

CLIMATE CHANGE & GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND GREECE

PART B'



WHEN
EQUITY · EMPOWERMENT · CHANGE


sustainable **WE**
INNOVATION · IMAGINATION · IMPACT

An initiative of **WHEN** carried out
in collaboration with **SustainableWe**
and the contribution of the redevelopers
of the **European Centre for Environmental
Research and Training (EKePeK)**
of **Panteion University**

SUPPORTED BY



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This research was published
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 **WOMEN ON TOP**

which became

WHEN

in 2025.

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Introduction

In 2022, Women On Top, in cooperation with SUSTAINABLEWE and qed, and with the support of PPC, Henkel, Lush Fund, MedWomen Fund and other sponsors, carried out the 2nd part of its study on the impact of the climate crisis on women's lives in Greece and women's role in designing and implementing sustainability strategies.

The 1st part of the study, completed in the spring of 2022, attempted to shed some light on the interaction between climate change and gender equality, based on data which shows that women, as well as other vulnerable social groups, are more heavily impacted by the phenomenon in many areas of daily life, both in urban and rural settings, yet they participate much less in mitigation strategies and actions. The literature review, which was the basis for the 1st part of the study, revealed that the increase of inequalities that affect women due to climate change is becoming apparent in the agricultural and tourist sector, especially when women are exposed to extreme weather events and natural disasters, which they are – mainly for social reasons – less equipped to handle.

The 2nd part of the study includes a quantitative survey on the beliefs and the effect of climate change on women's lives in Greece, through a nationwide sample of 1,027 women, and personal interviews with representatives of the stakeholders.

SURVEY IDENTITY

Methodology of the quantitative survey

Online and phone structured questionnaire survey – in order to obtain a representative population sample in terms of age and urbanicity

Sample size

N=1.027, nationwide sample

Target group

Women aged 18-64

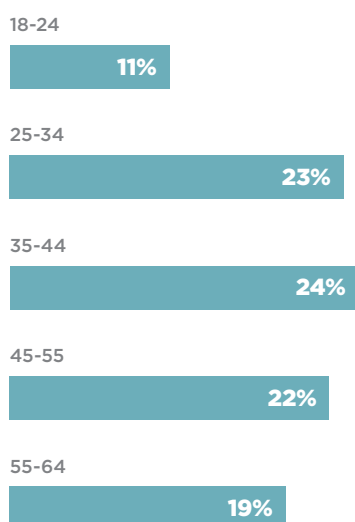
Investigation period

July - August 2022

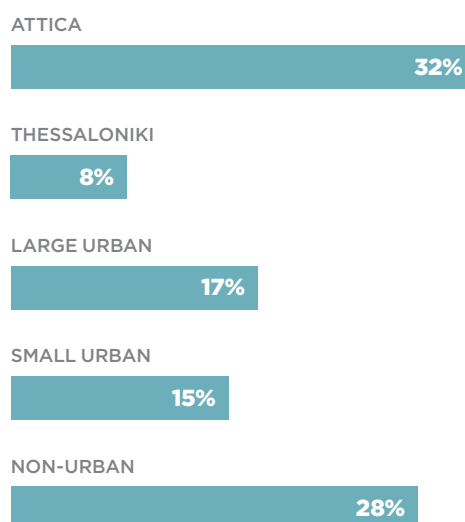
The data was weighed according to the latest available ELSTAT figures (2021 census) in terms of the age and urbanicity of the nationwide women's population.

GRAPH 1 SAMPLE

AGE



URBANICITY



Methodology of the qualitative investigation

Online and phone interviews with women engaged on a professional or voluntary basis in the sustainability field, either individually or in small groups.

Investigation period

October - November 2022

Summary

The aim of this report is to present the main findings of our study with regard to the awareness and knowledge of women in Greece surrounding issues related to climate change, the effect of this crisis on their work and their daily lives, and women's active engagement and participation in actions addressing the problem.

As seen by this quantitative and qualitative investigation, 75% of women in Greece are moderately or very informed on climate change, with Athens having the highest rate of awareness and non-urban centres the lowest. In terms of age groups, women aged 18-24 and 45-54 appear to be better informed, whereas women aged 55+ had the lowest rates of awareness.

The internet seems to be the most important source of information on climate change for women, with television being the second most important one, especially in small urban and non-urban centres and older ages. Social media seems to be particularly important sources of information for women aged 18-24.

Women in Greece appear rather familiar with certain phrases related to the environment, such as “natural disasters”, “climate change”, “green products”, “renewable energy sources”, and “energy poverty”. The understanding of concepts which have just recently begun to become part of the climate crisis vocabulary is less so. For example, 14%-32% of women in Greece are not familiar with concepts such as “sustainable development”, “climate adaptation”, “energy transition”, “green jobs” and “circular economy”.

In terms of the impact of the climate crisis on women's daily lives and work, temperature rise, wildfires, frequent/extended heatwaves, floods and energy poverty are the issues that appear to impact women's daily lives the most, also depending on the urbanicity of their place of residence.

42% of women feel that their work is already impacted “a lot” or “moderately” by climate change, due to the burden of the weather phenomena on their place of residence; the worsening of their daily working conditions; the status change in the labour market; and potentially due to the turn towards alternative energy sources, and due to the losses that companies have faced because of natural disasters or the climate change.

A significant percentage of women (70%) feel that investments and changes made to the economy, in the context of the green transition, have a positive impact on society.

It appears, however, that while women are aware of actions targeting the fight against climate change, they do not participate in them. What is telling is the 51% of women reported they do not participate in any action whatsoever. Similarly, 5% stated they are not aware of any such action.

The main factors motivating women to become more involved is the engagement of their close circle; the initiatives of the local government institutions; and the educational community. Correspondingly, the factors that have prevented or prevent women from becoming more involved in sustainability issues are lack of time (espe-

cially for women aged 25-44); concerns about potential political or party exploitation of the relevant initiatives; lack of meaningful results from previous actions; and difficulty in obtaining information on the ways they can become involved.

The most popular every day practices women undertake for the environment are recycling; using energy-saving lamps; reducing water consumption; using re-usable shopping bags; and limiting the use of appliances. In other words, mainly practices that also have a positive impact on their personal or family budget. However, the low adoption, on the part of women, of practices that require a substantial financial investment or that significantly alter their daily habits is very telling.

Unfortunately, 40% of women in Greece feel they do not participate at all in the decision-making process with regard to the environment, and only 5% feel that they have an important part in it. Women over 45 years old have the highest rate for non-participation, standing at 54%. Women from Athens and women from non-urban centres are those who feel they have a somewhat larger part in the decision-making process, compared to women from other (small or large) urban centres.

Work and the Civil Society appear to be the institutions offering women better chances of participating in the decision-making process with regard to the environment, with percentages standing at 30% and 49%, respectively. Their representation in local government bodies stands at 18%.

All of the above (and many more) findings arising from the second part of the Women On Top study, highlight the need to take measures on multiple levels in order to inform and raise awareness among women on issues of environmental sustainability; to offer education on effective engagement practices; to encourage women's participation in sustainable strategy planning; and to investigate in depth the gender dimension of these strategies in Greece and the wider Mediterranean region.

CHAPTER 1

Detailed findings of the quantitative and qualitative investigation

This report presents a summary of the most important findings from the qualitative and quantitative investigation, focusing on 3 main pillars: Women's **Information and awareness** on environmental concepts and issues, the **Gender impact** of the climate change in their lives, and the aspects determining their own **Engagement with and participation** in these issues.

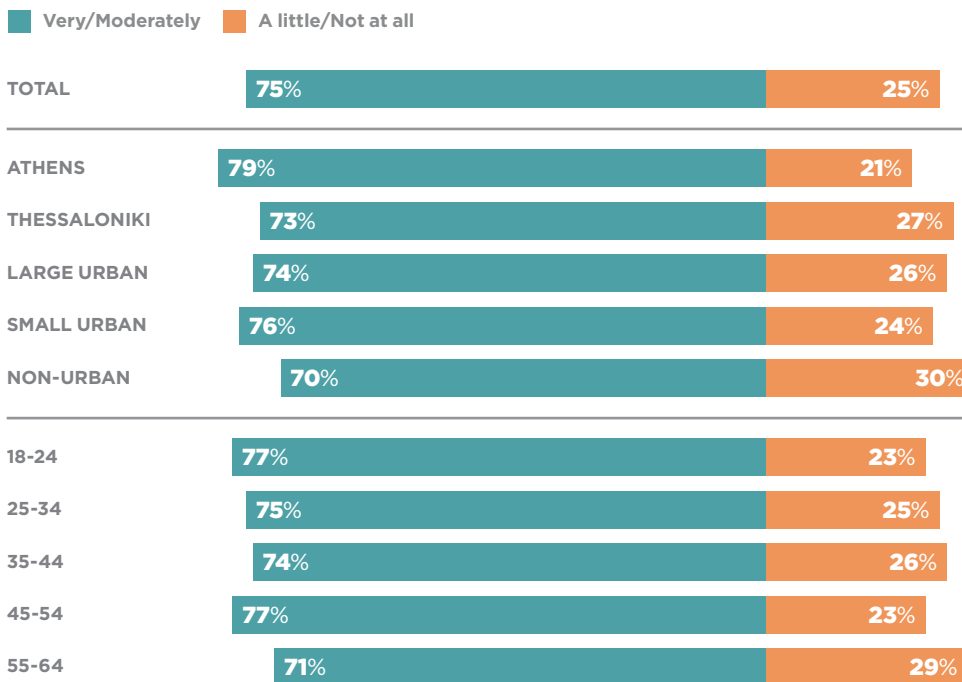
1.1 | INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

The knowledge and understanding of concepts related to the climate crisis and sustainable development are considered a first and particularly important step in terms of providing information, raising awareness and promoting engagement in any population, on environmental issues.

75% of women stated they are moderately (59%) or very well (16%) **informed** on climate change, where women in Athens have the highest awareness rate (80%) and women in non-urban centres have the lowest (70%). In terms of the **age groups**, women aged 18-24 and 45-54 (77%) appear to be better informed, while women aged 55+ report the lowest awareness rates (Graph 2).

GRAPH 2

“HOW WELL INFORMED DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELVES WITH REGARD TO CLIMATE CHANGE?”



The **internet** appears to be the most important source of information for women on issues related to climate change; especially in small urban centres, 52% of the female population prefers this medium, while women in non-urban centres report the lowest rate of internet usage (40%). Women aged 35-44 appear to use the internet as a source of information at a higher rate.

The accessibility and direct diffusion of information offered by the internet wins the battle against **television**, which is mainly preferred by older age groups (33% among women aged 55-64). Radio and the press have an overall smaller impact. Correspondingly, at a rate of 28%, younger women rely on **social media**, forums and blogs to get information, where they have more opportunities to interact and comment. In any event, the world wide web is the main source of information for women in relation to climate change (Graph 3).

GRAPH 3

“WHICH MEDIA DO YOU CHOOSE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE?”

