



Euroclima

**Voices of women leading the green and just
transition in Latin America and the Caribbean**

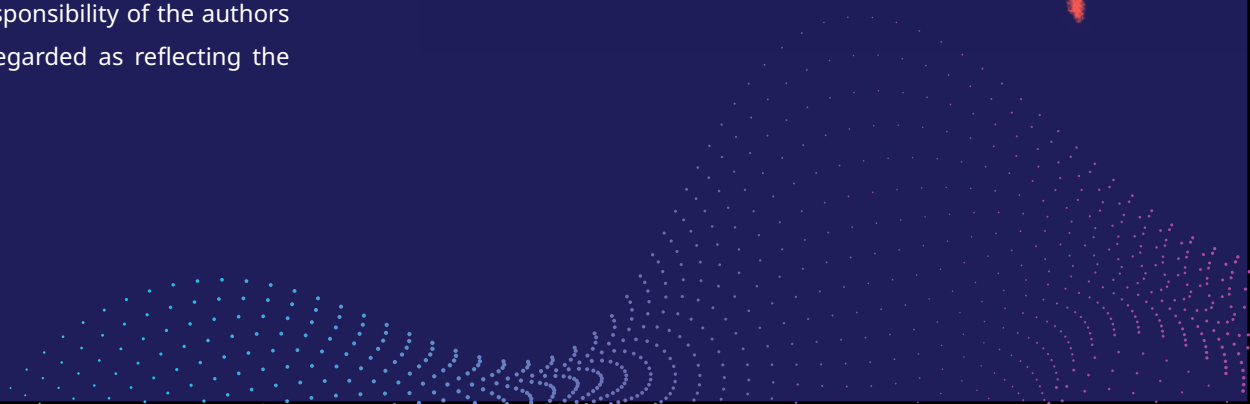
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Voices of women leading the green and just transition in Latin America and the Caribbean

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PROLOGUE - Myriam Ferran

Deputy Director General - Directorate General for International Partnerships

Leadership with impact: The European Union and its commitment to Gender Equality

Gender equality is not just a fundamental principle of the European Union (EU); it is a defining value. Women, young women, and girls are not only beneficiaries of progress, but key agents of change. Achieving gender equality is not an aspiration, but a necessity. It is the basis for just, inclusive, and prosperous societies, where opportunities are not determined by gender. The EU has made this commitment firmly, integrating gender equality at the heart of both its internal and external policies.

The **EU's 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy** seeks to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities and access to leadership. The European Commission has achieved **gender parity in its leadership**, and the **Equality in Boards Directive** requires that, by 2026, at

least 40% of non-executive positions in listed companies be held by the underrepresented sex, with penalties for non-compliance.

In the EU's **global action, the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III)** ensures that gender equality is at the heart of its external action, allocating, in **2021**, approximately **€9 billion** and **€13 billion in 2022**. But **2025 will mark a turning point** with the ambitious target of **85% of all new external actions contributing to gender equality**.

GAP III has supported the training **of women running for public office**, the creation of **shelters for victims of gender-based violence**, and **access to education and health care for girls** in different regions of the world. It has promoted the **participation of women in the energy and digital transition**, ensuring that they are part of the future.

Gender equality is not an isolated goal but **a fundamental pillar of the EU's Global Gateway (GG) sustainable investment strategy**, integrating a gender perspective into all its initiatives, taking a holistic approach and ensuring that both material and social infrastructure foster inclusive growth. From **regulatory reforms and technology transfer to skills development, employment and sustainable financing**, GG generates opportunities where they are most needed. With a special focus on SMEs and women entrepreneurs, it seeks to break down barriers, expand access to finance and set new global standards for equity, innovation, and sustainability.

Within GG, one of the programs that is making a difference is **Euroclima**, a pillar of the **strategic partnership for a green and just transition between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean**. Its collaboration with the **Regional Working Group on Gender and Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean** stands out, as well as capacity building in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, and Chile. In terms of bilateral actions, we can highlight the **support in Peru to rural women pioneers in agroecological practices, in Central America to women leaders in disaster risk reduction in their communities, in Argentina and Chile to safer and more**

accessible urban transport with a gender perspective, etc.

Despite progress, global challenges continue to disproportionately affect women, young women, and girls. The EU remains fully committed to addressing them. Publications such as this one, **“Voices of women leading the Green and Just Transition in Latin America and the Caribbean,”** are critical to amplify their stories and ensure that their voices are heard and they are agents of change in building more just, inclusive, prosperous, and peaceful societies.

With every action, every investment and every policy, the EU wants to ensure that no woman, no young woman, no girl is left behind.



PROLOGUE - Andrea Kramer

Head of Division Latin America and the Caribbean - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Dear readers,

Women are critical agents of change for a green and just transition and should be acknowledged and addressed in the formulation and implementation of climate and environmental policies. Due to their historical and societal roles as providers and caretakers, women possess distinct knowledge of sustainable resource management and are at the forefront of climate mitigation and adaptation. This enables them not only to develop and implement practical solutions to environmental challenges but also to lead innovative initiatives that promote resilience and sustainability.

However, despite their pivotal role as catalysts for needed transformations, women continue to face barriers such as limited access to resources like land, agricultural extension services, affordable clean energy, and transportation, which restrict their opportunities. Addressing these barriers, empowering women, and ensuring their perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes is not only a matter of equity but also a proven strategy for developing more effective responses to cli-

mate and environmental challenges.

In the pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable future, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is firmly committed to a path towards more just, diverse and gender-transformative international cooperation. GIZ aims at strengthening the rights, resources, and representation of women in all their diversity through its work.

Euroclima is a regional flagship programme co-funded by the the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union that fosters the strategic partnership with the Latin American and Caribbean region, based on shared values and a commitment to jointly address climate change and biodiversity loss. It seeks to contribute to a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive transition through climate mitigation and adaptation efforts that considers the differentiated impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on women and girls.

The publication “Voices of women leading the green

and just transition in Latin America and the Caribbean” highlights the importance of women’s leadership towards a resilient and sustainable future. Drawing on inspiring experiences of female leaders in the region, the publication underscores the importance and the potential of networks to catalyze leadership and collaboration between women as agents of change. With success stories and concrete examples of initiatives from various sectors, the publication seeks to inspire women to step up and build connections that amplify the voices of women leading the green and just transition across the region.

A big thank you goes to all women who are working every day to pave the way for a more sustainable and equitable future and who are inspiring upcoming generations to engage ahead of the intertwined environmental and social challenges our world is facing. Thank you for your leadership, for speaking up and sharing your valuable experiences, knowledge, and perspectives. Now, please enjoy the read and let yourselves be inspired by some of their voices.



PROLOGUE - Joenia Wapichana

Director of the National Foundation of Indigenous People (FUNAI)

For a long time, indigenous peoples have been warning the world about the need to protect Mother Earth and biodiversity. It is urgent that every effort possible is made and that everyone is involved, because there is no room for negationism, racism or discrimination.

Indigenous women play a fundamental role in climate security, taking on a large part of the responsibility for education in good practices in the use of water and soil, passing on traditional knowledge and teaching sustainable management that value the standing forest. From an early age, learning to share rights and duties, benefits and responsibilities, spaces, and challenges, cultivating a sense of collectivity and respect for diversity. Nowadays, in addition to our responsibilities, we also assume positions of representativeness.

My story may be similar to many others who have not yet gained visibility, but they all have the same importance in the fight for access to rights and the collective protection of indigenous peoples. It was this search for education that led my family to move to Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima, in the Brazilian Amazon. This decision,

made by my mother, implied prejudice, discrimination, and racism in the non-indigenous world. I share these experiences to empower other women, to show the path-way, challenges, and achievements.

Being the first indigenous woman lawyer in Brazil, responsible for defending indigenous communities, brought visibility to the struggles we face, especially with regard to territorial, environmental and climate rights, which are essential for the protection of life, culture and biodiversity. My work combined the technical knowledge acquired at university and the forensic practice to the vivid experience of defending the indigenous cause.

Through the Indigenous Council of Roraima (CIR), I had the opportunity to exercise the legal profession and participate in fora and instances for discussion on climate and biodiversity. An emblematic example of this trajectory was the case *Raposa Serra do Sol*, which became a national and international symbol of the fight of indigenous people for their rights. An oral argument in the plenary of the Federal Supreme Court (STF) in 2008 was given by an indigenous woman - a milestone that declared the strength of female

protagonism in the defense of collective rights.

There is a real need for indigenous women in all spaces. And why should an indigenous woman not represent indigenous peoples as much as non-indigenous society? In 2018, I was elected the first indigenous woman Federal Deputy in Brazil, the result of a collective union of the indigenous peoples of Roraima through the *Malocão* policy. My mandate (2019-2023) enabled the creation of projects and laws in various areas, especially those of indigenous interest. Among the most important bills are PL 5467/19 and PL 4347/2021, which deal with the protection of indigenous lands, the reversal of environmental fines to the benefit of indigenous peoples and the transformation of the National Policy of Territorial and Environmental Management in Indigenous Lands (PNGATI) into state policy, guaranteeing its continuity, and the recognition of the category of Indigenous Environmental Agents.

Territorial and environmental rights are at the heart of indigenous peoples' rights. indigenous peoples. It is through the legal security of indigenous lands that other rights are rendered possible, such as cultural, environmental, economic, health and education rights. In this context, the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (FUNAI) plays an essential role as it is the body responsible for demarcating indigenous lands.

For the first time in history, FUNAI is headed by an indigenous woman, a milestone that represents effort, resistance, and commitment. This moment represents the continuity of an institution that was scrapped, bringing in indigenous wisdom, the principles of shared responsibility and the holistic vision of indigenous women.

Our struggle goes beyond speeches and occupying spaces. We want full and effective participation, social inclusion, and fully guaranteed rights. We demand public policies with budgets established by law and recognition of our capacity to offer solutions to global challenges, and not just to be seen as a source of data on environmental protection.

We are fighting for a place at the table, with equality, respect and understanding. Our fight is for everyone, without distinction. After all, we live on one only planet, and taking care of Mother Earth is essential for the survival of life.

INTRODUCTION

After another celebration of International Women's Day, we are proud to share *Voices of Women Leading the Green and Just Transition in Latin America and the Caribbean* with you, a publication that aims to continue and facilitate the dialogue, initiated in different spaces, by promoters of climate and environmental action in the region.

The voices of the 25 leaders we had the honor of interviewing are diverse. They speak from different social and cultural contexts, as well as from positions at different levels and in different spaces in which the green and just transition is articulated. By reading their reflections, you will learn about climate action experiences developed in important positions in the region's governments, academia, activism, civil society, and international bodies. This collection offers a panorama that synthesizes the strengths and challenges we face in global action to defend the environment. It also provides technical knowledge, which they generously share, in areas such as urban mobility, sustainable energy, circular economy, water and sanitation, biodiversity and ecosystems, resilient food production, disaster risk reduction, governance and climate finance.

To make it easier to read, we have organized the leaders'

contributions into three main axes. Each one highlights the emphasis brought up in the interview. It is a reading proposal that highlights a path of understanding, without forgetting the cross-cutting nature of many of the issues dealt with.

In the first axis - which highlights the topics of Gender and Climate Change - Adelle Thomas, Carolina Cuesta, Daniela Chacón, Emiko Sepúlveda, Frances Fuller, Leticia Sabino, Paola Tapia and Rosa Riquelme link environmental damage and its daily impacts to the reality of women and the need to consider this in climate and environmental decision-making. It is clear from their voices as leaders that there is an urgent need to integrate gender into climate policies and environmental justice. They also offer perspectives that can be beneficial in achieving these objectives, among others, betting on an intersectional approach that addresses the multiple inequalities that run through climate and environmental policy.

In the second axis - on Poverty and Rights - Ana María Acevedo, Celia Xakriabá, Carol Chehab, Gabriela Gavarrete, Joyce Mendez, Kerryne James, Margarita Velázquez

and Tarcila Rivera Zea highlight the relationship between gender, poverty, and exclusion. They highlight economic inequality, the importance of generating independence and autonomy based on the exercise of one's own rights, of the access to basic services and of the respect for diverse cultures. In addition, they propose comprehensive solutions that reflect this complexity and specific needs in the face of the impacts of the crises we are confronting. Their message is unanimous: it is essential to think about promoting the rights and autonomy of the most vulnerable groups.

In the third axis - Leadership, Empowerment and Political Participation - Camila Ramos, Eduarda Oliveira, Lourdes Valenzuela, Marina Moscoso, Nancy Aucahuasi, Patricia Hernández, Paula Bisiau, Saiurys Bonnet and Sandra Guzmán agree on the importance of women's empowerment in the political and social spheres. They also stress the importance of their involvement and leadership as key elements in solving complex problems. In this sense, they promote the training of women and other historically marginalized groups, so that they can exercise their rights and perspectives in a sustainable and qualitative way. Finally, another response that emerges from their reflections is the importance of sustaining networks for the exchange, the learning and the collaborative creation among women who are leading the green and just transition in Latin America

and the Caribbean from within strategic areas.

In addition to the voices of the leaders, we highlight some of their initiatives to achieve the goals of the green and just transition. We selected them due to their regional, gender or social inclusion approaches: CELA - Clean Energy Latin America, CHIRAPAQ - Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru, Latin American Center for Rural Development, Latin American Observatory of Energy Geopolitics, Una Vaina Verde, Women in Energy Brazil, Women in Motion, and Youth Network for Disaster Risk Reduction for the Americas and the Caribbean.

We would like to thank all the women who daily echo the struggle for greater equality in Latin American and Caribbean societies and particularly to those who accepted our invitation to be part of this initiative, which we hope will continue to grow. Just as they were inspired by previous generations, they also pave the way so the women of the future can continue in this joint effort to develop a society that respects and values them as protagonists in climate and environmental action.

We invite you to put on the lens of these 25 leaders in the fight for a green and just transition.

We hope you enjoy the reading and that you find inspiration in these voices!



Gender and Climate Change



ADELLE THOMAS





Adelle Thomas, Senior Director of Climate Adaptation in the Natural Resources Defense Council and Vice-Chair of Working Group II of the IPCC speaking from Washington DC

“ If you are not considering gender, you are not doing climate action. You are further subjecting women and children to inequality

A human-environment geographer, Adelle has a master's and PhD in Geography from Rutgers University and a bachelor's in Civil Engineering from University of Minnesota and Macalester College. She received the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for her dissertation on the implications of global environmental change and globalization for Caribbean tourism. She has worked for over 17 years on the intersections between climate action and development, focusing on adaptation and loss and damage in the developing world context. She has been a Lead Author for several IPCC reports as well as the founding director of the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Research Centre at the University of the Bahamas.

“ I had to speak up, because I was not hearing the experiences of my friends, and my family reflected on the global stage

What motivated me to get into climate action was the impact that climate change was expected to have on my own country of The Bahamas. I felt like I had to speak up, because I was not hearing the experiences of my friends, and my family reflected on the global stage. Though I was initially interested in sustainable tourism, Robin Liechenko, my graduate advisor, inspired me to work on responding to climate change, highlighting that the impacts of climate change may result in the unviability of tourism in the Caribbean region.

Intergenerational justice is something that has been very present throughout my work. Being a woman and a mother has given me an increased impetus to do the work, because you see what the impacts are, particularly on people and women that are unable to speak for themselves. I have been involved in the climate change arena for years and impacts that were initially projected to happen in decades are happening now. Things have changed and we are experiencing the impacts of climate

change every day, people are now noticing and realizing that climate change is a current reality.

Gender issues in the Caribbean: perspectives and experiences

“ To elevate our voices, we need to build networks and better connections among women

When I started getting involved in the national and international context, in 2007, I was younger, I was a woman, I was from the global South, and I was not white. These were barriers to having a voice, being able to speak up, and being recognized by other people in those spaces. It was a challenge to be one of the only others in the room, as I had to speak up and make my different perspective heard. I was a loner out there. I think if I were male, I would have been in politics. But that was never appealing to me because it is currently not a space for women. The bar for women in politics is ridiculously high. Nowadays, it gives me hope to see so many more women, especially from the Caribbean, involved in climate issues.

I find the understanding of gender issues in the Caribbean to be quite different than elsewhere. It is not so much a problem of participation of women, as we are dominant in governance and research spaces. It is more of an undercurrent that results in gendered roles at the political leadership level and differentiated impacts of climate change on people.

In disaster risk-prone regions, like The Bahamas and other small islands in the Caribbean, we are witnessing loss and damage at unprecedented levels, and it is mostly affecting low socioeconomic classes, migrants, women, and children. Single women often do not have assistance to prepare for hurricanes or recover from impacts, and they face additional threats of violence in shelters or deportation issues as migrants. With successive impacts happening closer and closer to each other, loss and damage becomes a national development issue, driving Caribbean economies further down the cycle of debt. The same is happening on the subnational scale, causing communities to be worse and worse off. If you are not considering gender in climate action, you are not doing climate action. You are further subjecting women and children to inequality.

This undercurrent is also visible in leadership positions. Women like Mia Mottley from Barbados are an inspiration to us all because they stand out among so many men. We still have quite a way to go when it comes to women's representation. We need to continue elevating gender issues in the Caribbean and advocate for further gender data and sensitization. If we are measuring and tracking gender issues, we will be able to say what is happening. To amplify our voices, we need to build networks and strengthen connections among women. The more people see women in leadership positions, the sooner these older conceptualizations and stigmatizations will pass. We need a network of women to support ourselves across the region and with other regions, because it is very difficult to do it alone. Keep up the fight, keep showing up in spaces. We will get there one day.

