation of bike lanes, energy efficiency, low emissions and green areas, recycling, etc.





SDG 14 - Elvira Marcos Moliner, works at Vaersa (Valencia for the Use of Energy Resources) providing legal assistance. She actively collaborates with the NGO “The isbjorn collective”, whose purpose is the protection of the seas, oceans and marine ecosystems.

SDG 15 - Itziar Calodro Sáinz, has a degree in Environmental Sciences, specializing in Environmental Management and Planning. She is co-founder of the company “Magic&Nature”, dedicated to carrying out ecotourism experiences in a natural environment, with the aim of raising awareness among all people of the importance of environmental education so that we can enjoy terrestrial ecosystems without interfering with them.



SDG 16 - Ana María Verdejo López, is a magistrate in Denia. She is a trial judge and resolves conflicts by applying the law. Its function is to defend the most vulnerable people, guaranteeing the rights of all of them.

SDG 17- Isabel Muñoz Llorens, is councilor for Cooperation and Volunteering of Alfaz del Pi. She coordinates the work of all associations and NGOs through cooperation agreements, for example, in Gambia, in Colombia, in Bolivia. The associations present their projects and help communities improve people's quality of life.



Regarding initiatives led by women that have had a significant impact on the implementation of local sustainability policies, we highlight Lourdes Caselles Doménech, councilor for urban planning at the Benidorm City Council. She leads the vertical city project of Benidorm, demonstrating that this form of construction is sustainable, as tall buildings have a much smaller environmental impact.

She highlights the advantages of this type of buildings, energy efficiency and optimization of developable land. Land optimization allows a certain amount of population to be located efficiently and, this means energy savings, efficient management of public transport,

reduction of car use and greenhouse gases, reduction of time in movements and the concentration of necessary services. Furthermore, this vertical system allows the creation and maintenance of numerous green areas in the urban environment, which helps reduce temperatures and CO₂.

On the other hand, water consumption is one of the most pressing problems for the planet due to climate change, especially in countries like Spain.

For this reason, from the Benidorm city council, the councilor for urban planning, Lourdes Caselles Doménech, works for responsible and efficient use of water. This work has borne fruit since Benidorm occupies the third position in the world ranking, and the first in Europe, according to the ILI (Infrastructure Leakage Index), an indicator of water use efficiency from the IWA (International Water Association) that measures the water losses in large cities.

This is possible thanks to the reuse of regenerated water and the use of technology for preventive maintenance of pipelines. Reclaimed water is purified wastewater that, where appropriate, has been subjected to an additional or complementary treatment process that allows its quality to be adapted to the use for which it is intended. Benidorm City Council has infrastructure that allows the permanent use of regenerated water for urban uses in order to gain efficiency and sustainability in the management of the water cycle and the use of resources. Most of the volume of regenerated water is destined for agricultural use, leaving the rest of the volume (well below 5%) for urban uses (irrigation, street washing, etc.) and industrial uses.

Finally, from the urban planning department, Lourdes Caselles is committed to increasing the city's green areas and, to this end, the Benidorm City Council has increased the city's trees, which has contributed to creating greater biodiversity in the green network. local and has favored the absorption of carbon dioxide. Each new tree planted is capable of absorbing about 25 kilos of carbon dioxide per year, an amount that increases as the specimens grow. In addition to the environmental benefit, by resulting in cleanliness and air quality, these plantations also contribute to generating friendlier urban spaces and significantly reduce temperatures.



María
Lourdes
Caselles
Doménech

Finally, when addressing the challenges women face in Spain in gaining access to leadership positions, specifically in the Marina Alta and Marina Baixa areas of the province of Alicante, one key aspect to consider is the difficulty of accessing a masculinized leadership position.

Currently, only 22% of women hold the position of urban planning councilor in the “Marina Baixa” region. The construction sector has traditionally been considered a masculinized job, which is why, today, the lack of references or gender stereotypes mean that there is still little representation of women.

According to the Report “Women in the Construction Sector” carried out by the Industrial Observatory of Construction in Spain (2023), currently only 11.2% of workers in the Construction sector are women. Although there has been an increase of 3.8% compared to previous years, it is still a very low percentage.

The same report states that the construction sector is unknown among women, as it barely has visible female role models, especially in the jobs on the job site. The recommendation or prescription for women to be part of the sector is also scarce due to social prejudices due to stereotypes that make access to the sector difficult.

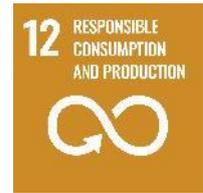
On the other hand, another added difficulty is in terms of conciliation. Motherhood, family care, time dedicated to work...Although progress has been made in conciliation measures, the burden of care and responsibility for the home continues to fall on women.

The report “Women and men in Spain”, carried out by the National Institute of Statistics (2022), indicates that 70.4% of women with children had a job in 2022, compared to 75.6% of women without children. With this, women without children work more than those who have had them.

On the other hand, 89.4% of men with children have a job, while that percentage drops to 77.9% for men without children. An aspect that shows that it is women who leave their jobs more when they have children or take leave.



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TÂRGU MUREȘ (ROMANIA)



Oana
Leahu

Oana Leahu is a theatre director and professor (holding a doctorate in Theatre and Performing Arts) and dean of the Faculty of Arts in Romanian at the University of Arts Târgu Mureș. Dedicated mainly (but not exclusively) to children and youth theatre, she has directed over 50 performances all over Romania, receiving numerous awards and national and international appreciation of her performances. Most of her shows are dedicated to all age groups, meaning that through professionally staged and accessible stories we can achieve a trans-generational cohesion, promoting life-long learning opportunities and access to culture, helping to

achieve objective 4 (Quality Education).