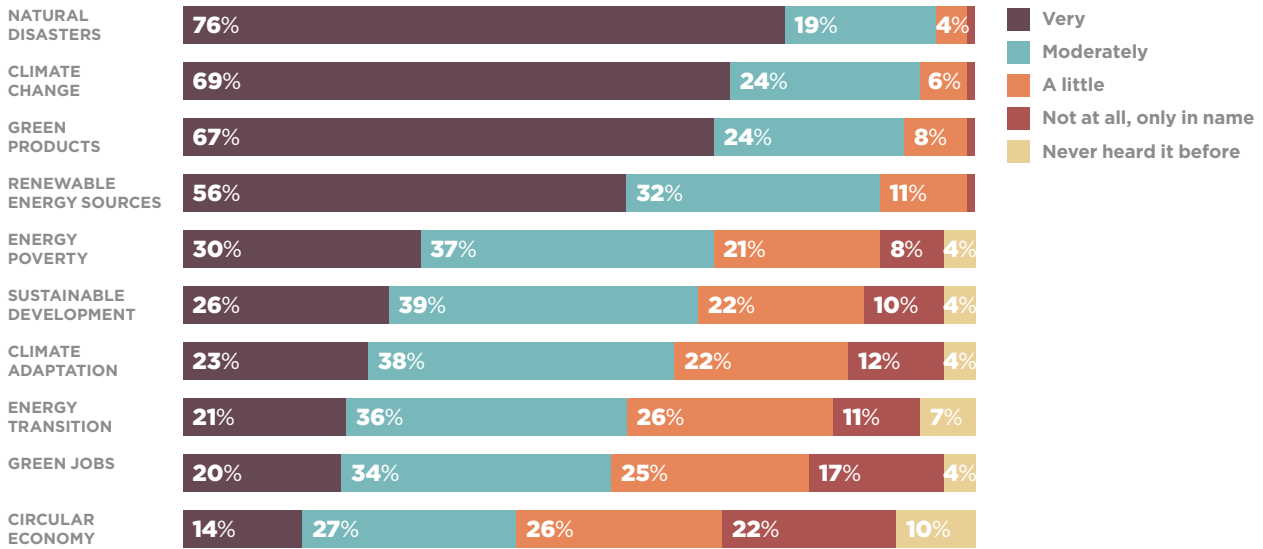
	ATHENS	THESSALONIKI	LARGE URBAN	SMALL URBAN	NON-URBAN
INTERNET	45%	46%	45%	52%	40%
TV	19%	21%	19%	24%	25%
SOCIAL MEDIA	15%	14%	21%	14%	13%
FORUM/BLOGS	5%	5%	7%	4%	11%
RADIO	7%	4%	4%	3%	7%
PRESS	8%	9%	4%	2%	3%

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
INTERNET	41%	46%	50%	44%	40%
TV	14%	18%	16%	24%	33%
SOCIAL MEDIA	28%	16%	15%	13%	9%
FORUM/BLOGS	6%	11%	7%	7%	4%
RADIO	4%	5%	8%	5%	6%
PRESS	6%	4%	4%	7%	7%

According to our survey, Greek women’s savviness in concepts such as “sustainable development”, “renewable energy sources” and other relevant terms is of particular interest. Through the corresponding questions posed to the participants, the goal was to investigate, on the one hand, their level of awareness on issues related to the climate, and, on the other, any confusion which may be evidenced between concepts and definitions that are considered identical, similar or even unclear. In this context, the questionnaire included concepts which have been widely discussed and also concepts which are newer or more specialised.

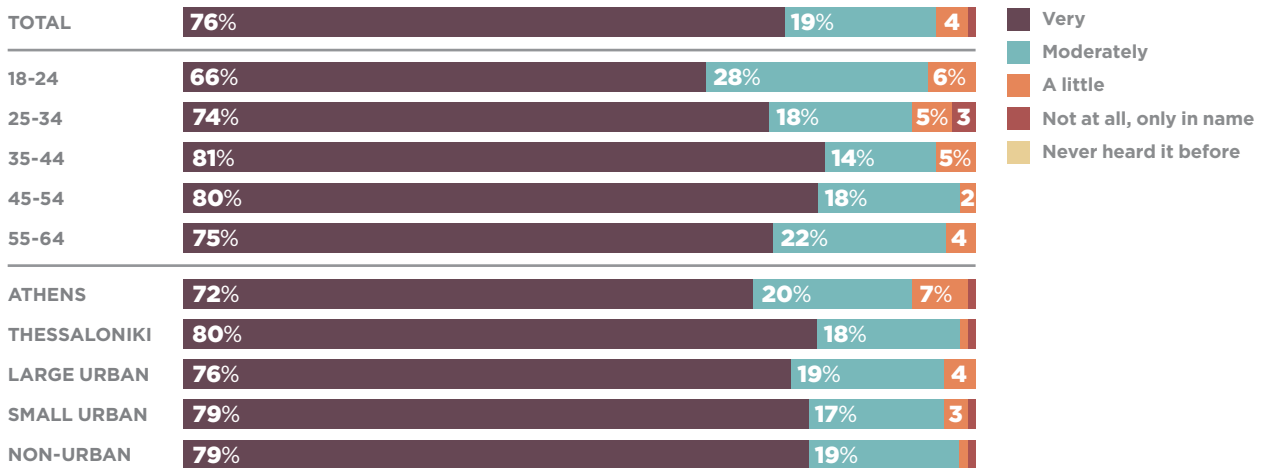
It appears that women in Greece are rather familiar with certain phrases related to the environment, such as “natural disasters”, “climate change”, “green products”, “renewable energy sources”, and “energy poverty” (Graph 4).

GRAPH 4
 “HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS?”



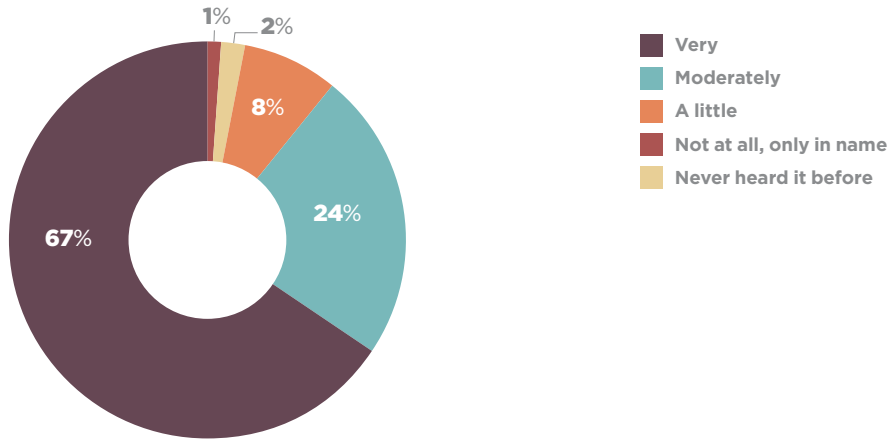
Especially in relation to natural disasters, a combined 95% of the women stated they are “well” or “moderately” familiar with the phrase. As we have seen in the 1st part of our study, natural disasters are one of the most apparent threats we are now facing close to us, in our country or even in other parts of the planet. Therefore, the sense of “familiarity” with these concepts, as well as the fear and insecurity that go hand in hand with them are most likely the causes for their increased visibility, especially in non-urban and small urban centres (Graph 5).

GRAPH 5
 “HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS?”
 NATURAL DISASTERS



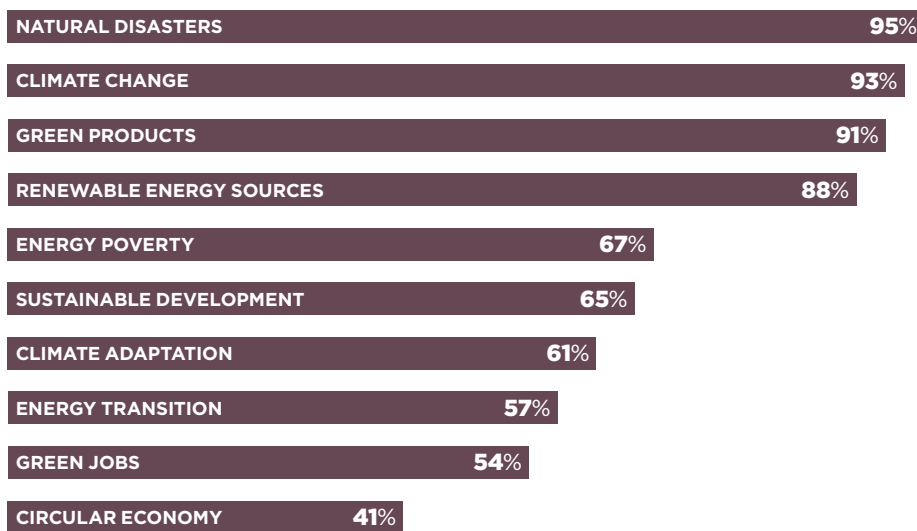
Moreover, the concept of green products is known to women, at a rate of 91%. This high rate is common across all ages and geographical regions (Graph 6).

GRAPH 6
“HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS?”
GREEN PRODUCTS



The grasp on concepts that have just recently begun to become established in the climate crisis vocabulary is not as strong. These include concepts such as “sustainable development”, “climate adaptation”, “energy transition”, “green jobs” and “circular economy”. In this case it is understood that these definitions and concepts are more specialised and less widespread beyond a more cognizant audience with a special interest in climate change.

GRAPH 6B
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO KNOW THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS
“VERY WELL” or “MODERATELY”



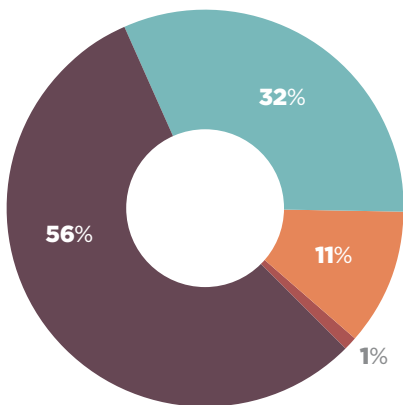
The participants' level of knowledge on issues related to **energy**, particularly in a period when energy plays a decisive role in the European and global economy, is especially interesting. In terms of renewable energy sources, the high and moderate rate of familiarity stands at 88%. On the contrary, in terms of energy poverty, we find answers such as "I do not know anything", the option "a little" or "never heard it before" are more frequent, standing at 33%, while the options "very" and "moderately" stand at 67%. The rates per different age group and geographic area are similar, with small variations.

The rates corresponding to the question on the energy transition are even lower, as only 57% of the women report they are "very" or "moderately" familiar with the concept. In this case, the geographic – urban or not – distribution is also interesting, as higher levels of knowledge and therefore familiarity with the concept of energy transition are reported in Athens, whereas small and non-urban centres report higher rates for lack of information (Graph 7).

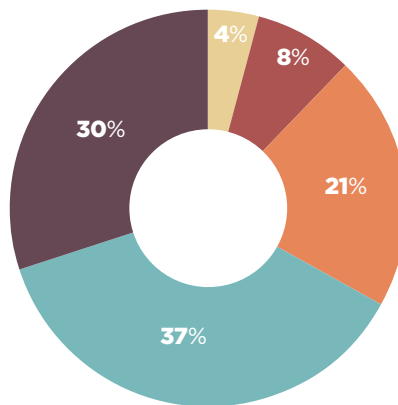
GRAPH 7

"HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS?"

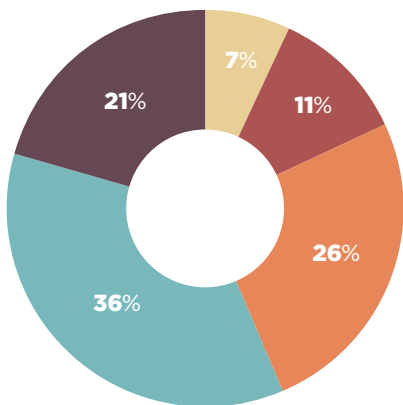
RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES



ENERGY POVERTY



ENERGY TRANSITION



- Very
- Moderately
- A little
- Not at all, only in name
- Never heard it before

The answers in relation to green jobs stand at similar rates, as 54% of women report they are “very” or “moderately” familiar with them. The age distribution is according to the aforementioned rates, while differences are reported from the small urban and non-urban centres and Thessaloniki, with clearly higher rates related to lack of information (Graph 8).

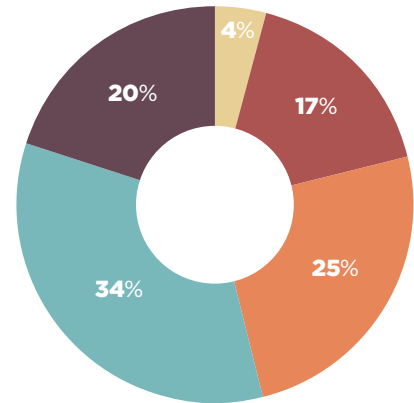
Knowledge on the concepts of sustainable development and the circular economy falls in the lowest positions. 65% of women report they are “very” or “moderately” familiar with the concept of sustainable development, while the 18-24 and 55-64 age groups report higher rates for limited knowledge. Moreover, the non-urban and small urban centres report higher rates for limited knowledge in relation to the concept of sustainable development (Graph 9).

