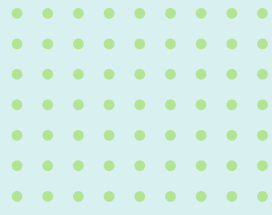




WOMEN MOVE EUROPE'S MOUNTAINS




INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY 2022



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 862739





Every year the world celebrates the **International Mountain Day** on 11 December. This international day was launched for the first time in 2003 and since then, it has become a symbolic date to **acknowledge the uniqueness of mountains** across the world.

As years passed, the predominant vision about mountains as mere “fragile ecosystems” has been increasingly challenged. A new narrative that looks at mountains as **territories of opportunity** has emerged and is becoming more and more widely accepted.

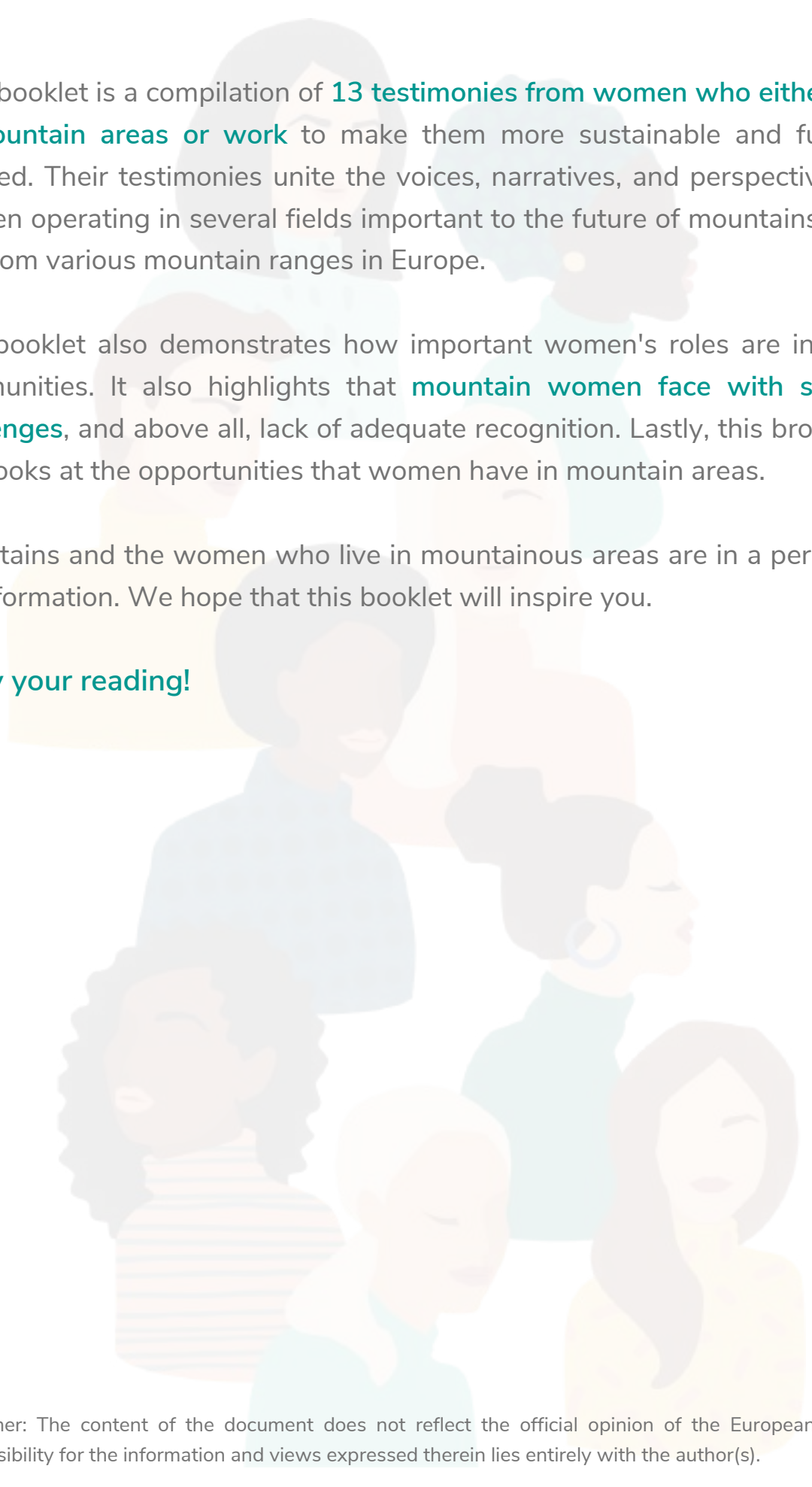
On this special day for mountains, we thus call on policy makers at all levels to acknowledge the contribution of rural, remote and mountain areas to Europe’s green and digital transition, and more particularly the role of communities, who need to see their role fully recognized in this new narrative.

