

# **Danube Networkers**

## **Meeting at the Danube Festival Ulm – July 2024**

**Thursday, 11 July 2024**

### **Intergenerational intercultural Workshop**

Working Group 1 „Leadership of Women“

Attendants: Participants of the Project „Taking Little Steps Toward Change“, the workshop was presided by Carmen Stadelhofer (ILEU)

Aim: Discuss the situation of women in your countries – What can we do to improve their situation?

### **Statements made by attendants:**

Women have a lot of power, but do not profit from that

**Ileana** (Bulgaria): 17 years of Bulgarian initiatives, many related to business, but there is still no equal pay, except with the right education

**Olga** (Ukraine): The situation is difficult for women in Ukraine women took over many responsibilities from men, but are still connected to their families. Even though they are the main pillars of society, it is not easy to combine all that. In the last years we were very active, organizing humanitarian aid, NGOs, and still continue as mothers. Important is support from the outside at financial level as well as cooperation locally. The work-life balance is important since overload could lead to fatigue and big pressures on women. And – there are still more men in leading positions.

**Galina** (Ukraine): It is important in the Ukraine that girls are promoted in school. There are many companies led by women, in the fields of finance, health, economy. The life expectancy of men is shorter. After the war, Ukraine will be different since 8 million women and children have left, many of them will hardly come back.

**Silvia** (Croatia): She is a school principal, has travelled a lot. Things are changing for worse in Croatia, we are neglected... it was better in the 80s, deteriorating today. There are too many men in the Parliament, principals, mayors – all men. Equal pay is not given.

**Maria** (Romania): She is an English teacher, has many male students. Officially the situation is very good – but many girls are very good in school but then end up as mothers. Some advantages for women are only for statistics. However, the percentage of girls is rising, that will lead to equality in business. But a backlash is still to be feared.

**Iris** (Germany): She has two sons, works – but does not cook. Her recommendation: educate the boys! There should be more child care during the day so that mothers can work more easily.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Do younger men take over more responsibility?

**Krasimir** (Bulgaria): He sees men and women as equal. There are flexible working hours, child care, kindergardens in companies, leadership training.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Political, educational influence is important. Where are the role models for women?

**Iris** (Germany): Aren't women powerful?

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Yes, but what power do they have?

**Silvia** (Macedonia): Women still need to be twice as good as men. She lost her husband twenty years ago, became a doctor, her parents are engineers. Their salaries are equal. In Macedonia, girls have a difficult childhood, often stay at home.

**Monica** (Bulgaria): Bulgarian mothers often return from abroad and then apply what they saw.

**Ileana** (Bulgaria): Women are often overworked and therefore buy pre-cooked meals.

**Maria** (Romania): There are the same tasks for both sexes.

**Lessia** (Ukraine): Women must be professionalized, there are not enough women in leadership positions. Where does that absence come from? Women need empowerment, good role models to inspire others.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Let's discuss about women having more chances – what could be the option for that? Quotas? Is that the answer?

**Diana**: There should be tests in tenth grades and quotas for university. Her father e.g. travels a lot, has a bigger salary, but also more responsibility.

**Silvia** (Macedonia): Family management is not a pattern for everybody. Men and women do not do the same things: women were trained as housewives, disappear then. So: Educate women!

**Anna Maria** (Moldavia): There is much violence against women. Women do become more independent in cities and towns, in villages they do not have these possibilities. But – they don't stand up for their rights! There are a lot of suicides, depressions.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Is that true for the entire society?

**Olga** (Ukraine): There needs to be an institution such as the „Frauenhaus“ in Germany (Women's shelter). There are many victims of violence.

**General statements:**

Some role models mentioned: Frieda Kahlo, Carmen, Michelle Obama, Margaret Thatcher.

Networking and mentoring are important for women.

Our countries do not have the same concepts of motherhood and partnership.

We share many experiences!

Young women today should have the chance to choose.

Feminism is on the retreat, young women should be aware of that!

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Is it a question of „can“ or „must“? Do women have an opportunity or must fulfill a role?

Women should be empowered – and at the same time, men (especially younger men) should be educated.

**Krasimir** (Bulgaria): If a couple builds a big family, and both have degrees, how can they manage? Who will stay with the child?

**Ileana** (Bulgaria): She is an engineer, has studied and a family – but still no career since it is hard to find a kindergarden in Bulgaria, there are not enough. If any, they are often private and expensive, children go less than three years to kindergarden.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): What about the human potential of women? Is there more solidarity? Are they equal?

**General statements:**

A woman should be aware of her potential.

Women should have the choice.

Why are women weaker? They are less prepared for this role.

**Carmen** (Chairwoman, Germany): Who decides who is weak? Abilities need to be strengthened. Women need positions where they have influence. It is needed to foster little steps and break the glass ceiling. Gender equality must be at 50:50.

**General statements:**

Begin with educating your sons!

Structures: If there are not enough kindergardens, that constitutes a handicap for women.

It is disturbing that „trad wives“ are in fact on the rise.

Gender education must begin in schools.

**Gitti** (Germany): She has educated all her four sons to do family work.

### **Visions for women:**

They need to play role, networking is important, communicate that and empower those who want to have the choice.

Women can take over male professions.

In Germany: „Omas gegen Rechts“ engage in society

Stand up for your rights!

Make men understand that variety will make everything better.

Empower women by

- Role models

- Leadership training

- Mentoring

- Family management

- Equal pay

- Improving structures: child care, schools, politics

- Quotas

- Standing up for women's rights

- Giving women a true choice: family or professional life!