Even more pronounced is the lack of information surrounding circular economy, as 58% of women state they know nothing about, know a little or never heard about this concept before. It is the only concept where more than 50% of the participants reported a lack of information (reported limited knowledge) (Graph 10).

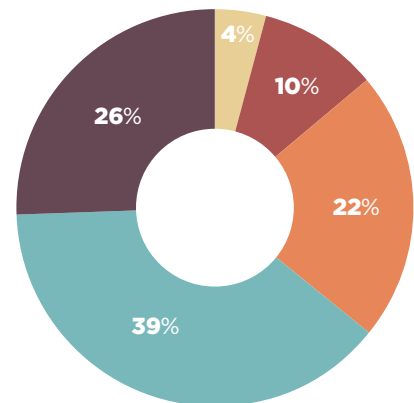
A 14%-32% of women in Greece know nothing about concepts such as “sustainable development”, “climate adaptation”, “energy transition”, “green jobs”, “circular economy”.

GRAPH 8-9-10
“HOW WELL TO YOU KNOW EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS?”

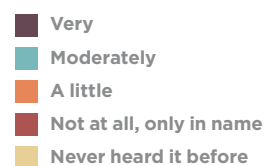
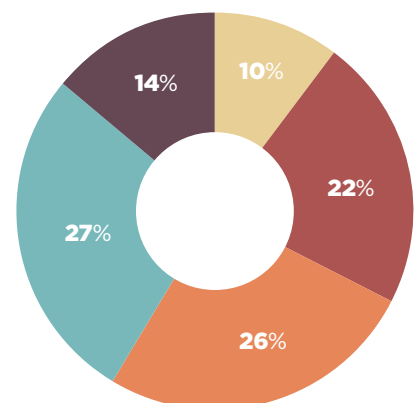
GREEN JOBS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



In conclusion, we can say that the concepts which have been in use for a number of years and are now part of our everyday vocabulary appear to be well understood, whereas the newer ones, and perhaps more complex in terms of their content, are less accessible concepts, and the public is not yet familiar with them in their daily lives and practice. This limited grasp on certain concepts may act as a retardant in terms of introducing good practices in everyday life, participating in decision-making processes and becoming more involved in relation to the environment.

Moreover, because of women's lack of well-rounded and in-depth information, we, as a society, lose an important opportunity to further disseminate knowledge, healthy beliefs and habits: as noted by our female interviewees who are engaged in the field of sustainability, women, because of the central role they have in their families and in child-raising, are recognised as the main agents of information and change for their entire communities. Therefore, the above underline the need to place more emphasis in providing information on these aspects of climate change and the adaptation of our societies to its impact in the coming years.

As some of the experts with whom we discussed noted, based on their empirical experience, in terms of information, men are usually better versed on the technical issues, whereas women are more aware of the bigger picture. For example, we see men who can perfectly explain the operation of a wind turbine and many women who understand the general reality and participate in demonstrations or organise information campaigns. On the contrary, men do not participate equally in such activism initiatives; they mostly focus on processes related to the implementation of technical solutions.

1.2 | THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES

Climate change and the environmental mitigation policies affect individuals to a different extent, according to their dependence on different interdisciplinary factors, including age, gender and place of residence. This section reviews topics related to the general subject of gender equality and how it relates to climate change in terms of its impact on health, work and the household. Moreover, women's role in other basic activities within the household was also examined. These include food preparation, waste separation, and the selection of environmentally friendly products/services.

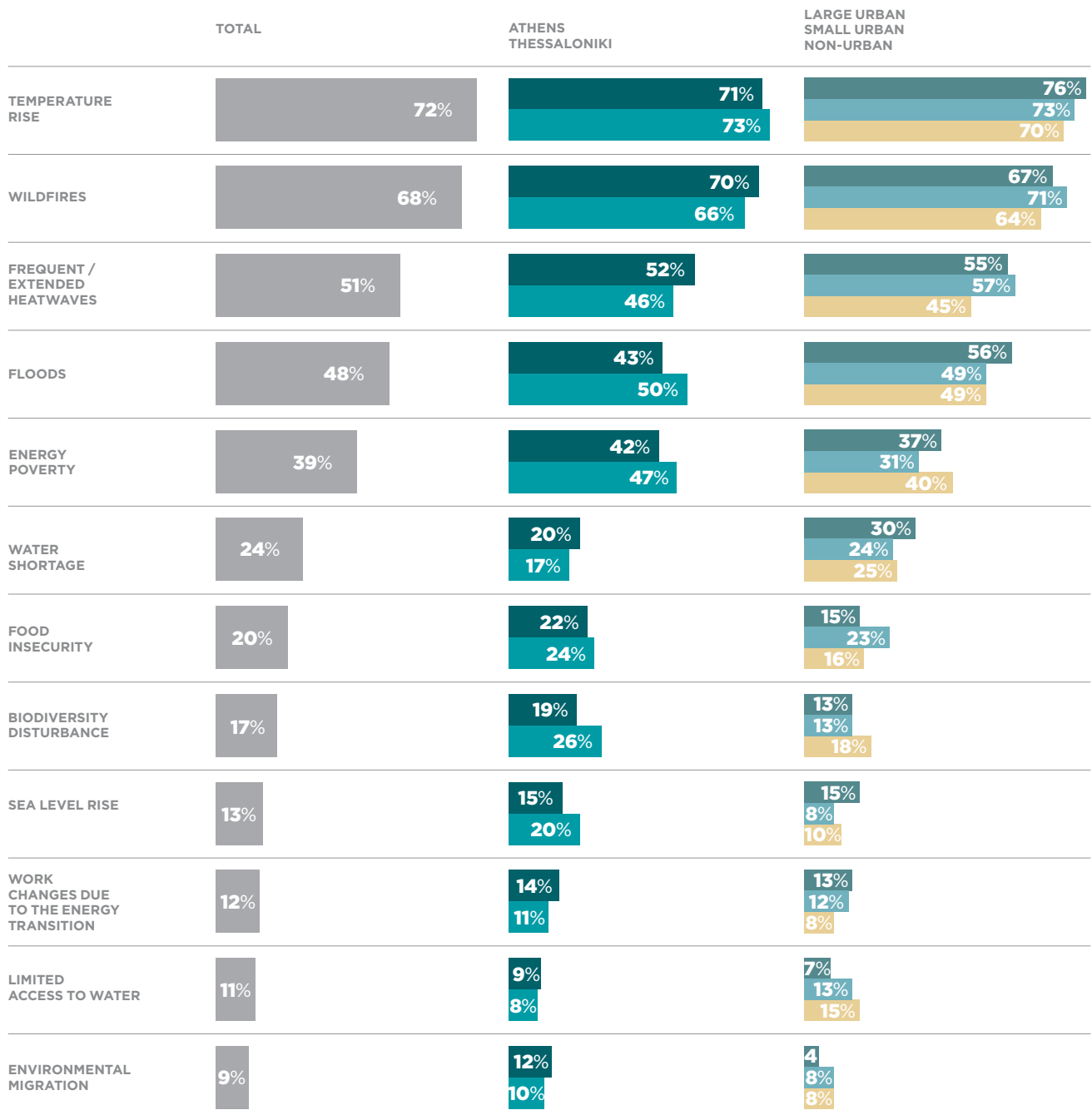
In 2022, global temperature rise, wildfires, frequent/extended heatwaves, floods and energy poverty are subjects which appear to impact the daily life of women more, as 72% to 39% of the participants placed these issues at the top of their lists of concerns.

It appears that, practically speaking (at least for the time being), issues such as water shortage, food insecurity, biodiversity disturbance, sea level rise, work changes due to the energy transition, limited access to water and environmental migration affect women less.

Significant differences are noted between the answers of women from **large urban, small urban and non-urban centres**. Specifically, the issues related to temperature and water (temperature rise, heatwaves, floods and water scarcity) appear to concern women in large urban centres more significantly than women in non-urban areas. Moreover, women in small urban centres appear to be more concerned about wildfires and extended heatwaves (Graph 11).

GRAPH 11

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE?”

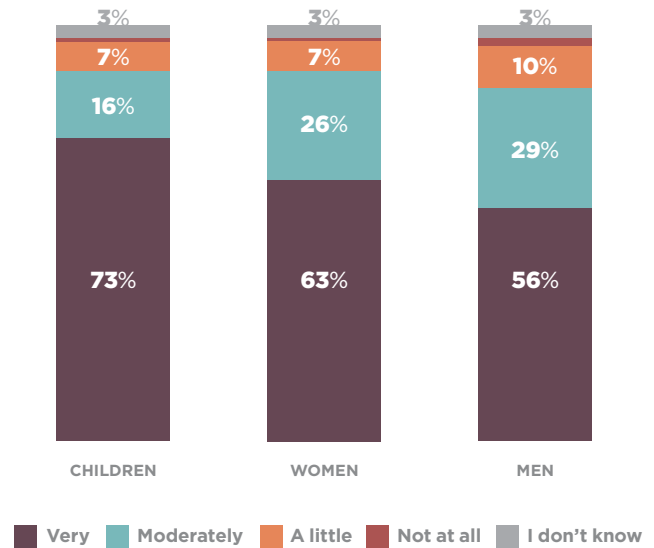


Temperature rise, wildfires, frequent/extended heatwaves, floods and energy poverty are the issues that appear to influence more women’s daily lives, also depending on the urbanicity of their place of residence.

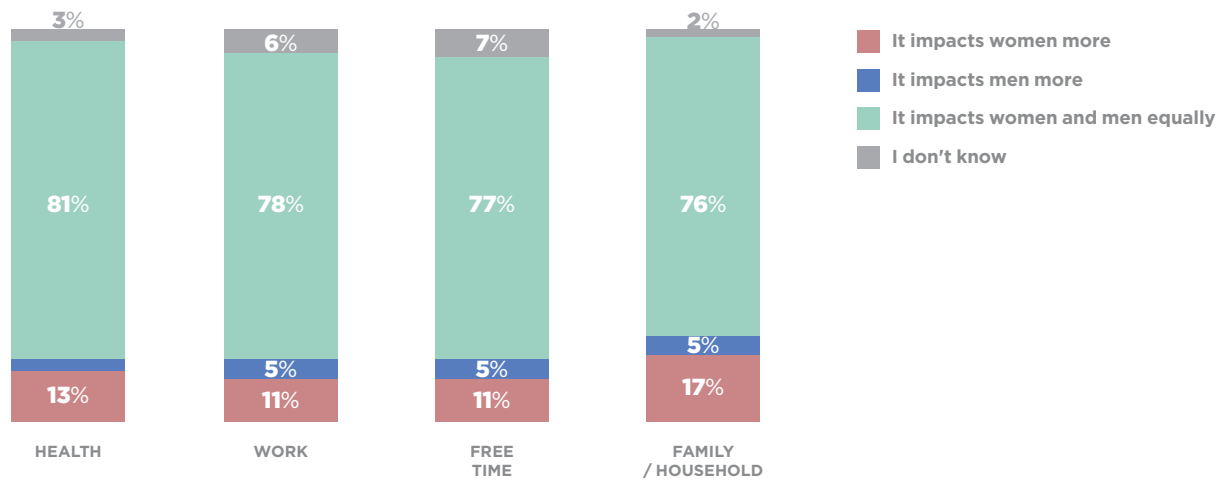
In general, women feel that the climate crisis mainly impacts children, then themselves and, to a lesser extent, men – perhaps expressing an empirical understanding of the relevant divergence which is also captured by the international research literature, on the different impact of the phenomenon on the most **vulnerable population groups** (Graph 12).

11%-17% of the participants recognise specifically the increased impact of climate change on **women’s** health, free time and family life. The imbalance appears especially evident to women in **non-urban centres**, perhaps due to the different nature of their daily activities and different degree of proximity and occupation with the natural environment. This dimension becomes more apparent through our interviews with women engaged in the field of sustainability, for whom direct contact with nature in their daily lives was a significant trigger for concern and mobilisation (Graph 13).

GRAPH 12
“HOW MUCH WOULD YOU SAY CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING...”



GRAPH 13
“WHAT IS, IN YOUR OPINION, THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN RELATION TO...”