We also firmly believe that this transformation towards more sustainable, liveable and future-oriented mountain areas cannot be achieved without women. Women are a **key pillar** of mountain regions.

They are backbone of the family, they often are entrepreneurs, they nurture relations within their own communities and with their younger relatives who have left mountain areas. Women are **custodians of traditions and knowledge, but also fighters and drivers of change** in the mountains.

With this booklet, we thus want to welcome and celebrate this year’s International Mountain Day theme **“Women move mountains”**. Making a fresh, **inclusive narrative** for the future of mountains is a small but crucial first step.

This publication is the result of a collaboration between the **MOVING** project, an international and multidisciplinary research project to strengthen the resilience of mountain products value chains, and **Euromontana**, the European Association of Mountain Areas.

The background of the page features a collection of stylized, semi-transparent illustrations of women's faces and profiles. These illustrations are arranged in a cluster, showing a variety of ethnicities, hair styles, and colors. The colors used for the illustrations include shades of teal, orange, yellow, and light blue. The overall effect is a diverse and inclusive representation of women.

This booklet is a compilation of **13 testimonies from women who either live in mountain areas or work** to make them more sustainable and future-focused. Their testimonies unite the voices, narratives, and perspectives of women operating in several fields important to the future of mountains who hail from various mountain ranges in Europe.

This booklet also demonstrates how important women's roles are in their communities. It also highlights that **mountain women face with similar challenges**, and above all, lack of adequate recognition. Lastly, this brochure also looks at the opportunities that women have in mountain areas.

Mountains and the women who live in mountainous areas are in a period of transformation. We hope that this booklet will inspire you.

Enjoy your reading!

Disclaimer: The content of the document does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author(s).



Mar Delgado

University of Córdoba, Professor
Coordinator of the MOVING project

Women can move everything they want to move, right? However, our research has shown that **the role of women in mountain areas is not always visible**. There are very few women in leading positions.

In most of the mountain value chains that we have analysed in the MOVING project, men are in charge of the main phases of the production and women role is not so visible.

Ultimately, the decision-making and visibility is associated to men. We should do something about that and **the MOVING project works to highlight the role of women in mountain areas**.

In my region, there are some young female entrepreneurs taking the lead of their farms and businesses, but we need more of them. We need to make women more visible.



Challenge for mountain women:

Vibrant and sustainable mountain areas where the young generations can make a living.

Opportunity for mountain women:

To make public and private goods and services provided by rural areas fully recognised and valued by society and decision-makers.



Sierra Morena (Spain)



Sustainability and rural
resilience

Laura Gascon Herrero

Provincial Government of Teruel

Senior Project Officer



Challenge for mountain women:

Small communities are more traditional and it is more difficult to change their mentality. Women are seen as caretakers rather than local leaders. Luckily, good examples are slowly changing minds.

Opportunity for mountain women:

Living in a territory with more men than women, as well as with a high rate of older adults. This means that young women living in a mountainous area have higher possibilities of becoming mayors or municipal councillors. As a result, they can reach positions of power quite easily.