At the same time, she worked with the same passion and professionalism in both big cities and small towns in Romania, using mainly the local human and material resources of the institutions she worked with (local employees; the workshops and the other facilities of the theatre), promoting objective 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries) by reinforcing socio-economical cohesion through art production.

In relationship to objective 12 (Responsible consumption and production), Oana Leahu has encouraged reusing and adaption of already existing props or elements of stage design for her performances, as well as using different materials in a creative way (the ones needed in the making of puppets or marionettes in some of her productions or visiting the second hand stores for finding adequate clothing for a character).

With regard to initiatives led by women or women-led groups that have had a significant impact on the achievement of sustainability policies in the local context, the University of Arts Târgu Mureș, under the coordination of Oana Leahu, organizes the Studio International Theatre Festival – Meeting of Theatre Schools. Now in its tenth edition, this festival has

become a key cultural and educational event, bringing together dozens of universities from both Romania and abroad.

For one week, the city and the university host professionals from the field—both students and teachers—offering them the opportunity to exchange ideas, connect, and, above all, enhance their teaching techniques and creative practices. Through theatrical performances, creative workshops led by experts, and academic colloquia for participants, the festival offers a practical and meaningful contribution to Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda: ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

At the same time, the festival contributes to bringing together the various universities in the European and world academic space, facilitating the exchange of experience and best practices. In addition, some of these events (theater performances, book launches, exhibitions, concerts, street events) give the local public the chance to get in touch with the most diverse and innovative cultural practices. Thus, the last-mentioned points contribute to the achievement of the tenth objective: reduce inequality within and among countries. Seeing the commonalities of their specific practices, but above all, getting in touch with what makes them different, the festival also contributes to the achievement of the sixteenth objective: to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

And finally, when addressing the difficulties faced by women in accessing leadership positions in organizations, companies, or public administration in relation to sustainability, it is worth highlighting the University of Arts in Târgu Mureș as a model of good practice in our city. Within the university's highest decision-making body, the Senate, 9 out of 16 members are women. Furthermore, both the Vice-Rector of the University and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in the Romanian Language are women. Of the six departments that make up the two faculties, three are currently headed by women, reflecting a significant presence of female leadership within the institution.

However, one of the pressing challenges that remains in terms of sustainability is the excessive use of paper documentation required by national regulations. Catalogues, inquiries, meeting minutes, and other administrative documents are still kept in physical or dual (paper and digital) formats, which results in unnecessary consumption of time, space, and human resources.

Although women are represented in our top management, there are still gender stereotypes and biases at local and national levels, Romania being a rather conservative country. Mentorship and professional networks are crucial for career development, but women in Romania may have limited access to these resources. Male-dominated industries and leadership circles can be less welcoming or inclusive to women, making it difficult for them to build the connections needed to rise in their careers. Some people perceive women as

less dominant than men and less suitable in leading positions, emphasizing a strong dichotomy between family and career. It might be more difficult for women to achieve leading positions and for young women to target these positions in the future without promoting more role model women, inspirational women who make a balance between family and career (for those who choose this path of life achievement) or women who run public institution, businesses, NGOs or other strong organizations. Therefore, a better public representation of these role models would encourage a change in societal expectations.

Discrimination in the workplace remains a significant barrier. Although Romania has made strides in gender equality, women are often underrepresented in high-ranking positions across industries. Subtle forms of bias, such as women being overlooked for promotions or excluded from critical decision-making networks, hinder their progress. This phenomenon limits women's upward mobility in both the public and private sectors.

In regard to the way the city is connected to other major locations in Romania, although we benefit from flight and terrestrial connection, less polluting means of transport as railway are poorly developed in the region. Târgu Mureş is not on main railway line network, being positioned on the 405 line - Deda – Târgu Mureş – Războieni, which is not electrified. This leads to using polluting Diesel-powered locomotives which run at low speeds due to the conditions of the infrastructure, making the railway transportation mainly unattractive. This means limited modern access in Targu Mures for both males and females, but this might affect the females even more, as more time spent in traffic connecting to Târgu Mureş diminishes the attractiveness of a job for those who want to take care of the family or to work remotely.

The absence of robust policies supporting work-life balance, such as affordable childcare or flexible working hours, as well as few places in pre-kinder (nursery) system in Târgu Mureş makes it challenging for women to pursue leadership positions. Many women in Târgu Mureş and Romania must juggle professional ambitions with significant family responsibilities, limiting their ability to engage fully in career development opportunities.

Overall, these structural and societal barriers create a challenging environment for women aspiring to leadership positions in our country.



SOPOT (POLAND)



Magdalena
Czarzyńska-
Jachim

Professional experience, engagement undertaken within the activities of the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, as well as creating spaces for dialogue (at the national level, the Standing Committee for Human Rights and Equal Treatment of the Union of Polish Cities; at the level of the City of Sopot, the Sopot Human Rights City Team), agreements, and legislative work on introducing changes to national legislation enabling the respect for human rights, during a challenging time when social narratives in Poland portrayed human rights as privileges, make Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim a suitable reference in relation to compliance with European sustainability objectives.

Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim, the Mayor of Sopot, within the scope of her roles in the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, as Chair of the Standing Committee for Human Rights and Equal Treatment of the Union of Polish Cities, actively contributes to shaping and promoting gender equality solutions.

Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim, as a Chairwoman of the Committee initiated:

- The publication of the position statement amending the definition of rape in Article 197 of Criminal Code.
- The recommendation to cities regarding the "Consent Campaign" during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, organized by CARE International in Poland.