A green and just transition: impact on projects

A gender lens must be taken from the beginning, from the planning stages

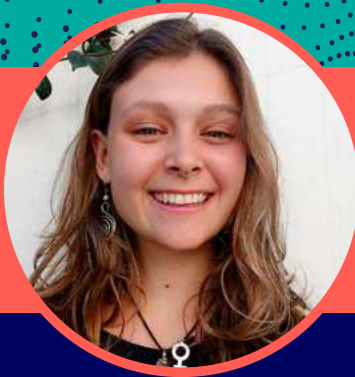
The green transition has been all about jobs, especially in the energy sector. The more recently coined concept of a just transition incorporates adaptation and inclusion of communities and people who have been marginalized. Adaptation projects focused on infrastructure or ecosystem-based measures require certain skills that have historically not been practiced by women. If these jobs do not go to women, it will increase existing gaps in our opportunity to participate in the workforce. We need to address existing inequalities that climate change exacerbates, make sure that it does not further exacerbate them, and decrease those inequalities and lift people up. I do not want to see jobs and opportunities on climate action going disproportionately to men, without benefiting women as well. I think we could pay better attention to ensure that any job opportunities that are created are equally beneficial to both genders.

In both adaptation and mitigation projects, this trans-

lates to making sure that there is equal participation of men and women from the planning stage to develop projects that are equitable. Getting this participation may require changes in engagement modalities to reach the population that you are looking for (e.g., holding consultations at different times of the day, providing childcare, going to people's homes). You have to be flexible and accommodate their needs if you want to actually get their participation. Women must be involved, and a gender lens must be taken from the beginning, from the planning stages.

CAROLINA CUESTA





Carolina Cuesta, co-founder of the Youth Network for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, speaking from Montevideo

“ In Uruguay, the face of climate change is the face of a black and poor woman

As co-founder of the Network of Young People for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, Carolina says that her feminist activism is a way of advocating for a paradigm shift in climate policymaking, calling for solutions that address the root causes of the problem. She currently studies Environmental Engineering at the Catholic University of Uruguay and, before launching this network, she was active in the defense of the youth in different collective instances both local and international, participating, for example, in the Latin American and Caribbean Climate Week and in one of the various Conferences of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. She is also a member of Fridays for Future Uruguay and co-founder of the Youth Network for Climate Justice Uruguay.

I see our role as fundamental in harmonizing technical and political knowledge

My father used to say to me: "Caro, individuality is not going to change the world, you want to change the world?, you have to go to the collectivity." This is why, to encourage collective action, in my interventions I place great importance on informing and passing on knowledge in a friendly and accessible way to young people, through formats and content adapted to the audience. It is essential that communities and groups have the knowledge to critically analyze their environment as a first step to co-creating alternative solutions. I also see our role as fundamental in harmonizing technical and political knowledge.

I have the privilege of being surrounded by wonderful, brilliant, caring, strong, tender, and enterprising women who love what they do and claim rights in the struggles they inhabit. Throughout my life, I have learned something from each one of them and, in a way, I am a combination of these learnings. I find inspiration in the network of women to which I belong: my friends, who are like sisters, my grandmothers, my mother, my aunts

and my cousins, the women in my collective, those who are active in political parties, my neighbors, my school-teachers, and the doctors who look after us, and Mother Earth.

Participation and feminist action to overcome inequalities


The environmental crisis and the gender crisis, in reality, are a single problem that concerns the way in which we conceive and inhabit territories

Many people have had to leave their territories and move to the city due to climate disasters. They have been forced to reinvent themselves in search of opportunities that aren't given. An important consequence is that the social fabric in which they were inserted is being destroyed. The environmental crisis and the gender crisis, in reality, are a single problem that concerns the way in which we conceive and inhabit territories. Paulo Freire said: "only the oppressed, by liberating themselves, can liberate the oppressors" and to free us, we need to trust.

When I think about gender relations and their effect on these vulnerabilities, as well as the various crises we are living through, I see racism as one of the big barriers. This is particularly reflected in access to funds that allow people to exercise sovereignty over their territories. These funds are not only scarce but are often not sufficiently flexible and accompanied to reach those groups that are on the front line of territorial defense.

This is why, in the spaces which I organize and facilitate, I try to take an intersectional view when making decisions, mainly with a view to encourage the participation and inclusion of the perspectives of diverse people, ensuring representativeness and awareness of the differentiated realities we live in. I know that it is the people who really participate, who achieve decision-making power, who will build the climate and environmental policy. This is the reason why we need to form diverse and representative teams. It is from these teams that we can obtain the most resilient and efficient solutions.

Keys to closing gaps in the participation of all

 **I believe that we are at the mercy of the type of participation we have**

I see that most voluntary spaces, of civil society and organizations, are staffed by women. In fact, we often even have to actively seek for men, thinking exactly about the representativity that we want to promote. However, when it comes to speaking with those who make the decisions, we usually find a majority of men. Their voices are the most recognized and, therefore, the ones that are validated and considered the alleged bearers of truth. It is also often the case that when there is a woman at the decision-making table, she is looked down upon and branded, for example, as bossy. This is something that has happened to me. When I am to lead, I am “bossy”, “the boss”, and when it is a man, he is “entrepreneurial”, “the leader”.

Women's participation must be qualitatively significant and go beyond mere consultation. To this end, I think it is essential to have subsequent monitoring and accountability, once the theoretically co-constructed strategies have been approved. I believe that we are at the mercy of the type of participation we have and the effective implementation and consideration of our voices.

In order to prepare for disaster and to enable intelligent solutions, I reckon that it is key to innovate and to strengthen the capacities of civil society to facilitate the formation of networks and the exchange of knowledge. In the current scenario, it is essential that global South countries receive the promised funds, guaranteeing suf-

ficient autonomy to use them according to their specific needs, without neglecting the monitoring with appropriate criteria to the different contexts and their people. I also think that art is essential as a tool to promote the social transformations we need to develop community resilience.

Youth Network for Disaster Risk Reduction for the Americas and the Caribbean

As a platform for integrating and strengthening the action of younger generations in reducing the risk of environmental disasters, it was created in response to two problematic phenomena: the growing vulnerability to natural disasters, especially those related to climate change, and the consistent under-representation of young people from the region in global spaces.

It originated after the formation of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2022 and was officially launched during the VIII Regional Platform on that same topic, which took place in Uruguay. Its main objective is

the development of skills and cooperation in disaster risk reduction, promoting the participation of young generations in decision-making and in the creation of inclusive policies. Through training programs, dialogues and the use of social networks, it promotes technical training, mobilizing the participation of young people in 41 countries of the region, comprising approximately 600 members.

DANIELA CHACÓN





Daniela Chacón, cofounder of Women in Motion, speaking from Quito

“ It is essential that we discuss unpaid domestic work in the context of a green and just transition

From the Placemaking Leadership Council to the classrooms of the Universidad de las Américas in Ecuador, where she teaches International Relations, Daniela acknowledges her privilege. At the age of 32, she was deputy mayor of Quito and fiercely led the program *Cuéntame*, which aimed to combat harassment in public transport. In 2019, she was recognized as one of the remarkable feminist voices in the field of transport by Women Mobilize Women for her leadership. A lawyer from the San Francisco de Quito University, a Fulbright scholar in 2009, and with a master's degree in Public Administration from the George Washington University in the United States, today she continues to move in all directions: she founded and is the Executive Director of the TANDEM Foundation and co-founded Women in Motion.

“ I suffered seeing how much discrimination there is against us, and how, because I was a woman, I had to work twice as hard to show that I deserved to be there

It has been ten years since I started my political career. I grew up as a privileged woman and had access to many opportunities, but when I became deputy mayor of Quito, I realized the constant violence and sexualization that women face in politics. I suffered seeing how much discrimination there is against us and how, because I was a woman, I had to work twice as hard to show that I deserved to be there. This experience made me come out as a feminist and starting my internal process of understanding how gender affects my life.

One woman from the region who inspires me in my action for a green and just transition is Paola Tapia Salas, former Minister of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile and one of the co-founders of Women in Motion, which I also helped found along with a group of fantastic women. We all currently work in the transportation sector in the region, and from this, we co-founded this Ibero-American network that seeks to promote female

leadership in the sustainability agenda, with a special focus on sustainable mobility. Our focus is on integrating a gender lens into the planning of mobility systems and the generation of knowledge.

The power of feminism in the area of transport

“ The recognition of a woman saying that she feels much safer traveling by public transport because she knows she'll be protected is truly transformative

I work to integrate the gender lens with the axes that guide municipal public mobility policy, such as citizen security, access to basic services and citizen participation. One of the initiatives I coordinated is the project *Ciudades para Mujeres*, developed with the aim that municipalities understand gender gaps. We know that, at local level, it is crucial that governments take on their responsibilities addressing these gaps within their sphere of competence, using the knowledge available. The recognition of a woman saying that she feels much safer traveling by public transport because she knows she will be protected is truly transformative.

Fortunately, through our work at the *TANDEM* Foundation, we see that women's organizations demonstrate greater empowerment to demand better services and responses from the government using data and knowledge. For example, through an exercise we called “*Mis tiempos, Mis Actividades*”, we got women and men to describe what they do every hour of the day. Then we quantified paid versus unpaid time. The results provided a quantifiable basis for making new demands, and for this it was fundamental for women to know their rights and use the citizen participation system of Ecuador.

Challenges for progress in incorporating a gender lens

“ We have to think of women as partners, owners, with decision-making power

Despite the progress made, it is necessary to conceive the gender perspective as technical knowledge that goes beyond merely hiring women. We have to stop understanding this perspective as a simple extension of unpaid care work and start recognizing that, when applied to the development of public policies, it offers an important return for society. This is why it is crucial to discuss unpaid

domestic work in the context of a green and just transition, based on mobility, because the care sector marks other forms of discrimination, inequality and violence.

We have to think of women as partners, owners, with decision-making power. An interesting experience is the system *Manzanas del Cuidado*, developed and implemented in Bogotá by former mayor Claudia López. This formula focuses on promoting specific, cost-effective, and easy-to-implement measures to make people's daily lives easier. This includes, for example, affordable automatic washing machines, which have given local women up to six hours a week of their time back.

Women in Motion

Women in Motion is an Ibero-American network of more than 400 Latin American women. It was created in 2008 in the context of the first Women Mobilize Women conference. Its mission is to promote women's leadership in the sustainability agenda, with a special focus on sustainable mobility. The network works to integrate a gender perspective into the planning of mobility systems and the production of knowledge, a need that is still pending at many levels.

One of their most notable projects is the program *Lideresas Urbanas*, through which they call on women from the region to equip them with concepts, technical tools for planning and implementation, as well as soft skills for negotiating and promoting a gender perspective in decision-making. In addition, the network has a directory of experts, and has developed a network of paid mentorships that bring together experienced women with younger women who are starting their work towards a green and just transition in very enriching exchanges.

In order to continue strengthening its impact, Women in Motion seeks to partner with organizations led by women. This collaboration stands out as one of its main strengths. The approach is not only theoretical, but also deeply practical.

EMIKO SEPÚLVEDA





Emiko Sepúlveda, general coordinator of the National Youth and Children's Conference on Climate Change in Chile, speaking from Santiago



Creating accessible training and education opportunities is fundamental

Trained as an engineer in Renewable Natural Resources in the University of Chile, Emiko served as a Youth Climate Delegate at the Conference of the Parties in the United Arab Emirates. She is also the general co-coordinator of the Local Conference of Youth, a space where Chilean youth advocate for climate action. Her path, however, began much earlier: from the Chilean Association of Municipalities to the branch of the United Nations Development Program that unfolds in her country, she has dedicated her life to climate adaptation, collaborating with organizations like Adapt Chile, the FAO, and the Chilean Ministry of the Environment. In her current work at the consulting agency *Airefresco*, she continues building a sustainable future based on the mobilization of young people and community commitment.

“ Being able to accompany us, beyond the cause and the community, gives me hope, because I am putting into practice what I want for the world

My feminism began when I understood the injustice in the fact that women are treated differently, not equally. I think it is important to question this inequality as a form of systematic abuse. This is where my need to be a feminist comes from, so that I can defend myself.

I speak of a kind of defense that finds inspiration in the collective, in the many people who have given me a push, friends, books, films and trips that have contributed to the way I commit myself to promoting actions for a green and just transition. Being able to accompany us, beyond the cause and the collective, gives me hope, because I am putting into practice what I want for the world.

Leadership and activism with a critical perspective

“ My vision of youth activism started with the Penguin Revolution, the student movement that erupted in 2006 in Chile, one of the most important since we returned to democracy in my country

I am not satisfied with the way decisions are made that affect society. However, I am willing to collaborate with whoever is necessary to ensure these decisions are as good as possible. I have always had a spirit of leadership, and it is not difficult for me to occupy these areas of responsibility. What is difficult is being a leader in the face of socio-cultural barriers typical of my country and common across Latin America, which have often led me to be labeled "spoiled", "bossy" and "inexperienced".

With time and experience, I have identified that most of these barriers are associated with my identity as a woman, and even more so as a young person. Today I know that, on many occasions, I was not even considered because of my gender. In addition, I had to face constant mansplaining. This male behavior is usually reproduced in mixed contexts where men assume they must explain things to women, a phenomenon that is unfortunately very common in spaces of greater power and responsibility. Despite these and other obstacles, I have persisted in participating in decisions on common issues at different levels, in which I usually get involved. I have always been interested in democracy and governance from the grassroots and for the grassroots.

My vision of youth activism started with the Penguin Revolution, the student movement that erupted in 2006 in Chile, one of the most important since we returned to democracy in my country. It continued with the student movement in 2011, during which university spaces functioned as catalysts for political and social questioning. It also created conditions for women to raise their voice.

Fortunately, activism has changed, especially with the arrival of social networks. And while we still have a lot of room for improvement, especially in limiting hate speeches that overshadow our actions by raising more constructive ones, I also recognize that this type of collective action has great potential to foster self-learning.

Creating accessible opportunities for training and education is fundamental. In my case, the curiosity that arose in different activism spaces led me to the need to learn more about public policies. I had the luck to attend the fourth edition of the School for Leaders and Young Women of *Comunidad Mujer* and the course of the Chilean Ministry of the Environment on integrating a gender lens into public climate change policies. These experiences were essential, as they provided me with tools and refer-

ences to understand my reality.

Climate action and questioning consumption

“We over-consume everything, from our planet to our bodies and spirits

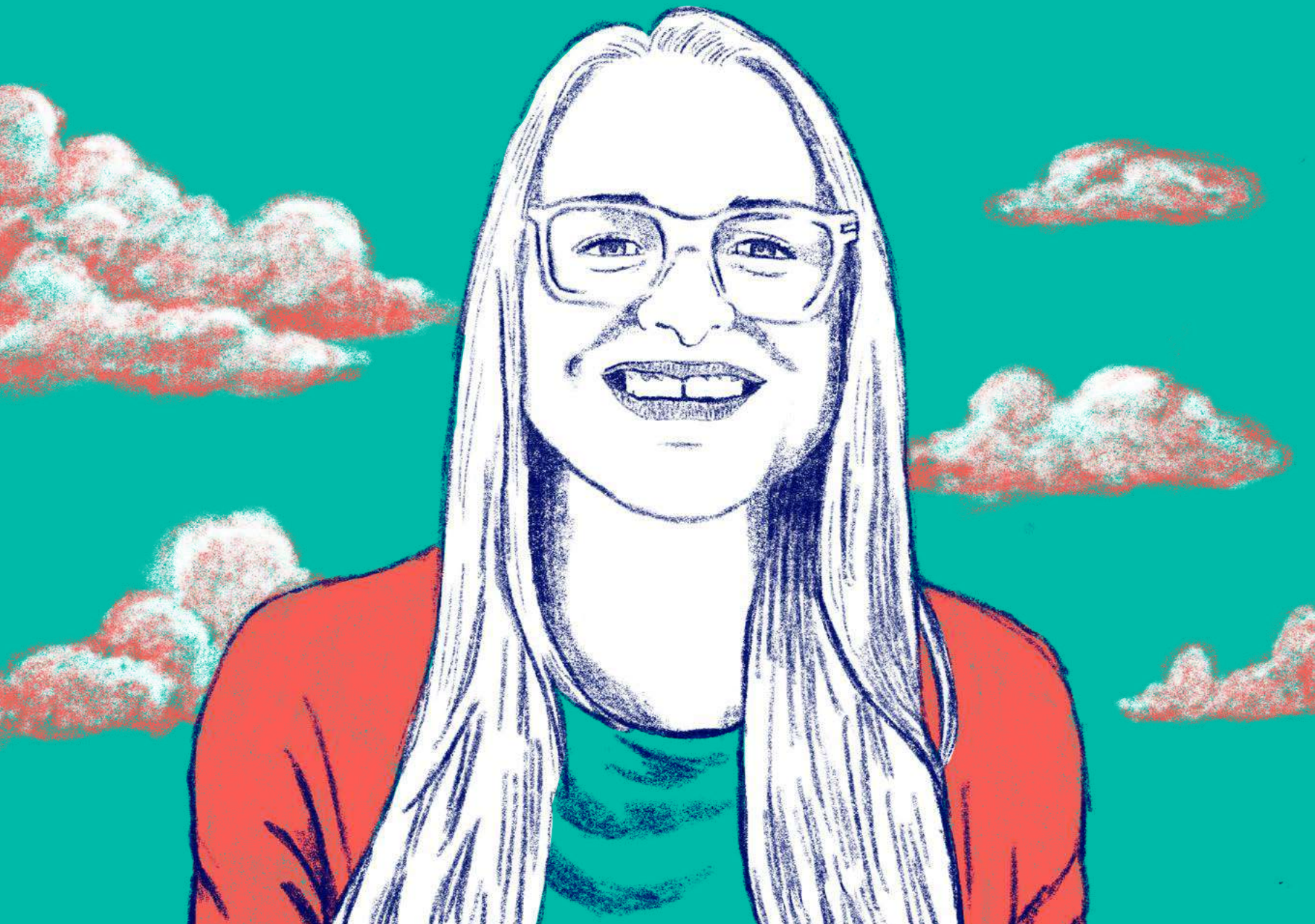
I have participated in building youth networks that are present in the most diverse spaces. My aim is to provoke reflection on normalized undemocratic practices and to work to eradicate them from our collective surroundings. As part of this effort, we are developing a podcast called *Las Juventudes Dicen*, which will highlight young voices and opinions about sustainable development.