When I think of the statement *Women move mountains*, the associative **power of women** in the territory comes to my mind. Women increase the cultural and tourist attractiveness of mountain areas as a result of their activities, events and festivities. **Women bring imagination and passion to the projects** they start and are equipped with great networking skills.

In the Aragon region, there is a very active initiative called MAR "Artist women in rural Aragon". Women are putting together a calendar of activities to foster a new image of mountain areas as places to live, raise children and have a high quality of life.

Through this initiative women are the ambassadors of the positive message. Their message says that in mountains people can simultaneously have better living conditions and more spare time, enjoy fuller inter-personal relations and have interesting jobs.



Iberian System (Spain)



Innovation



Kirsty Blackstock

James Hutton Institute

Social Researcher



No one can move a mountain alone, but together we can do anything! Women tend to be good at working together.

Challenge for mountain women:

We need to pay attention to the infrastructure and institutions to allow women to play a full role in mountain value chains and mountain development.

Opportunity for mountain women:

Women tend to be the main caregivers for children or older relatives. They have a double burden of trying to have meaningful work and meaningful participation in civil life, whilst managing childcare, healthcare and so forth.

When the MOVING project looked across the 23 mountain value chains, we asked people about gender balance. What we found is that **most value chains are traditionally male-dominated.**

When it gets to the later stages of the value chains, such as distribution, marketing, and consumption, there is a lot **more gender equity.** The agricultural value chains are traditionally more male dominated than the tourism value chains.

Having said that, in the Scottish mountains, the key value chain is the Scottish Speyside Malt Whisky. Traditionally the work went from father to son and grandson. They have recently recognized that it was an issue, so they have tried to bring women in the industry. Now, in terms of young people coming to the industry, it is more equal.



Cairngorms National Park and Highlands area, (UK)



Governance: land and water management policies

Anna Giorgi

University of Milan – UNIMONT

Professor

The statement *Women move mountains* reminds me of all the women I have known so far, in my family and during my academic career, who act in tangible and effective ways to **ensure the conservation, valorisation and sustainable development** of mountain areas.

Women who stay or return to the mountains, as well as those who study and do research to bring innovation to these territories, are **important protagonists** of an **indispensable change** towards sustainability, equity and the well-being of society.



Alpine region, Lombardy
(Italy)

Research & Innovation
Education



Third mission for
sustainable mountain
development

Challenge for mountain women:

To have the possibility to fulfil one's dreams, be and feel free while staying in mountains areas.

Opportunity for mountain women:

To change society, replacing wealth with well-being, becoming custodians rather than “consumers”.



Jone Fernández Landa

Basque Government

Director for Rural and Coastal Development and
European Policies

I believe that women are key players for the future of our mountains. **Women boost the social and economic development of these areas**, as well as contribute to the environmental sustainability. However, this role is not sufficiently recognised.

In the Basque Country, their role is essential, due to their contribution to maintaining lively, dynamic areas, where they stand out for their role as entrepreneurs, as well as for their growing involvement in the political life of their rural municipalities.

I would like to highlight the important role played by female farmers. I believe that **the future of our mountain areas is linked to the survival of a competitive, viable, and innovative agricultural sector**. This contributes to the important task of producing local, healthy, quality food, but also to the conservation of biodiversity.



Opportunity for mountain women:

I consider of outstanding importance that we design public policies that help to make more visible the role that women play in mountain areas, and that facilitate the reconciliation of their family and work life, so that they continue to choose to live and work in these areas.

Opportunity for mountain women:

If we take advantage of the opportunities offered by ICT, social innovation, and other tools to develop Smart Mountains, this will benefit those areas, and if the gender perspective is integrated across these transformation processes, it will be women who will be especially favoured.



Basque Country (Spain)



Rural development
policies

Tamara Zivadinovic

Mena Group LTD

Director and Expert on geographical indications



Our region consists of traditional communities. At first glance, women are not very active nor they are involved in the community life. However, they are the ones who carry

Challenge for mountain women:

The limited number of options to attain economic independence or even being able to contribute economically to the family economy.