At the same time as the mayor of Sopot, she ensures women's full and effective participation in decision-making processes in Sopot, over 60% of managerial positions are held by women. She also advocates for gender parity on electoral lists to increase women's access to decision-making processes within the city.

She also focuses on strengthening the position of girls and women in everyday life, creating solutions for cities, including Sopot, in areas such as enhancing safety and promoting social inclusion. In her various roles, she influences Sopot's policies related to combating violence against women and girls, contributes to legislative changes aimed at promoting gender

equality, and empowers women and girls. She possesses knowledge and experience in the field of gender equality and empowering women and girls.

Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim is recognized in local government communities, women's networks, and government administration, as someone committed to human rights work, with a particular focus on women's rights. As the Mayor of Sopot, she brings experience related to implementing solutions for cities that consider human rights, in areas defined by New Urban Agenda and Agenda 2030.

The initiatives led by Magdalena, as the mayor of the city of Sopot, revolve around:

- Creating a system for seeking solutions for City of Sopot, based on research and consultations, ensuring social participation, and implementing solutions that consider the needs of all city residents.
- Developing solutions for the city that enable the realization of human rights within the city and strengthen the position of women and girls, as well as disseminating knowledge about the needs of groups most vulnerable to exclusion, including within the education system.
- Inspiring Sopot residents.

With regard to initiatives specifically dedicated to women:

- The "Sopocianki" Program, that includes Program PINK BOX.
- School of Childbirth in Sopot 2022-2025.
- Program-Early Detection of Risk Factors for Civilization Diseases SOPKARD.
- Breast Cancer Early Diagnosis Program-Mammography / USG for women.
- Prevention and Early Detection of Osteoporosis 2024-2026.
- CTG for Pregnant Residents of Sopot-pregnancy monitoring at home.
- Infertility Treatment Program with in vitro Fertilization 2022-2025.
- Oncofertility 2024.
- Sopot Amazone Association Naprotechnology (Creighton Model Fertility Care System 2022-2024).

In addition, in Sopot it carries out the event for women, "Marcha de Sopocianki", which is a month dedicated to women with activities related to women's health, job fairs, physical activities, yoga, self-defense workshops, meetings of authors, exhibitions of women artists and workshops that address various forms of violence. discrimination and mental well-being.

It also implements different programs aimed at women:

- Disability prevention program for the elderly.
- Initiatives aimed at providing psychological and social support to older women.
- Investments in age-friendly urban infrastructure.
- Financial programmes and materials to support low-income older women.
- Educational and activation programmes that can meet the skills development needs of older women.
- Sports and recreational programmes that are adapted to the needs of older women.
- Activities undertaken to break stereotypes about ageing and the role of women in society.

As for the difficulties faced by women in Poland in accessing leadership positions, it should be noted that in Poland, more than half of women between the ages of 30 and 34 have higher education, while less than 40% of men have it. Despite the improvement in education, the employment rate of women of working age is lower than that of men (70 per cent compared to 79 per cent), and the unemployment rate of women in the same age group is higher than the unemployment rate of men (4 per cent compared to 3 per cent). Women are more likely than men to withdraw from the labour market entirely, mainly due to caregiving responsibilities.

Among women aged 25-59, 23% are economically inactive - less than in 2010 (28%), but still more than among men (11%). The reason for women's economic inactivity in 64% of cases is caring for children, seriously ill adults or other personal or family obligations (among professionally inactive men it is only 16% of cases). Working women in Poland receive on average 9% lower wages than men.

Women hold over 46% of senior management positions (slightly more than in 2010), but the higher the management level, the lower the female representation.

Solutions that could positively influence the change in the situation of women in access to management positions include increasing the level of employment of women in managerial positions; providing fair, equal pay and benefits for work of equal value; appreciating and supporting a parent's care for a child or other dependent person by providing services, resources or information; a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal or physical violence, and counteracting sexual harassment; developing business relationships with women-owned companies (including small businesses and women entrepreneurs); new technologies (including ICT), strengthening the role of women and their digital competences needed in the future; strengthening the role of women in the entire value chain and eliminating practices that harm them.



ASSOCIATION JEAN MONNET (FRANCE)



Simone
Veil

Simone Veil, who was member of the Association Jean Monnet, was a Holocaust survivor, a champion of women's rights and the first directly-elected President of the European Parliament.

Lawyer, politician and feminist, Simone Veil was Minister of Health of France between 1974 and 1979. That same year she became a member of the European Parliament and was elected president, a position she held until 1982. She presided over the first directly elected Parliament and was the first woman to serve in that role.

It is recognized, above all, for the legalization of abortion and the improvement of the living conditions of women and the situation of prisoners. But throughout Europe she is also known for honouring and preserving the memory of Jewish citizens killed in the Holocaust during World War II and for her commitment to European values and unity.

Like her political courage, her personal courage has also earned admiration; It is not in vain that she is a survivor of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Her childhood and her traumatic experiences during World War II planted the seed of her commitment to a united Europe, a cause she will champion for the rest of her life.

As for the initiatives led by Simone Veil that have had a significant impact on the achievement of sustainability policies in France, we can mention that after Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's victory in the presidential elections in 1974, she was appointed Minister of Health and Social Security, a position she held until 1979. During this period, he passed controversial laws such as access to contraceptives in 1974 and the legalization of abortion in 1975.