I advocate for intersectional feminist climate action, but I warn that this perspective can be tokenized or idealized, making women be included just to make it look like gender issues are being tackled, but without giving us a truly influential or meaningful role in decision-making. My stance is that we should not romanticize women as caregivers or experts in caring for people and the environment, as this contributes to relegating us and hinders our access to spaces of power.

The current focus on the climate crisis is not addressing the roots of the problem. The roots lie in over-consumption and over-exploitation. We over-consume everything, from our planet to our bodies and spirits. We focus on satisfying demand and increasing efficiency, but we do not question the logic that sustains these consumption needs.

I believe that the key is not to give in and to find a balance that allows us to take care of each other as part of nature, without forgetting our collective identity. This cause belongs to society, we are a collective that must be protected.

FRANCES FULLER





Frances Fuller, Head of Global Offices at Climate Analytics, speaking from New York

“ We are neglecting the post-traumatic stress disorder and the impacts that disasters are having on people

Frances holds a bachelor's in Environmental Bio-Geoscience and Environmental Science from the University of Leeds, and a master's in Environment, Politics and Globalization from King's College London. She obtained a certificate on Renewable Energy Market Trends and Finance from the Renewable Energy Institute. Before her current post at Climate Analytics, where she also works as a senior implementation specialist, she acted as advisor for the Alliance of Small Island States, was part of the United Nations Secretary-General's climate change support team and special assistant to the president of the United Nations General Assembly. She has been active in the government of Antigua and Barbuda, as environment officer and special advisor at the Department of Environment.

“ I strongly believe that when we think together as a community we can come up with the right solutions

My motivation stems from the place I am from. I spent most of my childhood breaks from school in Barbuda, the sister island of Antigua, being really immersed in nature. Growing up, I realized that things were changing, and I started to understand a bit more about the impacts of climate change. At university I learned more about the science and started to realize how disproportionately countries like mine are impacted. It really inspired me to get involved.

I was always surrounded by strong women, and I continue to be inspired by them. My mom, my sisters, my aunts, and my grandmother. One of the women who inspired me along the way towards a green and just transition was Ambassador Diann Black-Layne, she really was a force to be reckoned with. What gives me most hope is people and how fast technology and solutions have developed. We can create through collaboration. There are solutions now that you would not have dreamt of five years ago. I strongly believe that when we think and act together as a community we can come up with the right

solutions.

Insights on promoting gender and social inclusion in the Caribbean

“ We need whole-economy approaches, making people more resilient and dependent on local products

There are not enough people from our region in the international discourse related to climate and biodiversity, and we need to strongly encourage that. Research has shown that gender and social inclusion are crucial to effective climate action and sustainable solutions. In different regions, and even different countries, the context is so different. As temporary actors we need to be responsive to that. One key challenge in our region is that much of economic life happens in the informal sector, for which we have a lack of data, let alone gender disaggregated data, to understand what it looks like.

We need to unpack what we mean in communities that are not familiar with this language around gender-responsive approaches, because ultimately it does not mean 50/50 participation in every activity, but that you

are actively moving forward, together. For me a priority is broadening the reach of the message and being more inclusive, bringing in church groups, community groups, civil society, and small businesses. One very positive experience I had recently involving gender and social inclusion in our projects, was with the Gender Affairs Office. They have a wealth of knowledge and understanding on issues across the whole spectrum of the economy. But, in general, there are very few examples of adequate gender and social inclusion in policy or projects. I identify two main reasons for this.

On the one hand, small island states are capacity constrained and highly indebted, often facing other priorities. This is slowly progressing, with the evolution of international climate finance and the acknowledgement of specific access issues. On the other hand, they are highly dependent on imports, for fossil fuels and everything else. Building resilience is not just about decarbonizing the transport and the energy sectors but also about how to transition key sectors such as tourism and agriculture. We need whole-economy approaches, making people more resilient and dependent on local products.

The non-economic or non-tangible pieces that women see (co-benefits, adaptation, resilience, etc.) are essential and too often neglected in the climate conversation in the Caribbean. It would be highly beneficial to have more women in that conversation. Women are agents of change and when they are included in decision making, you get holistic solutions that benefit everyone, since they have historically thought about everyone other than themselves. Mentorship programs are a critical approach to tackle some of the hurdles women face when entering these spaces. It is key to have women supporting women.

Inclusive climate action for lasting solutions

“ I see women and marginalized groups not just as beneficiaries, but as participants in the process

We are neglecting the post-traumatic stress and the impacts that disasters are having on people. Women and marginalized groups face the greatest impacts of events such as hurricanes, which can just rip away your whole life in the matter of hours. The sound of the wind is terrifying. Climate policies that ignore these vulnerabilities and lack inclusive approaches will fail to provide effective, long-term solutions.

In stakeholder consultations, I see women and marginalized groups not just as beneficiaries, but as participants in the process. As such we have evolved our verification on how they will participate, who will be involved, and the scope and durability of their engagement. It is nice to see consultations that include all of society and provide an infrastructure that allows everyone to be active.

There is so much research on the huge impact of giving money directly to women-led businesses, community groups or projects. We need a shift in the way climate finance is delivered. Ensuring that a minimum percentage of climate funds go to women or minority-led initiatives would help. We must rethink risk and financial flows, with out-of-the-box approaches, to create a safety net for the most vulnerable.

Limiting warming to the 1.5°C goal cannot be at the cost of vulnerable people who are already impacted. You cannot have us continue with a colonial approach to decarbonization that is not inclusive and will only perpetuate continued problems in this new economy that we are trying to build. It is going to be challenging to use the same solutions to get out of the difficulties we are facing nowadays.

LETÍCIA SABINO





Leticia Sabino, founder and director of the Walkability Institute, speaking from São Paulo

“ I am particularly concerned about the naturalization of violence and the fear that women have of the city

Leticia studied Business Administration at the São Paulo Business School of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation and did postgraduate studies in Creative Economy and Creative Cities at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation. She also holds a master's degree in City Planning and Urban Design from the University College London on a Chevening scholarship. In addition to her current position, she is a consultant and has co-founded initiatives such as Empathy Walks, the Association for Walking Mobility in São Paulo, and the Latin American Network for Walkable Cities. She was also a member of the Technical Commission for Walking Mobility and Accessibility at the National Association of Public Transport. For her work with the Walkability Institute, she was recognized with Santander's *Criativar* Award in 2013, in 2014 with Liberty Seguros' *Sinal Livre* Award for Urban Mobility, and in 2020 as one of the remarkable feminist voices in the transport sector for the Women Mobilize Women initiative. She was also the mobiliser of *Paulista Aberta* in São Paulo, a program that for ten years has opened one of the city's main avenues to people on Sundays and public holidays.

I have been debating, reflecting, writing, and building more walkable cities for 12 years

I have been debating, reflecting, writing and building more walkable cities for 12 years. The motivation to make better cities to live in came after an experience living in Mexico City in 2010, which already had public policies for leisure in public spaces and active mobility that were not yet in place in Brazil, such as Avenida Reforma for leisure on Sundays and shared bicycle stations. In 2015, I had the opportunity to live in London during my master's and study public space design and participatory methodologies. More recently, to broaden my knowledge and perspectives on Brazilian cities, I ended up becoming a bit of a nomad, having spent time in Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza, Salvador and visiting projects in various cities.

When I realized that both walkability and the gender perspective in the transport sector are neglected, despite being in the majority, I wanted to work to make both dimensions more visible and improve people's quality of life. Some of the women from the region and colleagues who I find inspiring are Kelly Augusto, coordinator of the Latin American Platform for Sustainable Urban Mobility,

Eveline Trevisan, coordinator of Active Mobility in Belo Horizonte, and Taynara Gomes, a consultant on diverse projects for cities focusing on children, among many others.

Characterization of the mobility sector

The city for women is smaller in terms of territory and time because of fear

In the mobility sector, there is not much knowledge or data on gender gaps, and even less on race, which makes it difficult to act intersectionally between race, gender, and walkability, which is fundamental in Brazil, and which we seek to complement with our methodologies. There is also a long way to go for the available data to reflect the reality of women's experiences in the city.

Fear of going out on the street, for example, is neither measured nor taken into account in mobility surveys, i.e., immobility, its factors or even women's mobility strategies, such as going out accompanied, among others, are not evaluated. They are also very poorly geo-referenced, i.e., there is no relationship between the ways of travel-

ling and the times of day with the types of streets and the quality of the spaces. Women's participation in decision-making is essential to incorporate a holistic vision of life in cities that considers more complex needs and perspectives, such as care, the school environment and children's autonomy and access to green areas. Our efforts to integrate a gender perspective into mobility focus on the most neglected area of all, which is walking. The difficulties we usually encounter are very representative of undervaluation, because we are talking about women's experience in cities, especially as pedestrians, and there are no public administration sectors dedicated to this, no investment and no specific public policies. Both walking and women's perspectives are underserved in cities.

The city for women is smaller in terms of territory and time because of fear. Women do not have the same access to the streets as men, nor the freedom to always move around. I am particularly concerned about the naturalization of violence and the fear that women have of the city. When we ask women in the projects if they have strategies for dealing with violence when travelling, the answer is negative. However, when we ask them what they do before going out, they can list several choices that are

strategies, such as wearing comfortable shoes so they can walk quickly, using large bags to protect themselves from men on public transport and using bicycles at night to feel safer than on foot. So, women's experience is also marked by this layer of worry and stress, which is naturalized in their routines, but which shapes their journeys and access to rights, further widening gender inequalities.

Solutions in the face of the challenges in the area of walkability

“ Women with or without children, young, old, black, from the periphery, of different sexualities and pregnant, all have to be protagonists in the evaluation of public space and in building solutions

To find solutions to the problems faced by women in the city, it is important to institutionalize the gender perspective. A budget allocation guaranteed by law could be used to guarantee specific lines of funding at federal level for municipalities to implement gender safety audits and walkability indices for urban projects, or to guarantee training for technicians in cities, which could be proposed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Cities, to make progress on this issue. We currently carry out

these processes when we have the resources. We have already done so in João Pessoa, Curitiba, and Salvador in partnership with the IDB.

I am also in favor of creating plans that require citizen participation and walkability plans, because the term of the plans lasts for several governments and can guarantee more continuity. Public recognition of the work of organizations and women through awards, networks or events also helps to strengthen these initiatives, especially if they serve to connect people working in the field and provide inspiration to continue working for a green and just transition. We have to demand laws that require participatory processes to develop a citizen's vision in projects, as in Spain, for example.

We work with two main audiences: the public administration and the general population. In the public administration, you have to deal above all with men who do not even walk around or live in the city, and make them aware of how difficult it is. The important thing is for them to walk around, to put themselves in the shoes of the population and their daily problems. Participation has to be diverse, because the needs and layers of violence

we face are different. Women with or without children, young, old, black, from the periphery, of different sexual orientations and pregnant, all have to be protagonists in evaluating the public space and building solutions. That is what we do with our methodologies, but we need investment if they are to be scaled up and have a more significant impact on the transformation of cities.

PAOLA TAPIA





Paola Tapia, co-founder of Women in Motion, speaking from Santiago de Chile

“Transport and mobility policies need to incorporate a gender perspective

The promotion of Paola Tapia as the highest authority of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications of Chile, in 2017, made her the first woman leading this portfolio. She is a lawyer with a degree from the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*, with twenty years of experience in the Ministry, where she is currently Director of Metropolitan Public Transport. She has a master's degree in Public Law, and diplomas in Management, Public Policy, Education, among others. She is co-founder of Women in Motion and the Latin American Observatory on Gender and Mobility, from where she promotes female participation and gender equity in urban mobility policies. In 2023, the international initiative Women Mobilize Women recognized her as one of the most remarkable feminist voices in the transport sector.

“ Women's leadership in all spheres is fundamental for gender equality, because by their example they inspire others and show us that it is possible to occupy spaces, especially those historically masculinised ”

When we meet faces that are often invisible, such as those of women, needs that are also invisible are revealed. I am motivated to act in this regard, because I understand that if I have the opportunity to hold public office, it is to be at the service of society and people. A crucial influence in this vocation of public service is Michelle Bachelet, a woman who in 2006 showed us that it is possible for one of us to lead the country by becoming the first female president of Chile, and who also had the responsibility and strength to hold that office again between 2014 and 2018.

The potential of women's networks

“ It is very important to mainstream a gender perspective and generate more female voices in all areas ”

I believe in women's potential to inspire more women, especially younger women. We have to take up the chal-

lenge of designing training and accompaniment that empower them. This goes hand in hand with generating knowledge, sharing good practices, and creating powerful networks. These spaces and leaderships must be shared, as they deliver the message that we can work and build in networks. In this we have to be courageous to face the challenges, trust in our capacities and preparation. This is not a competition between genders, but the development of a healthy coexistence between those who make up society, so that we can progress and create fairer and more equitable systems.

It is very important to mainstream the gender perspective and amplify female voices in all areas, because the sectors in which we work are not isolated. For example, mobility policies are related to climate change policies, as they are directly linked to the promotion of renewable energies. They are also tied to increasing women's participation in decision-making spaces and in the labor market, generating benefits at all levels.

This perspective can make the spaces of power where public policies are designed more sensitive to women's voices and needs. We need to go beyond a formal human

resources issue and make sure that this approach is present in how we think, how we plan, and how we project our cities.

The mobility of care in urban planning

 **64% of women report that the most unsafe place in the city is a public transport stop**

Today we know that women have distinctive mobility patterns: they use public transport more than men and are the ones who mostly take on household care work. This includes shopping, transporting children, elderly, and people with disabilities, visiting relatives, among others. It is therefore crucial to ensure that they have public transport options close to their homes that are offered throughout the day and connected to health and educational facilities. This is an approach that addresses the mobility of care, without which the city does not function. It is therefore crucial that transport and mobility policies have a woman's face.

With this perspective as a basis, in Chile we generated the first Gender Equity Policy in Transport, one of the first in the world. We managed to approve it in March 2018

and based on it, we developed a roadmap in collaboration with academia, civil society, and the private sector. With it, the gender approach was mainstreamed in the transport sector, which had concrete effects, such as training and an increase in female staff, especially in driving, among others.

One of the key actions to equalize female participation from the engine of the system was the Women Drivers Program. Created in 2022, it has led to an 81% increase in the number of female drivers in just two years. The program offers scholarships for professional licensing, as well as a promise of employment by transport operating companies at a terminal near their homes. This has given the drivers economic and personal autonomy, and a workspace compatible with the development of their private lives. In addition, they report that this has led to a better working environment and a reduction in the number of traffic accidents.

At the same time, it is to be expected that the leap to electromobility will have a certain impact on the quality of life of citizens and more directly on workers in the sector. More directly, this change improves the city's envi-

ronmental conditions at all levels. In Santiago, a woman in the southern sector, which is more popular, can live up to 16 years less than a woman who lives in the more affluent sectors, towards the east of the city. This is due to environmental reasons, lack of timely and quality access to health care, and to mobility limitations, which is one more reason to include a gender dimension in our public policies.

Another relevant project has been the gender-sensitive safe and accessible bus stops. These are bus stops that include additional safety elements that give more certainty about travel times and waiting conditions. Some of them are the installation of solar lighting, information panels with the distance of the buses, and a panic button. We implemented this measure because surveys informed us that 64% of women reported that the most unsafe place in the city was a public transport stop.

Finally, two years ago we created the first Latin American Gender and Mobility Observatory. Public agencies from the capital cities of Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Mexico City, La Paz, Lima, and Santiago participate in this space.

The Observatory was created to make the implications of gender in mobility visible, share good practices and develop common indicators. We have had two face-to-face meetings (2023 in Santiago and 2024 in La Paz) with representatives of the agencies, drivers, and international organizations. The first meeting resulted in a publication with good practices and indicators that is accessible for free on our website, and a new publication from the second meeting will soon be available, as well as a study on violence.

ROSA RIQUELME





Rosa Riquelme, Executive Director of the Energy Sustainability Agency, speaking from Santiago

“ In face of complex problems, including women is an opportunity for greater integrality

Rosa has a degree in Economic Sciences from the University of Chile, and a course in Economics and Gender Equality. Before taking up her current position, she worked in the Chilean Ministry of Energy, in energy efficiency, and in the Ministry of Education, in the executive secretariat for Early Childhood. She was recognized as Ambassador of Women in Energy, a program of the World Energy Council.

It motivates me to work for a fairer society for today's people and those of the future

I like to be active in spaces that allow me to maximize my public impact, it motivates me to dedicate my time to actions that have social utility and not just an economic one. It motivates me to work for a fairer society for today's people and those of the future. It is a planetary challenge and an opportunity for coming generations to be able to enjoy a habitable environment, not to be deprived of their territories and their history.

When I applied for my current position, I wanted to bring many ideas to implement in the agency. I thought that, even if I did not get the job, at least I could make them listen to my ideas. I wanted them to know that there was a lot to do and a lot of potential to be developed. This strength and inspiration come from family. My granny inspires me in all my efforts for a green and just transition, because of the resilience she instilled in me. She comes from a humble background, so seeing me grow up was a dream, and for me, pursuing that dream, with the confidence that it will always be possible, is a beautiful inner strength that she gifted me.