Opportunity for mountain women:

Get women involved in regional development programmes and other activities such as the promotion and positioning of traditional products on the market.

on the **making of traditional products** of this mountain region, like Sjenica cheese or handcrafts of sheep wool.

These products are highly valued by consumers around Serbia (and beyond) because they are homemade and have big added value. For this purpose, women often learn new skills and search for new ways of promotion.

Moreover, women deal with family care. As the Pester plateau is a less developed area, they encourage their children to either work or study abroad. **Women are the ones that maintain the close connections** between their departed offspring, their families and their community. Because of this, those relatives living abroad continue to support and contribute to the region.



Pester plateau, Dinaric Mountains (Serbia)



Geographical indications, rural development and gender

Manon Wallenberger

CIPRA International

Project Manager on Social Innovation

I see women moving around doing unseen mountains of care work. I see women moving mountains of unseen work. I also visualise women who produce a way smaller "mountain of destruction" than their male counterpart, when it relates to soil use, property, consumption and pollution, carbon emissions, soil destruction etc.

In the non-for-profit sector, I really see women moving mountains. For example, in the campaign to protect the Swiss glaciers or just at our office, **I am so impressed by women and by how they manage to combine their work with their private life.** However, I also notice that there are not enough women in key managing positions.

Coming from France, I am surprised of the differences in roles and expectations regarding work and motherhood.



In the part of Austria I live in, the patriarchal culture is extremely present, and the subordinated role of women is felt very much. Finally, I work at the core of Europe and the Alps, in a country where abortion is forbidden, which horrifies me every single day! We need feminist policies!

Challenge for mountain women:

The rise of neo-fascism in all Alpine regions. The far right has never improved the life of women.

Opportunity for mountain women:

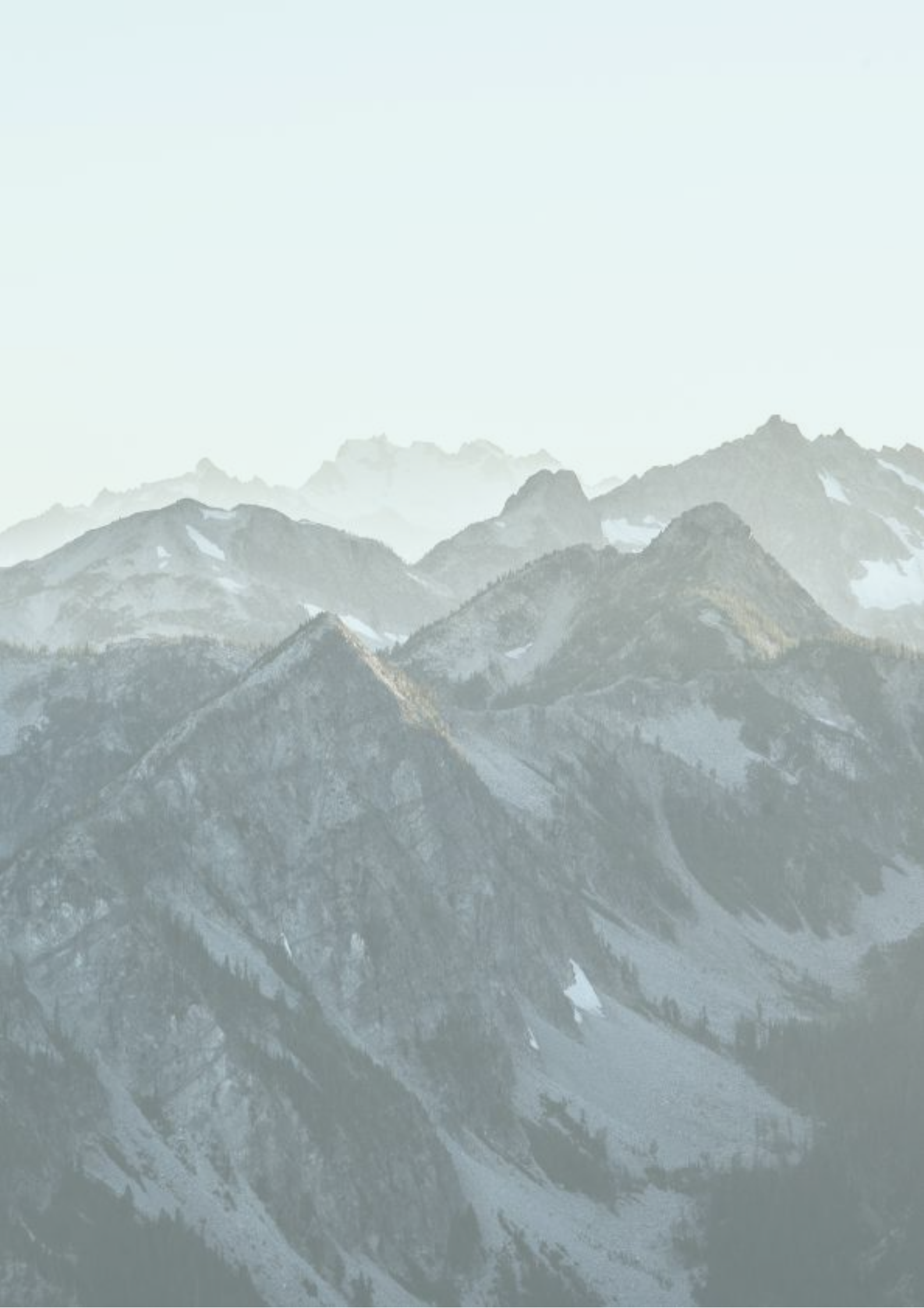
"#MeToo" movement has not arrived everywhere in our valleys. Who knows, it might make a change in our mountains!