She will be the first president of a European Parliament voted directly and the first woman to hold the highest position in an EU institution. In addition, he chaired the Legal Affairs Commission and was a member of the Environment, Foreign Affairs and Security Commissions and the Human Rights Subcommittee, to which must be added his work within the Special Commission on German Reunification, created in 1990. During her term in Parliament, she was also president and vice-president of the Liberal and Democratic Party, later converted into the Liberal Democratic and Reformist Group. In 1981 she won the Charlemagne Prize, which rewards a person's contribution to European unity.

Simone Weil dedicated her life to publicly denouncing the crimes and offenses of the fascist and totalitarian governments of the 20th century. She was an author committed to human rights, to the need for a decent life and work, and to access to justice, education, and freedom.

Before arriving at the European Parliament, his political commitment had already made a difference for many people. First, as a magistrate of the Penitentiary Administration, where she worked since 1956 to improve the conditions of prisoners in France and guarantee their dignity. And, later, she as Minister of Health in the Government of Jacques Chirac, by getting the "Veil Law" approved, which decriminalized abortion up to the tenth week of pregnancy.

The image of her defending women's rights before a National Assembly made up almost entirely of men, who shouted her "murderer", "libertine" or "hysterical" has already become an icon of French politics. "We cannot continue closing our eyes to the 300,000 abortions that, every year, mutilate the women of this country, that trample on our laws and that humiliate or traumatize those who have to resort to them," she said. Her struggle inspired the plot of a film, 'The Law', directed by Christian Faure in 2015, and which you can see on Filmin.

After leaving Parliament she returned to the French Government in the 1990s as Minister of State, before presiding over the High Integration Council, joining the French Constitutional Council and entering the French Academy. Simone Veil died in 2017 at the age of 89. Five years after her death, the Pre-Texts publishing house publishes "Simone Veil, dawn in Birkenau", a compilation of her words collected by the filmmaker David Teboul, in which she remembers, for example, how in the camp of concentration "could not be weak or alone." Thanks to her strength, many women, years later, were never alone.

Finally, in France, women still face a number of challenges in accessing leadership positions. Among the most prominent barriers are gender stereotypes, which perpetuate the idea that leadership roles are more suited to men. Difficulties in balancing personal and professional life, due to the lack of policies to support family reconciliation, also limit opportunities for women. Under-representation in technical (STEM) sectors further restricts their options, as these fields often offer career paths with greater leadership opportunities.

Additionally, women in France face barriers such as:

- Pay gaps: The gender pay gap, which persists in many sectors, affects women's ability to access high-level roles.
- Lack of networks and mentoring: The absence of women-specific professional networks and mentoring can hinder access to leadership opportunities.
- Discrimination and gender bias: Women often face unconscious discrimination and bias in selection and promotion processes, which can harm their chances of rising to leadership positions.
- Cultural and social norms: Cultural norms that associate authority and leadership with masculine characteristics can discourage women from aspiring to high positions.
- Under-representation on committees and boards: Under-representation of women on committees and boards limits women's influence and visibility in business and politics.
- Despite policies promoting gender equality, these barriers continue to limit women's opportunities to reach leadership positions in France.



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USAMBORGIA (ITALY)



Elena
Cattaneo

Elena Cattaneo is an Italian neuroscientist, academic, and Senator for life who has made significant contributions to the fields of neuroscience and public policy. Her dedication to scientific research, public education, and ethical practices has established her as a respected figure not only in Italy but also across Europe. Through her work, Cattaneo embodies the principles outlined in the European Union's sustainability goals, particularly in terms of Quality Education (SDG 4), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), and Health and Well-being (SDG 3).

Elena Cattaneo was born on October 22, 1962, in Milan, Italy. She pursued her academic studies in pharmacology and neurobiology, obtaining her PhD from the University of Milan, where she now serves as a professor. Her primary area of research is Huntington's disease, a hereditary neurodegenerative disorder that affects motor and cognitive abilities. Cattaneo's research on Huntington's disease has not only advanced scientific understanding of the condition but has also highlighted the importance of investment in biomedical research. This focus on improving public health aligns with the European sustainability goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages (SDG 3).

In recognition of her contributions to science and society, the Italian government appointed her as a Senator for life in 2013, an honour granted only to those who have made an extraordinary impact on the nation. In this role, Cattaneo has been an outspoken advocate for evidence-based policymaking, public investment in scientific research, and the integration of sustainable practices within academic and governmental institutions.

One of Elena Cattaneo's primary contributions toward the European sustainability agenda is her dedication to education, particularly in promoting science literacy and research-driven knowledge. She has been a vocal proponent of incorporating scientific research into educational curricula, emphasizing the need for young people to engage with science and

technology. Cattaneo believes that fostering curiosity and critical thinking among students is essential for developing the next generation of innovators who can tackle pressing global challenges, including those outlined by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Her work reflects the EU's goal of achieving inclusive, equitable, and quality education (SDG 4). Cattaneo has continuously advocated for greater public investment in educational programs that prioritize STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), underlining that education is the foundation upon which sustainable and innovative societies are built. By supporting initiatives that bring science to the forefront of Italian education, Cattaneo actively contributes to improving the quality of education, especially in fields that can drive sustainable development.

Cattaneo's work also aligns closely with the EU's focus on Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12), particularly in relation to scientific research and ethical practices. As a Senator and scientist, she has stressed the importance of conducting research responsibly, with a focus on transparency, ethical considerations, and long-term societal impact. Her advocacy extends to the responsible use of resources in academic institutions, where she promotes sustainable practices and supports initiatives aimed at reducing waste and optimizing laboratory procedures.

Through her involvement in policy-making, Cattaneo has encouraged Italian research institutions to consider sustainability when it comes to resource allocation and laboratory management. She champions a model of research that is not only ethically sound but also environmentally conscious, setting a standard for responsible consumption within the scientific community. Her stance has a broader impact, serving as a guide for institutions across Europe seeking to implement sustainable practices in research and production processes.