Just energy transition: Inclusion and gender approach

This transition must be just, and for it to be just, it must be with everyone

In face of complex problems, including women is an opportunity for greater integrality. As mainstreaming the gender perspective is a relatively recent priority, there is a lack of technical skills, tools and models that allow it to work with this complexity. This is part of an institutional dialogue, but it is also a very personal topic. We have done a great work of conversation, dialogues, and efforts to broaden understanding to progress in incorporating this approach into all areas.

I work integrating transversality, incorporating the gender perspective into all our sustainability initiatives, as well as territoriality, so that our work is relevant to the local reality, because territories and people are always impacted by it. In addition, I see a great potential in linking and generating information to make better decisions.

This transition has to be fair, and for it to be fair, it has to be fair to everyone. In the current development model, from the extractive sector and mining to the development of renewable energies, many injustices have been committed against communities. That is why we must change the way we work with them, considering them as beneficiaries, but also as actors who will play a key role.

Women must be part of this transition and of the labor market that will be generated in the territories as a result of this development. We need to identify the spaces in the value chain in which they have an effective place and what is missing for them to be able to contribute to others, analyzing their employment options. Only if we open more spaces for participation will we have a transition that is supported by the population and is therefore sustainable. Sustainable, renewable, and efficient energy has the opportunity to become a different market, as long as it manages to incorporate people, in a more distributive way, and if the benefits indeed reach society as a whole.

I believe that the answer lies in energy efficiency and the decompression of demand, based on a cultural change. I see in cooperative energy and distributive gen-

eration, with remote equipment, an alternative to guaranteeing access for the entire population. We are working on this with many women leaders in the territories, through, for example, the program Energy Community.

The problem of the masculinization of the energy transition

A lot of people think that if you go to university, they fully prepare you. But that is not the case, because they do not prepare you to face a masculinized world

Many people think that attending university fully prepares you. But that is not the case, because they do not prepare you to face a masculinized world. It is a challenge to keep working to make our voices heard, even if progress is slow and if we still have to put up with behavior and attitudes that devalue, sexualize, objectify and infantilize us in these political spaces, which in addition tend to be highly elitist.

If we carry on like this, we will continue to lose talent. For example, only 1% of the workforce with electrical certification are women, which means that electromobility cannot include them. This is serious because we know

that companies will call for people with certification. To counter this negative trend, we have advanced in electromobility programs with a gender perspective, which show good results because women commit more and for longer. In addition, women tend to network among themselves and to identify as a group.

We have encouraged companies to increase the number of positions held by women in roles other than those they have traditionally held. Companies are surprised by the results because women are detail-oriented and responsible. Another milestone has been the incorporation of a direct line of work in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, known as STEM, into school staff, showing that there are gender biases in training and, therefore, in job opportunities.

Finally, in the framework of our program *Giro Limpio*, which focuses on energy efficiency in freight transport, we also included this approach and identified problems with access to toilets and the length of routes which, because they are very long, cannot be carried out by women, as socially it is difficult for them to stay away from home for prolonged periods. This identification was a first step in

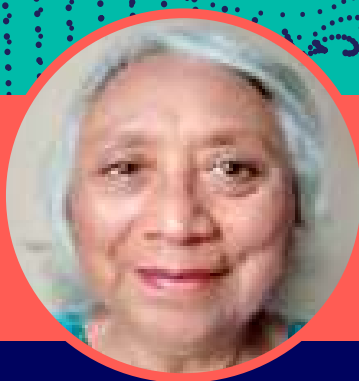
supporting this conversation, but it remains complex to make progress in reducing this gap.

Poverty and Rights



ANA MARÍA ACEVEDO





Ana María Acevedo, founder and Executive Director of the NGO HOMAS, speaking from Lima, Peru



Women's leadership is fundamental in promoting water and sanitation services

With a solid academic background, having obtained her master's degree in Social Sciences from the *Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos*, Ana María has dedicated her career to improving living conditions in rural communities. She began her career working with women in popular canteens and is currently a member of the Latin American Coalition for Rural Sanitation and Water. She also actively participates in Sanitation and Water for All, as Peru's representative, and is a member of the coordinating committee of the Peru SAN network. Her experience also includes important roles in the NGO FOVIDA, where she represented the Latin American voice on the Food Security Committee, and in the *Foro Salud*, where she served as national coordinator. In addition, she has been a consultant at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, mainly on food and nutrition security. She has also published a study on civil society organizations in water and sanitation in seven countries in Latin America, unveiling the key role of women in the provision of water for their households.

“ I have been working for years to contribute to the development of a committed citizenry, betting on strengthening our community and on the construction of a fairer country

I strongly believe in the possibility of a better future for Peru, and this strengthens my conviction that, despite its difficulties and challenges, I would not change my country for any other. I see the potential of a civil society that is well-informed, experienced, and capable of proposing solutions. That is why I have been working for years to contribute to the development of a committed citizenry, betting on strengthening our community and on the construction of a fairer country.

My inspiration in the fight for a green and just transition comes from a close and powerful source: my mother, the first feminist I met. Her example taught me the need for equal opportunities for women and men, as the true wealth of a country lies in its people, in their ability to mobilize and in the power of that population to generate change. This reinforces my commitment to working for a Peru in which all voices are heard and valued.

Women, leadership, and water in rural areas

“ Women are the most affected by environmental issues, especially by the scarcity of quality water in rural areas


My professional experience in coordinating projects that contribute to a green and just transformation has allowed me to identify three fundamental roles that women generally assume in rural communities: the community role, the care role, and the leadership role, although the latter is often made invisible by cultural patterns that restrict the recognition of women outside the domestic sphere.

During my work in the organization of community managers and administrative boards of water and sanitation services, which serve almost the entire rural population, I was surprised that most leaders were men, despite the regulatory requirement to include at least 30% women in decision-making spaces. In practice, although the percentage was formally met, it was more of an administrative procedure than an actual implementation.

This is problematic, since women are the most affected by environmental damage, especially the scarcity of quality water in rural areas. This has impacts on the whole Latin American region, where the migration from the countryside to the city of women has been intensified. The migration of younger women to cities, in search of better opportunities, weakens communities' ability to improve general living conditions.

The women who remain in the rural areas end up being left alone with care work and family agriculture, while the men go away in search of temporary jobs. This perpetuates the conditions of poverty and makes us think that life in these places will become increasingly difficult. We know that extreme poverty in these areas is only alleviated through community work and solidarity. However, the trend towards privatization of water services and rights poses a further danger to the livelihoods of these communities, affecting the 30% of the population living below the poverty line in Peru. The situation is not much better in the cities. For example, around 10% of the population of Lima does not have access to drinking water through the public network, and it is women who end up taking responsibility for finding solutions.

Female empowerment and rights approach

 **With an approach based on scientific evidence, we seek to facilitate the exchange of experiences and create spaces in which women can access decision-making positions**

In the organization I run, we are dedicated to raising awareness about women's rights. This is fundamental to empowering them so that they can exercise their full citizenship and develop the capacity to influence the improvement of public policies. It is a complex process to strengthen their role in society and also redefine their role at home. It is necessary work, and we hope to expand it to promote a rights approach in other spheres.

In addition, it is vital that we rethink public discourse, to prevent sexism from perpetuating inequalities that hinder the achievement of our goals. It is a difficulty I am familiar with, because although I have always been respected for my knowledge in the spaces in which I coordinate teams, in other decisive contexts, such as meetings with mayors, I face constant underestimation. This reality reflects how women continue to be underestimated, even when their

experience and skills have been clearly demonstrated.

Despite these difficulties, I continue to work to bring visibility to female leaders, especially in the promotion of water and sanitation services. With an approach based on scientific evidence, we seek to facilitate the exchange of experiences and create spaces in which women can access decision-making positions. One successful example is the Federation of Peasant Women of Peru, which focuses its work on promoting the participation of rural women in decisions.

CAROL CHEHAB





Carol Chehab, Director of the Latin American Center for Rural Development, speaking from Quito

“ The best lessons are found in the lives of rural women. It is important to listen to them and open more spaces for them to participate

Carol is an economist from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, with a specialization in Foreign Trade from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a master's degree in International Finance and Trade from the University of Barcelona. Her experience focuses on the rural sector, especially agriculture. She was Undersecretary for Commercialization at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador. In addition to her current position, she serves as the Executive Director and as researcher at the Foreign Trade Observatory of Ecuador.

My greatest inspiration are the women of the countryside, the farmers who work and carry on despite the constraints of everyday life

I was interested in climate change studies when I saw its effects on production, on the income of those who make a living from agriculture and on the food security of the population of Ecuador. That's why my greatest inspirations are the women of the countryside, the farmers who work and carry on despite the constraints of everyday life. The best lessons are found in the lives of rural women. It is important to listen to them and open more spaces for them to participate. My work is aimed at expanding opportunities for these voices to be heard and for them to have a greater say in policy proposals and decision-making.

The situation of rural women in Ecuador

It is important to incorporate and give visibility to women as agents of change

A gender approach goes far beyond women. It includes all people put in precarious conditions, including those who live in rural areas. That is why our action

against climate change and the loss of biodiversity must address the great existing needs in the rural world.

When we started our action, the participation of women in spaces such as advisory councils, or women's committees, was very low. Over time, this has increased but women living in rural areas of Ecuador have yet to be incorporated. We often hear them say that they are not summoned and that they do not receive the necessary training. For example, when it comes to fair trade, the action is aimed at small producers, and the intervention of women's groups is not considered.

This way of acting, on the one hand, neglects the fundamental role that women play in the functioning of the agricultural sector and in food security: they are part of production, commercialization, households, and family farming. On the other hand, it only gives visibility to the role they play as caregivers, disregarding the other multiple roles they play in society. This must be changed, and it is important to incorporate and give visibility to women as agents of change. This is done with more information about their realities and by giving them a voice in the multiple areas in which they participate socially.

How to advance a gender approach in the rural world

“ A gender approach must be part of the response to the effects of climate change, from the design to the definition of public policy

There is great concern about climatic phenomena that we do not know how to deal with, such as drought, floods, plagues, and diseases. In face of the impacts of climate change, we know that we can work more on agricultural insurance, traceability of products, giving visibility to the work behind small-scale production, the generation of opportunities and viable alternatives in the rural world. We can also promote rural work; specifically in the agricultural sector by addressing its vulnerabilities, all while ensuring that we take a gender approach.

This approach answers to the effects of climate change from the design to the definition of public policy, improving our ability to differentiate between the needs of the population. While we have made substantial progress on gender-sensitive policy proposals, now we have to put them into practice. This requires coordinated efforts with local governments, where there is still a lack

of training on how to incorporate this perspective and to guarantee ourselves a role in formulating proposals. We will be able to ensure that women are considered on an equal footing when identifying the groups that will receive the benefits.

To offer these rural leaders a real opportunity to participate in public decision-making, it is essential to consider their realities. Often, they are invited to meetings in urban areas and during business hours, which makes it difficult for them to participate, as they do not have the resources or support, which they need to attend. We also have to make decision-making spaces more convening. We must ask them what their needs are politically. We need to open up so that they can tell us if they want to continue producing corn or rice, because maybe they are looking for alternatives and we do not know it.

The important thing is to create programs and projects that have an impact on the territory. We need to work directly with people in the rural sectors because there are few organizations. We have to go out into the field more, promote more joint work, to support the formation of organizations and also those that already exist, without

being prescriptive about what they need to do, but rather accompany them. From within the NGOs, we have a great opportunity for these proposals to be incorporated by public bodies. We can influence so that women are rec-

ognized as protagonists and have the same opportunities and rights as men in the public sphere.

Latin American Center for Rural Development

The Latin American Center for Rural Development, founded in 1986, is a research network dedicated to understanding changes in rural sectors and promoting strategies for equitable territorial development in Ecuador and other Latin American countries. Its work focuses on research into agricultural production, territorial development, and the impact of climate change policies on rural areas.

Its studies adopt two general approaches: one that recognizes the potential of the rural sector beyond those who work in the fields, fostering links between the rural and urban sectors, and another based on early warning and a gender perspective, incorporating women's voices at all stages of the projects.

The center is financed by international funds and works to influence public bodies, promoting gender equality in decision-making. One of its most prominent projects is Siembra Desarrollo, which works with women's organizations to create an alternative model of rice production, avoiding the use of fertilizers and unsustainable agro inputs. It also offers training that empowers women, forming community leaders and strengthening their ability to respond to natural phenomena.

CÉLIA XAKRIABÁ





Célia Xakriabá, Federal Deputy of Brazil for the state of Minas Gerais, speaking from Brasília

“ Society has to understand that when we indigenous people enter politics, we take on the responsibility of representing a collective struggle


The collective commitment that guides Célia's life is reflected in each of her academic and political achievements. She was the first indigenous woman elected as a Federal Deputy, and the first doctoral student of her people, at the University of Minas Gerais, where she also studied Intercultural Training for Indigenous Educators. Her schooling took place at the *Xukurnuk* Indigenous State School, in the *Xakriabá* territory, where she also was trained as an indigenous teacher. She also obtained a master's degree in Sustainability with Traditional Peoples and Territories from the University of Brasília. From her current position, and with the support of her community, she reactivated the Parliamentary Front in Defense of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and chairs the Commission on the Amazon and Original and Traditional Peoples, as well as being an alternate member of the Participatory Legislation and Culture Commissions. She also led the creation of the Caucus for the Planet at COP28. Her work, which is strongly group-based, won first place in the Climate and Sustainability category of the *Congresso em Foco* Award.

The political strategies that will advance this century will be those that touch the heart deeply

When I was a child, I was inspired by the forms of leadership I saw in my great-grandfather, my grandfather, and my father. But when I had the ability to investigate, to ask questions to my great-grandmother and other women around me, my understanding of leadership changed. I realized that these men I admired always made decisions taking women's opinions into account. Then I knew that I came from a background inspired by women. That was the origin of my political positioning.

My link with culture - understood as a struggle instrument - led me to listen, teach and do politics in a different way. In my case, this was well received, and could explain that I was elected in 804 of the 853 municipalities in the state of Minas Gerais, even before I had a consolidated political career. My climate, environmental and cultural appeal, and the urgency in my call to care for and save the Earth reached a majority. This experience leaves me convinced that the political strategies that will advance this century will be those that touch the heart deeply.

The power of indigenous culture in the green and just transition

 **It will not be possible to heal the planet if we do not take women and indigenous peoples into account**

I think the only agendas that have the capacity to unite society are those that address climate, environmental and gender issues. This is because, in addition to having a program of specific actions, they come with a struggle. For example, decarbonization and reforestation begin with a change in consciousness that is based on a process of deep understanding of the problem. We are talking about a matter of survival, which cannot be reduced to a political issue, but must be treated as a humanitarian issue.

And this is the struggle that led me to politics. It was not possible to remain impassive in the face of the massacre we were experiencing. We are indigenous peoples, which means we are much more than environmental activists. We cannot simply distance ourselves from the problem and stop defending the territory and the environment. I am part of the people whose lives are threatened,

and my biggest dream is that we, indigenous people, can sleep in peace again.

In Parliament we are working, inspired by Ecuador and Bolivia, to recognize nature as a subject of rights in our Constitution. To this end, we name the Brazilian biomes: the Cerrado, the Amazon, the Caatinga, the Pampa, the Pantanal, and the Atlantic Forest to take a step forward in environmental protection.

However, this is not enough at the legislative level. They have tried to capture the green and just transition in a very dangerous way, as a trap that facilitates the perpetuation of patterns that are harmful to our environment. The colonial project continues to be reproduced, and we still have a long way to go to abandon this way of thinking. The legalization of the Temporal Framework thesis has exacerbated violence in indigenous territories and will cause climate displacement. This is ecocide.

Our place of learning continues to be the territory, it is where we re-enchanted ourselves as a community, where we live our experiences and reforest as well. It gives me hope to see that our presence produces positive changes, that

we are capable of generating transformations. That is why it is important for us to occupy institutional power and place the indigenous issue at the center of the debate. We are committed to standing up against any climate, territorial and gender inequality, and violence.

It will not be possible to heal the planet without taking women and indigenous peoples into account. We have to understand that we are one of the last generations that can solve the climate crisis. And that indigenous peoples are one of the few alternatives left to move forward in the search for a solution, precisely because of the way we live, because of the relationship we have with territory and with time.

Obstacles to indigenous women's participation in politics

We want a healing process that is collective

Institutional racism sustains violence. It is reproduced daily against us indigenous women in different ways, including in the spaces in which our rights are supposedly defended. At the beginning of my career, it was very uncomfortable to have to justify what it means to be indigenous, but today I understand that those who question our identity do so because they do not know their origins.

These political spaces reflect society, and there is a preconceived, patriarchal, image of us that endorses sexual violence against our bodies in order to discredit our social presence. We have to take responsibility for taking care of our bodies, our people and our territories, with a view to historical reparations to indigenous peoples.

That is why we need more women and more indigenous people to defeat this predatory capitalism. For the next elections, we want to develop a party fund that sup-

ports indigenous candidates, so that they can compete on more equal terms. We want a healing process that is collective, based on our ancestry, and that breaks with the necropolitics that chooses who lives or dies.

Society has to understand that when indigenous people enter politics, we take on the responsibility of representing a collective struggle. I will only rest when there are many of us, when we have the peace of mind to exist in freedom and guarantee a project of Brazil for the planet.