Vorarlberg Austria,
Rheintal, Liechtenstein



Youth, social innovation,
environment and climate
change



Cătălina Rogozan

Highclere Consulting
Junior Researcher

In my opinion, the statement *Women move mountains* shows the important role that women play in mountain regions. They are the mainstay of mountain communities. First, they are the soul of the family and their protectors. Secondly, they are income providers. **Women are managers of mountain resources.** Yet, they are invisible because they do not have access to the same resources, opportunities and services, and they are not part of the decision-making processes.

Therefore, it is important to empower women to be more actively and effectively **engaged in the decision-making process.** They need to be offered equal access to resources, knowledge and opportunities in order to be able to foster real sustainable mountain development in mountain areas.



Challenge for mountain women:

Mountain women today are not part of the decision-making processes. As a result, public authorities and local communities do not know their opinions and interests.

Opportunity for mountain women:

To increase the access to capital and know-how in order to involve more women in touristic activities across mountains.

For instance, their roles could range from owning accommodation units to providing leisure time activities and well as preserving local traditions.



Southern Carpathians
(Romania)



Agriculture and rural
development

Natalija Mamula

PINS Local Development Agency

Deputy President of the Board



Challenge for mountain women:

Women face several challenges in mountain areas, such as lack of quality jobs, low wages, efficient time management and slower advancement compared to men.

Opportunity for mountain women:

Digitalisation is certainly an opportunity. It gives women in mountainous areas access to international treasures of knowledge from all areas, which in addition to hard work, learning and effort, can "move mountains".

Women bring strength, persistence and fearlessness. This is what happens when women are included and considered as equal members of their communities.

In our mountain region, women hold three **pillars of our society**, while I would say men hold one.

A woman is first of all a mother, then a businesswoman and then a housewife.

These roles require a high level of dedication and efficient time management. Women of our area have these qualities despite the many challenges life in the mountains they have to face with.



Gorski kotar (Croatia)



Entrepreneurship, youth, tourism and agriculture

Anna Geiser

Zurich University of Applied Sciences
Research Assistant

It is crucial to promote women in development and decision-making processes to pave the way for a more sustainable and liveable future in mountain regions. **Supporting women and overcoming patriarchal systems will move mountains** out of deadlocked paths.