On the other hand, Elena Cattaneo's research in neuroscience directly supports the EU's goal of promoting health and wellbeing (SDG 3). Her work on Huntington's disease and her dedication to biomedical research have not only provided hope for those affected by this debilitating condition but have also contributed to broader advancements in neuroscience. Cattaneo is a proponent of using research to improve public health outcomes, advocating for more robust funding for healthcare and scientific research that can lead to lifesaving medical breakthroughs.

In addition to her scientific work, Cattaneo has addressed issues related to mental health and the ethical implications of scientific advances. She advocates for a healthcare system that integrates scientific findings to improve patient outcomes and prevent disease. Her efforts to improve public health extend beyond her laboratory, as she engages with policymakers and the public to raise awareness about the importance of scientific research in enhancing quality of life and fostering well-being across the population.

Elena Cattaneo's work resonates across multiple domains, encompassing scientific research, public education, and sustainable policy-making. She is a role model for scientists, educators, and policymakers who strive to make a positive impact on society. By championing the integration of science into education and policy, Cattaneo contributes to a sustainable future where informed decision-making and responsible practices shape the European landscape. Her legacy is one of resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of society through science and sustainability.

In conclusion Elena Cattaneo's achievements reflect a deep commitment to advancing the European sustainability goals through her work in education, health, and ethical research. By promoting quality education, advocating for responsible research practices, and contributing to public health, she has established herself as a key figure in Italy and beyond. As Europe continues to work towards achieving the SDGs, Cattaneo's role as a scientist and public advocate serves as a reminder of the profound impact that individuals can have on creating a more sustainable, educated, and healthy society.



We also want to name Cristiana Falcone Sorrell for being a respected figure in the field of sustainability due to her extensive experience and leadership in the field. She has held several senior positions, including Senior Advisor to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Action Campaign and Senior Advisor to the World Economic Forum, where she focused on advancing sustainability initiatives globally.

She is particularly known for her advocacy and expertise in integrating sustainability into corporate strategies and policies, aligning them with European Union directives and global sustainability frameworks. Falcone Sorrell's work emphasizes the importance of companies and organizations committing to sustainable practices, not only to meet regulatory requirements, but also to generate positive environmental and social impacts.

Her influence extends beyond Italy, shaping discussions and actions on sustainability at international platforms. Falcone Sorrell's efforts have helped raise awareness about the urgency of addressing climate change, promoting sustainable development, and encouraging businesses to adopt responsible practices that contribute to achieving European sustainability objectives.

Regarding initiatives led by women or women-led groups, in Italy Women in Green Economy (WiGE), an EU-funded project, has made significant contributions to the achievement of sustainability policies.

WiGE is a network of professional women and entrepreneurs in Italy dedicated to promoting sustainability and green economy initiatives. This network fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and advocacy to promote sustainable business practices, green innovation, and policy development in Italy. WiGE aims to empower women by providing them with leadership opportunities, skill development and networking within the green economy sector. The initiative advocates for policies and initiatives that promote sustainability, climate action, and green technologies. It raises awareness of the importance of women's contributions in achieving environmental sustainability goals.

This project encourages women's entrepreneurship and innovation in green technologies and solutions, promoting economic opportunities that contribute to environmental sustainability.

Finally, women in Italy face several challenges in accessing leadership positions in organizations, companies, or public administration, particularly in the context of sustainability. Some of the key difficulties include:

- Glass ceiling and gender bias: Persistent gender biases and stereotypes often create barriers for women aspiring to leadership roles. This is exacerbated in sectors like sustainability, where leadership positions historically have been dominated by men.
- Lack of role models and mentorship: The underrepresentation of women in senior sustainability roles means fewer visible role models and mentors for aspiring female leaders. This lack of mentorship and guidance can hinder career progression.
- Work-life balance challenges: Balancing professional responsibilities with family commitments remains a significant challenge for many women. The demanding nature of leadership roles in sustainability, often requiring extensive travel or long hours, can pose additional obstacles.
- Corporate culture and organizational policies: Organizational cultures that are not inclusive or supportive of gender diversity can perpetuate inequality. Lack of supportive policies such as flexible working arrangements or parental leave policies can also deter women from seeking or staying in leadership positions.



PODJETNIŠKI
INKUBATOR
KOČEVJE



KOČEVJE (SLOVENIA)



Jadranka
Glavač

Jadranka Glavač, assistance to the Roma in socialisation. She is a remarkable advocate for social entrepreneurship and active citizenship, particularly in supporting vulnerable groups. Her work spans roles in the Business Incubator Kočevje and the Safe Shelter Society, where she has designed and managed numerous projects promoting social inclusion and financial empowerment. She has received State recognition for outstanding achievements in voluntary work, for its promotion and development in the field of social welfare, social entrepreneurship, support and assistance to victims of violence.

In 2011 she was placed in the final selection and designation as "Noble Visionary" in the Ona Plus magazine's 50 most successful women campaign, which identified a common denominator among the nominees; talent, life philosophy and fearlessness, which moves people to tears and puts a genuine smile on their faces (2011). Her efforts have been instrumental in fostering social networks and developing innovative business models that align with European sustainability goals, particularly in reducing inequalities and promoting social well-being.