GABRIELA GAVARRETE





Gabriela Gavarrete, founder of the project Suma Un Bosque, speaking from San Salvador

“ It is necessary to promote the protection of biodiversity as a source of income and employment

Gabriela studied biology at the University of El Salvador and later Ecology at Dickinson College. She has dedicated herself to the conservation and restoration of the ecosystems of her country. As founder of the project *Suma un Bosque*, which is driven by the youth organization *Un Pulmón Más*, she works together with local communities to restore forests. Her commitment led her to join the board of directors of the Mesoamerican Society of Conservation Biology. In 2022, her work was recognized by the Global Landscapes Forum, which named her Restoration Steward.

I choose to do this work with commitment and wholeheartedly to bring about change

My studies gave me the opportunity to get to know the different contexts of El Salvador in depth and to realize how cruel the reality of my country can be, where many people live in adverse conditions. That is why I cannot stand still, especially if I have the education and knowledge to contribute with my work. I choose to do this work with commitment and wholeheartedly to bring about change. I am convinced that, if I do not do what comes from my heart, I am not doing anything.

The woman who first inspired my actions in favor of a green and just transition was my grandmother, Salvadoran, rural and lover of botany. I also recognize a great help in the accompaniment I received in my professional development process. I have seen many efforts fail without the support of a network. I have also seen the progress that can be achieved with greater companionship, having someone to tell you 'you have a good initiative, I have your back'. This way of supporting each other is something fundamental to achieving the goals we have set ourselves.

Feminist leadership in environmental restoration and conservation

There are many communities in which women take on voluntary roles to care for the ecosystems, but without support or recognition, such that their leaderships are weakened and lost

I work with women leaders who dedicate themselves in their communities to passing on what they know to next generations. They have acquired this knowledge by observing their surroundings. They are women who have an important power of mobilization, who contribute to their communities with enthusiasm and taking on different roles, for instance, dedicating themselves to the care of the trees.

However, despite their crucial leadership and participation, they often do not receive any kind of recognition or legal support that values the work they do for the community. The result is that younger generations of women leave their communities to start families, even abandoning their studies due to a lack of opportunities. There are many communities in which women take on voluntary roles to care for the ecosystems, but without support or

recognition, such that their leadership is weakened and lost. It is very understandable that this happens since no one can live on a volunteer basis.

It is a contradiction that women are always present to organize all of this, but when you think about the spaces where decisions are being made to tackle the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, we see that the majority are men. What is worse is that the experience of women who have always been involved in this kind of work is not recognized, nor that of those who have other perspectives, observing, inquiring, and ultimately knowing. It is very worrying, because if we keep listening to the same people, things will continue to be done in the same way.

Green jobs and equity as key for conservation

Projects that generate green jobs can have an impact on the way people plan their own lives

I set the emphasis on the generation of green jobs as a key to involving more people in this type of care, which is urgent today. When this type of project is started, it is

very important that we focus on how the expected change in the ecosystem will be produced, but it is also essential to anticipate, plan, and consider social change, knowing that the people around us can start to act. Green projects can have an impact on the way people plan their own lives.

We see that a considerable number of people do not get involved in these initiatives due to a lack of resources or time, as their voluntary collaboration is expected. As a result, communities become disconnected from the forests. That is why we need to raise awareness and promote the protection of biodiversity as a source of employment and income for them.

We know that most of the people behind the local enterprises are women. We are talking about crafts-women, cooks or guides whose sustainable activities we need to promote because of their important economic impact. Our aim is for them to be able to formally establish their businesses and thereby earn an income, projecting over time their changing role and position in the community.

These projects have to be designed in a sustainable way to ensure that they are maintained and strengthened over time. It would be advisable to consider ongoing monitoring and follow-up by the community. In addition, data and research are fundamental. It is important to consult and exchange information with communities, as well as to systematize the results of these contacts and to return this information to the communities themselves, so that the actions that are implemented are relevant and truly useful today and in the future.

We must not forget that the state has a fundamental role to play in this whole process, especially regarding investment in research and education. Also, in the recognition of the decisive work done by women and the younger generation in all public decisions. Finally, it is very important that the state involves itself in recognizing and promoting the importance of international agreements, such as the Escazú Agreement, and in projecting needs over time.

HONORABLE KERRYNE JAMES





Honorable Kerryne James, Minister for Climate Resilience, Environment, and Renewable Energy of Grenada, speaking from Saint George



I will continue to remind my Caribbean people of our fighting spirit and resilience

Kerryne James, a Psychology graduate of St. George's University, first distinguished herself in 2018 when she became the youngest parliamentarian in Grenada and the Commonwealth of Nations appointed to Grenada's Upper House of Parliament, serving as a Senator. Her early years in leadership were marked by a dedicated role as Chair National Democratic Congress' St. John Constituency Branch, and later the Chairperson of the National Democratic Youth Movement—the youth arm of the party. As a youth leader, she contributed to Grenada's National Sustainable Development Plan 2035, providing a young voice to guide the nation's long-term strategic vision. These foundational experiences positioned her to make history again in Grenada's 2022 general elections as the youngest elected parliamentary representative, for the constituency of St. John at just 24. Today, she holds the office of Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment, and Renewable Energy, where she continues to advocate for sustainable development and resilience on national, regional, and international fronts.

“It is all about knitting a tapestry of voices into a cohesive strategy for the change that we want to see, for the transformation that we are leading

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan (a category 3 hurricane) ravaged Grenada, altering lives and landscapes alike – I was only seven years. Observing my parents’ relentless efforts to rebuild and provide in the face of adversity left a lasting impression that instilled in me a deep resolve to be part of sustainable solutions for our nation. Nearly two decades on, this early conviction has shaped my approach to policy: one that weaves community-centered strategies into the fabric of national initiatives, ensuring that our policies are not only responsive to Grenada’s distinct challenges but also respectful of its ecological and cultural richness. Our aim is to forge a unified vision that drives transformative and lasting change.

Inspired by the bold female leadership of Barbados’s Prime Minister, Mia Amor Mottley, in championing a green and equitable transition, I am committed to advocating for women’s integral role in climate action. This advocacy is focused on restoring agency and channeling resources to historically marginalized communities, whose contri-

butions are essential to building a resilient and inclusive future.”

The role of women’s engagement and leadership in the Caribbean

“Leadership is not merely about occupying spaces; it is about transforming them. Who better to drive that transformation than women, with our shared history and demonstrated resilience?”

The active engagement of Caribbean women in climate action is not incidental; it is a testament to our region’s recognition of women’s indispensable role in sustainability and resilience. Leadership, as history and facts affirm, is not just about presence but about meaningful transformation, a responsibility Caribbean women have continually embraced. Yet, despite these contributions, there remains a pressing need to move beyond symbolic representation to full decision-making authority for women.

Alongside my ministerial peers across the region, I have joined forces in advocating for shared objectives, yet we still encounter reactions that characterize our asser-

tive advocacy as aggressive, angry, or youthful exuberance. Such labels dilute the full potential of our leadership in the climate space. It is essential to recognize that collaboration has been a cornerstone of my journey. In this shared responsibility, we must also engage the other half of our societies—men—to assume an active role in building resilient and equitable communities. Their participation is both necessary and crucial.

The importance of inclusive approaches that recognize women's role in society

“ Recognizing the role of women in society is essential to crafting inclusive climate strategies that are both equitable and resilient. Gender should not merely be seen as an identity marker but as a lens for understanding and addressing the unique challenges and contributions within our communities.

In climate policy, gender should be viewed not just as a social identifier but as a vital perspective for understanding the multifaceted impacts of climate change. To address these challenges fully, we must go beyond surface-level empowerment initiatives and consider the complex realities of women's roles within society. In the

Caribbean, we face the compounded effects of both deeply ingrained social structures and the severe impacts of climate change—factors that erode our local economies and compromise livelihoods.

Our ongoing battle to mitigate and adapt to climate change also forces us to rebuild independently. Recent disasters, particularly Hurricane Beryl, underscore the importance of gender-sensitive approaches to disaster risk management. The majority of individuals seeking assistance are low-income earners, often women whose housing and economic security are increasingly threatened by coastal erosion and flooding. Recognizing these dynamics is essential to restoring agency and directing resources to historically marginalized groups.

In response, we have forged a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, Community, and Gender Affairs to adopt holistic, inclusive strategies. Our approach spans both long-term planning—with realistic timelines—and immediate relief efforts, prioritizing aid to mothers already in social safety programs who remain acutely vulnerable post-disaster. The hurricane's far-reaching impacts have affected access to basic necessities like

education, water, and electricity, and have underscored the need for accessible mental health services to address the psychological toll of climate-induced challenges.

To ensure our policies resonate with Grenada's diverse realities, I am committed to recognizing intersecting disparities and pursuing a grassroots, community-driven approach. Inclusivity is essential to create policies that are culturally sensitive, robust, and anchored in equity. Engaging not only direct but also indirect stakeholders, we conduct consultations at all levels, guiding citizens through the process and meeting them where they are. For meaningful impact, we must balance scientific frameworks with human-centered approaches, as individuals best understand and articulate their lived realities. It is our responsibility as leaders to adapt, listen, and build policies that reflect this depth of understanding.

JOYCE MENDEZ





Joyce Mendez, co-founder of the Latin American Observatory on Energy Geopolitics



The question I want to ask is: Do you see yourselves as good ancestors?

Joyce spends her time in different collaborative initiatives, transversally strengthening youth and feminist cooperation networks. At a global level, she is part of the Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change to the United Nations Secretary General and participates in initiatives such as *Youth4Climate*. She is also a member of the World Youth Parliament for Water and collaborates with the *Paz Azul* initiative, which promotes cross-border cooperation for water. She also co-founded other organizations at regional level, such as the National Youth Network for Water and Climate Action in Paraguay.

“ For many people, it is not an option to stand back and not get involved in climate and environmental defense action, since they experience the negative impacts on a daily basis

I was born in Colombia and grew up on the border of Foz do Iguaçu, where Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet, an area known as the region of the three nations and the land of waters. I learned that water is an element that orders the social life of the region, which is at the root of several conflicts in the area, as well as many of the efforts to develop cooperative actions. This is a critical issue, which explains why, for many people, it is not an option to stand back and not get involved in climate and environmental defense action, since they experience the negative impacts on a daily basis.

We all depend on the collective. That is why I always thank my communities, and the countries that have welcomed and supported me, because I know that my achievements are the result of multiple community actions. The work of women in this has been fundamental. I met many, from different backgrounds, who inspired me and gave me a helping hand, especially my mum. I

am the result of decisions made by previous generations, choices that have shaped who I am and the path I follow today.

Energy justice and youth participation in the green and just transition

“ We need to reflect on the application and translation of international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, to the realities of the territories

Since I started participating in actions to advance a green and just transition, my focus has lied on citizenship, sustainability, and the participation of young people in the creation of various networks. I have always enjoyed working immersed in grassroots movements, dedicating my efforts to empowering young people to participate in decisions and for them to have a greater impact on their territories.

I see that we are developing renewable energy without ensuring its sustainability. We are lacking a reflection on the topics of energy poverty. We know that it is key to mainstream the efforts towards energy justice and social justice. However, we allow for hydroelectric infrastructure

projects that do not consider the current scarcity of water resources in Latin America and even dispossess indigenous populations of their territories.

This is a major loss, since there are many ancient technologies that could be adapted to make the green transition fairer in the local contexts, because this is not just a global sphere of action. In this sense, we need to reflect on the application and translation of international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, to the realities of the territories.

Another problem we need to address is the imbalance that exists between the feminization of environmental action and the masculinization of the spaces of power. Decision-makers, most of whom are men, have never been out of the cities, and do not know the territories nor the conditions of the people who inhabit them, so they cannot take them into account in their decisions. As a result, many spaces are inflexible to the reality of women and other vulnerable groups. Even so, I see signs of change. I believe we could be facing a new generation of young, migrant, indigenous, mestizo and Creole women gaining access to decision-making spaces and the creation of public energy policies.

A legacy of intergenerational justice

 **One person's success is the result of multiple community actions**

The question I want to ask is: Do you see yourselves as good ancestors? Because sometimes we think of legacy as something huge, but it can be much simpler, something that is meaningful, that is part of a collective sense. For us, the climate fight is super important, not only for current generations, but also for those to come.

I would like to point out that *tokenism* affects not only women, but also young people, since many institutions claim to work with young people, but they are just fulfilling a requirement to gain recognition and even receive funding. However, when it comes down to it, they do not incorporate our visions. They take advantage of the fact that we work with passion and are often willing to continue doing our work anonymously, without funding nor recognition. Given the magnitude of our contribution, as young people, it is legitimate to wonder about the political will to move forward with our real and concrete inclusion.

I think it is important that we raise our voices and mobilize, thinking about our legacy for the next generations. By this, I mean that we are responsible for channeling social change not only for our present, but also for the future. We hope to make space for other young people and to empower those who will come after or who have been excluded until now. And although I know

that there is still a lot to be done, it is satisfying to see that there is continuity in this work. We have a legacy and new generations of young people who will be able to take our progress and build on it with their critical thinking, cooperation, and collective work. Regardless of climate change, I see that we are creating a new paradigm.

Latin American Observatory on Energy Geopolitics

The Latin American Observatory on Energy Geopolitics was created as a research project in 2017. Its aim is to disseminate information in an accessible way, through a free platform, including news, articles, videos, and other materials dealing with energy and energy geopolitics topics, with a geographical focus on Latin America, but also considering their relationship with international actors from other regions. Its action is generally based on recognizing the geopolitical and historical relationships in the development of issues relating to energy and resources.

In the first stage, the work focused on promoting research and dialogue around the geopolitics of energy in the Latin American region, developing a theory for the design of community energy management models. Later on, it started to implement a second phase in its work, more

practice oriented, dedicated to establishing these capacities. In their first project, it managed to install a solar panel and a satellite that provides Internet access and electricity to an indigenous community in Peru.

Its current focus lies on the incorporation of the development of ancestral technologies into social management. It concentrates its actions on organizing workshops in which the importance of energy justice is promoted and information is provided so that different local communities can plan their own energy sovereignty and security. In their strategy, the active participation of indigenous youth in the implementation of energy self-management also stands out.

MARGARITA VELÁZQUEZ





Margarita Velázquez, researcher at the Regional Center for Multidisciplinary Research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), speaking from Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico



The demand for water is a feminist demand

Margarita has a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of London and is educated in Social Psychology from the Autonomous Metropolitan University. She has a distinguished academic career, mainly linked to the Center for Multidisciplinary Research at UNAM, where she coordinated the seminar on Gender Studies and created programs that connect the gender perspective to ecology and the environment. As a researcher, she has carried out studies on social policy, development, sustainability, and gender, and has been a consultant on these issues for international bodies such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women, FAO, ECLAC and the Inter-American Development Bank. In the public sector, she has held positions in the National Population Council, the Secretariat for Agrarian Reform and Mexico's National Women's Institute.

“ We have to keep training people to guarantee a legacy that has continuity, that allows us to look to the future

As a researcher, I am concerned about the relation between the population and the environment, in terms of reproductive health and rights. That is why I got involved in the environmental field, specifically because I am interested in developing arguments that highlight the role of women in this debate, and in understanding how the social fabric is being produced based on the relationship between people and their surroundings.

Children and young people keep me hopeful in this work, as do my students, when I see that they are aware of and respect the environment. This makes me confirm that we have to keep training people in order to give continuity to the efforts to build sustainable societies that allow us to look to the future. One woman who inspires me is Alicia Bárcena, a great environmentalist and feminist.

The relationship between gender and the environment

“ Climate change impacts different women differently, and not all women engage in climate change action in the same way

Just as gender relations are socially constructed, so are relations between gender and the environment, and they change from context to context. The environment and climate sector has been relatively sensitive to gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. However, I see that we still need to learn how to create projects and policies that go beyond mainstreaming, we need them to be transformative.

We continue to apply the same logic to solving environmental problems. It is a form of action that intervenes from the top to the bottom in societies. The only difference is that they are now saying that they have to, in addition, be intersectoral and transversal. But we do not see a change in the direction of action, looking for a territorial intervention under a bottom-up logic, as we say in sociology, and that allows populations to express their interests and needs and to participate in the solutions.

This results in a lack of clarity about the role and the narratives of people in building sustainability. In the case

of women specifically, this explains why we continue to give them an instrumental role rather than a central role in mitigation and adaptation actions. In addition, climate change impacts different women differently, and not all women engage in climate change action in the same way. Especially considering that society assigns them the tasks of care, of social reproduction, without due recognition or deserved revaluation.

Gender, environment, and community in the green and just transition

“ We have to deal with the environment, but we also have to deal with inequalities

In my eagerness to understand, I organized several courses to critically discuss the relation between gender and the environment, always trying to integrate women from civil society, academia and from the countryside, as they enrich these programs with their experiences. After a while, we formed a Latin American group, in which we cultivated connections and exchanged experiences. This made me confirm my confidence in networks for the generation of knowledge.

Institutions exclusively dedicated to women are proving to be insufficient to generate the transversality we propose. If I question the concept of transversality, and so many others that have become fashionable, it is because they are emptied of meaning. We need to begin to give meaning to this effort and work towards an articulated government plan. I want to talk about transformation, about rupture. Having resilient communities is the most anti-feminist thing I have ever heard. The feminist principle is to disturb, to change. We have to remain critical of the methodologies that inform current processes and be vigilant to act when they ignore social activities.

I see in non-governmental organizations, and in civil society, an opportunity to maintain a permanent dialogue with the state. We have to go to the territories, understand how problems in each context manifest and are understood, in order to make sense of a policy before implementing it. If we don't, we'll continue to generate rights that we won't be able to materialize later on.