In the Swiss Grisons Alps, women have repeatedly demonstrated their capability to create sustainable value chains, generate jobs and income in the region and promote regional values. Women have brought new energy to traditionally male-dominated areas and have provided new opportunities. In several cases, when women have entered areas where they were previously underrepresented, this has led to a more open, communicative and liveable environment. Women also bring different perspectives to regional development.



Challenge for mountain women:

As in all other areas of life, women are constantly confronted with systematic disadvantages, where men are not burdened in the same way (care labour, unequal pay, misogyny, etc.). We all need to help break down the patriarchy -in mountain areas and everywhere else- so that women do not have to prove their abilities every time they stand up to make a difference.

Opportunity for mountain women:

Swiss mountain areas are in need of new ideas and sustainable management. Therefore, there is plenty of opportunities for women to step in and lead the way.



Swiss Alps
(Switzerland)



Regional food systems
and sustainability



Bożena Wiśła

Association “Świt Korbani”- Housewives’ Club in Bukowiec, President

Women living in the mountains work in difficult areas, which requires particular commitment, organisational skills, self-discipline. They are used to harsh landscape and weather conditions.

They have a strong character, resilient to stress and highly determined to achieve their goals. **I associate women of the mountains with active, strong, independent people** who can cope even in extreme conditions.

The role of women is extremely important. They often hold key positions in various fields, in the economy, in social and cultural life. I believe that the role of women is appropriate and meets the needs of the local market and the community in which they reside.



Carpathians in Podkarpackie Region (Poland)



Agriculture, tourism and agri-entrepreneurship

Challenge for mountain women:

The most important challenge is to maintain the pace of economic growth.

Opportunity for mountain women:

If women have the means and the purpose to act then they will certainly achieve the necessary goals.

Merita Kuli

Connecting Natural Values and People Project Officer



Women in rural and mountain regions, although considered as vulnerable, are the **moving force in those regions**. their role in households is still not recognised.

They raise the children, they take care of the elderly and they equally contribute towards economic sustainability of their households.

Through **networks of rural women**, women in mountain areas have a platform to discuss challenges and get information on trainings and funding opportunities for development or expansion of their business.

Challenge for mountain women:

Ownership of land. Women and girls are left behind and rarely inherit the land. This affects their economic empowerment and development in general.

Opportunity for mountain women:

One of the huge priorities is gender budgeting. If local governments invest strategically in achieving gender equality in all sectors, women in mountains will benefit and increase their influence in fighting for their rights.

At the moment, with support from international agencies, the government of North Macedonia is working with national institutions and local governments to create gender sensitive policies and practices.



**Maleshevo Region
(North Macedonia)**



**Youth, tourism, mountain
development, agriculture,
environment and climate
change**

Kari Randen

Norwegian Mountain Network
Chief Executive Officer

Challenge for mountain women:

One of the main challenges in Norway is that women move from the mountain areas to more central parts of the country. An important reason for this is that the labour market in the mountains is not differentiated enough. Many women in Norway have higher education, and there are few jobs for these women in the mountainous areas of Norway.

Opportunity for mountain women:

In Norway there are opportunities for women to take a prominent role in politics. Through that, women get an influence on politics in the mountain areas. This can lead to a more sustainable development.

Women will want to develop and establish new jobs and new industries.



Women moving mountains means to me that **it is important that women in the future have a key role in sustainable development.** We must work together to ensure that female participation and leadership in the mountain areas go forward.

Norway is one of the world's most gender-equal countries. In the mountains of Norway, many women have an important role as farmers and as employees within the tourism sector. Many women are **central actors in politics and public administration.**



Viken fylkeskommune
(Norway)



MOVING is a four-year project funded by the Horizon 2020 programme. It aims to build capacities and co-develop relevant policy frameworks across Europe for the establishment of value chains that contribute to the resilience and sustainability of mountain areas to climate change.



www.moving-h2020.eu



EUROMONTANA

Euromontana is the multi-sectoral association for cooperation and development of mountain areas. Euromontana's mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas.



www.euromontana.org