Jadranka plays a crucial role in advancing the European sustainability goals, particularly gender equality and digitalization. Through her work with the Business Incubator Kočevje and Safe Shelter Society, she supports vulnerable groups, especially women, by promoting social entrepreneurship and self-employment. Her efforts include digital literacy programs and workshops, helping women gain skills for financial independence. Recognized for her contributions to social welfare and advocacy for victims of violence, she promotes equal opportunities and social inclusion, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on gender equality (SDG 5) and innovation (SDG 9).



Tina
Kotnik

We also want to mention Tina Kotnik. She is the head of the Regional Unit of the Slovenian Forest Service (OE ZGS) in Kočevje, where she is actively involved in environmental conservation and sustainable forest management.

Her work includes leading and participating in various conservation projects, especially those related to the Natura 2000 network, which aims to protect biodiversity at the European level.

One of the significant projects she has been involved in is LIFE Kočevsko (2014-2019). This project included various conservation activities such as establishing ecological cells, marking habitat trees, setting up quiet zones, and improving living conditions for amphibians and other forest species.

Tina also participated in the BEECH POWER project, which emphasized the importance and challenges of beech forests listed as UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites. In the field of women's empowerment, Tina Kotnik stands out as a leader in the traditionally male-dominated forestry sector. Her work and achievements in leadership positions contribute to changing stereotypes and promoting gender equality in this field. Her active involvement and leadership in complex projects demonstrate her significant impact and contribution to the sustainable development of forestry in Slovenia.

In 2012, Tina Kotnik was a leading municipal and regional initiator in mobilizing volunteers for the nationwide project "Clean Up Slovenia," inspired by the World Cleanup initiative. She took on the role of project leader for "Clean Up Kočevsko," where she and numerous volunteers have been cleaning illegal waste dumps and removing several tons of various waste from forests and roadside areas for 12 years. She is frequently a guest on national television programs and documentaries on environmental protection, ecology, and forest conservation topics.

Tina is also a councilor in the Municipal Council of Kočevje, where she advocates for addressing environmental issues and preserving forests and biodiversity in our forests. In her private life, Tina Kotnik reflects the same values and dedication as in her professional role. In her local community, she is known as an initiator and organizer of numerous initiatives to improve communal spaces for socializing and community bonding. Her efforts for sustainable development and environmental protection do not stop at her work but are carried with the same passion and commitment into her personal life, where she actively contributes to building a more connected and sustainable local community.

With regard to initiatives led by women or women-led groups that have had a significant impact on the achievement of sustainability policies in the local area, several projects in Kočevje stand out for their contribution to environmental, social, and cultural sustainability.

One of the most notable initiatives is Clean up Kočevsko (Očistimo Kočevsko), launched and led by Tina Kotnik, which has played an important role in raising awareness and promoting environmental responsibility through community clean-up actions.

In the field of sustainable tourism, Zavod Kočevsko, a public institution led by director Vesna Malnar Memedovič, focuses on the development of boutique and green tourism, positioning Kočevje as a destination that values both nature conservation and local heritage.

The cooperative Zadruga Zakladi Kočevske supports local agriculture and circular economy practices. Currently managed by three active women, the cooperative supplies locally produced food to public institutions, oversees market operations and urban gardening initiatives, and manages a boutique store that sells regional products. Within this framework, Podstršn'ca, a center dedicated to the reuse of materials, also contributes to sustainability goals.

The Društvo podeželskih žena Kočevske (Rural Women's Association of Kočevje) plays a key role in preserving rural traditions and culture. This association also promotes local products and supports the visibility of rural women's contributions to sustainable local development.

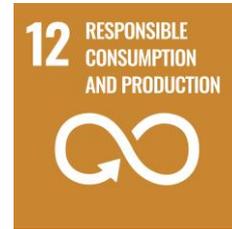
In the educational field, RTM Kočevska is an initiative focused on transferring knowledge about the region's history and environment to primary school students. The project was founded and initially led by Tina Žele Kovačič, with the belief that understanding local history fosters a deeper connection and sense of responsibility toward one's environment.

In addition, a Women's Group initiated and led by Jadranka Glavač provides a safe and supportive space for women to meet regularly and discuss issues related to women's roles in both private and public life, contributing to social sustainability and gender awareness at the community level.

Lastly, women in Kočevje may face difficulties accessing leadership positions due to ingrained gender biases and stereotypes that undervalue their capabilities in sustainability roles. Limited networking opportunities and mentorship programs for women can hinder their career advancement. Additionally, existing organizational cultures might not support or prioritize diversity and inclusivity. These factors, combined with potential work-life balance challenges, can impede women's progress in achieving leadership positions in sustainability-related fields.



Vesna Malnar
Memedovič



YUSTE (SPAIN)



Laura Arroyo
Escudero

Laura Arroyo Escudero, studied Social Education. She's from Madrid but has been living in La Vera for 20 years. She began working as a cultural facilitator in the region and as an environmental educator, raising her children, and becoming part of a rural community as a life Project.

Why is she a reference in sustainability? She has integrated the methodologies learned along the way in her own environment and discovering the fundamental contributions of agroecology for the transitions that cannot be postponed.

For the last 4 years, she is coordinating the project "La Vera Nos Alimenta". It is a project that aims to rebuild a healthier and more sustainable food system, both for our environment and for all the people who live in it, connected with ODS12 and on the other hand, reconnecting local production and consumption that is connected with ODS 17.

On the other hand, we have to mention the Women's Federation of the region of La Vera, for its initiatives that have had a significant impact on the achievement of sustainability policies in the region. It is a group of associations made up of all the associations in the region with a fundamental objective, to unite this region as a whole for its growth and exchange of experiences.

It is made up of 20 associations, made up of 3000 women.