One experience that struck me was a meeting with women farmers in the eighties to talk about their needs, in a place with many shortcomings, a ghost town in the

north of Mexico where, because of masculine migration, there were only women. My companion, a feminist, was worried because, at first glance, we had not had any feminist demands. But my vision was different. She could not see that the demand for water was a feminist demand. Thirty-nine years later, I affirm that access to water is a feminist demand. Access to water is fundamental, we have to have a water harvesting program at national level, with women at the forefront, as well as one for popular housing and another for waste management.

Another example is the current case of Chalco, one of the cities created in the 1990s in Mexico, which has been flooded with sewage for a month. It is a town literally sunk in shit, where the drainage channels do not work because of the garbage. It is a place that is sinking a millimeter a day as a result of climate change, but the problem is exacerbated by poverty, inequality and political conditions. It is not just environmental problems, it is public services. In places like this, we have to deal with the environment, but we also have to deal with inequalities.

In short, today it is up to us to work on the immediate construction of the futures of millions of women and men

and the future of a single planet. For this reason, the fight against climate and gender negationism cannot be put off. It is up to us to continue connecting, transforming, and disrupting for justice, equality, and sustainability.

TARCILA RIVERA ZEA





Tarcila Rivera Zea, founder and president of CHIRAPAQ, Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru, speaking from Lima

“ The most revolutionary against violence is to make indigenous women economically independent

Tarcila was part of the Global Civil Society Advisory Group of UN Women and, for a period, was a member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In her current position, at CHIRAPAQ, she promotes the affirmation of cultural identity, as well as the training of indigenous women and young leaders to hold public offices in their communities and local governments. In addition, in her effort to work from the local to the international level, she has founded organizations that reach millions of members, such as the Continental Link of Indigenous Women of the Americas and the International Forum of Indigenous Women. Her remarkable career and valuable contribution to the promotion and the defense of indigenous cultures and peoples have been recognized by UNICEF, the Ford Foundation, the Fuego Sagrado Foundation, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Women of Peru.

I do make it very clear that I am an activist

I am an Andean woman, Quechua *Chanka*, and the fact that I was born in a community that, to this day, is on the map of extreme poverty has totally affected me. We have been stripped of our rights by violence. That is why I do make it very clear that I am a human rights and indigenous people's rights activist.

Several women inspire me. For example, Domitila Barrios de Chungara from Mexico, the only indigenous woman present at the World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975. But, in general, I am motivated by those who are in their contexts, in nature, who are in remote situations, who have great wisdom. Among them my mother, from whom I inherited the strength and teaching to achieve things on our own. She inspires me even after her death.

Problems of current leaderships

If we talk so much about our worldview, the recovery of balanced relations must be a priority

It is essential that we create spaces in which also leaders who have a voice in other scenarios can also be heard. At this point in life, I tell my sisters of The Americas that we no longer want to be marginalized. How can we not talk about land rights when we talk about biodiversity? How can we not talk about the impact of climate change? How can we not talk about the damage of monoculture or large-scale production for agroexport that damages the land and eliminates biodiversity?

The presence of the state does not always imply the defense of the rights of communities, but rather shows the institutionalized imposition of programs in an unconsulted manner, destructuring traditional organization. The high incapacity of public management, the high level of corruption and the high level of racism, plunge us into this total crisis. Millions of public funds are spent on assistance programs in Peru, which have immobilized the population that should receive support for the development of their capacities and funds for their initiatives.

These programs, which may be necessary in some cases, neutralize the valuable knowledge that the pop-

ulation has about food production and sustainable ecosystem management.

For me, the problem lies in public education. If the education system is not changed from the basic levels, we will not have political leaders, civil servants who are committed to the cause of the people, or people who are well educated and capable of participating in the economic, political, social, and cultural life of a country that is multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual.

We want the leadership to understand that the fight against violence against girls and women is not just our fight. It is not a matter of right or left, because the problem of rights is a problem for the whole of society. We need to promote spaces between us indigenous men and women because machismo, and everything that has to do with power, divides us a lot. If we talk so much about our worldview, the recovery of balanced relations must be a priority in order to eradicate violence of all kinds from within and from outside.

The need for a monetary economy is gaining importance, which leads to the use of illegal activities that

provide precarious employment. Drug trafficking and informal and illegal mining groups, land traffickers and loggers are expanding. In the communities, both men and women are excluded. We want collective and not individual leadership, that young people participate and have organizations that support them. When they leave their community for a conference or training, they should go with the support of their organizations and communities, not as individuals, and when they return, they should be professionals who are accountable and share what they have learnt in order to achieve a multiplier effect.

The local impacts of climate change

 **The monetary economy in communities or rural areas is still a challenge**

Climate change affects life in every way. We know that everyone sees the forest, the trees, the green, the romantic, but the people are less visible. These are the people who have to eat, live off the ecosystems, and when faced with the impacts of climate change, they are particularly affected, mainly in the sustainability of their way of life.

Programs should be developed and implemented by talking to the people in each community. The participation of the communities would guarantee the success of the interventions because they know the space and territory they inhabit and would be able to give their opinion on their impact on the families and their environment by measuring the real benefit. There is a need to work in situ on what it means to use our resources without predation. If this is not done, what has already happened in some Andean contexts may happen, where the collector takes the money and the people who generated the product receive much less, in a cycle of work and production that takes many months and does not solve the family's economic problem.

The monetary economy in communities, or in rural areas, is still a challenge. We need to invest in creating a friendly market for them so that their products have the appropriate value. In addition, we have power conflicts that distort the definition of 'local communities'. We see that indigenous rights are used to claim benefits from other groups, which do not belong to indigenous peoples and cultures, grouping them under this concept.

The local community must have its own legislation, based on its own characteristics, with specific rights, but

it cannot be on the same level as the indigenous communities. It is necessary to distinguish that between the two types of communities there are different ways of doing agriculture and living from it, there are differences in everything. It is essential to consider this cultural aspect in order to obtain appropriate policies.

Finally, in the face of all these new challenges related to climate change, the economy, sustainable life and the development of their own capacities, the most revolutionary thing to do against violence is to make indigenous women economically independent and to teach them to manage and use money well as a new element in the life they live today. Women must be strengthened and those who have economic initiatives must be supported. Intergenerational learning for the market makes it necessary to consider the knowledge of the elders for the new generations, who have different expectations and do not find opportunities to continue living in the communities. How can the forest continue to be preserved if the tree cutters eliminate the fruit or the seed from which they make their products for the market? Without inputs, how can we generate our own economy, on what can we apply our knowledge? And without our own knowledge, how can we push ourselves towards other scenarios and challenges?

CHIRAPAQ - Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru

CHIRAPAQ, the Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru, is an indigenous association founded in 1986, whose inspiration is based on the experience of the South American indigenous movement. Its mission is to strengthen the initiatives of Andean and Amazonian indigenous peoples through four key programs: Indigenous Women, Food Sovereignty and Security, *Ñoqanchiq* and Advocacy, and Cultural and Political Defense. These programs enable interdisciplinary action that promotes the integral development of indigenous people, ranging from child nutrition with local products to the incorporation of intercultural education into school curricula to ensure cultural continuity.

Over almost four decades, CHIRAPAQ has led important projects, including the demand for food culture, which seeks to improve child nutrition with indigenous foods, and the creation of the Organization of Andean

and Amazonian Indigenous Women of Peru, a space that fosters the leadership and empowerment of indigenous women. This effort, which took 14 years, reflects the association's commitment to strengthening capacities and promoting gender equality in communities.

Additionally, CHIRAPAQ promotes networking through the Continental Link of Indigenous Women of the Americas. This space gives visibility to indigenous organizations and promotes their participation in national and international decision-making processes, influencing the creation of policies that guarantee the full exercise of indigenous people's human rights, from an intercultural and intergenerational perspective, guided by the principles of reciprocity, mutual respect, and complementarity.

Leadership, Empowerment and Political Participation

The background of the slide features a dynamic, abstract pattern of small dots in shades of blue, green, and yellow. These dots are arranged to form a series of overlapping, wave-like shapes that sweep across the lower half of the image, creating a sense of movement and energy.

CAMILA RAMOS





Camila Ramos, director, and founder of CELA - Clean Energy Latin America, speaking from São Paulo

“ I know that we women have a real impact on the energy transition in Latin America

Camila graduated in International Relations with Economics and has a postgraduate degree in Global Economic Policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science. In addition to her current position, she is vice-president of the Brazilian Photovoltaic Energy Association, a member of the board of directors of the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo and an expert at the Clean Energy Finance Solutions Center. In 2018, Global Solar + Energy Storage recognized her as one of the Women in Renewables, and recently Reuters highlighted her as part of the Trailblazing Women in Energy 2024. She was a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Renewable Energy Council, the Inter-American Institute for Clean Energy, and the Green Finance Council of Brazil. She has also worked at *Energias Renováveis do Brasil* and headed the research department for Latin America at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

“ In the energy sector, the most heard voices are still mostly those of men. Women's voices have not yet been equally incorporated

I had the opportunity to start working in the renewable energy sector at a very early stage, which allowed me to gain experience and visibility over time. At the time, I did not know any other women who could inspire me in this arena, but this situation also motivated me to break new ground and contribute to growing this space for us.

After so many years, I still feel that people are surprised by my presence and my leadership, it seems to be something unexpected because I am a woman. It is alarming to see this difference in expectations according to people's gender and the impact this has on the position of women. In the energy sector, the most heard voices are still mostly those of male. Women's voices have not yet been equally incorporated.

The presence of women in the energy sector

“ I think it has made a difference to foster the growth of women in the sector through training, initiatives to attract them and the creation of networks

Tokenism is a common phenomenon when it comes to considering women in talks and panels. I often receive invitations from people who start by saying they thought of me because they needed to include a woman on an all-male panel, and do not always mention the contributions I can make based on my knowledge or my vast experience. In some cases, they do not realize that by including me, they are relying on my consultancy work, which allows me to bring up-to-date facts and figures.

However, I have seen an increase in the women participating in the sector today, especially in renewable energy projects. This makes me happy, because I think I can be optimistic about my work and because I know that women have a real impact on the energy transition in Latin America. I think it has made a difference to encourage the growth of women in the sector through training, initiatives to attract them and the creation of networks. I am seeing that more attention is put in giving women a voice. This is why I try to constantly bring them closer to my clients, showing them that they have a space where they will be listened to. In addition, measures such as mandatory quotas are also essential for women to occupy these positions, as the example of the Scandinavian countries has shown.

Essentials for working in the energy sector

“When we talk about the energy transition, we are talking about reducing the planet's emissions at a critical moment, because we are not on the path to fulfilling the Paris Agreement and avoiding irreversible damage

I am a renewable energy enthusiast. I feel very motivated by this type of project, as I have witnessed the birth of this sector and its growth. Wind and solar energy have gone from being one of the most expensive and uncompetitive sources to the cheapest, most competitive, and fastest growing sources. We have been able to make so many projects and investments in the sector viable, making these projects and investments competitive or move forward.

If anyone asks me what makes my eyes light up, I have no doubt: it is talking about renewable energies. When the work is done with passion and dedication, it is the right work. But I think we have neglected the global perspective. When we talk about the energy transition, we are talking about reducing the planet's emissions at a critical moment, because we are not on track to comply

with the Paris Agreement and avoid irreversible damage. So it seems that the concept green and just transition has lost its force. This is why it is essential to think about innovation and break with the current models when thinking about solutions.

CELA - Clean Energy Latin America

CELA - Clean Energy Latin America is a pioneering strategic consulting and financial advisory company based in São Paulo, which supports companies and investors in the development of renewable energy and energy transition projects in Latin America. The company began operations during the second decade of the 21st century, just as the solar energy industry was beginning to emerge in the region.

It is one of the few companies specializing exclusively in renewable energies. It also promotes the incorporation of technologies to reduce emissions, with the aim of helping companies carry out sustainable business in the context of the energy transition for an effective reduction in carbon emissions. It currently serves clients - both Brazilian and foreign - interested in investing in and creating businesses based on the development of wind and solar energy projects, as well as energy storage, green hydrogen, and other associated products, besides bioenergy, biogas and biomethane.

The company is part of the Women-Owned Companies, an international label that recognizes companies led and managed by women. It is an organization committed to maintaining a strong female team, which believes in the holistic vision that women bring to the development of new sustainable environmental businesses. It is also a signatory of the Global Compact of the United Nations.

EDUARDA ZOGHBI





Eduarda Zoghbi, creator of the program Women in Energy Brazil, speaking from New York

“ Women living in poverty suffer the most from the lack of access to clean, safe and modern energy

Eduarda studied Political Science at the University of Brasilia, and her master's in Energy and Environment at Columbia University. She was a consultant in the area of energy and gender for various international organizations, including the Inter-American Development Bank, Sustainable Energy for All and ECLAC. Today she is active in the area of Partnerships, Strategy and Resource Mobilization at the Climate Investment Fund, serving as a focal point of the G20 and COP30. In addition to her current position, she has been awarded international recognition due to her work for an energy transition and was recognized as Forbes 30 under 30, Reuters Future Leaders in Energy and Future Energy Leader by the World Energy Council.

“ I felt a big lack of female role models in the energy sector. This gives the impression that there are no women working in this area

I have always seen public policy as a way of transforming the climate and, knowing that the energy sector has a strong impact on climate change, I wanted to contribute from there. I have been a climate change activist since I was a girl. I dream with being Minister of Energy and Mines one day. In this sector, it seems to be more difficult to achieve this goal as a woman. When I started working, I felt a big lack of female role models in the energy sector. This gives the impression that there are no women working in this area.

Challenges for women in the energy sector

“ The masculinization of the sector and the harassment to which we women are subjected, as a minority in decision-making spaces, is a disincentive that makes it difficult to enter this field

Unlike the more general area of climate, which already has formal commitments and a broad participation of women, the energy sector - as a multidisciplinary area

involving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, better known as STEM - remains very much affected by the bias of female under-representation, which consequently makes it extremely masculinized. This is an area that relegates women to advisory positions, where they rarely occupy leadership positions. We see them being limited by a glass ceiling that is very difficult to break. Added to this is the centralization of job opportunities, the lack of attention to inclusive language and the reduction of their contribution to the historical caregiver role.

The masculinization of the sector and the harassment to which we women are subjected, as a minority in decision-making spaces, is a disincentive that makes it very difficult to enter this field. However, as a young woman, when I finally gained visibility and occupy a speaking position, I became part of various networks. In this way, I realized that the energy transition in Brazil is practically led by women who not always receive the visibility and platform they deserve.

This predominance of men in politics prevents that an intersectional gender perspective considers the differ-

ent needs of women in the creation of laws, as important consumers of energy and part of the workforce. As a result, public policies run the risk of reinforcing inequality. Engaging society in a change of consciousness that values the importance of the gender agenda is a pending task.

Tools for tackling the challenges of the energy sector

“ I focus on identifying which areas and people are being invisibilized in the energy transition to favor them directly

I have observed that bilateral and multilateral cooperation approaches tend to be very vertical, neglecting or reducing the space to include the gender perspective based on the local context. The role of women as consumers, decision-makers and heads of households who pay bills is neglected. Women living in poverty suffer from a lack of access to clean, safe, and modern energy. They are also the ones with inefficient appliances, which generate higher electricity bills. Given this context, it is impossible to think about energy and gender in Brazil without taking race and class into account.

I focus on identifying which areas and people are being made invisible in the energy transition to favor them directly. And in this, it is important to guarantee parity between men and women in the public sector, to develop education programs in collaboration with other institutions and ministries so that there is an academic focus on the energy transition and climate change.

We must provide more opportunities for the younger generation through studies abroad, exchanges, academic scholarships, language training from school, vocational vacations, career guidance and junior companies. In addition, we must promote and demand a gender policy in all national programs, such as the Ten-Year Energy Expansion Plan and the National Energy Plan.

It is important that we incorporate this approach transversally and to transform into a state policy, oriented towards long-term energy planning, which favors the most vulnerable people and the poor and urban population, guaranteeing access to energy and subsidies.

Women in Energy Brazil

Women in Energy Brazil was created in 2021. It is a joint initiative with Columbia University and the Columbia Global Center in Rio de Janeiro, which was born to motivate more women to enter the energy industry from the crucial moment in which they decide to choose a university career.

It was inspired by the Women in Energy program, of the Center on Global Energy Policy in the Columbia University, which invites women in leadership positions in the sector to speak to young university students at round tables, lunches, and networking events. It also coordinates visits to facilities, mentoring and workshops to give professional advice to undergraduate, master's and doctoral students. Its aim is to train young women to see themselves as energy experts and to have the confidence to communicate what they do, who they are, their potential and their capacity.

After two years of running leadership programs and workshops to promote energy knowledge exchange between Brazilian and US experts, the program is being redesigned and will operate independently through an institute. By maintaining links with Columbia University, the institute will be able to expand its programs, and will have three core components: training of women leaders in the energy field, annual exchange through a fellowship during climate week in New York, research in the area of gender to generate the data needed to inform public policy in the energy sector.

LOURDES VALENZUELA





Lourdes Valenzuela, coordinator of SuSanA Latin America and director of Programmes of the Aguatuya Foundation, speaking from Cochabamba, Bolivia

“ Including more women in climatic and environmental decision-making is fundamental

Lourdes has a solid background as a graduate in Architecture, with a specialization in Landscaping from the *Universidad Privada Boliviana*. She also has a master's degree in Integrated Water Resources Management from the *Universidad Mayor de San Simón*. The Women's Equality and Empowerment course at the University of Salamanca trained her to understand the gender and social justice perspective. In her current role as director of Communications and coordinator of SuSanA Latin America - from where she also acts as Gender and Social Equity focal point - and as director of Programmes of the *Aguatuya* Foundation, she mobilizes her professional knowledge to become a powerful communicator, who presents solutions for the urban water cycle.

