

## **Women, Hi-Tech, Policy, Expo2015: Opportunities and Roles**

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### **Abstract**

The future of technology is seeing women as co-protagonists especially in areas related to health, aging, nutrition. Women have a different approach, comparing to men, and different way to solve problems. Therefore it is important the presence of women in all working activity, in particularly at the managing level and in cooperation with men.

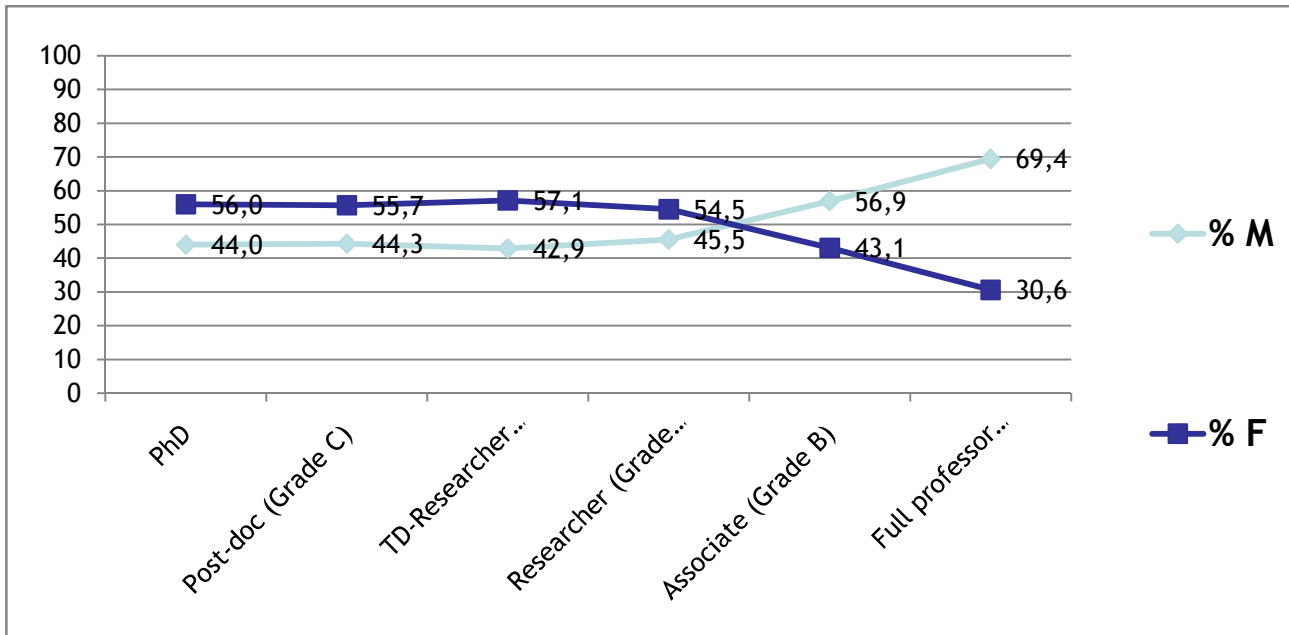
Currently, new initiatives in Italy and Europe, intend to establish a threshold for the presence of women as board of directors at public and private companies. This may represent an important opportunity and women will need to use all their skills just to prove what contribution they are able to offer. Of course, we'd like that in the near future. There is no need to legislate, but the society will always view women as co-protagonists of the technological and management processes

Our Non-Profit Association Talent4Rise, has the goal to promote culture and education, with particular emphasis for women and her managerial talent and entrepreneurship, in the presence of an ever more rapid technological evolution. With the social change and the aim of improving individual and society, Talent4Rise ensures the inviolable rights of the person and equality between men and women.

We hope to achieve the ambition to remove barriers that have so far limited the access of women to leadership roles and middle management in business, encouraging a process of cultural renewal to support a greater meritocracy and opportunity for growth.

The education plays an important role: adolescent boys and young men are important allies for gender equality goal and must be proactively and positively engaged at an early stage. They can be educated to challenge gender stereotypes, promote positive constructions of masculinity, and practice attitudes and behaviors based on equality and respect for women.

A clear picture of the current situation, in Italy, is given from a study carried out by the University of Milan, from which emerges a curious trend that leads women to demonstrate the best ability in science and technology during the course of the studies. This gap is reduced at the researcher level stage and the trend is inverted for associated and full professor roles stage. Deplorably, women do not have significant leadership roles in these areas, the causes are several but the figure is clear.



**Figura 1: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics**  
(Source: Università degli Studi di Milano 2013)

In any case women, for culture and mental preparation, are suited for working where parallel processes are needed and to apply technologies in physical and material processes. Often men have more interest in the technology itself. Therefore for the use of technologies, it is necessary to have a comprehensive approach that incorporates the female sensitivity.

The future of technology is seeing women as co-protagonists especially in areas related to health, aging, nutrition, but not only because women have a different approach, comparing to men, and different way to solve problems. Therefore is important the co-presence of women in all working activity, in particularly at the managing level and in cooperation with men.

It is not easy to adopt the latest fashion in the Web, location or satellite sensors. So the correct approach is to find the path to achieve strategic objectives and then the synergy can be established.

We think that women have different ways of thinking that could enable the increasing of important values like: Innovation, Inclusiveness, Intelligence, Integrity, Involvement, Interaction and Intangible values. Moreover we are confident that these attitudes are most important during the economic crisis because can be the accelerators for the economic growth (<http://www.womenonboard.be/>).