It should be noted that, as reported by the experts with whom we discussed, women, also due to the increased responsibilities they undertake even in the family context, spend more hours outdoors on an everyday basis (using public transport, taking children or senior family members from one place to the other), compared to the average male; consequently, their daily lives are **more heavily** impacted by the extreme phenomena accompanying climate change.

42% of women feel that their **work** has already been “very” or “moderately” impacted by climate change. The figure rises to 52% among women aged 18-24 and drops as the age of the participants increases, a fact which highlights the greater seriousness of the climate crisis impact on younger generations and/or their own heightened reflexes in relation to the issue, or, in other words, their high rate of climate literacy.

What is climate literacy?

Climate literacy is the skill of understanding the individual's impact on the climate and the climate's impact on the individual and society.

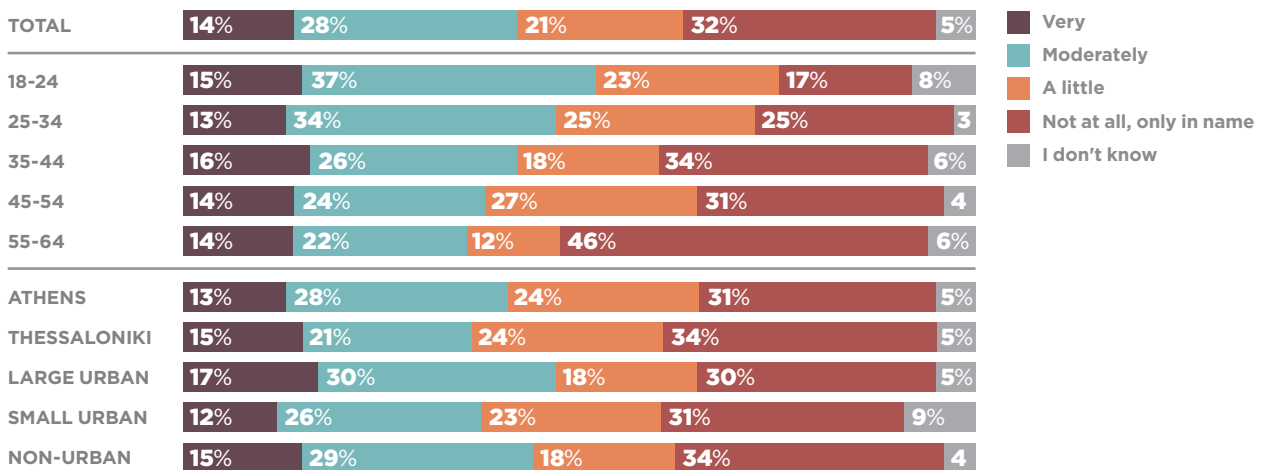
Climate literate persons understand the main principles and characteristics of the climate system. They are able to associate social and economic phenomena with climate changes; assess scientifically reliable information in relation to the climate; participate in public debates on climate change in a meaningful way; and help raise environmental awareness, thus laying the foundations for building an environmentally conscious society, with an active role in addressing environmental issues.

The phenomenon of climate illiteracy is not limited to the Greek society or the female population. It is identified on a global scale and in individuals belonging to the broader range of gender identity.

In terms of the place of residence of the participants, women from large urban centres appear to be more affected in their work (at a rate of 48%) from the consequences of the climate crisis, while the same rate for women from non-urban centres stands at 44% (Graph 14).

GRAPH 14

"HOW MUCH DO YOU FEEL YOUR WORK HAS BEEN INFLUENCED BY CLIMATE CHANGE?"



In Greece, at this time, the ways in which the climate crisis appears to be impacting women's professional life are the following:

- Increasing the burden on their place of residence
- Worsening their daily working conditions
- Changing the status in the labour market, perhaps due to the turn towards alternative energy sources
- Causing businesses losses due to natural disasters or the climate change

Nonetheless, as arising from the survey, climate change does not appear – at least at this stage – to act as a factor for increased human mobility, as a large number of the participants (80%) stated they have not had to change their **place of residence** due to unfavourable conditions resulting from the climate crisis.

How does the climate change affect the labour market in general?

It would have been impossible for the world of work to be spared from the multifaceted impact of climate change. The consequences of the phenomenon are clearly more evident when the work takes place outdoors, as the workers, especially during the summer months, suffer from thermal stress and dehydration. Moreover, research has demonstrated that workers perform better in their workplace when temperatures range between 16°C and 24°C, depending on the type of work they do¹. In contrast, very high temperatures can have an adverse effect on the workers' productivity and performance, and exponentially increase fatigue levels, resulting in loss of alertness, which can be the cause of serious labour accidents.

At the same time, temperature rise, changes in rainfall patterns and sea level rise will impact – di-

rectly or indirectly – the productivity and sustainability of all economic sectors, in every EU member state, and unavoidably hurt the labour market. More specifically, climate change may influence labour force availability due to degradation of the population's health status, and the additional limitations related to occupational health.

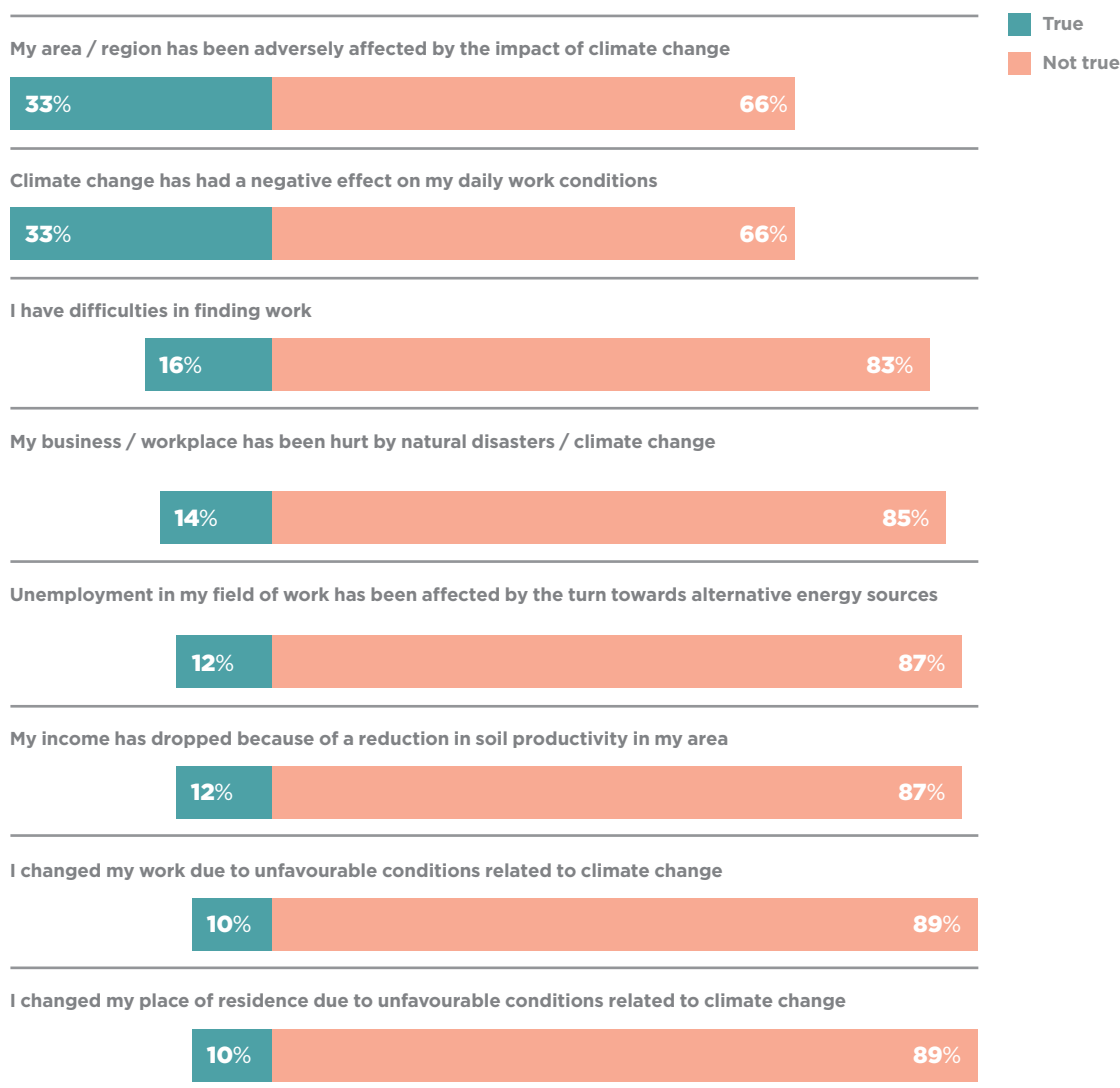
Without doubt, the natural disasters caused by climate change are expected to have a more severe negative effect on economic sectors, such as those of agriculture, energy, construction, transport and tourism; they will destroy important infrastructure, and even cause loss of human lives, something that will increase the pressure on the emergency services and the healthcare sector.

¹ See Vimalanathan K, Ramesh Babu T. The effect of indoor office environment on the work performance, health and well-being of office workers. *J Environ Health Sci Eng.* 2014 Aug 9;12:113. doi: 10.1186/s40201-014-0113-7. PMID: 26435837; PMCID: PMC4591743.

When called to provide details on how the climate crisis is affecting their work, 33% of the women report that their **area** has been experiencing a burden from the impact of climate change and another 33% reports that climate change has had a negative effect on their daily working **conditions** (Graph 15).

GRAPH 15

Below is a series of phrases/statements. Please note how true each of the phrases is for you and your work, in relation to the impact of climate change.



To a significant percentage of women (30%) the drop of agricultural land **productivity**, and, consequently, of their income is directly associated with the impact of climate change. As noted in other sections of this study, the agricultural sector is extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change, as extreme weather phenomena and sudden temperature changes adversely affect productivity and the spatial distribution of crops.

This impact is expected to intensify in the coming decades, unless appropriate measures are taken, affecting even more severely sectors closely associated with natural resources, such as agriculture and forestry.

16% of women report that the climate crisis has had a negative effect on **unemployment** levels in their field of work, possibly because of the turn towards alternative energy sources, whereas 14% report that their business or company where they work has suffered because of natural disasters or the climate change.

The fact is that in recent years, in the context of the fight against climate change, an effort is made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve natural resources. This strategy, commonly known as “**green growth or green transition**”, is implemented in line with the UN’s Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015) and the Sustainable Development Agenda. On a European level, the process is based on realising the commitments of the EU member states, stemming from the European Climate Law and the European Green Deal, to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent, i.e. achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

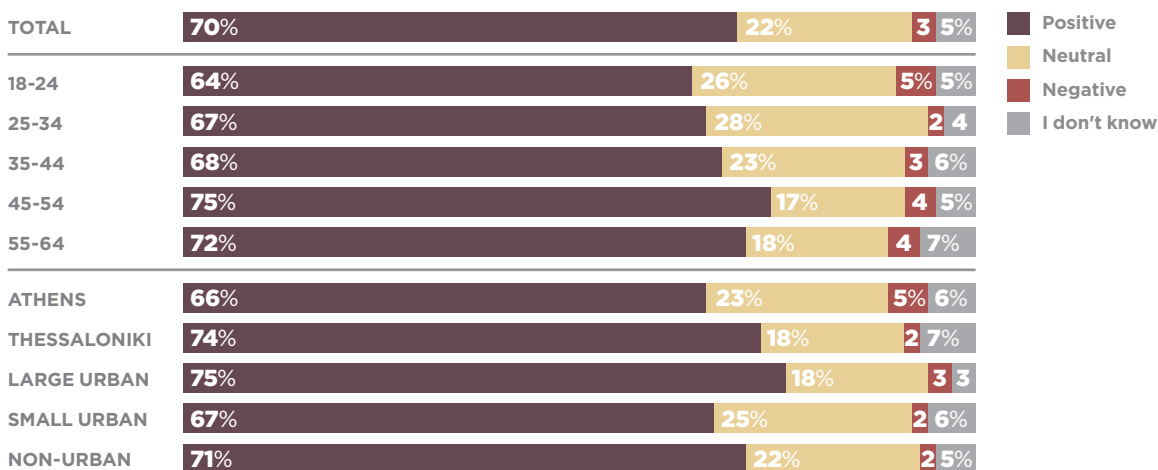
This process may lead to a – temporary, perhaps – **reduction** in jobs, especially in smaller rural communities, where economic activity relies on conventional production. However, a potential effective implementation of the green transition, will have a favourable effect on economic and social **well-being**, as well as environmental sustainability.