Incorporating the gender perspective, in a practical way, has had a significant impact on my own life

In Bolivia, simply because you are born a woman, you are born in disadvantage. This moves me and motivates me in my work to prevent pollution and improve environmental services, a task that undoubtedly belongs to society. Incorporating the gender perspective in a practical way has had a significant impact on my own life. I am committed to participation, education, behavioral change, and gender equity.

One woman from the region who inspires me in my action for a green and just transition is Cecilia Rodriguez, a former colleague who supported me and helped me to trust in my abilities. Thanks to my relationship with her, and with other women I have worked with in the communities, I learnt to recognize that gender and social inclusion must be incorporated across the reality of our actions, and not treated as something separate.

Women in environmental water management

I see a lot of room for us to contribute with our individual work to the change we need

I am optimistic and value our nature as creators of life. Also, our ability to implement new approaches and think of alternatives that promote a green and just change for our societies. I see a lot of room for us to contribute with our individual work to the change we need. I am sure that, if we consider the gender perspective from an active position, rather than as a victim, we can learn to implement it and generate a transformation on both a personal and social level.

I focus my work on three roles attributed to women: the productive role, the political role, and the community role. In the productive role, women are the responsible ones for running the household, for ensuring access to water and for sorting waste. Even when performing crucial tasks, their work is made invisible, taken for granted, with no real recognition or voice in the wider decisions that directly affect them.

In the political sphere, the situation is even more critical. Women are assigned the domestic burden, and then relegated in community meetings, being denied the participation in decision-making. Ultimately, they are entrusted with the role of treasurers of the water com-

mittees, but rarely are they offered the space to lead as president or vice-president.

The third role, community, reflects the cultural and social burden associated with supporting a family. This limits access to higher education, creating almost insurmountable barriers for most women in these communities to develop their full potential. We find ourselves trapped in a social structure that deprives us opportunities from an early age, reducing us to mere executors of social expectations.

Including more women in climatic and environmental decision-making is fundamental. Finding a balance in masculine energy and feminine energy will drive actions in favor of the sustainability of ecosystems. However, this potential is blocked by norms and structures rooted in our culture. We need to rethink the practical conditions for our participation: schedules, spaces and to question who has real freedom to participate.

Towards integrated environmental management

With the right support, women are there, they do not shy away

At SuSanA Latin America, we are aware of the generational and structural changes we need, which is why we have supported the creation of young environmental brigades to educate and sensitize the population door-to-door. This initiative has fostered intergenerational and intra-family learning, opening a visible space for dialogue and training, which are crucial. With the right support, women are there, they do not shy away.

In addition, since we started our work, we have been able to meet the demands of the communities and municipalities, which has given us a good reception. As an NGO, we focus on promoting the necessary infrastructure. We started with drinking water systems, but soon realized that this generates wastewater. By solving one problem, we created another. This is why we also started working on sanitation and solid waste management.

In our journey through the urban water cycle, we identified the importance of addressing flood disasters and integrated water management, which led us to develop sustainable drainage and differentiated collection solutions. Over the years, we have adopted an increasingly holistic vision, integrating all the dimensions necessary for truly sustainable environmental management.

MARINA MOSCOSO





Marina Moscoso, knowledge manager at the C40 Cities Finance Facility (CFF), speaking from Bogotá

“ Knowledge management is key to generate learning cycles and be able to recognize if we are reproducing a sexist system to try to change it

Marina has a degree in International Relations from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and a master's degree in Urban Management from the Technical University of Berlin. She also took courses in Public Policy and Gender at the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, as well as in Global Road Safety Leadership at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School for Public Health. She also is co-founder of the initiative Women in Motion and led its operations between 2018 and 2022. At Despacio, she was technical director and stood out for the implementation of innovative projects. She is currently knowledge manager at the C40 Cities Financing Facility. In 2020, she was recognized as a remarkable woman in transport by the Women Mobilize Women initiative.

Since I started my professional career, I have been motivated to work for a fairer and more inclusive society. For me, it is very important to make a difference with the work I do, it is my way of seeing and understanding the world, it is what drives me.

There are many fantastic women who inspire me. Unfortunately, one of them is no longer with us, Marina Harkot, a cyclist and activist who was brutally run over in São Paulo while riding her bike. She was one of the first women to speak out about gender and cycling in that city. Despacio baptized its digital library on ciclo-inclusion in her honor: <https://despacio.org/bicis/>.

The consolidation of sustainable networks

Political will and example are essential if projects are to integrate both a gender and inclusion approach

One problem with our women's and activism networks is that we do not have permanent funding. We have to find a governance structure and long-term funding for them to operate with support and increase our impact. We can no longer see this work as voluntary because

we are facing a global complexity that negatively affects people, and therefore also puts the sustainability of the networks we have built at risk. It is essential that participation in a network also implies some benefit for the people who are part of it.

A gender approach for the preparation of sustainable projects

One difficulty that constantly arises in my work is moving from the diagnosis of equity and inclusion to action. For example, it is not clear how to best incorporate the results of the diagnosis into a business and financing model that is a better fit for a green and just transition.

Lately, we have been reflecting, as a team, on the contribution of gender studies to the meaning and impact of the recommendations that lead us to a green and just transition. This is why we created workshops, manuals and guidelines so that the people leading projects can integrate this approach. We have also made territorial knowledge and local advocacy capacity a condition in the terms of reference we use to contract different services as an organization.

A gender approach is a possible solution. However, we lack the leadership to integrate it into the planning and implementation of our strategies. Political will and example are essential for projects to integrate both the gender and inclusion perspectives. It is extremely important that people realize that they can play their part, and that they dare to do things differently. Bogotá is a great example of innovative and bold action to ensure the sustainability of the business model of its public transport operator by including a great number of women, guaranteeing both their training and their remaining in the system.

The future of feminist transport

👤 We need to talk about the depth of the change we are implementing and constantly train ourselves to achieve it

Transforming the transport sector by implementing gender and inclusion perspectives is a conscious process, a very complex paradigm shift. That is why insistence is key: we need to always take it into account and to repeat it, we need to talk about the depth of the change we are implementing and constantly train ourselves to achieve it.

We cannot dedicate ourselves to reproducing old recipes to solve the problems we are facing. We have to value our own ways of improving current conditions, because in practice we learn as much from mistakes as from successes. This is how we will understand how to achieve our social and environmental goals, without fear of making mistakes. Knowledge management is key to generate learning cycles and to be able to recognize that we are reproducing a sexist system and to try to change it.

It is important to continue our efforts to reach an ideal horizon in which the gender perspective is knowledge that is established in society and integrated by the entire population. This does not mean that we discard other, more technical, specialized, and in-depth perspectives that help in this discussion, but it is important to make a greater effort to lay the foundations that allow us to identify normalized gender injustices and barriers in our societies.

For example, if we were to achieve developing a feminist transport system, its purpose would be to understand both the routes and the business models that support

them, to guarantee greater safety and accessibility, on equal terms for the whole of society. It would also emphasize walkability and night-time suitability. And it would focus on the whole population and people's displacement, not just on numbers.

If we set this goal in transportation projects, we will be working towards women's physical, economic and decision-making autonomy, addressing the obstacles they face in order to meet their needs.

Finally, we need to talk about money, for example through programs like the climate budget, because without money nothing will be done. We have to examine budgets and to better understand how resources are being distributed.

NANCY AUCAHUASI





Nancy Aucahuasi, Executive Director of *Promovilidad*, speaking from Lima, Peru



Public transportation is one of the critical scenarios in which women experience fear

Nancy is an economist from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos and holds a master's degree in Local Development and Municipal Management from the National University Federico Villareal, as well as studies in Strategic Planning with a Prospective Approach, Governance and Public Management. She has woven her experience through roles ranging from sustainable urban transport to school feeding and social inclusion. She helped strengthen the crucial role women play in Peruvian society at the Program Caminos Rurales of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Currently, she is Executive Director of the National Sustainable Urban Transport Program.

“ Everyday women inspire me for a green and just transition, because, with their strength, they show that they are standing up in the face of adversity

I have been able to see, verify and encourage the participation of women. For example, as general manager of a drinking water company in the Apurímac, in the south of Peru, in the Andean zone, where I worked with urban-marginal communities on drinking water projects and extending networks to households. There I observed how the women worked for no reward apart from the joy of having drinking water in their own homes. It was at that moment, when I became involved in expanding the human right of access to water, that I realized the extent to which we women are made invisible. Everyday women inspire me for a green and just transition because, with their strength, they show that they are standing up in the face of adversity.

Barriers to incorporating a gender perspective into public transport

“ Without an integral and holistic approach, we will not be able to contribute to the transformations that are needed towards a fairer and more inclusive society

Public transportation is one of the critical scenarios in which women experience fear. Although many depend on it, mainly because of their role in family care, this system does not offer sufficient safety and well-being guarantees. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of coordination between the sectors and levels of government, which prevents adopting a holistic approach, capable of dealing with the complex interrelations between the various issues involved, especially sociocultural ones.

Although progress has undoubtedly been made, society continues to underestimate and silence women who reach decision-making positions, affecting their professional and personal lives. This underestimation has consequences because, by reducing women's participation in decision-making, there is little room to consider their differentiated needs and interests when drawing up public policies. Public policies and projects are often standardized and do not consider the specific needs and demands of individuals according to their contexts. The lack of information and scarce awareness of the importance of changing perspective and incorporating a gender and inclusion approach, has led to a lack of political will and a high level of resistance in decision-making spaces.

Finally, the application of this approach is hindered, rather than promoted to develop better public mobility policies. This is problematic, because without an integral and holistic approach, we will not be able to contribute to the transformations that are needed towards a fairer and more inclusive society.

The gender and inclusion approaches in urban mobility

 **When women are given space, they make the most of it**

To face these challenges, at Promovilidad, a program created by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Peru, we seek to promote sustainable urban transport systems with gender, inclusion, and accessibility approaches. My goal is to create and strengthen networks that integrate these approaches, understanding that the sustainability of societies depends on their interrelation.

Municipalities are key to implementing these proposals and achieving effective results as spaces of direct attention to the population. Through our government action, we work to raise awareness and support municipi-

palities so that these policies reach the territories. Before taking any action, it is crucial to question its impact on the population. The approach to gender and social inclusion must be broad, encompassing all vulnerable and marginalized groups.

One strategy that has worked in projects to reverse the reduced presence of women in climate policy is positive discrimination through gender quotas. Promoting women's participation in this way has shown that when women are given a space, they make the most of it. Even though this strategy faces resistance due to deep-rooted socio-cultural patterns, its positive results in management have helped to mitigate these and other prejudices. The wave of female empowerment that this generates can no longer be reversed. I am optimistic and think we have a good future ahead if we work day by day on its construction.

PATRICIA HERNÁNDEZ





Patricia Hernández, general director in the National Association of Water and Sanitation Entities (ANEAS) of Mexico, speaking from Mexico City

“ We need women to have a voice, a vote and decision-making power in public policies

Patricia is the first woman to hold the general direction at ANEAS, an institution that has existed in Mexico for over 40 years. With a degree in Water Education, Management and Economics from the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* of Mexico, she also completed two master's degrees: one in Public Policy from the *Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México*, and the other in Governance and Globalization from the University of the Americas Puebla. Prior to her current role, she served as deputy director of Inter-institutional Liaison in the same association, where she also acted as legislative liaison and coordinator in the commissions of the congress of the State of Guerrero.

“ My advice to women is not to stop dreaming about what they want or let anyone tell them what they can and cannot do

When I think about how I incorporate a gender perspective into my work to promote a green and just transition, I cannot help but remember my childhood. I see myself running, almost as if it were a game, with my bucket of water. Today, as an adult, I know this is not a game. I have reached a position where I can influence decisions, and I am aware of the responsibility I have. My goal is clear: to contribute to change, so that those who today live their childhood carrying liters of water every day, renouncing to their right to education and a healthy life, can have a different future. Childhood should not be sacrificed for water that, on top of that, is of poor quality and causes disease.

My advice to women is not to stop dreaming about what they want or let anyone tell them what they can and cannot do. The fight for a green and just transition needs strong and determined female voices. The sources of inspiration in my own journey have been women like Dr. Blanca Jiménez, the first director of the National Water

Commission, a key figure in our region and an exemplary leader, determined and visionary.

Women in the management of water

“ We need to identify gender inequalities in order to improve the design of public policies

Historically, women have had to take on care roles, whether for the environment or for people. We are essential in the management of natural resources, such as water, and for this reason we find ourselves deeply affected when we face its scarcity. We are talking about problems of hygiene, health, schooling, and food security. Therefore, a gender perspective is fundamental, since it incorporates a sensitivity for the tasks performed by women when it comes to access to water and sanitation.

It is also clear that women should be heard in decision-making spaces. However, their formal participation is very low, and their role is not recognized when discussing vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change. If we want to make progress towards fair and universal transformations for both women and men, we need to

abandon the habit of using models copied from other countries, which are often implemented without considering the specificities of our social contexts. Instead, we need to identify gender inequalities to improve the design of public policies.

I see the empowerment of women across all areas of public, social and private life as fundamental to this transformation. To this end, we must explore greater opportunities for participation. I believe it is essential to create professional, academic, and personal support mechanisms to ensure that women have access to these opportunities.

Inclusive climate action: empowerment and equity

“It is important to make it very clear that we have the knowledge and the capacities needed to take on responsibilities, and that it is shameful that only 6% of those who lead operating bodies in Mexico are women

We have to open opportunities for all women who are qualified and can contribute to the change we want to build. We need women to have a voice, a vote and

decision-making power in public policies. That is why we need to promote and strengthen access to technical and scientific careers, for example through scholarships for women, so that they can prepare themselves and access management positions. It is essential as well that spaces are provided in which they can actively contribute and cultivate their experiences in leadership positions.

From my position, as the first female director of ANEAS, I see this discourse that delegitimizes the achievements of women leaders, which insinuates that many are starting to occupy management positions. It is important to make it very clear that we have the knowledge, and capabilities needed to assume responsibilities, and that it is shameful that only 6% of those who lead operating bodies in Mexico are women.

When these positions are occupied, we always face a double demand, because in addition to reporting back to the directive council of the organism, you are an example for other women to dare look for this type of challenge. We are at this moment of changing the message. Promoting the idea that we can generate this generational change, this transformation in the promotion of equity, and that we will not continue to limit the possibilities for the next generations.

PAULA BISIAU





Paula Bisiau, co-founder of Women in Motion, speaking from Bangkok

“ Political will can be generated with proper data and adequate awareness

Paula graduated in Philosophy at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, then embarked in a master's degree in Urban Economy at the University Torcuato Di Tella and could ground her interest for the equality and empowerment of women thanks to the scholarship VVEngage for female leaders in politics of Vital Voices. In her current mission in the Redux Foundation, she has dedicated herself to transforming urban mobility from the ground, with a focus on speed management and regulation. Before she served in political and consular affairs in the Embassy of Argentina of Singapore, she was Undersecretary for Sustainable and Safe Mobility of the City of Buenos Aires, Director of Sustainable Mobility and Director of the 14th commune of Palermo in Buenos Aires. In 2019, the initiative Women Mobilize Women recognized her as one of the remarkable feminist voices in the field of transport. Along with Women in Motion, Paula has also co-founded the Ibero-American Alliance for Safe Mobility.

Real change in this area will only come if there are women in decision-making positions

I fell in love with the topic of urban mobility while talking with neighbors about the policies implemented in 2009 in my commune, Palermo. In these conversations I understood the importance of mobility in everyday life, and how the problems associated with it disproportionately affect women.

Today, I am convinced that real change in this area will only come if there are women in decision-making positions, women with a gender perspective that address these issues in detail. An example of this can be found in the work of Manuela López Menéndez, who, as Secretary of Transportation and Public Works for the City of Buenos Aires, demonstrated that a gender perspective is fundamental to driving effective and lasting change.

Persistence and collaboration as drivers for a green and just transition

Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion are a relatively new challenge, which makes it the more important to give continuity to this work

Persistence is essential to achieve sustainable and lasting change. If we do not stay in the course, we run the risk of going backwards and losing the advances in the gender and social inclusion agenda, as these are often not sufficiently valued or made visible. It is crucial to invest in communicating the achievements made, especially their benefits, and to keep pushing for laws and specific actions to ensure the success of the strategies aimed at a green and just transition.

Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion are relatively new challenges, which makes it more important to give continuity to this work. We must conduct it in a socially sustainable way, identifying alternatives and opportunities, and learning how to improve as we progress. To this end, I believe it is essential to create intersectoral networks, as they are sources of incubation for new ideas. I speak from my own experience: the generosity of the exchange with my peers at international level and the constant support, both technical and human, have been paramount. It is vital to learn from the mistakes of others and to share good practices.

Besides, for me, the feminist voice can have many nuances. The important thing is to put women at the forefront and recognize that our experiences - in life, in the city, in mobility, in motherhood - are not uniform.

Diversity and action in the transport sector

“ I believe it is essential to take advantage of the opportunities and positive trends in the positioning of the gender and social inclusion agenda

In addition to women occupying positions of power, it is essential to ensure their access and employment in the transport sector, one of society's largest employers. Involving women and a diverse population in this area allows us to create a more humanized and representative environment. It is not just about being a woman or a man, but about including different perspectives in all types of teams.

To this end, it is essential to take advantage of the opportunities and positive trends in the positioning of the gender and social inclusion agenda. The presence of women in decision-making is not just an act of justice, but a necessity for a green and just transition. Approaching

a problem from multiple perspectives leads to more creative and appropriate solutions.