For this reason we are interested and we thrust in a policy able to recognize and support those women's spontaneous phenomena and to develop new business initiatives and sustain the Italian entrepreneurial activities, through practical support, with all appropriate instruments for the purpose (training, business angels, ...), and the involvement of a selection of these realities, from a constructive and open dialogue with the institutions.

Gaining strength from these certainties we launched our activities towards these finalities during our first Congress on 15 March 2014, calling at the round table to participate a subset of Italian politicians (from Italian Parliament and EU Parliament), academics and business women in order to

update us about the existing possibilities introduced by the new Italian and European laws and to get directions for our future work.

Because the Italian policy shall follow the EU policy and the European Commission places fundamental rights at the heart of all EU policies. As stated Vice-President Viviane Reding : "Europe has been promoting gender equality since 1957 – it is part of the European Union's 'DNA'. And the economic crisis has not changed our DNA. For us Europeans gender equality is not an option, it is not a luxury, it is an imperative. I am convinced that together we can also close the remaining gaps in pay, employment and decision-making jobs." "But, ensuring equal opportunities for all is vital for the European Union's economy. Using the best European brains makes economic sense". More women on Boards: EU Commission proposes 40% objective towards 2020 for publicly listed companies and by 2018 by public undertakings. At the present boards in Europe's biggest companies are still dominated by one gender, and a glass ceiling remains, barring female talent from top positions. Women only make up 15% of non-executive boards and 8.9% of executive boards.

Above and beyond we announced a training course managed by our Association, mainly dedicated to women who plan to be prepared for gaining access to the boards of companies: The first introductory course will be held in October 2014 and will give our associated informed and prepared to follow higher level training course. We are interested in particular to women with manager profile that could have a real possibility to access these careers. We are addressing mainly Technology Companies due to our DNA, but all health and nutrition fields are well accepted.

Besides then we announced our first project which aims to combine food production with the extensive use of technology, to support the Italian small producers to spread their production internationally using the web X.0 technology. Our target is Expo2015 in Milan.

We take the opportunity given by the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, called Expo Tables, and we elaborate a project for small food producers. Then we attended to Young Tables (dedicated to young people) and then to Food Tables (dedicated to food projects) and we presented the Project named Rise2Up.

Our participation to the Chamber of Commerce of Milan - Expo Tables, get us introduced to other important realities and stakeholders giving us the opportunity to play a part at the International Tender EXPLODING ENERGIES TO CHANGE THE WORLD addressed to the world of Associations of Fondazione Triulza that is the exhibition area dedicated to Civil Organization within Expo2015.

The project Rise2Up, involves the deployment of mega interactive displays, distributed within the exhibition space of Expo2015 and the surrounding areas, which will disseminate good practice of Italian "slow food", offering high-quality food with unique flavors and genuine. Italy in fact, thanks to the production, the climate, the location, the history and tradition, can boast extremely high quality levels of the food, recognized throughout the world. The project will consider also foreign experiences in order to offer a global vision of best practice in the world.

Rise2Up wants to amplify the relationship between producers and consumers, to increase the level of participation between supply and demand, making it more collaborative, WEB2.0, enhancing the

need for empathy and connection, and using new technologies. The aim is to enhance food products and increase their perceived value.

On mega screens, the best practices of food producers will be presented, in the form of short-stories supported by the producers themselves, so that they are usable by remote users and guests of Expo2015, according to the aphorism and vision: "Everything that you can imagine, you can taste"

In short videos producers will be able to tell in a very personal and special effect the environment and the traditional method of their production. In screens neighboring areas, producers and consumers will then convene to know each other and for their products promotion. Some videoconferences could be also arranged between the two groups.

Then, in order to support the video messages we would organize Workshops inside and during Expo, with the physical presence of producers in order to strengthen the highlights of their productions. Important tools for achieving this goal will be represented also by dedicated Social Networks and Gaming App applications.

At the end of the workshops producers will be awarded for the best tutorial: several awards are foreseen: the best preserved tradition, the best innovation process, producing more original, the better quality and authenticity, the best nutrition education, the most WEB 2.0 producer, the most internationally, the producer closer to biodiversity and, finally, the most eco-friendly producer.

Another initiative will be launched, a "call4idea" for the best idea of Gaming App with the aim of educating the quality and authenticity of food.

Our goal with Rise2Up is to educate to a proper nutrition way, to promote new lifestyles, encouraging the active participation of consumers, in particular young people and teen age, enhancing the knowledge of the "food traditions" as cultural elements and fostering the encounter between different cultures in the widest sense of the term "diversity."

Rise2Up also wants to promote best practices on food products (following the guide of Mr. Oscar Farinetti), but also following the participation model of Web 2.0 and augmented reality although with a strong attention to the disseminated messages and the educational footprint of the Association itself.

The role of social networks in the field of nutrition and health, is becoming an increasingly significant value as educational phenomenon, enabling the figure of new intermediaries self (apo-mediator) regarding information on the topics of nutrition and health. However, the spontaneous expansion of this phenomenon must be suitably directed and controlled to prevent the spread of no reliable information on such a sensitive issue that is nutrition with a great impact on the health of people.

The apo-mediator may be "moved" by specific industrial interests to push the consumption of one or another kind of food. The project therefore has the purpose to undertake communities that allow the participation of consumers and producers but under the aegis of certificated moderators and in principle self-determining and free (we have the intention to create a scientific Rise2Up committee with this spirit).

Summarizing with Rise2Up project we would like to achieve the following results:

- increase awareness of consumers about the quality and sustainability of Italian and foreign healthy food
- dissemination of good practices of small producers in the world
- building communities of producers and consumers both nationally and internationally.
- bringing young people genuine products through social networks and web initiatives
- creating a long life project (over and after the EXPO period), setting up solid communities around the services offered.