

Introduction

The actual global process, known by most people as “new social revolution”, is challenging the paradigms on which the present society is built. The advents of new digital technologies, the crisis of the economic system, the capitalist model and the innovation processes outcomes have undermined the existing social equilibrium. In Europe, reducing inequalities and social exclusion to overcome the financial crisis and to tackle unemployment are crucial challenges for the future. At the same time, there is a great potential of growth for Europe through opportunities provided by new forms of innovation and by the engagement of citizens. To deal with all these societal challenges it becomes more and more fundamental to include the women perspective. In 2012, John Gerzema e Micheal D’Antonio have conducted a research called “Athena Doctrine: How Women (and men who think like them) will rule the future”. From this study emerges that among 64,000 people surveyed in thirteen nations, two thirds feel the world would be a better place if men thought more like women. Our idea is to launch a communication campaign in order to create an European platform on the theme of Women and Social Innovation, building a framework for associations, companies and stakeholders with similar interests. The platform could be called **WISE4ALL: Women in Europe Innovative Society for All**.

This platform concerns several themes such as social integration, the balance of roles, of political power and economic, scientific and cultural competitiveness, the role of family and the crisis of social values. But, are we sure that these problems do not stem from a mainly male standpoint? Does the social integration debate relate components with different weights and roles that have not yet been integrated into society? Women have always played key roles in society but their social status is still questioned. Why this does happens? Do the socio-cultural models internalized by women affect so much their role in society? Or maybe it depends on the nature of being a woman?

An analysis, made by the Commission in 2008, spotted a field of determined defiance, issues, and barriers tackled by innovative women during the establishment, the management and the spread of a business, even in science and technology industries. Educational choices, traditional concepts of the role of women in society and the difficulties in balancing family responsibilities with work, had ruled them out from fast-moving and competitive sectors, which expect long and flexible working hours and constant training in order to be up-to-date with new technological development and market opportunities. There are many studies which show that women have fewer opportunities to hold high-level professional positions than their male colleagues. The invisible barrier that keeps women out of positions of responsibility or of the head of companies in which they work, is called “glass ceiling”, that is often the result of discriminatory practices in the labour market.

From their point of view, how do women face this issue? Which are the questions they ask themselves? Do they feel free to handle their life or are they aware of being submissive to a dominant cultural model?

Nowadays it seems that the focus in public policies is about numbers and not about contents: in the economical/political system gender balance is handled only through

mandatory gender quotas. However, what is really important is not the women numerical strength, but the change of perspective that women can generate in the public sphere. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to avoid the problem reduction in two opposite points of women: on the one hand, the theory that considers women a vulnerable category which has to be protected and promoted or, on the other hand, the theory which states that gender inequalities do not exist at all.

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that the support of women in leading roles has to be achieved through the promotion of the feminine gender in all its aspects. In this sense, women's power in the economical context is sustainable only if accompanied by the evolution of women's roles in society, promoting a leadership model that integrates both genders through the harmonization of their peculiarities. A positive leadership is made by an invidious that becomes a social player, able to *create a change*.

Maintaining the opposition between women and men, underlying differences and qualities of each, means to strengthen stereotypes or to overthrow the old ones to create new ones. In order to oppose gender stereotypes, interpreted in a dichotomical way, isn't it better to consider women and men for their differences and qualities as individuals?

S-COM campaign

For all these reasons, S-COM is launching a campaign on these issues. The mission of the campaign is to create a permanent platform that examines in depth the added value of differences from a diverse point of view: the female one.

Women for social innovation will meet in order to redefine "gender equality", not by the classical legislative approach, but through the construction of a participative process that fosters innovative practises of a new cultural model. The platform aims to be a physical and virtual space to connect all structures and networks that deal with several market sectors as industry, technologies, science, social and cultural dimensions. In addition, its purpose is to bring together anyone who is interested in a reflection and discussion on issues related to the enhancement of the women point of view. Starting from the role of women in the contemporary society, our aim is to integrate the global debate on the transition towards new societal paradigm in the path of European policies.

S-COM

S-com is an International non-profit agency settled in Brussels.

Since 2005 works to prove that the communication has an indispensable role in the sustainability and innovation processes. In order to achieve this, S-com promotes a series of events aimed at drawing conclusions on the following issues: clarify how a communication based on participation and integration could cross sectorial knowledge borders and informative asymmetries, and how such a communication could carry out a connecting role in the knowledge sharing and social innovation processes.

Collect experiences and best practices on connective and mutual learning use of communication within and across sustainability systems; delineate innovative communicative modalities to support the introduction of the reflexivity function; that is the ability to calibrate continuously the actions undertaken (in political, economic, scientific field etc), taking into account the impact of these actions on society and environment; investigate how sustainability principles and methods could be applied in to the specific fields of insitutional communication, corporate governance and scientific research; study how Information & Communication Technologies and Social Media can play a role in favour of the introduction of participative communication in multi-stakeholders analysis and decision making process.

Last Projects

2014-2017 Merid - Middle East Research and Innovation Dialogue Project – Horizon 2020

2012- 2016 MedSpring - Mediterranean Science, Policy, Research & Innovation Gateway
PROJECT - FP7 – INCO.2012