Our sample survey reveals a very optimistic view in relation to the green transition, as, despite the fact that a large number of the participants do not appear to be fully cognizant of the concept, 70% state that the effort has a **positive effect** on the environment, the economy and society. Only 22% believe it will have no effect, and only 3% believe it will have a negative effect, whereas 5% of the participants have no opinion.

The rate of acceptance of change is lower among **younger** women, however, overall, the positive outlook towards the green transition is a promising reality, which will maximise the generation of multiple social benefits, some of which related to gender equality (Graph 16).

GRAPH 16

In the green transition process, investments and changes are made in relation to the economy (green growth). This transition towards green growth, you would say has an overall effect that is...



Of course, to date, the majority of the participants do not see any differentiation in the way these changes affect men and women in the Greek society, highlighting the need for carrying out more extensive research on the gender impact of these developments and for informing the public on this impact (Graph 17).

GRAPH 17

In the green transition process, investments and changes are made in relation to the economy (green growth). This transition towards green growth, you would say impacts more the work life of...



1.3 | MOBILISATION AND PARTICIPATION

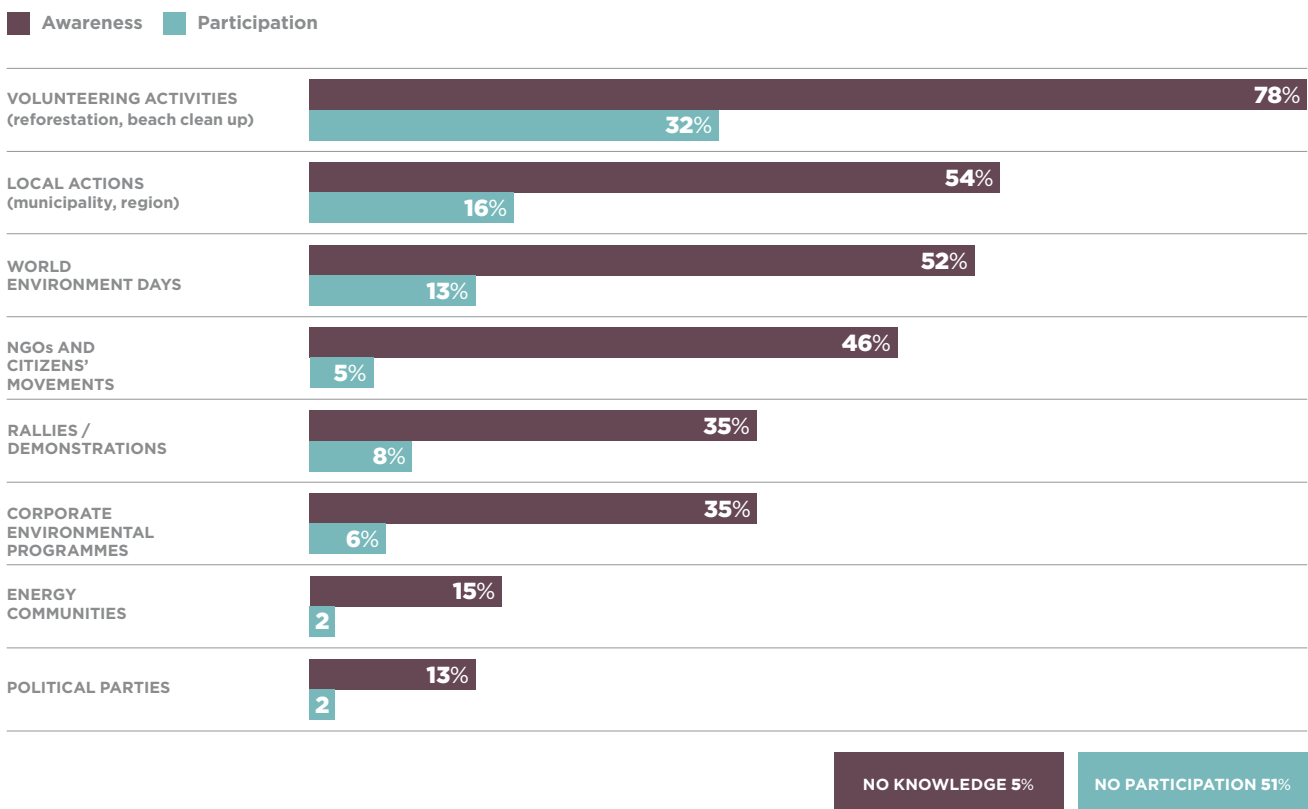
Effectively addressing climate change, in terms of mitigation and adaptation on the part of the population to the consequent changes, requires the active involvement of the people, who are called to stay informed on the mobilisation means they have at their disposal, and, of course, to implement international and national policies, adapted to the conditions and particularities in each region. In this context, the sample survey we carried out provides some useful information in relation to the knowledge and understanding of the everyday mitigation practices that women use, and the factors which discourage them from becoming more mobilised.

In terms of women’s **awareness** about initiatives related to the fight against climate change, **volunteering actions** (reforestation, beach cleanups, etc.) have the top rates standing at 78%, followed by **local initiatives** led by Municipalities and Regions, **World Environment Days**, and **NGOs/Citizen movements**, at rates ranging between 54%-46%. Other initiatives with lower rates of awareness are **rallies/demonstrations** (35%), **corporate environmental programmes** (35%), **energy communities** (15%) and **political parties** (13%).

The rates for women’s participation in those initiatives, even among **younger** ages who generally appear to be more mobilised, are very low. Volunteering initiatives retain a high rate standing at 32%, but none of the other initiatives has a rate over 16%, whereas the bottom 5 stand at less than 10%. It is very telling that lack of information in relation to the different initiatives stands at 5%, whereas non-participation stands at 51%. In other words, the participants **are aware** of the interventions but avoid **taking part** in them (Graph 18).

GRAPH 18

Which of the following actions and initiatives that are related to climate change mitigation are you aware of? In which actions or initiatives related to climate change have you participated?



- Volunteering activities (reforestation, beach clean ups, etc.) are best known to women (78%) and attract greater participation (32%).
- Corporate environmental programmes, rallies/demonstrations, energy communities and political parties are less known to women, and women’s overall participation in such actions is very low.
- 51% of women reported they do not participate in any climate change mitigation initiative whatsoever.

Municipalities and local initiatives in general, are more favoured by women in terms of participation in volunteering activities for the environment. Municipalities are also a rallying point for citizen initiatives, as well as a mobilisation factor for women, in relation to World Environment Days. **Organisations** such as Greenpeace and WWF are found next. The rates for women’s mobilisation through the **university** com-

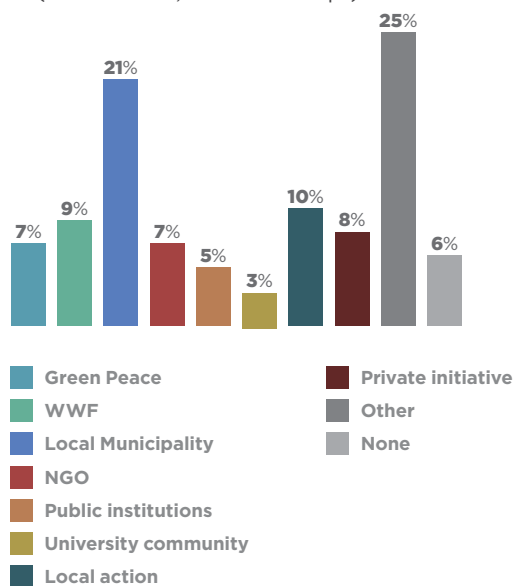
munity and other public institutions are particularly low. Nonetheless, interviews with women engaged in the field of climate change mitigation reveal that a significant part of those who develop long term activity started on this journey as post-secondary school students, through their involvement with **political or social** organisations active in educational settings (Graph 19).

GRAPH 19

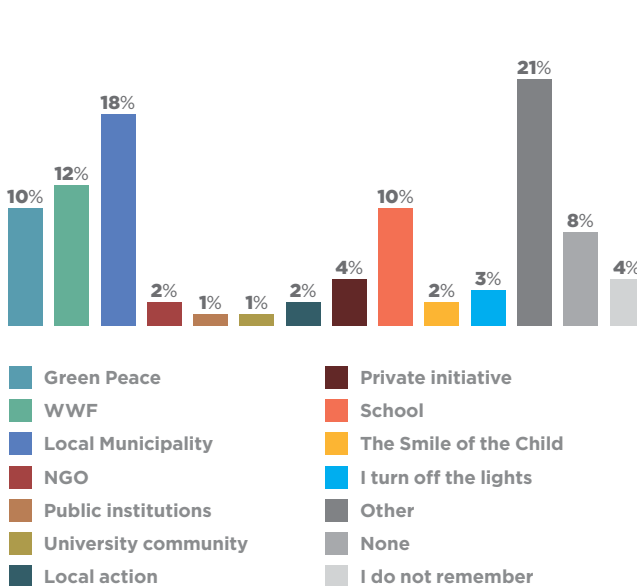
With which organisations have you been involved in relation to climate change?

VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

(reforestation, beach clean ups)



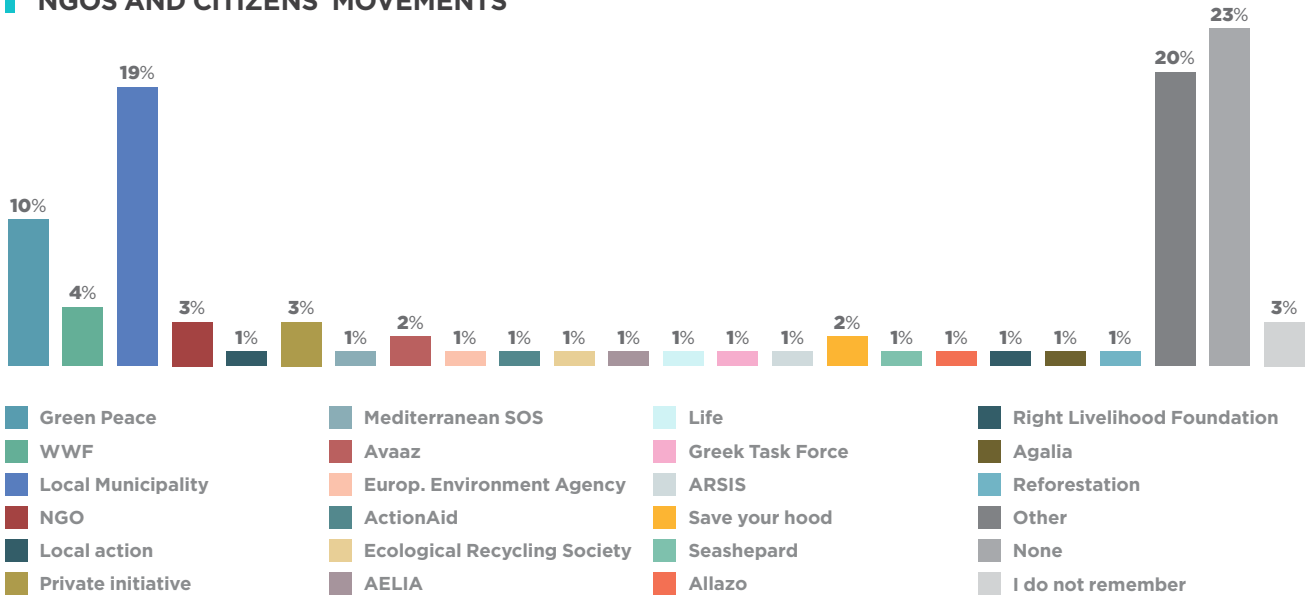
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAYS



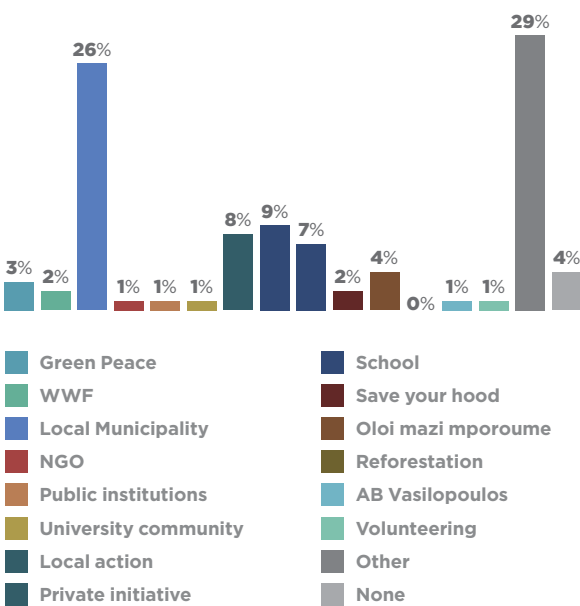
GRAPH 19

With which organisations have you been involved in relation to climate change?