The Federation has supported women's empowerment, their rights and has developed training activities to promote entrepreneurship in sustainable business activities, such as workshops for the production of natural cosmetics, organic production and marketing.

Encarna Ramajo, is the founding member of this Federation, is worth mentioning. She has dedicated half of her life to working for and with this group. She was born in Jarandilla de la Vera and she's 87years old. For many years Encarna has been fighting for the empowerment of women living in the region of La Vera, and for the vindication of their rights. She has promoted numerous projects and activities through the Federation.



Encarna
Ramajo

As for the difficulties that women in the region usually encounter when accessing leadership positions, the most prominent are the problems associated with reconciling family life, the lack of empowerment and the lack of generational renewal
Women are an indispensable pillar for sustainable rural development, to reverse the processes of depopulation and masculinization of the rural environment.

DRAFT



SALDUS (LATVIA)



Ilze Klava

Goal 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Goal 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Ilze Kļava, a teacher by profession, right now works as the project manager in Saldus Municipality and leads number of initiatives related to sustainable living. Previously she has been also Saldus City Council member and worked for years as a Head of Druva parish administration. With her activities she has made a contribution for the benefit not only for the local society but has given her contribution relating to SDG 16 and 17.

Ilze has been working with children in 4-H organization since 1991. This organization historically focused on agriculture, nowadays focuses on citizenship, sustainable living, science, engineering, and technology. 4-H reaches across the globe with the goal of improving the lives of young people. It is the one of the world's largest youth development organizations, reaching 7 million young people in more than 70 countries in North America, South America, Central America, Europe, Asia and Africa, sharing the goal of improving the lives of young people. Therefore, Ilze Klava's activity in this organization has contributed to the achievement of SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals, aimed to strengthen implementation and renew the global partnership for sustainable development. For more than 30 years she has been contributing to this goal by cooperating and creating partnerships with local government, state institutions, companies and civil society. It was possible thanks to Ilze's personal traits, skills and ability to share best practice, learn from others, attract investments for sustainable projects and strengthen international cooperation.

Ilze leads a Smart Village in her home village Jaunlutriņi, where she organizes local product Sunday markets as well as number of other activities related to smart and green living.

She is a leader of NGO who works on the implementation of energy efficiency projects of residential buildings in her village. As she has always been close to community of her village (she has lived here all her life) she understands their needs very well. Therefore, she plays an important role in achieving the goals of sustainable development locally.

Ilze is an active supporter of the idea of waste sorting, so in the last year she organized number of projects in biological waste sorting and marketing and educational activities about this topic as well. By taking these steps, she has contributed in building safer, fairer and more sustainable world.

As for the initiatives led by women that have had a significant impact on sustainability policies in our town, we can highlight the local products store and online sales platform "Products of the province" established in 2021. The night markets of local products in the city every Friday since December 2023, and some community participation projects such as drinking water taps in public spaces. There are also a good number of playgrounds in residential areas started by active women.

Finally, with regard to the difficulties faced by women in accessing leadership positions in Saldus, it should be said that discrimination as such, if it exists, is subtle. Latvian recruitment legislation does not allow for overt discrimination. At the same time, it cannot be argued that gender discrimination does not exist at all. There are often deep-seated beliefs that a leader is a man, and women are stereotypically associated with caring and emotional labour rather than leadership. These stereotypes can limit women's ambition and self-confidence.

Women's opportunities to obtain higher education and training in leadership skills are equal to those of men. This cannot be a factor that reduces their competitiveness in the fight for leadership positions.

The question of work-life balance is an important one. Women are more likely than men to take primary responsibility for household chores and childcare. This double burden can make it difficult for women to participate fully in working life and promote their careers.

If we talk about the specific challenges in the sustainability framework, women working in sustainability may face additional challenges, such as the stereotype that women are more interested in social issues than in the economy or technology.



LVIV (UCRANIA)



Iryna Farion

Iryna Farion (1964-2024) was a Ukrainian linguist and politician (a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada, 2012–2014). She was a professor at the Department of Ukrainian Language at Lviv Polytechnic's Institute of Humanitarian and Social Sciences. She authored over 200 articles and was involved in numerous educational projects to promote the Ukrainian language and culture. In 2014-2019, Iryna hosted the historical programme "The Greatness of the Individual". Many Ukrainians praised her for encouraging Ukrainian society to sever all ties to the Russian language to counter Russian influence. She was shot dead outside of

her home on 19 July 2024.

Iryna Tsybukh (1998-2024) was a former journalist, a military paramedic of the volunteer battalion "Hospitalers". Before the full-scale invasion, she was shooting a documentary film, working on the reform of "Suspilne TV". In February 2022 she joined "Hospitalers" and served in Donetsk region. In 2023, Iryna received an award from the president – the Order of Merit. She was killed during rotation and the evacuation of wounded in the Kharkiv region on 29 May 2024, just a few days before her birthday.



Iryna Tsybukh



Ruslana Lyzhychko (1973), known as Ruslana, is a Ukrainian singer, songwriter, dancer, producer, actress, activist, and former politician. She is a World Music Award and Eurovision Song Contest winning recording artist, holding the title of People's Artist of Ukraine. She is recognized as the most successful Ukrainian female solo artist internationally and was included in the top 10 most influential women of 2013 by the Forbes magazine.

She is also a former MP serving as deputy in the Verkhovna Rada for the Our Ukraine Party.