For example, we found that the daily journeys made by women in Buenos Aires are more numerous and shorter, generally linked to private transportation to carry out care duties. This mobility pattern creates an additional economic burden since short journeys are rarely subsidized.

In addition, we have a sad but undeniable reality: 100% of women say they have been harassed at least once on public transport. This percentage reflects the seriousness of a reality that we must transform. And in this and other cases, having the data, we can communicate and make the problem visible correctly. Like this, generating more support for the cause is made easier, especially if the information comes from international organizations, which are not involved in the contingent agendas of each country.

Several years ago, we launched a major media campaign to bring visibility to this type of violence. We used the slogan *"Ni loca, ni perseguida, ni histérica, el acoso*

existe" (Neither crazy, nor persecuted, nor hysterical, harassment exists). However, this reality also has deep cultural roots, which is why it needs to be tackled on multiple fronts. In addition to the communicational aspect, it is essential to include a gender and inclusion perspective in universities, training those who will make decisions in the future and who will work in the transport sector.

In my experience in the city of Buenos Aires, it has been essential to have a dedicated technical team with all the necessary resources, information, and knowledge, as well as a strong political will. Both aspects are achievable: political will can be generated with appropriate data and awareness, and teams can be trained through relevant education on gender and mobility. But above all, it is necessary to have the thirst and the audacity to transform reality.

SAIURYS BONNET





Saiurys Bonnet, founder of the social enterprise *Una Vaina Verde*, from Santo Domingo



Projects must be thought with triple impact from the start

Saiurys studied International Business at the *Universidad Acción Pro-Educación y Cultura* in the Dominican Republic, then obtained a master's degree in Sustainable Development and Corporate Responsibility at the *Escuela de Organización Industrial* in Spain. She has also completed several studies focused on Integrated Management Systems 999 auditing and International Finance Corporation Standards, such as the one she did with D'Appolonia, an Italian company, and another at the Universidad Iberoamericana, with a focus on Corporate Social Responsibility. She has worked for the Dominican Corporation of State Electrical Companies and in the private sector. Currently, in addition to directing *Una Vaina Verde*, she leads the non-profit initiative *Rizos de Felicidad*, which she founded with the purpose of teaching children to recognize and value their identity, fostering healthy self-esteem from an early age.

“ I believe in sowing seeds, I may not live with them to water them, but they are there, and there are seeds that germinate because of the rain, the important thing is to sow

I started my career working for the private sector, but it did not take me long to realize that I wanted to do something different, to dedicate myself to initiatives with a greater social impact, where my efforts would serve to add value that was more connected to the people. This shift was influenced by the example of other women, especially national leaders who inspired my action for a green and just transition, such as Yomaira Martínó of GreEnergy Dominicana and Karina Chez of Kaya Energy, tough and impressive women. I am very inspired by women's leadership, because thanks to many women who have walked the path and worked hard, it has been easier for me to build on solid foundations and better conditions.

Women's leadership and development of public policies

“ I believe that when a woman is in a position of power, it always has a ripple effect on society. If we

add to that a holistic approach to care, we can enhance our strategies

It is sad to know that the political power that women currently hold in the Dominican Republic is mostly the result of the demand for women's quotas, instead of occupying these positions on merit in fair and objective competition. Despite these crumbs, it still cannot be said that we have managed to ensure active participation, independently and transversally recognized throughout Dominican society, so we must continue to be in the struggle.

I experience this lack of validation in my own actions. For example, if I, or any other woman, is at a meeting, it is assumed that we will play the role of secretaries. We are no longer on an equal footing to make decisions, because with that gesture, they try to treat us as inferior, often without that intention, but with that result. The pigeon-holing and assignment to a delegated role happens automatically. Also, from the outset, because I am a woman, young, black, curly, I often perceive that my knowledge, my experience, my methodologies are questioned before I they meet me, especially in conver-

sation panels, be it as a moderator or a panelist. As a woman, you always have to validate yourself, you have to go the extra mile in everything, you have to look good and assertively manage extremely macho behavior. All this is a pity because people associate success and leadership with personal sacrifices.

I think it is key that we understand these differences, that we learn to trust in ourselves and in our capacities, without the need for external validation. We can rely on mentors and role models who are where we want to be. In addition, it is essential to always bear in mind that historically and culturally, women have been and continue to be violated. I believe that when a woman is in a position of power, and does not forget her trajectory, she becomes a catapult for many others with everything they need to succeed.

Enforcement and education for a green and just transition

“ It seems to me that there is a long way to go before we move from simple advertising strategies to real action

Positive changes result due to social and media pressure. It is sad to think that we still have not developed a collective awareness of how to achieve a better, fairer, and more inclusive society. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that we have a flawed education system, right from basic education. Radically transforming it will take as long as it takes for a person to graduate from it, about 12 to 14 years. This may not be a long time from a historical perspective, but it is a long time for the reality of the country and for people's daily experience.

That is why I think it is more effective, in the short term, to put the emphasis on the green and just transition in enforcement and in the consequences for those who do not comply with environmental rules. And a fundamental dimension of this is solid waste and water management because the negative consequences of the lack of sustainable policies are socially visible.

Education is key in the medium and long term, even more so if we consider the existing lack of knowledge in the areas of sustainability and the environment from a triple impact approach. Projects must also be thought through in terms of their impacts and the mitigation

of these impacts from the beginning. In the Dominican Republic, an environmental education and dissemination law was passed, but the tools needed to implement it have not been developed. It seems to me that there is a

long way to go before we move from simple advertising strategies to real action, but we are on track.

Una Vaina Verde

Una Vaina Verde is a social enterprise dedicated to education, consultancy, and organization of events to promote the social incorporation of the principles of sustainability, both in everyday life and in companies and institutions. Its approach focuses on co-creating with the ecosystem, articulating multidisciplinary teams for the success of projects. Its founder, Saiury Bonnet, explains that the company was born to make sustainability an easy and fun thing to do.

The company stands out for creating and using tools and methodologies adapted to different stakeholders, close to the community and adapted to the Dominican context, including gamification strategies. Through games, they seek to promote knowledge about sus-

tainability, ensuring that those who participate in their projects acquire significant learning and contribute to a green and just transition, both at the individual and corporate level.

Their work focuses on individuals and organizations in the private, state, and civil sectors, promoting sustainability with a triple bottom line approach: economic, social and environmental. Gender is integral to their work. In addition, they have sponsors for their mass events, to ensure that sustainability is accessible to the entire population.

SANDRA GUZMÁN





Sandra Guzmán, founder and general director of the Climate Finance Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, speaking from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

“ When you empower yourself and make use of your voice, you not only open up possibilities, but you also allow people to listen to you

Sandra holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of York, a master's in Environmental Policy and Regulation from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a bachelor's in International Relations from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. 12 years ago, she founded the organization she currently leads. Previously, she served as general director of Climate Change Policies at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico and was a researcher and program coordinator of the Mexican Center for Environmental Law. She was recognized as one of the *Chevening Global Change Makers 2019*, Intellectual of the Year, in 2018, by the magazine Marie Claire and one of the 30 most sustainable minds from Mexico in 2023 by the Forbes Mexico Magazine.

When I understood what climate change was, and what generated it, it created terrible stress and anguish in me. That is why I started very young in environmental action. In Mexico and now in Africa, I have learned that environmental impacts are happening at a high speed: droughts, famine, the increase in wars due to water scarcity. And I saw that this is a global problem, which is also affecting other countries in the region and in the Global South in general.

I grew up very empowered. My mother inspires me, as she was the one who allowed me to escape gender stereotypes and roles and taught me that studying was the best way for me to do what I wanted to do.

The integrated understanding of gender, climate, and biodiversity approaches

“ Synergies still need to be generated, not only in terms of policies, but also in terms of intra-institutional and inter-institutional coordination

Although some countries have made progress in understanding the integrality of gender, climate, and biodiversity perspectives, such as Colombia, Chile, and

Mexico, for the management of climate finance it is still a very incipient concept in the region. Synergies still need to be generated, not only in terms of policies, but also in terms of intra-institutional and inter-institutional coordination.

In Mexico, there is a lot of talk about feminist foreign policy, but internally, institutions and even civil society groups continue to work separately, those working on environmental matters from those working on gender matters. Nonetheless, this has changed little by little and more ecofeminist groups keep emerging. There is a lack of a more pragmatic vision that stimulates the integration of these perspectives and mobilizes questions such as what the vulnerabilities women are exposed to, why are they exposed, what kind of vulnerabilities are we talking about and what kind of intervention could help solve the problems.

However, where we have indeed progressed at regional level is in the integration of more women in decision-making processes, more women leading, for example, in environment ministries. Now, at the international level, I would not say the same, I see two levels. Among

decision-makers, it is very clear that the role of women is still limited, but when you go to the more technical spheres, they are the protagonists. For example, those who were behind the Paris Agreement, in addition to the political bodies, were women at ministerial level. A working group, mostly of women, began to create understandings so that there would be certain mentions that would open the doors in the text.

The role and struggle of women in our societies

Having women making decisions can radically change the way a problem is approached

Little is said about men's entitlement, a common attitude that makes them behave as if they are deserving of certain rights or recognitions simply because they are men. I cannot stand that, nor the lack of gender awareness. We have to recognize that we are all there. It is an evolution, and I believe that we are part of a generation that is leading this change. My mother, who is my predecessor, would never have imagined that this change would come about in just one generation, let alone my grandmothers.

When there is equal participation of women, the policies are very different. You have the capacity to complement and integrate visions that result in policies that contribute in different ways. You can see the difference in the recognition of women's intervention from a political and technical point of view, because they influence not only the design of projects, but also the process. As women, we tend to focus on the collective, and I believe that this attention is not always present when there are no more holistic visions. So having women making decisions can radically change the way a problem is approached.

I recognize that we sit at tables through which many women have had to go before, and that is why we cannot stop occupying them. The challenge is that you have to put up with it, in the sense of being there and denouncing it, and I think this breaks the pre-established dynamics. That is what I notice, for example, in the negotiations. There are very serious problems, such as sex tourism at the Conferences of the Parties, where we have managed to reduce. This speaks to the silence that women have had to break to get to this point. Being a woman, Latina and young, when I started, it was very difficult to open doors, but I set myself out to it and started working on

different levels. When you empower yourself and make use of your voice, you not only open up possibilities, but you also allow people to listen to you.

I want to work with conviction, set goals and go after them. Without riding roughshod over anyone, simply looking for what makes me happy. I believe that happiness is a course of action. We women have been under pressure for so many years that we deserve the right to be happy.

Policy recommendations for gender-responsive approaches to climate change and biodiversity loss in the region

Impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss are already unfolding and severely affecting people's lives and livelihoods while exacerbating existing inequalities. These challenges are acutely felt in the region, where diverse ecosystems and vulnerable communities face disproportionate risks. The following recommendations are grounded in the views and insights of the interviewed women whose leadership and experiences provide critical guidance for shaping a green and just transition.

First, integrated and holistic solutions that address both environmental and social dimensions of climate change and biodiversity loss are required. Hereby, an **intersectional human rights-based approach** is key to protect and ensure the exercise of the populations' rights and to foster universal access to them, for instance, with regards to resources, qualitative services, and participation in public life. **Promoting co-benefits** in climate and environmental solutions like social cohesion is essential. It is key that climate and environ-

mental action go hand in hand with the strengthening of social safety nets to enhance the resilience of all to the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The fight against climate change, biodiversity loss and inequality being deeply interconnected, climate and environmental action need to be gender-responsive and **integrate and mainstream a gender lens from the planning stages**, for instance, through timely impact assessments in the adaptation and mitigation planning processes to ensure that their benefits reach the whole population. Integrating the expertise of national Gender Affairs Offices, or similar mechanisms, from a cross-sectoral approach into funding streams, climate planning and implementation might be helpful in the development of human centered climate and biodiversity action.

Context-appropriate frameworks tailored to the specific socio-cultural, economic, and environmental contexts of each region are essential, especially in places in which the impacts of climate change and bio-

diversity loss are already deeply felt. Recognizing the psychological and social impact of disasters, embedding appropriate measures into adaptation strategies and rethinking climate finance and risk assessments to ensure equitable access to resources for recovery and adaptation might contribute to a resilient foundation for communities.

To achieve gender-responsive climate and environmental action, **equal and qualitative participation in consultations, design, and implementation of vulnerabilized groups beyond their role as beneficiaries** is needed. Only through their inclusion in decision making spaces will their differentiated needs be significantly considered. This requires adjustments in modalities of engagement and appropriate logistical support to ensure meaningful and not merely administrative participation, as well as a follow-up of its effective consideration and for its sustainability through, for instance, community feedback loops. In this, the rural population and the rural-urban gaps must be considered. Community resilience and ownership in planning processes must be supported to address the root causes of rural-to-urban migration by investing in education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities,

particularly for young women.

Localized gender-disaggregated data collection and transparency are also essential to support and inform gender-responsive and evidence-based action and policy that reflects the differentiated impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. This nuanced approach allows for the identification of region-specific trends and the recognition of gender-specific challenges, such as access to resources, decision-making, exposure and impacts to climate risks. In addition, it contributes to monitoring the effectiveness of climate and environmental action, increasing the accountability of relevant societal actors and hence the chances of qualitative consideration throughout climate adaptation and mitigation action to bridge identified gaps. Finally, it contributes to raising much needed awareness.

Also, an environment that allows for a **sustainable leadership and access to decision-making spaces** of women is key to ensure genuine representation of differentiated needs. This requires significant cultural change and challenging entrenched biases. For instance, through emphasizing the importance of cre-

ating supportive policies and structural reforms that actively promote and enable women's leadership in all sectors. Also, by promoting the visibility of women's leadership and role as agents of change through the recognition, reward, and support of their contributions, bringing public awareness through stories of success such as women-led initiatives.

Regional knowledge exchange and networks and fostering civil society cooperation aimed at a regional dialogue and collaboration as well as mentoring programs that foster women's empowerment have been proven key. They have greatly contributed to innovative solutions to address climate change and biodiversity loss with a gender and social inclusion approach, while also raising awareness to ensure that their inclusion remains central in the agenda, preventing backlash. Alongside these, it is essential to consider **adequate training for women and girls** both in soft and hard skills, especially considering the EU and Latin America focus on mitigation and adaptation infrastructure. To this aim, equal access to green jobs and relevant training programs, as well as for equal employment opportunities, is necessary to ensure that women and vulnerable groups are integral to and benefit from the transition. Education is key to mainstream a gender

and social inclusion approach in future societies, with universities playing a central role by integrating this approach into their curricula in a transversal way and promoting access for women to STEM careers.

If we are to effectively tackle the multiple crises we face, we need to come up with new solutions that break patterns. It is not sustainable to continue to ignore the care societies built on women's shoulders. Women are the backbone of many sectors, from agriculture to family care, yet their contributions are often undervalued or invisibilized. A formal framework that addresses the systemic undervaluation of care work, **recognizing and providing adequate support for sustaining life** and thus women could be a first step to do so, building on the various international agreements and research findings highlighting, for instance, its impact on mobility and energy consumption. This framework must avoid romanticizing women as natural caregivers or environmental stewards, as this narrative reinforces gender stereotypes and limits their access to positions of decision-making.

Finally, **fostering Indigenous knowledge, practices and leadership** in climate and biodiversity action is essential, as they hold key solutions to the environ-

mental and climate crises. Indigenous peoples' rights, livelihoods and resources must be safeguarded, among others, combating exploitative practices that perpetuate environmental degradations, and addressing systemic violence and racism against them to protect the indigenous identity and ownership, especially in the decision-making arena. Their leadership and systems of knowledge should not only be acknowledged but also prioritized, with a commitment to ensuring their active involvement in shaping policies that directly affect them. Gender-inclusive leadership should be a cornerstone of this process, recognizing and promoting the leadership of Indigenous women and other marginalized groups.

Epilogue

In this publication we set out to give visibility to the voices of women who are leading the green and just transition in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through the 25 interviews we are publishing, we hope to continue and facilitate the dialogue started in different spaces by protagonists of climate and environmental action in the region.

However, the leaders we interviewed exceeded all our expectations. Not only did they provide us with valuable proposals, but they also showed us concrete examples of their ability to influence the mitigation of climate impacts and adaptation in an increasingly complex environment. Furthermore, through their voices, we could better understand the strategies for mainstreaming and institutionalizing a gender and social inclusion approach into policies with social, climate and environmental dimensions.

Reading their testimonies, it is clear that these women have dedicated their capacities to moving towards a transition that must not only be green, but also fair and inclusive. Their actions show that sensitivity to factors such as gender, economic situation, ethnicity, and age are essen-

tial for implementing sustainable and effective solutions. In addition, they show that diversity in participation and decision-making is fundamental to tackling the climate and environmental crisis equitably in the region.

Other themes that their visions have in common are training, both in soft skills and in leadership and negotiation. Similarly, we see that science, technology, engineering and mathematics, areas grouped as STEM, occupy a central place in the solutions they identify. And several of the interviewees spoke of the need to guarantee the employability of women in a context of a green transition, as well as of the creation of inclusive networks that strengthen their leadership. All these actions have proven to be powerful drivers of change, not only at a local level, but also through regional initiatives that have the potential to transform entire communities.

These women show us that the path towards a green and just transition also implies courage, determination, and a deep conviction of the need for structural change. Today they fight for a world where environmental protection, social inclusion and gender equality are addressed jointly.

With this publication, we hope not only to inspire those working on climate and environmental action, but also those in positions of responsibility and decision-making in the region, to make gender perspectives and social inclusion central axes to their policies.

We hope that *Voices of women leading the green and just transition in Latin America and the Caribbean* is a contribution to this journey, and that we continue to learn from each other, support each other and collectively build a greener, fairer, and more inclusive future.