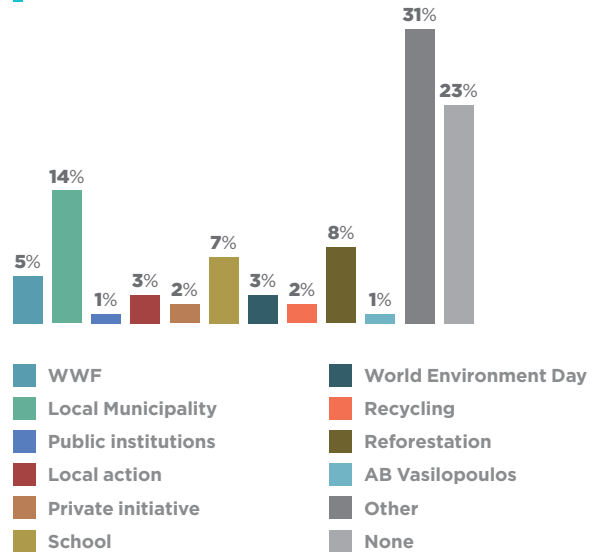
NGOS AND CITIZENS' MOVEMENTS



RALLIES / DEMONSTRATIONS



CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES



There is no significant differentiation noted in terms of awareness of and participation in initiatives depending on women's age, save for the case of **demonstrations, volunteering, and actions carried out by NGOs**, which seem to attract more women from the

18-24 age group, and **corporate initiatives**, which seem to attract more women aged **25-44**, perhaps due to their work relationship with the corporations leading those initiatives.

Similarly, **initiatives led by NGOs and citizens' movements**, as well as corporate programmes, seem to be more visible and popular among women residing in Athens and Thessaloniki, perhaps due to the highest concentration of companies and organisations in **urban centres**. Women from **non-urban** centres, correspondingly, participate more in field volunteering activities, such as reforestation and beach clean ups, most probably because of their direct relationship to the areas concerned.

Lets now look at the specific practices adopted by women in their daily lives. At the level of personal action in the fight against climate change, mobilisa-

tion is mostly expressed through **recycling** and **natural resource conservation** practices. Particularly in non-urban areas, recycling rates stand at 83%, a fact that demonstrates the widespread adoption of this practice in many areas of Greece. Even though the adoption rate of these practices drops to 61% among young women, it stands at or over 80% in all other ages. As far as energy savings go, women commonly use **LED light bulbs** (at a rate of 66%-71% in cities and non-urban areas), while for women aged 18-24 the rate drops to 49%. Similarly, a **reduction in water use** is reported at a rate of 56%-61%, with similar rates according to age (Graph 20).

GRAPH 20

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU DO PERSONALLY and/or IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?”

	ATHENS	THESSALONIKI	LARGE URBAN	SMALL URBAN	NON-URBAN
Recycling	78%	74%	79%	78%	83%
Change light bulbs for energy savings (LED)	67%	71%	65%	68%	66%
Save water	61%	56%	63%	60%	58%
Use reusable shopping bags	63%	63%	52%	49%	55%
Limit the use of electrical appliances	44%	48%	48%	49%	45%
Avoid using straws	46%	45%	40%	43%	49%
Use reusable cups for coffee and beverages	36%	39%	35%	31%	40%
Consume more local products	23%	29%	29%	38%	41%
Reduce/avoid packaging materials	30%	29%	29%	28%	29%
Repair old objects instead of replacing them	29%	35%	23%	21%	35%

GRAPH 20

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU DO PERSONALLY and/or IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?”

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Recycling	61%	80%	79%	86%	82%
Change light bulbs for energy savings (LED)	49%	66%	75%	69%	66%
Save water	59%	59%	58%	66%	57%
Use reusable shopping bags	50%	58%	66%	54%	52%
Limit the use of electrical appliances	43%	46%	40%	56%	43%
Avoid using straws	54%	44%	47%	42%	44%
Use reusable cups for coffee and beverages	40%	43%	40%	32%	28%
Consume more local products	26%	31%	37%	30%	31%
Reduce/avoid packaging materials	21%	27%	33%	31%	31%
Repair old objects instead of replacing them	29%	29%	31%	24%	31%

Women’s preferred practices in favour of the environment:

1. Recycling
2. Changing light bulbs for energy saving
3. Saving water
4. Using reusable shopping bags
5. Limiting the use of appliances
6. Avoiding using straws

Women’s less preferred practices in favour of the environment:

1. Carrying out home insulation projects
2. Installing new heating systems
3. Using bicycle for transportation
4. Buying second-hand products
5. Using composting
6. Changing travel habits
7. Switching to a hybrid/electrical vehicle

The wide use of practices related to recycling and energy and natural source conservation is also most likely associated with a **reduction in expenses** in the personal and family budget. In contrast, expensive practices, such as changing travel habits and purchasing hybrid cars, as well as general practices that have a negative effect on personal comfort are less readily adopted. For this reason, state incentives are extremely important, including subsidies and tax benefits, to reduce the purchase cost of green products and promote the turn towards **environmentally friendly behaviours**.

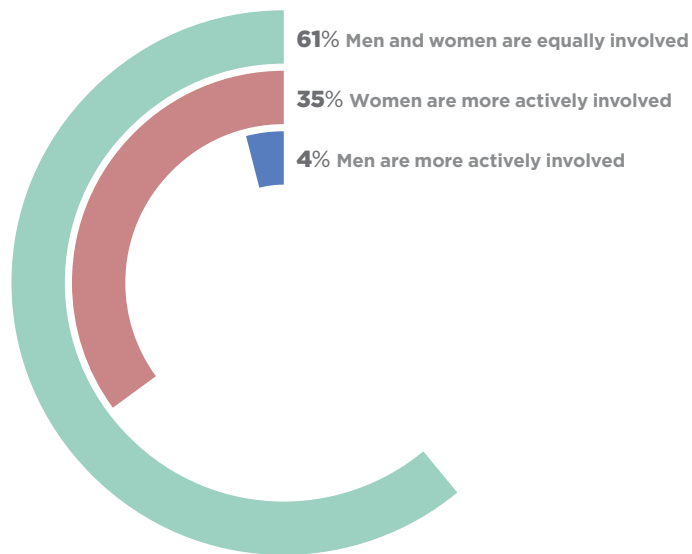
In terms of the age, women 35-54 seem to be more active in the “everyday battles”, while women 55+ are generally less mobilised. Ages 18-24 appear to be adopting more environmentally responsible consumer habits, not related to maintaining a household but ensuring a **reduction of their personal expenses**, such as riding a bicycle, buying second-hand products, etc.

The use of public transport is more common in Athens compared to other areas, a fact which underlines the importance of providing **systemic solutions**, such as the necessary infrastructure, to support personal change.

It is, however, telling, that 35% of the participants feel that women are more **actively** involved in climate change mitigation, and only 4% believe that men are more involved (Graph 21).

GRAPH 21

“CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION.
PLEASE NOTE WHAT IS MORE ACCURATE IN YOUR OPINION.”

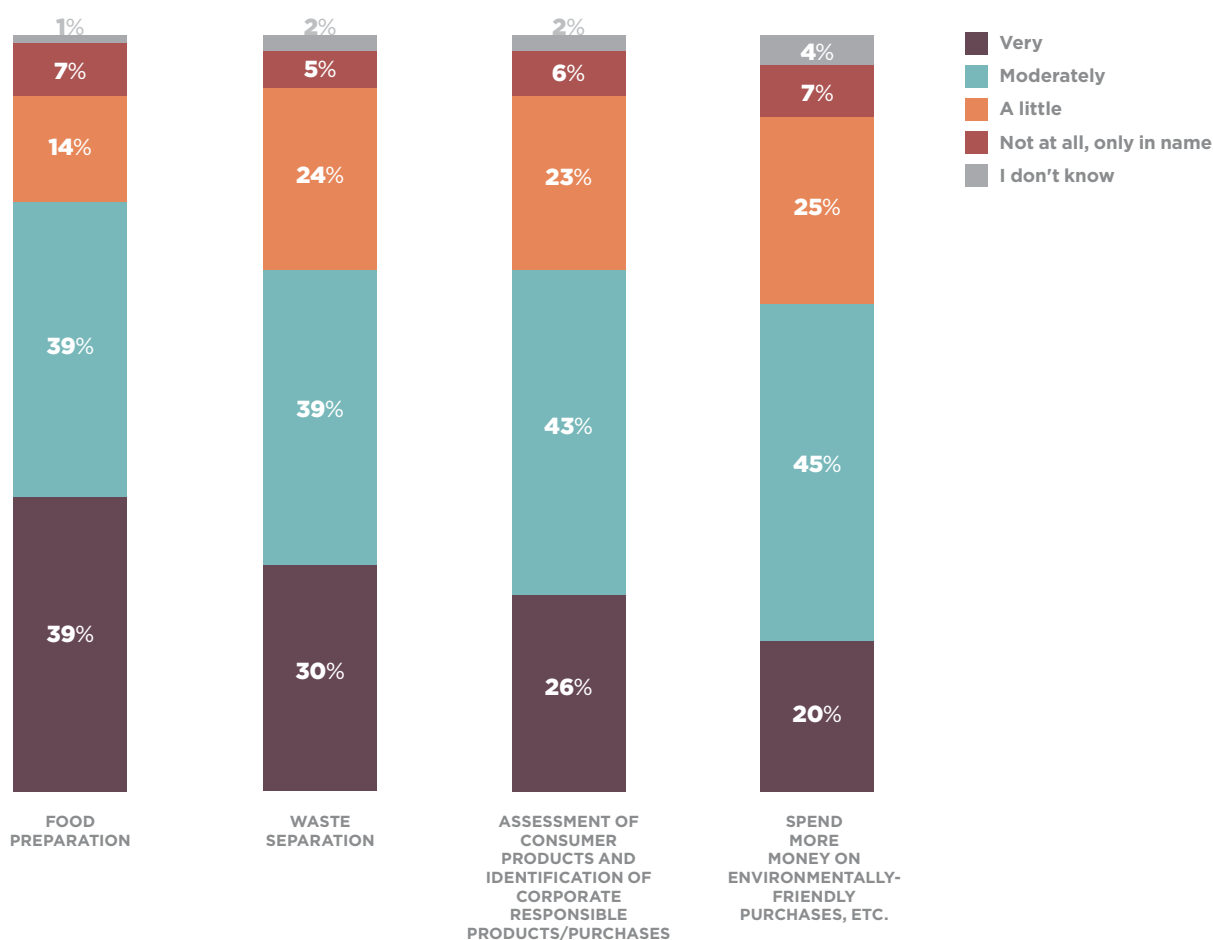


At this point, we can note a minor geographical differentiation, where participants from large urban centres feel that men and women are equally mobilised, whereas in non-urban areas, women feel they are more active in climate mitigation. The above findings are perhaps related to the fact that, as acknowledged

by the majority (up to 78%) of the participants, women devote more time and energy on aspects of **housework** and family care which are associated with environmentally conscious behaviour (food preparation, waste separation, assessment of consumer products) (Graph 22).