Ruslana was the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in Ukraine in 2004-2005. In autumn 2004 she actively supported the democratic processes in Ukraine known as the Orange Revolution. In December 2012 Ruslana launched the human rights campaign «Don't keep silent» which challenged the juridical system of Ukraine. In 2013-2014 Ruslana was one of the leaders of the pro-EU protests known as Euromaidan. Due to her activism, she put herself in serious danger. For her extraordinary courage, commitment and dedication Ruslana was honoured with several awards including the International Woman of Courage Award, and the 2014 Distinguished Humanitarian Leadership Award. She has been named an honorary citizen of her hometown Lviv and was nominated to receive the title Hero of Ukraine.

As for initiatives led by women or women's groups that have had a significant impact in Lviv, the non-governmental Centre "Women's Perspectives", established in 1998, should be highlighted. Its mission is to defend women's rights and support equal rights and possibilities for women and men in all walks of life. The activities carried out are aimed at implementing gender policy in Ukraine, combating violence against women and domestic violence. It also increases women's competitiveness in the labour market, and promotes women's participation in decision-making processes in Ukraine.

Over the past 21 years, the Centre has implemented more than 120 projects, helped more than 9,000 clients, conducted sociological research, collaborated with local authorities and provided legal, educational and informational support to various actors.

There is also the "Kryla" project (2020-2025). It aims to improve the economic well-being of women and the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Ukraine. The goal will be achieved by strengthening the economic security of rural women and the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, especially those affected by conflict; improve employment and development opportunities for women and the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. This project operates in the regions of Lviv, Kharkiv, Kyiv and Poltava (a total of 20 territories) and is aimed at rural women, Roma women, women with disabilities, women affected by gender-based violence, women living with HIV, women affected by war (veteran women, widows, temporarily displaced women, etc.). It is expected that 3,000 women will receive support.

On the other hand, the "CirclE" Project was implemented in 2019-2022 at the Lviv Polytechnic University by a team of 4 women and one man. This multidisciplinary project aimed to generate interest and raise awareness about Europe's sustainable development in a globalized world; promoting European values, including the circular economy; exchange of European experiences; and to explore Ukraine's sustainable development reserves (between candidate countries and partner countries) through the application of circular economy principles and their role in strengthening the EU's influence in the world.

Finally, with regard to the difficulties that women must face in our country and specifically in our locality, to access leadership positions, we must make special mention that the invasion of Russia (2014) has become a key issue for women. UN Women's Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) on Ukraine highlights that "the multisectoral impact of the crisis is affecting women disproportionately" and lists gender-based violence, increased care burden, and lack of access to gender-specific healthcare as some of the issues that disproportionately affect women. At the highest level, women make up only 21% of the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, below the global average of 24.5% and below the European average of 29.6%.

A report by Kvinna till Kvinna, a women's rights organisation working directly in areas affected by war and conflict, reflects a similar problem with regard to inclusion at the local level, where "local authorities show a lack of gender sensitivity, perceiving women's civil society organisations as competitors rather than partners".

The Ukrainian government did not respond to Global Insight's request for comment. Women are not mere passive victims of war, in fact, women's participation in the community and the family has increased. Women play a key role in humanitarian efforts within communities by running shelters, providing aid, and taking on a greater burden of care.

"More women than men depend on social assistance," highlights the Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment of Ukraine, carried out jointly by the World Bank, the Ukrainian government, the European Commission and the United Nations, while "total per capita income in male-headed households was, on average, 20% higher than female-headed households".

In addition to causing stress and anxiety, this financial situation increases women's security risks and pushes some into the unprotected informal sectors of the economy.

Internally displaced women, who make up the majority of internally displaced persons in Ukraine, suffer the most from this poverty. A BBC Media Action study reported that, of the IDWs surveyed, 52% reported experiencing a negative impact on their employment due to the war, compared to 32% of non-IDWs. And shelters that house many women often do not offer any relief, such as UN Women's Rapid Gender Analysis reports indicating the increase in gender-based violence in these spaces and how women express the fear they feel of walking between buildings, where roads are isolated and unlit.

It is not only within Ukraine that the additional burdens of the conflict faced by women are exposed, but millions of traumatised people have landed in countries with insufficient infrastructure to be able to help them properly: 90% of these people are women and children.

Conclusion

The 'Her Voice, Her Power, Our Future!' project was conceived with the firm purpose of promoting gender equality through the recognition of women who, from different European contexts, are actively contributing to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the consolidation of the 2030 Agenda. In line with the general objectives of the project, the purpose of this report has been to make key women visible, to learn about initiatives led by them that have had a significant impact on sustainability policies and also to analyse the common and specific difficulties that women have faced or continue to face in accessing leadership positions in their respective countries.

Throughout the work, women's references have been identified in each of the project's partner countries, which has made it possible to highlight a diversity of voices and trajectories that converge in the same horizon: to achieve fairer, more egalitarian, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable societies. Although the socio-political and cultural contexts of each partner country present different nuances, for example, in the degree of institutional support for equality policies or in the social recognition of female leadership, there is also evidence of points in common in terms of the difficulties detected, such as the persistence of glass ceilings or the need for support networks between women, and it is also common in all the countries to highlight the crucial role that women play in social transformation from the local level.

A particularly relevant aspect is that, although we tend to highlight global women leaders, we often overlook women who, from their territories, carry out essential actions that allow the SDGs to be translated into everyday practices. Women who lead community projects, who work, who educate, who innovate from close proximity. This report reminds us that transformation does not only happen at the highest levels, but also at the grassroots.

For all these reasons, 'Her Voice, Her Power, Our Future!' project has not only allowed us to learn about inspiring experiences, but also to weave a collective story that reinforces the urgency of continuing to make visible, listen to and accompany more women on their path to leadership. Because for the 2030 Agenda to become a reality, we need more women's voices, at all levels and in all corners.