GRAPH 22

“TO WHICH EXTENT IS THE FOLLOWING TRUE IN RELATION TO TIME AND ENERGY WOMEN SPEND ON HOUSEWORK AND FAMILY CARE?”



With regard to the mobilisation factors, the survey revealed that young women are more motivated by social interaction and educational institutions, while older women are more influenced by local governments. The **social and family** environment influences women in urban and non-urban centres at a rate of 44%-46%, while for the women in Thessaloniki this

rate stands at 52%. The interaction with people who are aware of the gravity of the situation and its impact on an economic, social and environmental level leads women to awareness and the pursuit of further investigation, in order for them to better understand its full dimensions and the positive role they themselves can play (Graph 23).

GRAPH 23

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ENCOURAGES YOU OR HAS ENCOURAGED YOU TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE?”

	ATHENS	THESSALONIKI	LARGE URBAN	SMALL URBAN	NON-URBAN
Interest, mobilisation of the family/ social circle	46%	52%	45%	44%	46%
Local government initiatives	40%	41%	40%	37%	52%
Encouragement / participation / information from the educational community (School - University)	36%	37%	41%	41%	50%
Communication campaigns (TV commercials, etc.)	36%	33%	35%	34%	31%
Encouragement from NGOs and citizens' movements	24%	21%	22%	24%	25%
The participation of a certain consumer product brand that I use	19%	16%	21%	14%	17%
I have always been volunteering in environmental organisations (scouts, etc.)	13%	14%	11%	13%	13%
The participation of a certain public figure, artist, etc.	12%	14%	16%	13%	8%
My employer's encouragement	11%	8%	7%	12%	11%
The participation of a politician	7%	8%	7%	7%	7%
None of the above	7%	8%	6%	44%	46%

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Interest, mobilisation of the family/ social circle	50%	51%	45%	43%	40%
Local government initiatives	32%	37%	44%	48%	49%
Encouragement / participation / information from the educational community (School - University)	47%	41%	49%	39%	33%
Communication campaigns (TV commercials, etc.)	38%	33%	36%	34%	31%
Encouragement from NGOs and citizens' movements	34%	26%	22%	23%	19%
The participation of a certain consumer product brand that I use	11%	21%	20%	17%	14%
I have always been volunteering in environmental organisations (scouts, etc.)	23%	13%	12%	11%	10%
The participation of a certain public figure, artist, etc.	23%	11%	11%	9%	12%
My employer's encouragement	11%	9%	16%	8%	6%
The participation of a politician	14%	6%	6%	7%	6%
None of the above	3%	6%	4%	8%	11%

The activities of **local government** institutions are also influential, especially for women from non-urban centres and older women. Other institutions that appear to promote mobilisation are the **educational community**, especially in younger ages, the **media**, **NGOs** and citizens' movements. **Large companies** for which women work and **politicians** appear to have a smaller influence; however, the example of other **public figures** (such as artists) appears to have stronger influence on women aged 18-24.

Of course, the large number of women in small urban (44%) and non-urban (46%) centres who state they have not been mobilised by any of the above channels should be further investigated.

Top mobilisation factors for women

1. Interest and mobilisation of their family and their social environment
2. Local government initiatives
3. Encouragement from the educational community
4. Media communication campaigns
5. Encouragement from NGOs and citizens' movements

The most important deterrents for women

1. Lack of time
2. Political or party exploitation
3. Lack of meaningful results
4. Difficulty in obtaining information on relevant actions

Similarly, the main factor preventing, now or in the past, women from becoming more involved in sustainability issues is **lack of time**, a factor particularly important among women aged 25-44. The experts with whom we have discussed noted this as a major obstacle for mobilising and generally raising awareness among women. Other deterrents reported by participants were concerns about potential **political or party exploitation** of the relevant initiatives, **lack of meaningful results** from previous actions (which seems to particularly discourage younger women and women aged 55+), and **difficulty in obtaining information** on the ways they can become involved (Graph 24).

GRAPH 24

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD PREVENT YOU or IS PREVENTING YOU FROM PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTION/INITIATIVE RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE?”

	ATHENS	THESSALONIKI	LARGE URBAN	SMALL URBAN	NON-URBAN
Lack of time	58%	60%	66%	62%	63%
Political or party exploitation	39%	33%	33%	30%	37%
No meaningful results from the above in practice	22%	26%	17%	20%	17%
I do not know where to receive information on such actions / initiatives	17%	19%	14%	22%	18%
Indifference from the family / social circle	16%	10%	10%	17%	20%
Absence of interest	16%	14%	14%	17%	17%
I do not know any such actions / initiatives	14%	12%	10%	17%	17%
Fear of riots	15%	10%	13%	14%	14%
Fear of employer retaliation	8%	6%	7%	7%	4%
None of the above	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Lack of time	60%	69%	65%	61%	48%
Political or party exploitation	34%	30%	43%	35%	36%
No meaningful results from the above in practice	23%	18%	20%	16%	23%
I do not know where to receive information on such actions / initiatives	20%	23%	18%	16%	11%
Indifference from the family / social circle	28%	19%	12%	14%	12%
Absence of interest	25%	19%	13%	13%	12%
I do not know any such actions / initiatives	13%	15%	14%	16%	12%
Fear of riots	17%	12%	14%	12%	15%
Fear of employer retaliation	8%	7%	7%	6%	4%
None of the above	6%	4%	5%	6%	9%

It is also interesting that lack of interest from the family/social environment, and personal lack of interest mainly deter women aged 18-24, a fact highlighting the importance of rallying together smaller **communities** and groups, which cultivate caring and action-taking, especially in younger ages.

At this point, some of the women who are already engaged in the field of environmental sustainability note that by and large in our society, individuals turn to practices that concern their own **personal responsibility** and daily life and less so to actions aimed at **systemic change**, which, at least in theory, would have a wider and more long-term impact. On the other hand, other participants note that this focus on short-term, individual practices denies women the feeling that their efforts can have a wider impact and makes people treat climate crisis as something that is so big and so remote, that their own potential mobilisation would make no difference one way or the other.

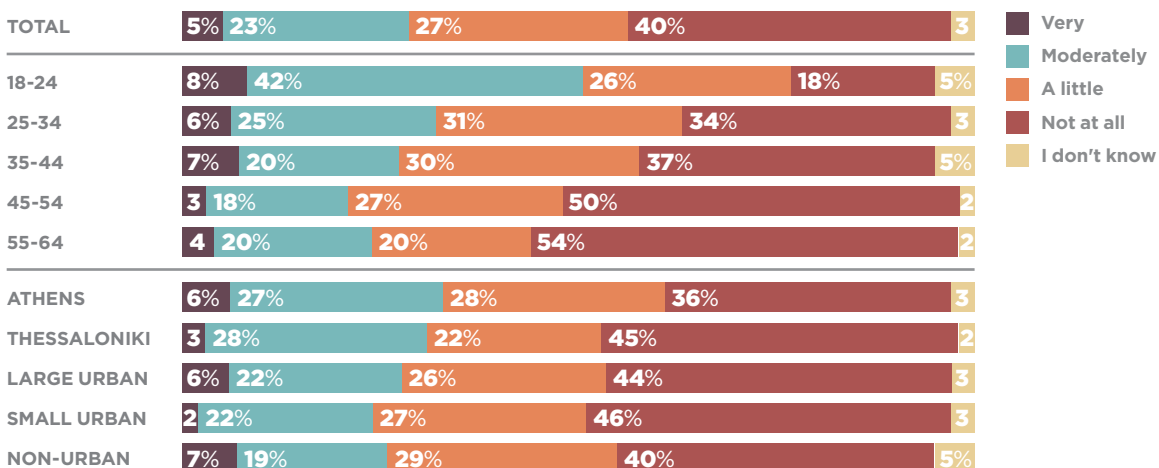
This fact is also associated with women's responses in terms of their **participation in environmental decision-making processes**, and the formulation of sustainability strategies. As highlighted in our qualitative

investigation by the representatives of stakeholders, internationally speaking, women often appear more engaged in environmental and sustainability issues, mainly because they are usually more aware, willing to make sacrifices and changes in their lives, and their population includes much lower percentages of “deniers” – **three good reasons for taking action**.

Nonetheless, 40% of women in Greece feel they do not participate at all in the **decision-making process** with regard to the environment, and only 5% feel that they have an important part in it. The picture is slightly different depending on age: we note that women aged 18-24 are rather involved (42%) but the rate drops with age (25% in the 25-34 age group, 20% in the 35-44 age group, 18% in the 45-54 age group, and 20% in the 55-64 age group); a difference which is perhaps due – at least in part – to women's greater **awareness** and knowledge, and their willingness to have a positive impact on the environment. Women from Athens and women from non-urban centres are those who feel they have a somewhat larger part in the decision-making process, compared to women from other (small or large) urban centres (Graph 25).

GRAPH 25

“TO WHICH EXTENT DO YOU FEEL YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?”



The phenomenon of women’s non-equal participation in the decision-making process in the field of sustainability is not, of course, limited to Greece, but is tied to the general absence of **women** from top leadership positions, in any sector. Especially in traditional economic sectors, such as the industrial sector, the jobs related to sustainability are, as experts from the field have confirmed, not easily covered by women and more easily covered by men, who are also over-represented in the educational settings associated with science and technology.

In the case of the sustainability issues, however, a point of stress and, at the same time, an opportunity presents itself: the solutions promoted to address the complex environmental problems must be based on **collaboration**. Collaboration is actually a leadership trait which has traditionally led to **excluding women** from conventional leadership positions with a more conservative leadership style. However, this exact trait may now become more acceptable and desirable, as an important quality of women.

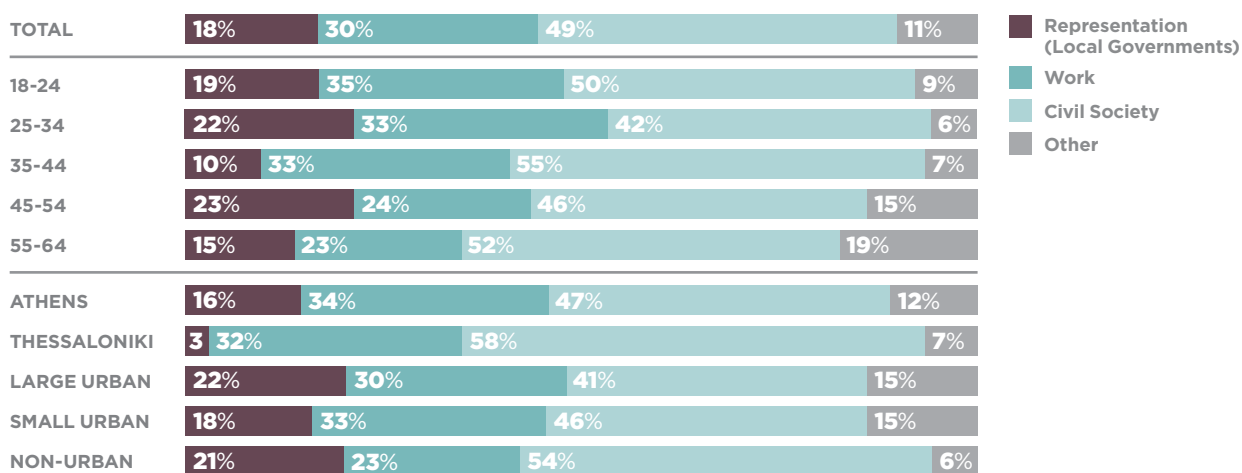
Unfortunately, for the time being, the problem of women’s low representation is strengthened by the lack of structured procedures of **participatory design** in any project, small or large, related in any way to sustainability. The interviews with the experts revealed

that the community members who will be influenced by a project rarely have the opportunity, through the national or local government, to contribute their experiences and play a part in the project design by helping identify the challenges and needs. And despite the fact that women’s experiences, challenges and needs at an everyday level are significantly different than those of men, women rarely have the opportunity to influence key elements of a policy or a structural change in their environment.

In general, **work** and **civil society** appear to be the institutions offering women better chances of participating in the decision-making process with regard to the environment, with percentages standing at 30% and 49%, respectively. Fluctuations are noted based on age and urbanicity: in non-urban areas, for example, the influence of work is less pronounced, standing at 23%, which is somewhat surprising, since a significant part of the jobs are in the primary sector. This is most probably due to the difficulty in adopting sustainable practices for managing land and water resources due to ignorance or cost. Women’s involvement via **representation** stands at an overall low rate, at 18%. This rate is slightly higher in large urban centres and non-urban areas (Graph 26).

GRAPH 26

“IN WHICH WAYS DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?”



▲

At the same time, as revealed through our interviews with organisations active in the sustainability field, many companies are motivated to **draw up environmental strategies** partly owing to the pressure they face from their clients and the consumer public that supports them. This fact, combined with the increased **purchasing power** of the female population – at least at a level of engagement and choice – points to the conclusion that many women have in fact a role to play in the formulation of sustainability strategies through their consumer choices and the pressure they can exert on companies and organisations in the private sector.

In general, however, the absence of women from the conscious design and implementation of sustainability strategies is a significant factor inhibiting the adoption of measures and practices that would address, in an **inclusive** and effective manner, the challenges faced by specific – especially vulnerable – population groups. In other words, unless women have their seat at the **solution table**, their problems will remain hidden and unsolved for a long time, based on the strategies that will be developed.

CHAPTER 2

Conclusions and proposals

The quantitative and qualitative findings presented in this second part of the Women On Top study outline the picture of the environmental **consciousness, identity and activity** that is developing for women in Greece. Since this process is still at an early stage, in a period when sustainability issues have risen to the top of the national, European and global agenda, this is the best time to acknowledge the need to take measures on multiple levels in order to widely **inform and raise awareness** among women on issues of environmental sustainability; to **offer education** on effective engagement practices; to **encourage** women's participation in sustainable strategy planning; and to **investigate** in depth the gender dimension of these strategies in Greece and the wider Mediterranean region.

These changes will permit the women in our country, who are over-represented among the vulnerable populations which are differently and more severely hurt by the climate crisis, to strengthen their **climate literacy**, build skills towards climate adaptability, and, of course, to consciously and actively take part in shaping measures, policies and infrastructure projects that will have an impact on their own health, work, well-being and daily life in the coming decades.

The specific findings of our investigation lead to the fields where any **future measures and policies** should be focusing. Below we will attempt to outline these fields, focusing more on short-term, medium-term and long-term proposals which can have a meaningful impact on achieving the above targets.

FIELD 1 | EDUCATION

Every quantitative or qualitative finding of this study highlights one or more aspects of the importance and necessity of environmental education to all members of society, and especially to those who come from vulnerable groups and/or traditionally have less opportunities and incentives to become informed and more aware, despite the fact they could hugely benefit from it. Women are part of those populations, and, what is more, the knowledge and beliefs they possess and the practices they use have an **intergenerational impact** on society: as mentioned in other parts of the report, women typically pass on, whether consciously or unconsciously, these traits to other members of their community with whom they interact closely or have a care relationship.

For this reason, it is deemed particularly important to place more emphasis on providing information and education to women of any age, through:

- Systematically simplifying and disseminating (through the media and other state and private communication channels) complex concepts and issues related to the climate crisis and environmental sustainability.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Including the above themes in all formal education levels.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Designing and implementing training and informal education initiatives for adult women of any age, mainly focusing on those women who are more adversely impacted by the consequences of the climate crisis and the energy transition.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Introducing the gender dimension of the climate crisis in the public debate (media, political speech, conventions, artistic works).

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

Why it is important for environmental education to start early

As mentioned by women experts from the field of sustainability, it is important for environmental education to start at a young age, on the one hand because it is a way to **establish** more effectively healthy habits and beliefs surrounding sustainability, and, on the other hand, because children act as **powerful agents of change** for the wider community they are part of: family, school and friends.

This is the case because:

- children assign themselves a leading role in anything that happens in their lives and therefore take responsibility to participate in the desirable change;
- children have a well-meant sense of ambition and omnipotence, which drives them to attempt difficult and challenging tasks; and
- children possess the necessary creativity to propose and experiment with innovative solutions.

FIELD 2 | COLLABORATIONS

As noted in many points of this report, addressing the climate crisis and its gender dimension requires the collaboration of many different stakeholders from every aspect of the social, economic, political and cultural realm. Individual efforts may prove fruitless and lead to resignation if they are not supported by **community initiatives and systemic changes**. Similarly, any actions addressed to individual age or geographical groups limit the sources of knowledge, experience and creativity that are necessary to design innovative and effective solutions. At this point, it is worth noting the importance of **collaborative design** and implementation of any political initiative or project related to sustainability, with the aim of addressing the challenges and needs of the **largest possible part of the population**.

Achieving horizontal collaboration and participation can be possible through:

- Cross-party initiatives on environmental education and sustainability, that will mobilise the healthy powers from any part of the political spectrum, enhancing the citizen's low confidence in party actions and strategies.

STATE

- Launching initiatives within academic communities, where people and groups with primarily different identity traits come together precisely at the time when creativity, novel thinking and mobilisation toward positive change are at their peak.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

- Focusing on education which is not addressed to individuals but brings together and collectively raises awareness among all members of a community or number of communities. Through this type of initiatives, community members cultivate a common vocabulary and values, enhance the chances and mechanisms for responsibility and accountability, and enjoy more opportunities for equal partnership towards practical and innovative solutions.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

- Enhancing the reliability and transparency of the institutions that will promote trust in participatory procedures, and citizen's responsibility and engagement through the adopted measures and policies.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Developing social innovation initiatives arising from participatory design processes, with the active involvement of women and their broader communities.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

- Empowering Municipalities and Communities to implement environmental actions, focusing on raising awareness and increasing the participation of women and younger people.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT



- Monitoring the implementation of the ESG criteria, systematically and reliably, throughout the entire range of economic activity, focusing on the supply chain of medium-sized and large companies. Focusing on supply chains offers the prospect of exponential impact through forging partnerships, enhancing accountability and diffusing best practices arising from it.

STATE

COMPANIES

- Promoting alternative leadership models in the public and private sector, through showcasing positive role models who combine effectiveness with participatory administration, a technocratic view with a vision, and a deep knowledge of their object with the capacity to process the large picture concerning the entire planet.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

- Implementing research and communication projects that highlight the inter-linked nature of the challenges (climate crisis and gender equality, sustainability and social justice, poverty and energy transition, etc.).

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

FIELD 3 | SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT

The significance of supporting women and other vulnerable groups in **enhancing their environmental engagement** and **conscious participation** in the design and implementation of sustainability strategies appears to be particularly important. This realisation is based on the assumption that the transition to a sustainable economy model cannot be achieved without certain vibrations and structural changes to social norms and large ecosystems. This means that the state must support individuals, so they can not only absorb these vibrations but also have an opportunity to **shape** their future and the future of their families. This particular target can be achieved through:

- Investing in public projects and policies that alleviate citizens from the practical or economic burden of adopting environmental sustainability practices, focusing on offering public transport infrastructure and supporting structural and consumer upgrades (replacement of energy-consuming appliances, purchase of hybrid cars, energy efficiency upgrades to buildings, etc.)

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Investing systematically in initiatives related to training and financial support for the work transition of individuals and populations that have been impacted by the energy transition on a professional level. Moreover, monitoring and evaluating these initiatives with the aim of adapting and optimising them.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Supporting women’s employment, which, for Greece, ranks at the bottom of the OECD countries. Moreover, investing in horizontal (quotas, training, etc.) and targeted (skill building programmes, incentivising companies and organisations) actions to promote women in positions of responsibility, both in the world of work and the public life in general (national parliament, local governments, Civil Society, international organisations, etc.)

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Supporting family and work/life reconciliation of workers with care responsibilities. Promoting the use of parental and care leaves by men, too; investing in children’s daycare centres, healthcare facilities and senior centres, or subsidising the use of private centres; and enhancing flexible work while also safeguarding the rights of the workers, are some important first steps in this direction.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMPANIES

- Creating and developing communities of young people, both at a local and regional level and within the framework of their studies and/or work. These communities will promote information, raise awareness and foster collaboration, at an age when people have immense potential for creativity, innovation and experimentation toward positive change.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

- Supporting social entrepreneurship, as a means for the participatory development of innovative and practical solutions on climate change mitigation, climate adaptability, the energy transition, and many other aspects of environmental sustainability.

STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CITIZENS

COMPANIES

ANNEX

Glossary

This section includes some brief definitions of the simple or more complex environmental concepts we have examined in the chapter “Information and Awareness” of this report.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural disasters occur when a hazard make a community vulnerable and the damage that may be caused is so severe, that the impacted community cannot recover by its own means. Such a disaster causes significant disruption in the way society functions, with extensive human, material or environmental losses. However, natural disasters are not the inevitable outcome of a natural hazard. Usually, the way in which a society functions is what creates the background, so the hazard turns into a disaster. It is also what defines the extent to which a society can adapt and respond to the hazards it is facing.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) classify natural disasters into the following categories:

- Geophysical, such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions, dry mass landslides
- Hydrological, such as floods and wetland landslides (e.g., avalanches)
- Meteorological, such as storms and thunderstorms
- Climatic, such as extreme temperatures, droughts and forest fires
- Biological, such as epidemics

CLIMATE CHANGE

According to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 1992, drafted in May 1992 and entered into force in March 1994, climate change is defined as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” In short, climate change refers to a medium- to long-term change in the temperature of our planet and the variations of the weather and season patterns, and hence, to the climate. This change, which is caused by human activity, has become extremely drastic, especially over the last decades, due to the use of oil, natural gas and coal.

GREEN PRODUCTS

Green products are products produced without the use of chemicals, additives and methods that are harmful to the ecosystem and human health, in all production stages. In the industrial, textile, chemical and productive sector, green products are categories of products which do not harm nature, are recyclable, do not contain substances that are detrimental to human health and are chemically safe.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Renewable energy sources (RES), otherwise known as soft/new energy sources or green energy, are sources of usable energy associated with various natural processes, such as the wind, the sun, geothermal energy, water circulation and others. More specifically, and according to directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament, energy from renewable sources means energy from renewable non-fossil sources, namely wind, solar, aerothermal, geothermal, hydrothermal and ocean energy, hydropower, biomass, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas and biogases.

ENERGY POVERTY

Energy poverty is the exclusion from or inadequate access of households to energy services, such as heating, cooling and lighting; a situation which has a negative impact on the people's health and well-being and the environment. However, the term has not been commonly defined by the scientists who study the phenomenon. According to the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV), it is estimated that more than 54 million households in the EU, i.e., 11% of the population, are facing the conditions and consequences of energy poverty.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

According to the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, as adopted for the first time in the Gothenburg European Council in 2001, and as developed in subsequent relevant texts, Sustainable Development is a continuous course of change and adaptation, not a static condition, aiming to meet the needs of the present but without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, through the balanced and equal pursuit of the three sustainable development pillars: Economy - Environment - Society, in other words, through a composition of economic growth, environmental protection and social cohesion.

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Climate adaptation or adaptability is the capacity of a system, such as urban areas, to adjust to the potential impact of climate change, to take advantage of opportunities or to cope with the consequences (EEA, 2012). This capacity involves many parameters, the most important being the available financial resources; the individuals' educational level; access to technology and education; equality; the institutional framework; and infrastructure.

ENERGY TRANSITION

The term "energy transition" is used to describe a turn towards sustainability through the increased integration of renewable energy sources in our daily lives and in the industrial setting. The current transition to renewable energy sources and perhaps other types of sustainable energy arises, to a great extent, by the acknowledgment of the fact that global carbon emissions must reach zero. Given that fossil fuels are the single largest source of carbon emissions, the quantity of fossil fuels that may be produced is defined by the Paris Agreement (2015), which has set the target of limiting the average global temperature rise to less than 1.5°C.

GREEN JOBS

UN defines green jobs as “positions in agriculture, manufacturing, R&D, administrative, and service activities aimed at substantially preserving or restoring environmental quality.”

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Circular economy is a production and model aimed at increasing the performance of raw materials by extending their period of use and simultaneously minimising the use of natural resources. Circular economy aims at creating cycles, through which raw materials, parts and product lose their value as little as possible.



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